

A Cemetery for the Expanding City

The First City Cemetery

In 1821, when Indianapolis was established, the first burial ground was located on the present Kentucky Avenue between West Street and the White River.

It was expanded from 12.5 acres, to 17.5 in 1834, and to 25 acres in 1838, when it became known as Greenlawn Cemetery.

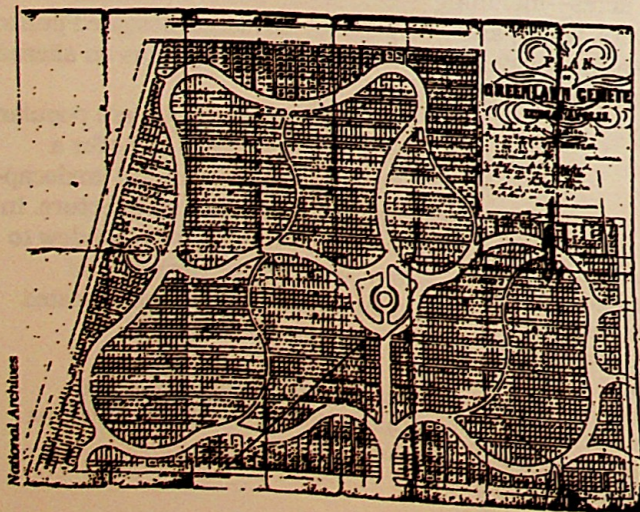
On June 2, 1864 an article appeared in the Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, about the dedication ceremonies at Crown Hill Cemetery. It noted the reasons why Greenlawn needed to be replaced.

"The cemetery now in use is within the city limits, and is rapidly being surrounded by our growing manufacturing establishments. It is on the direct line of the progress of that class of improvements. . . ."

Over the years, the bodies at Greenlawn were removed to Crown Hill for reinterment. In 1931, the federal government purchased land at Crown Hill and reinterred the remains of Confederate soldiers which had been at Greenlawn.

After this time, Greenlawn Cemetery no longer existed.

Bodies have been found in later years as industry expanded in the area, and most have been reinterred at Crown Hill.

