

# Greenlawn Cemetery

## Indianapolis

# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

- The four cemeteries combined equal a total of 25 acres.
- Cemetery standards suggest that one acre can hold 800 to 1,200 burials. For simplicity, we allow for 1,000 burials per acre.

# Greenlawn Cemetery

## Indianapolis

- From statehood in 1816, Indianapolis has been the seat of Marion County government, and since 1970, Indianapolis and Marion County governments have been virtually one and the same, with the creation of **“UniGov.”**
- Marion County has an area of **403 square miles**, 98% of which is land.
- According to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), **there are 150 known pioneer cemeteries** in Marion County, Greenlawn being the largest.
- African Americans were in Indianapolis before the city’s founding in 1821. It has long been accepted that the oldest public cemetery in Indianapolis, which accepted black burials, opened in 1863, leaving a question: **Where were the black people buried before 1863?**
- There are African American burial sites throughout Indiana, but not in Indianapolis. Because Indianapolis had Greenlawn Cemetery, which had a **“Colored Section.”**

# Greenlawn Cemetery

## Indianapolis

- Greenlawn was not a cemetery; it was four cemeteries: old **Burying Ground**, New **Burying Ground** or City Cemetery or Union Cemetery, **North Burying Ground** or Peck's Tract, and **Greenlawn Park**.
- There have been four recorded mass removals from Greenlawn:
  1. 1,200 Union Veterans - **North Burying Ground** to Crown Hill Cemetery in 1866.
  2. 1,200 early city residents - **North Burying Ground** to Crown Hill in 1911.
  3. 2,000 pioneers - **old Burying Ground** to Floral Park in 1924.
  4. 1,616 confederate prisoners - **Greenlawn Park** to Crown Hill Cemetery in 1931.





# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

## Eleven Park developers give a first look at their \$1 plus billion plan ahead of May 2023 groundbreaking

- “The development will include a 20,000-seat stadium, more than 600 apartments, 205,000 square feet of office space, nearly 200,000 square feet for retail and restaurants, a hotel, and parking garages.”
- “In 2019, the Indiana General Assembly approved legislation that provides a framework. According to that legislation, said taxes from a special tax district collected from the Eleven Park development would pay back 80% of the cost of the stadium, while Indy Eleven would be on the hook to pay the remaining 20% of the cost and cover any shortfalls.”
- Clare Rafford, Indianapolis Star, February 17, 2023



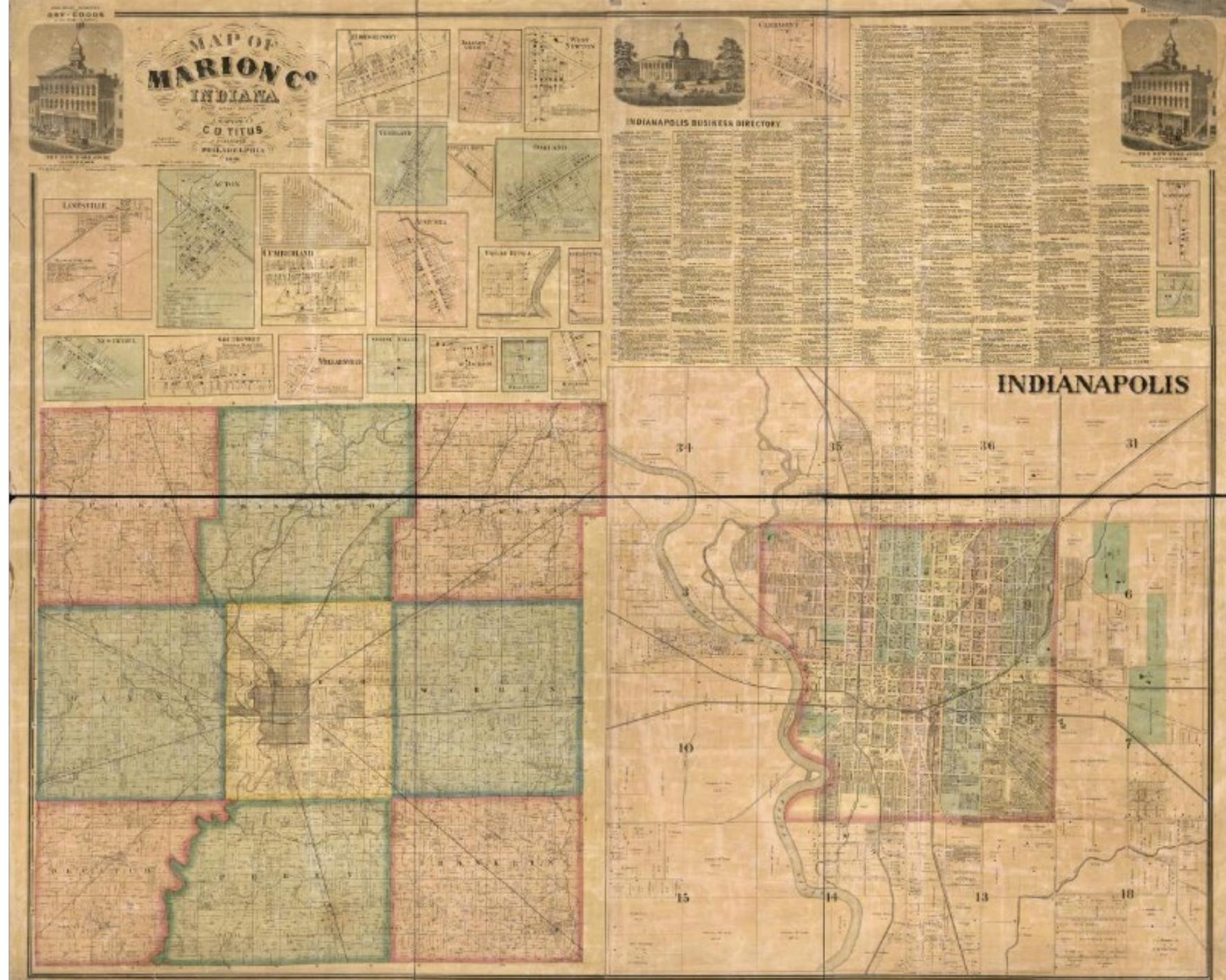
# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

Worley & Bracher, Map of Marion  
County, Indiana. Worley & Bracher,  
Philadelphia, 1866,

Available also through the Library of Congress  
Web site as a raster image.

Image courtesy Library of Congress website

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4093m.la000158/?st=image&r=0.35,0.396,0.653,0.409,0>





BLAKE

W

Woolen Factory

WATER

Governors Id.

135 Green Lawn Cemetery

Old Cemetery

133 Cemetery

132

T.H. & R.R.

KENTUCKY

137 Coal Yard

ST.

RACHEL

H.

ST.

HALSEN

ST.

WEST

COTTRELL

ST.

WEST

WOOD

YARD

90

STONE

YARD

MISSISSIPPI

89

Lumber Yard

GEORGIA

FRANKLIN

ST.

TENNESSEE

ST.

MARYLAND

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AVE.

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# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

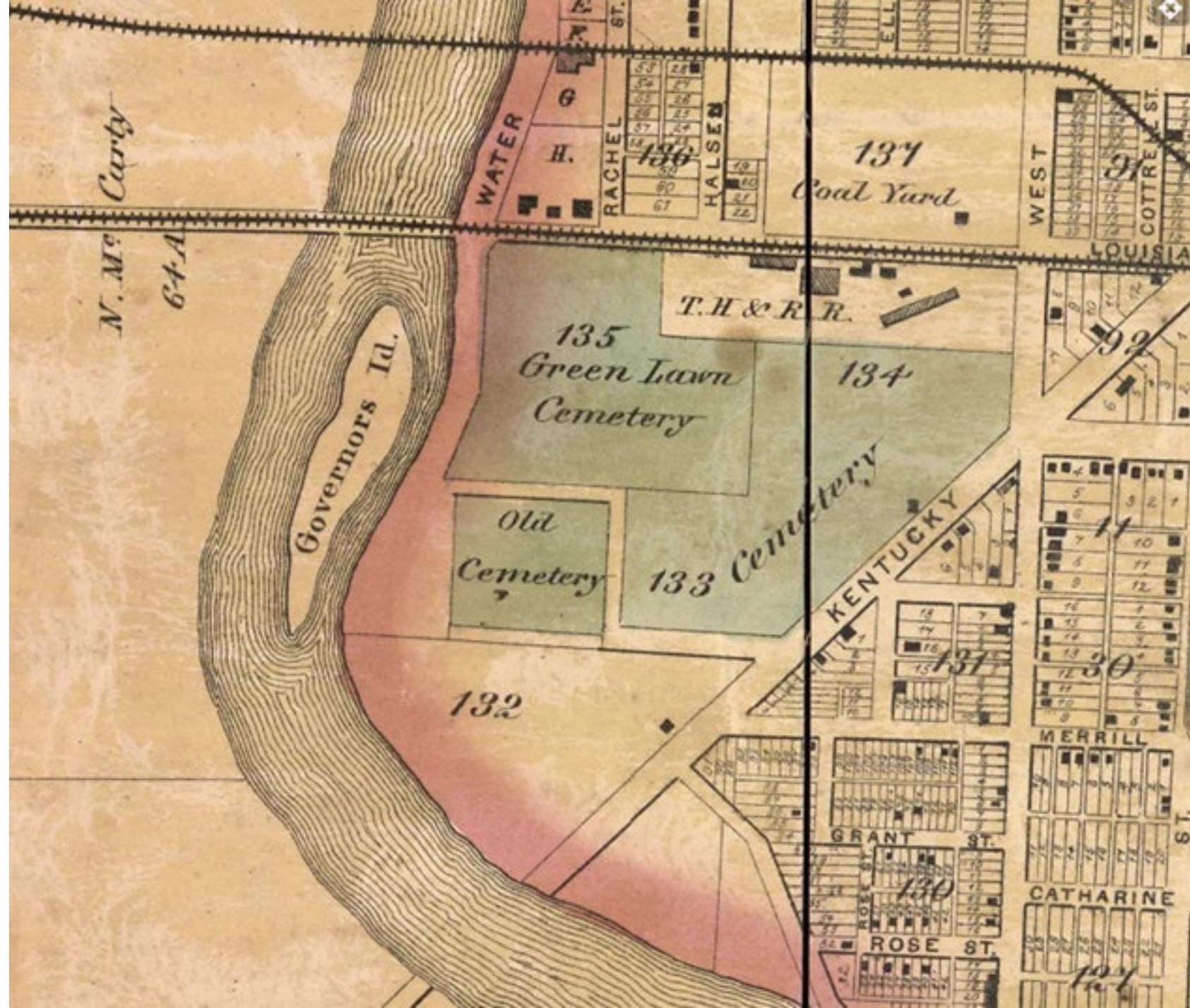
Worley & Bracher, Map of Marion County,  
Indiana. Worley & Bracher, Philadelphia, 1866.

- Map section of Indianapolis showing the location of Greenlawn Cemetery.
- Lot 133 New Burying Ground/Union Cemetery, Baseball Stadium (1834).
- Lot 134 North Burying Ground/Peck's tract (1852), Diamond Reality (Diamond Chain).
- Lot 135 Green Lawn Park Cemetery (1860).

## Note

Map section of Indianapolis, taken from original map and modified for research purposes.

Worley & Bracher, Map of Marion County,  
Indiana. Worley & Bracher, Philadelphia, 1866.



# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

- Greenlawn to become a park, part of the Indianapolis linear parks system and greenways
- The Parks Movement began in the 1850s and was common across the United States. Evidence of the Parks Movement is evident in larger urban environments, e.g., Central Park NYC and Rock Creek Park Washington D.C.