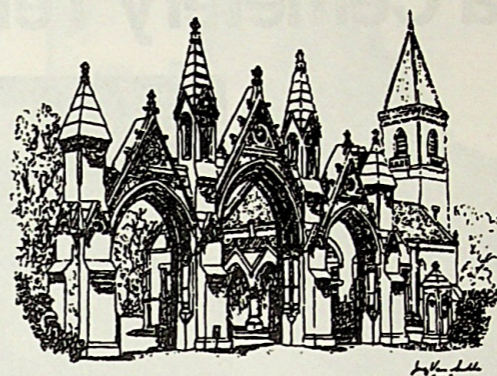


Highlights of Crown Hill History

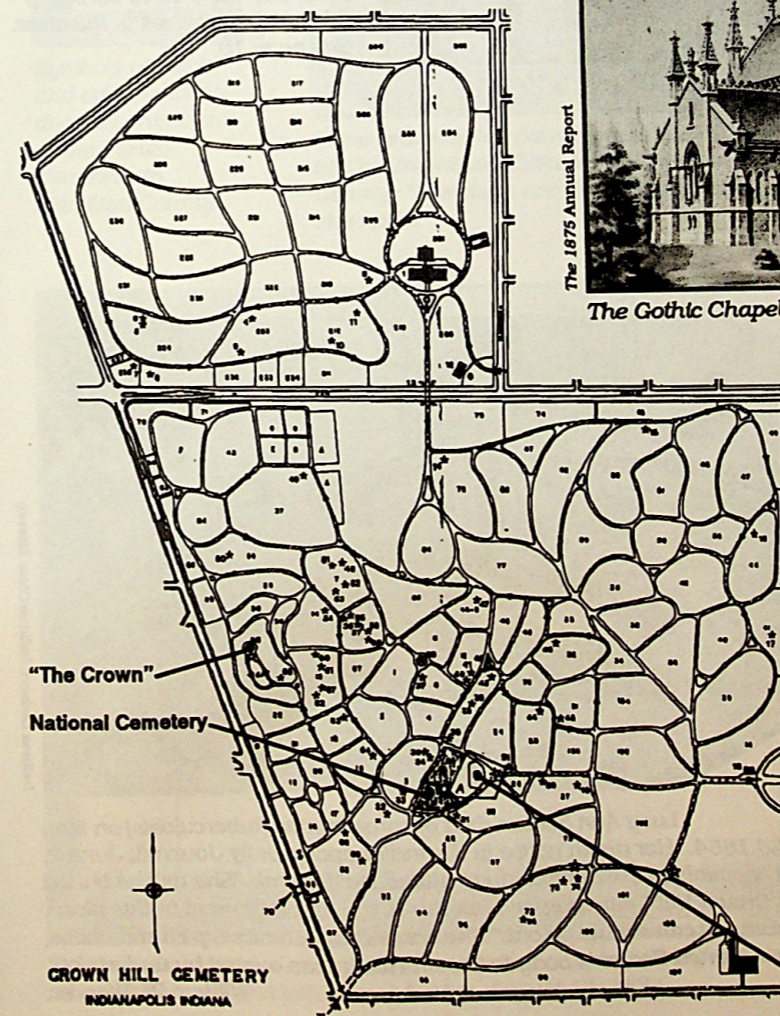
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| Plans for new cemetery discussed. A committee appointed to find a location. | September 12, 1863 |
| Association of Crown Hill established. Site chosen, 274 acres northwest of the city on Michigan Road. | September 25, 1863 |
| Frederick W. Chislett becomes first superintendent. | December, 1863 |
| Work on grounds begun. | Spring, 1864 |
| Dedication of cemetery attended by 400 people. | June 1, 1864 |
| First burial, Lucy Ann Seaton. | June 2, 1864 |
| First public sale of burial lots; 35 sold. | June 8, 1864 |
| First black person buried. | 1865 |
| Omnibus and trains pulled by horses in service between Crown Hill and city. | 1864-1878 |
| Federal government purchases land for a National Cemetery for war veterans. | August 27, 1866 |

Sources: Nicholas, *The Story of Crown Hill*; Sanford, *The Crown Hill Cemetery*; Indianapolis News, October 3, 1931.

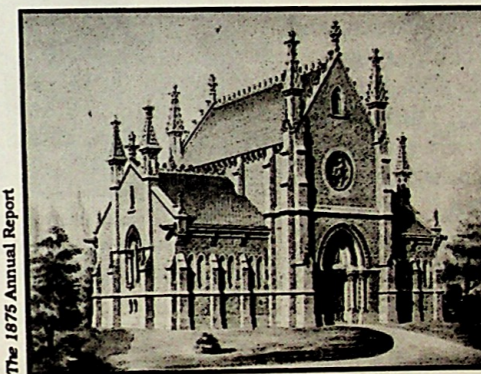
34th Street entrance of Crown Hill Cemetery. Drawn by self-taught artist Jerry Van Sickle, longtime member of the grounds crew, who was nearly blind at the time of this drawing in the late 1980s.



Crown Hill Cemetery



The 1875 Annual Report



The Gothic Chapel at Crown Hill.

34th Street entrance

Gothic Chapel

A Pleasure to the Eye

Entering Crown Hill Cemetery's 34th Street entrance, the visitor passes under a beautiful limestone archway. Immediately to the right is a dark red brick structure known as the Waiting Station. Both were designed by Adolph Scherrer, an Indianapolis architect, and built in 1885. The Waiting Station was a gathering place for those attending a funeral.

As the visitor proceeds, the stunning 1875 Gothic Chapel comes into view. It stands within sight of the National Cemetery and was the creation of Indianapolis architect D. A. Bohlen.

To truly appreciate the beauty of the cemetery, the visitor should walk through the grounds. Lifelike statues, large monuments, and grand mausoleums that exist throughout can be admired. Exquisitely designed gravestones can be found with poetic epitaphs that are inspirational, insightful, touching, or comical.

Students of nature have come for years to study the nearly 100 varieties of trees, many of which are identified. Abundant wildlife lives within the cemetery grounds. Squirrels, raccoons, opossums, chipmunks, and even deer feed there.

Those who visit "The Crown," the highest point in Marion County, almost two hundred feet from its base, are rewarded with a magnificent view of the city. It is the burial site of James Whitcomb Riley, one of Indiana's most renowned poets.

Crown Hill's wealth of natural and man-made beauty is available to the public. School tours and other events provide ready access to the wealth of historical information contained in Crown Hill.