- *Indianapolis Journal*, March 7, 1897

TO WORK OVER 1,000 MEN

PARK COMMISSION TO EMPLOY THEM  
IN FALL CREEK SYSTEM.

Conversion of Greenlawn Cemetery  
Into a Park—Papers Being Prepared  
for Asphaltting Kentucky Avenue.

Albert Lieber, Oran Perry and W. E. English were the members of the Board of Park Commissioners who were at the regular weekly meeting yesterday. This is the first meeting that Mr. English has been able to attend since his illness. Mr. Korbly, of Smith & Korbly, consulted with the board in regard to some legal matters. Until the park bonds have been sold, nothing will be done toward purchasing park lands. March 31 is the day fixed to receive propositions for the \$350,000 loan the Park Board is authorized to make. Controller Johnson expects to make a very advantageous loan and expects a good premium will be paid. Mr. Lieber said yesterday that he presumed the board would buy all the ground that is being considered at one time. It is the intention to employ from 1,200 to 1,500 men this summer in the improvement of the grounds. Work will be done in the Fall-creek system, laying out boulevards, etc., and at the same time attention will be given to the smaller parks. Mr. Lieber said that he thought the board would be ready to take some definite action by the latter part of next week.

Greenlawn Cemetery is to be at once turned into a park. All fences are to be razed and the grounds will be laid out with walks, and seats will be placed for the public. Where relatives do not object the graves will be leveled off. Papers are being prepared by City Engineer Jeup for the improvement of Kentucky avenue, opposite Greenlawn Cemetery, so that it will be of easy access. All earth removed from the surface of the street is to be used on the approaches to the Kentucky-avenue bridge over White river.

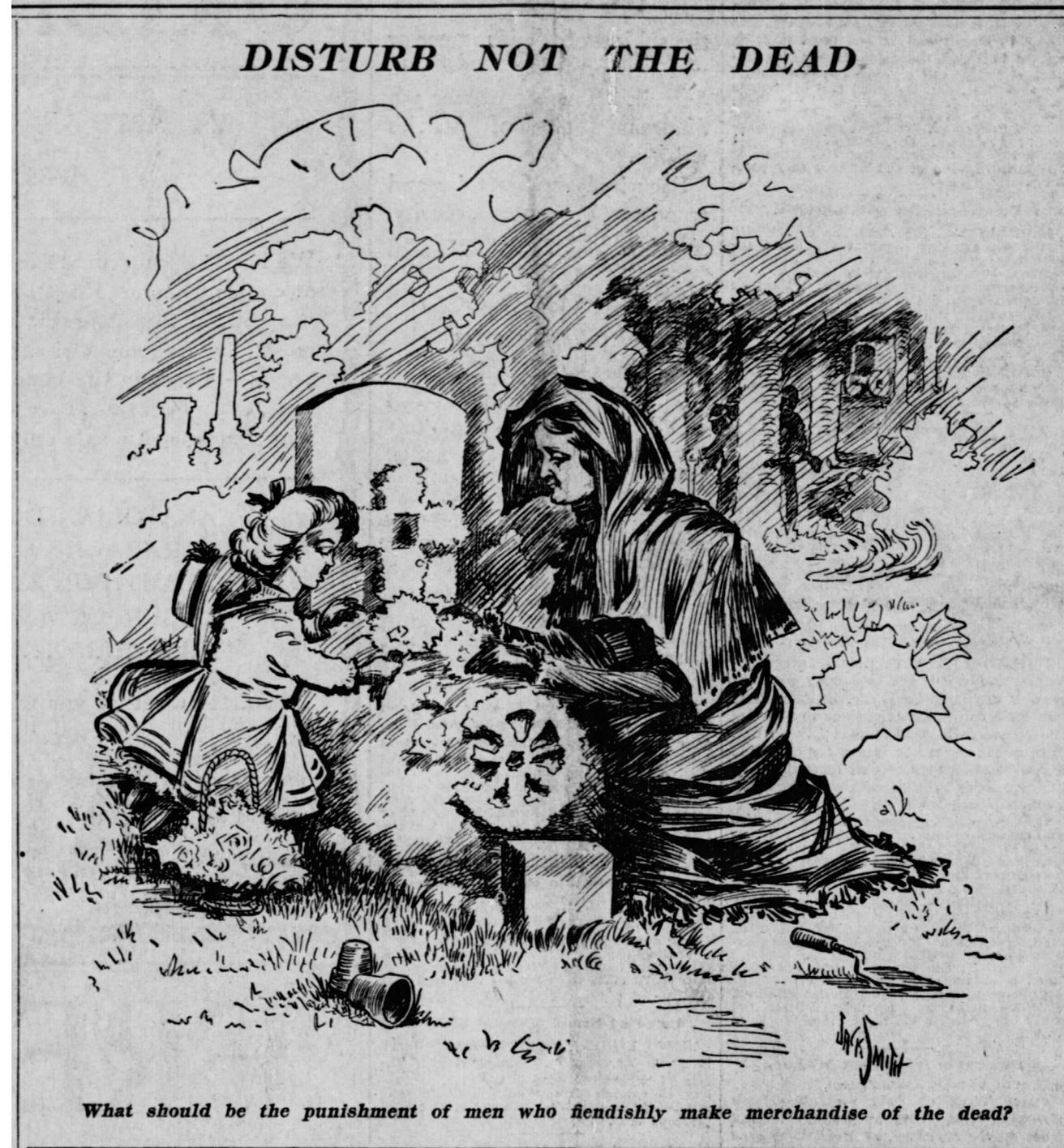
Before adjourning, the commissioners ordered an advertisement of bids for the new stone bridge at Garfield Park. This will be a forty-foot span. Bids were also called for an extension of water pipes in the park and for pedestals for the six cannons to be placed in Military Park. The board will purchase a blue print apparatus for use in the office.

# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

- Chaney Lively
- Thomas Magruder
- S. Kelly
- John Tucker
- Several veterans of the American Revolution
- At least five members of the 28<sup>th</sup> USCT

• Image from the *Indianapolis Journal*

• *Indianapolis Journal*, October 1, 1902



# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

- Suggested location for the new Pesthouse, a place for people with incurable diseases, *e.g.*, Tuberculosis.

## PESTHOUSE LOCATION.

### Greenlawn Cemetery Suggested as Just the Place for It.

Among other places that have been suggested to Mayor Bookwalter as locations for the pesthouse is that of Greenlawn cemetery. It is pointed out that this location is best for the pesthouse; that it could be placed near the east bank of White river; that it would be over 300 feet from the south line of the Gardner slaughter house and the same distance north of Oliver avenue. It would be in a piece of ground of many acres, outside of which is a sparsely settled neighborhood. It would be capable of ready sewerage and convenient to light, water and fuel.

- *Indianapolis News*, February 15, 1902

# Indianapolis City Hospital

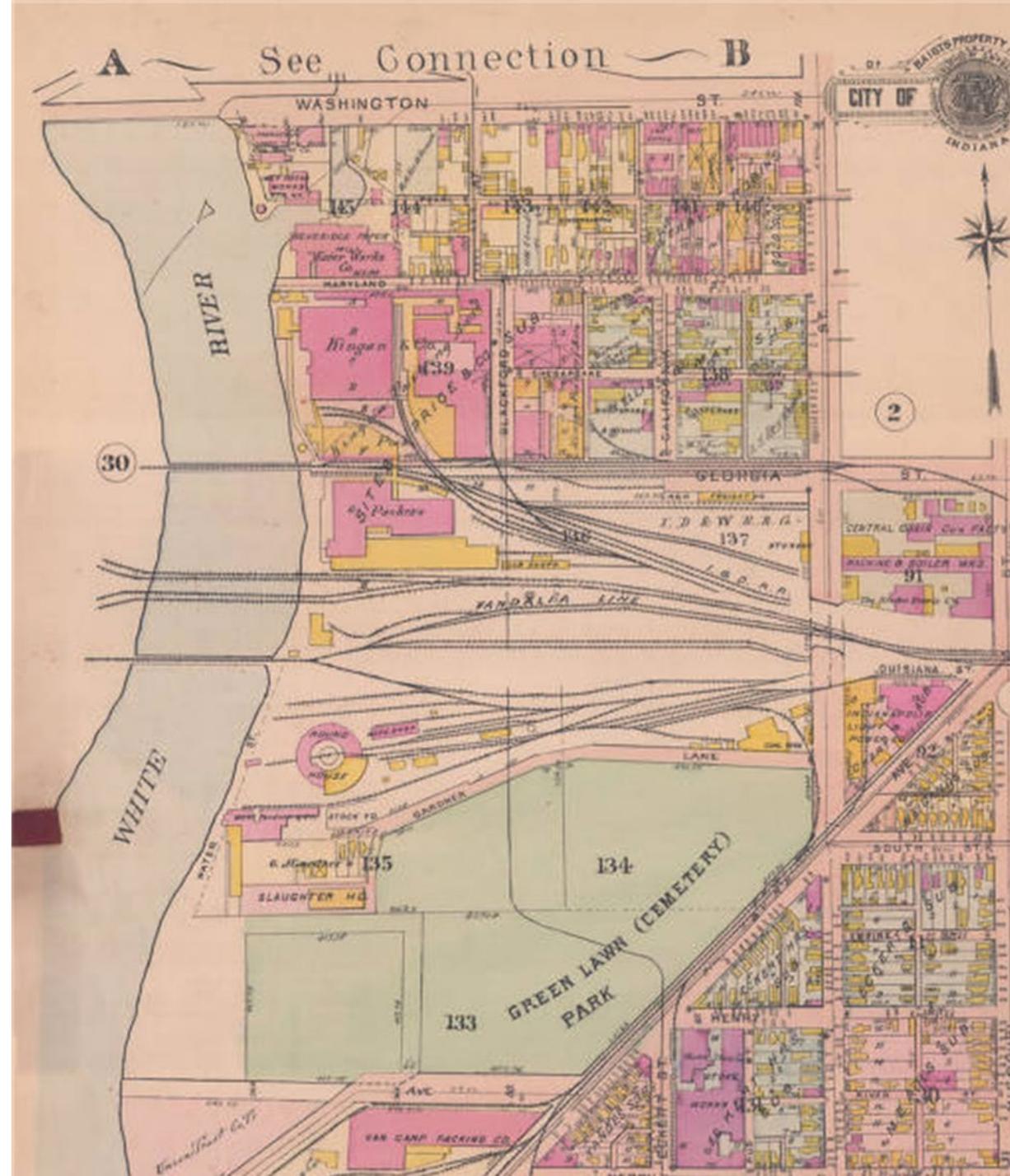
- Interior View 1900s
- Incurables Ward (Pest House)



- Wishard Nurse Collection  
courtesy Indiana State Archives

# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

- Map section of Indianapolis showing the location of Greenlawn Cemetery.
- Indianapolis, Baist Atlas, Plan 17, 1908
- Lot 133 New Burying Ground/Union Cemetery, Baseball Stadium
- Lot 134 North Burying Ground/Peck's tract, Diamond Realty (Diamond Chain).
- Lot 135 Greenlawn Park Cemetery



# CARELESS HUMANITY NOW HURRIES OVER THE HALLOWED GROUND WHERE THE PIONEERS OF INDIANAPOLIS WERE BURIED MORE THAN SIXTY YEARS AGO

Greenlawn Park, Once "the Old Graveyard," is Still the Resting Place of Bodies of Men Who Laid Foundations for Indiana's Foremost City—Stone Markers Tell of Grief and Misfortune That Befell the Early Settlers Long Before the City Grew Around the Resting Place of Honored Dead.

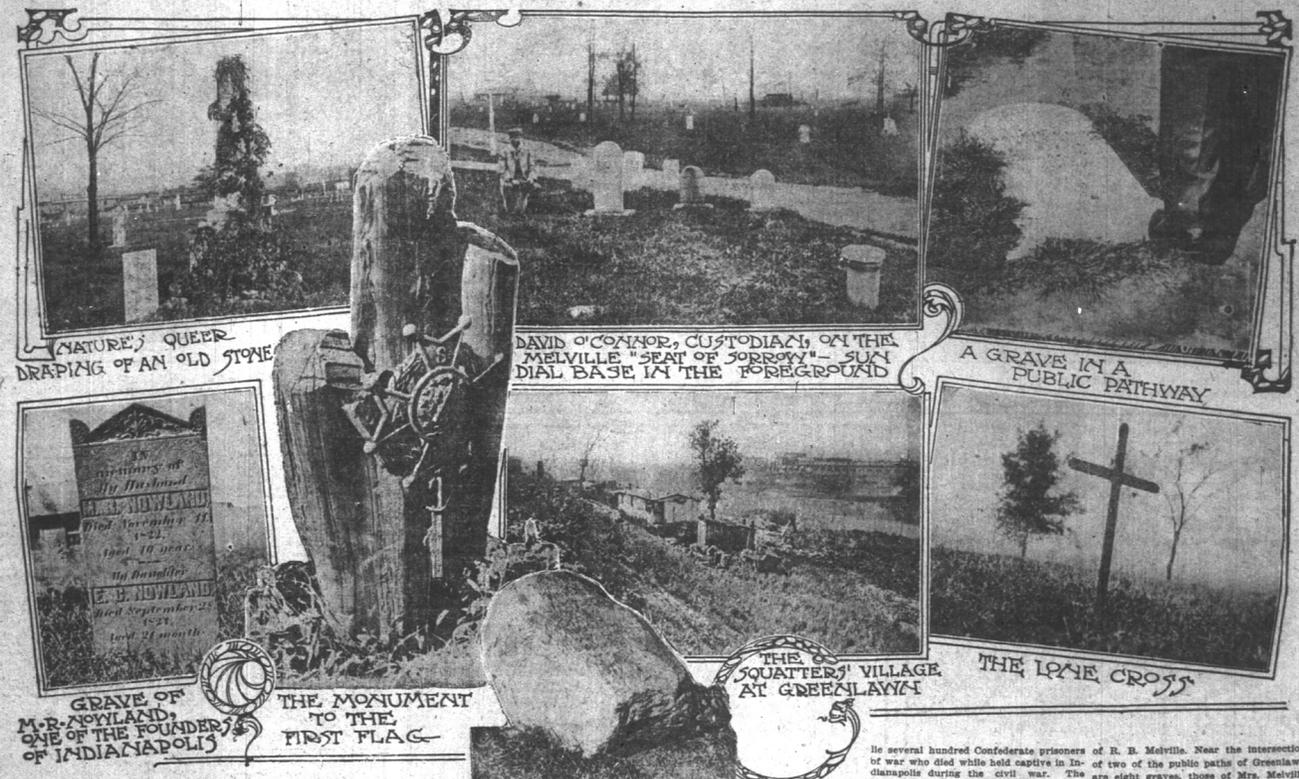
**U**NDER the shelter of the east bank of White river, a few paces north of the River avenue bridge, is a group of shacks, old houseboats and roughly constructed sheds. This queer collection of human dwellings are known to the natives thereof as Millburnville. The police call it No Man's Land. It is a squatters' village, of which Henry Millburn and his wife are chief claimants for possession. The legal department of the city of Indianapolis says the ground occupied by the Millburns and their group of seven families belongs to Indianapolis as part of Greenlawn park, formerly Greenlawn cemetery. The Millburns, by virtue of an interesting situation, say the ground they occupy is theirs.

**City Seeks Land for Park.**  
The city recently started legal proceedings to oust the Millburns and make No Man's Land part of Greenlawn park. The city at last is beginning to attach a little sentiment to Greenlawn because of its history. It is in reality the Trinity churchyard of Indianapolis, for in its green area were buried the pioneers of the city. It is the desire of the board park commissioners to drive the Millburns from their lair, and to beautify the river bank along the western border of Greenlawn. The claim of the government is based on unusual grounds. Mrs. Millburn says the ground the squatters' village occupies was given her by the government for guarding the old powder houses that were built along the western border of Greenlawn during the civil war, and in which the government stored ammunition for the use of the Indiana troops when they started toward the battle zone. Mrs. Millburn says that her great diatribe was vigilant at all times, and that she has justly earned title to the ground she occupies.

The only mark of identity left in connection with the powder houses is the concrete and stone base on which they stood. They are just above the river, and are almost hidden by grass. Adjoining the squatters' cabin, in River avenue, is the city dog pound and the storage yards for the equipment of the board of public works. It is the hope of the park board to clear Greenlawn of all buildings and to make it a city attractive. The older residents of the city are hoping that the resting place of the pioneers will be retained, at least partly as it is today. There are scores of interesting relics and markers in the old cemetery that are part of the history of Indianapolis.

**"The Old Graveyard."**  
Greenlawn cemetery was the city's first burying ground, being destroyed in local history as "The Old Graveyard" and as the city cemetery. It was at first a small tract but gradually was enlarged to meet the demands of a growing town. It originally was situated in a forest but the trees have almost entirely disappeared, only a few being left to afford summer shade. One of the finest elms in Indianapolis was a tree near the center of the old trees in Greenlawn but a local wire service company attached cables to it and electricity did the rest. The grand old elm is dead today and all that remains of it is a pole for its cable connection.

The several tracts that made up the original cemetery and its additions were named Greenlawn cemetery back in the 1820s and the tract still bears the name of Greenlawn, although it now is officially designated as a park instead of a cemetery. After the opening of Crown Hill cemetery many bodies were removed



from the old graveyard to the new and the city afterward took control of Greenlawn and transformed it into a park. Hundreds of the old gravestones remain in its broad area. It is worth the while of any citizen who enjoys delving into local history and tradition to spend an afternoon with David O'Connor, the custodian of Greenlawn. This honest, earnest son of the green hills is more than an ordinary custodian. He is sentimental about the gray old gravestones that dot the sward of the once beloved burying ground. It has been desecrated often and there are still some graves in paths that are crossed by thousands of feet daily. It is a sad commentary on human respect for the dead that one may stand and see the remnants of people who are employed in nearby factories go racing across the graves that have become park paths. It is not intentional disrespect, of course. It is just a development.

**Park Becomes Thoroughfare.**  
When Greenlawn was first opened as a cemetery, there was a narrow path leading across the cemetery from West street and Kentucky avenue to the River avenue bridge. It was a short cut for West Indianapolis residents. On rainy days the path had low spots that filled with water. This resulted in the use of the grass by pedestrians. They walked on the edge of the path. The result has been that what was once a narrow pathway is now a thoroughfare almost a foot wide. The gradual widening of the path has taken in graves and now the graves of many old residents of Indianapolis are part of a public thoroughfare.

O'Connor, the custodian, does not like the idea of grave desecration, for he has old-fashioned sentiments with regard to respect for the dead. He does the best he can to protect his charges, but it is no easy task in a cemetery that has been transformed into a park. O'Connor is in the sixtieth year of his life. There was a story in his chair in the situation one at Greenlawn by many of the city's older inhabitants who remember when Greenlawn cemetery was hallowed ground. O'Connor is more than a custodian. He is a historian. In his little shanty on the crest of Greenlawn he has a little book in which are inserted all the interesting stories told him by the old residents who visit the park-cemetery. The result is that it is worth any one's valuable time to stroll through Greenlawn with O'Connor and hear him tell the stories he has heard. He has a memory, too, that runs back into the days of Greenlawn's history. "I'm keeping a record of the stories," says O'Connor. "I'll not always be the custodian of Greenlawn and my successor will know something of the old graveyard's history to repeat to future generations. It strikes me that we are growing pretty cold in our respect for the dead. We don't keep enough of the past alive in our hearts. For instance, on the old gravestones we used to describe a little sentiment of love for the departed. Now the stone simply says you've died. Here in Greenlawn are many old gravestones that were erected in the age of genuine affection. They spoke kindly of their dead in the old days. I enjoy walking among the graves and reading the little expressions of esteem that were the last gift to the dead from those left behind."

O'Connor stopped and looked down at a gravestone in the center of the broad path. The stone said it was the grave of Elizabeth, the beloved wife of Francis O'Connor, who died on February 4, 1861, in the sixtieth year of her life. There was a story in his chair in the situation one at Greenlawn by many of the city's older inhabitants who remember when Greenlawn cemetery was hallowed ground. O'Connor is more than a custodian. He is a historian. In his little shanty on the crest of Greenlawn he has a little book in which are inserted all the interesting stories told him by the old residents who visit the park-cemetery. The result is that it is worth any one's valuable time to stroll through Greenlawn with O'Connor and hear him tell the stories he has heard. He has a memory, too, that runs back into the days of Greenlawn's history. "I'm keeping a record of the stories," says O'Connor. "I'll not always be the custodian of Greenlawn and my successor will know something of the old graveyard's history to repeat to future generations. It strikes me that we are growing pretty cold in our respect for the dead. We don't keep enough of the past alive in our hearts. For instance, on the old gravestones we used to describe a little sentiment of love for the departed. Now the stone simply says you've died. Here in Greenlawn are many old gravestones that were erected in the age of genuine affection. They spoke kindly of their dead in the old days. I enjoy walking among the graves and reading the little expressions of esteem that were the last gift to the dead from those left behind."

He several hundred Confederate prisoners of war who died while held captive in Indianapolis during the civil war. The monument occupies a remote corner of the old cemetery, but it is directly above the mound in which the soldiers from Dixie sleep. Another marker that harks back to the days of the rebellion is above the grave of Thomas Snarr. According to the stone, Snarr was a member of Company B, Eleventh Indiana, and was killed March 4, 1861, while in the discharge of duty. He was buried at Greenlawn with military honors, Governor Morton delivering the eulogy at the grave. The headstone says: "He sacrificed his life for his country." Another stone that is said to have a war-time connection tells of the murder of John W. Harries by Charles E. Carter. The shooting took place in 1860, at a time when disputes over the slavery question were rife, and O'Connor has it that the murder was the result of a political quarrel. A ghastly feature of Harries' headstone is a death mask taken immediately after he was shot. Another headstone with tragedy written on it marks the grave of James B. Githen, a railroad fireman. Githen was killed by the explosion of a locomotive boiler on the old Indianapolis, Peru & Chicago railroad, now the Lake Erie & Western. The accident occurred at Chesterfield, in April, 1863, when railroading was new in this section. His gravestone contains a voluminous history of the accident, but concludes with the statement that Githen did not know how it happened. At the bottom of the stone is written: "Remember me as you pass by. As you are now so once was I. I am now so you will be." There is no spot in Greenlawn marked with more bitter grief than the family lot

of R. B. Melville. Near the intersection of two of the public paths of Greenlawn are eight graves, those of Mrs. Melville and her seven children. All were born in Nottingham, England, the stones say. The absence of the husband and father from the lot has behind it a strangely pathetic story. Melville was a stone mason. He buried his wife and seven children at Greenlawn and was left alone. In his sorrowful hours he made for himself a square stone about sixteen inches high to be used as a seat. It was placed amid the graves of his loved ones. Opposite the seat, he built a sun dial. For many years Melville visited the graves each day, sitting on the stone seat and watching the sun work its way around on the face of the dial. O'Connor knew the Englishman and used to talk to him, but he had little to say. His greatest grief was that he could not be buried beside his family because Greenlawn was closed to burials shortly after the death of his wife. With this thought paying on his mind he went each day to Greenlawn and, during the last years of his life, often sat long into the hours of the night reflecting on the happy years gone by. He seemed to find peace nowhere but among his graves. He died several years ago, and was buried at Crown Hill, the thing he dreamed most. His stone seat and the base of the sun dial still remain as markers for his living agony, those and hours he spent thinking of the days gone by forever. Another marker that is written in sorrow is a granite boulder in the west central part of the grounds. It, merely states that there sleeps beneath it the five infant daughters of Christian and Louise Resenor-Louise, Carolina, Maria, Ella and Emma. To have lost five baby daughters was a sorrow, indeed. The age of Greenlawn cemetery is ap-

Custodian Deplores Trespassing on Graves He Associates With Tales Preserved Only in Minds of Men and Noted by Him From Talks With Aged Visitors Whose Memories Turn Their Steps to Abandoned Cemetery—Monuments Bearing Inscriptions in Honor of Heroes and Beloved Members of Families.

parent in a freak of nature. An iron fence that surrounded a grave is now held fast in the forks of a tree. The fence was around the grave of the daughter of J. Byrns, who died in infancy in the early years of the existence of Indianapolis. A tree began growing at the head of the grave and its forks grasped the iron fence. Today the tree is twenty-five feet high, and the fence is still held in its clutches. An interesting marker is that of Lydia Harvey, who lived to be 93 years old. She died in 1857 and, according to the figures, was born twenty-nine years before the Declaration of Independence was signed. She was a native of North Carolina and probably was a negro. She was buried in the paupers' field, but some one who estimated her, placed a marker above her grave.

**Beautiful Stone Carving.**  
There are many beautiful monuments still left in the old cemetery, each representative of a mason's skill. There is a stone cross with the figure of the crucified Saviour on it that is regarded as a work of art by all who see it. Another stone bears the forms of two sleeping children and the work is called excellent sculpture. An impressive marker that occupies a lonely spot is an iron cross. It looks as though it were in a desert. There is no mound near it and no name is on it to identify the dead.

One of the picturesque old headstones of Greenlawn marks the resting place of dead and Mary Brown, death Brown, the husband, was born in 1786 and died in February, 1858. Mrs. Brown was born in 1778 and died six months after her husband. The monument marking their grave has become entwined with vines and is one of the beautiful things of Greenlawn.

There are many monuments marking the graves of foreign-born citizens. One of particular interest is that of Matthew Patterson, son of Russell and Isabella Patterson. He died in 1851 and his parents, anxious to mark his grave with a granite from the old home in Ireland, had a block of red granite imported from Baltimore. The granite is beautifully finished and is one of the show things at Greenlawn. The gravestone of James O'Connor, custodian, is now searching for the stone that marks the grave of Father Barry once a devoted priest of Indianapolis. O'Connor says the fallen stone has been buried under grass, but knows it is there. He has a photograph of three of Father Barry, not knowing him to be dead these many years, have been seeking him for the purpose of setting up a statue in which Barry had an interest. O'Connor will find the grave, set down its markings on paper and forward the matter to the relatives who seek knowledge of the dead priest.

The bodies of about forty persons who were buried in that part of the cemetery once owned by Edwin J. Park, were recently removed and buried in Crown Hill cemetery. After considerable litigation the bodies were buried in Crown Hill cemetery, but a little more than seven acres of the original cemetery which was sold with the provision that it would never be used as a burial place. The cemetery was converted to any use other than that of a burial ground. From this five infant daughters of Christian and Louise Resenor-Louise, Carolina, Maria, Ella and Emma. To have lost five baby daughters was a sorrow, indeed. The age of Greenlawn cemetery is ap-

Greenlawn  
Cemetery  
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DAVID O'CONNOR, CUSTODIAN, ON THE  
MELVILLE "SEAT OF SORROW" - SUN  
DIAL BASE IN THE FOREGROUND

Greenlawn  
Cemetery  
Indianapolis



THE  
SQUATTERS' VILLAGE  
AT GREENLAWN

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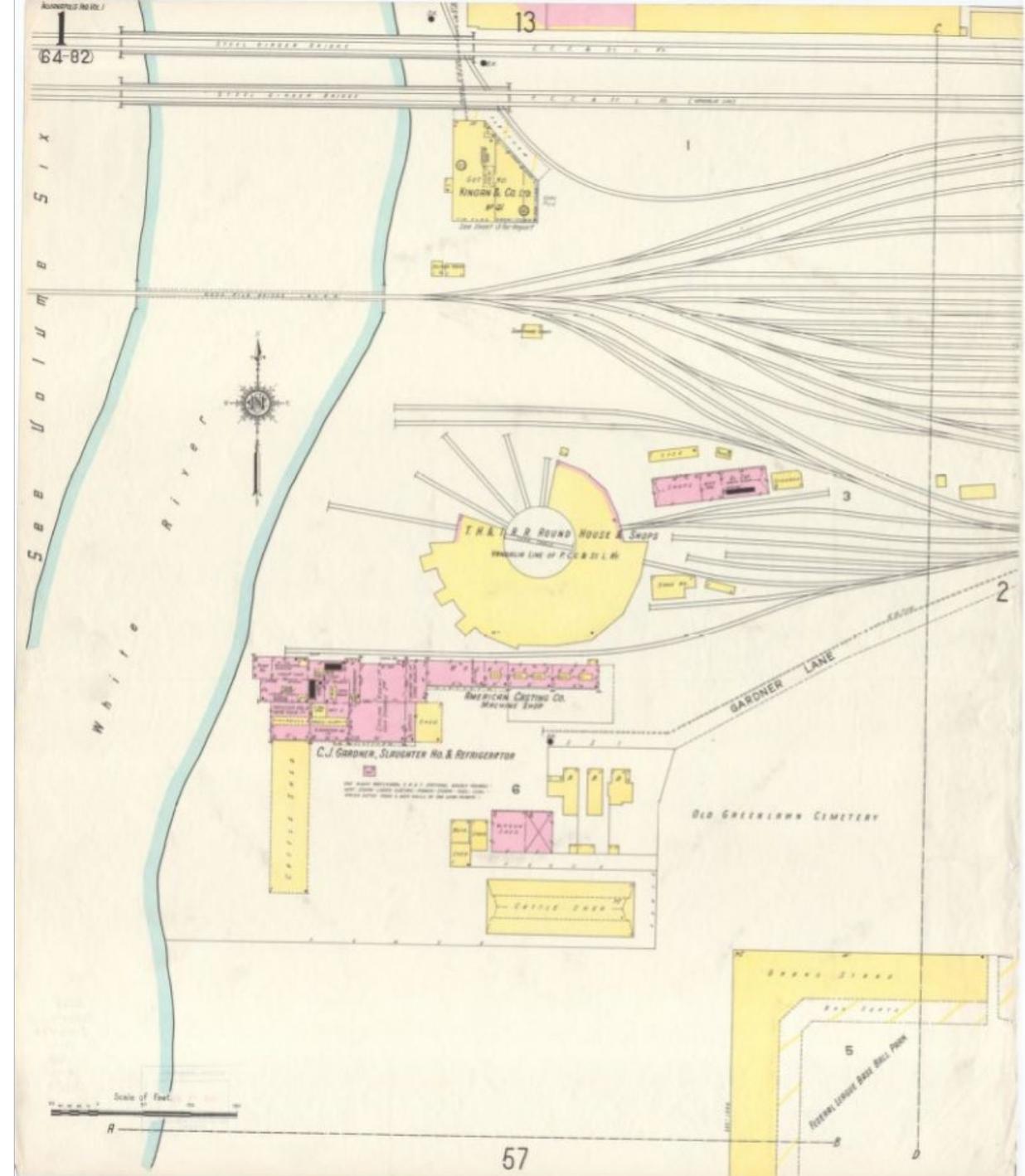
## Confederate Grave Marker

- Erected 1910
- Marked graves of 1,616 confederate soldiers who died while held as prisoners of war (POW)
- Graves relocated to Crown Hill in 1931
- Marker relocated to Garfield Park in 1928



# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

- 1914, Indianapolis Sanborn Fire Map #1



- Insurance Maps, Indianapolis, Indiana, Volume #1, New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1914

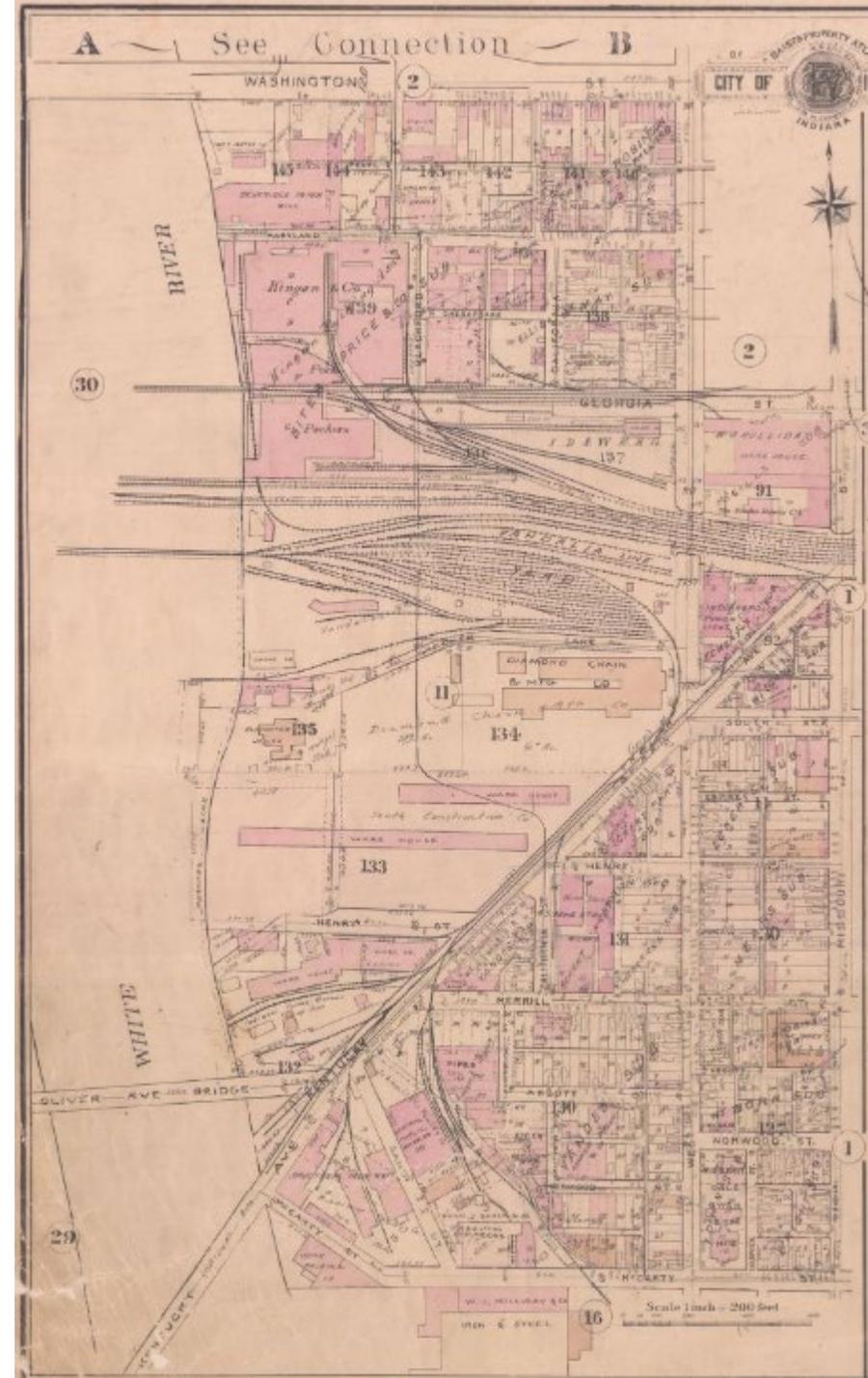
# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

- Map section of Indianapolis showing the location of Greenlawn Cemetery.
- Indianapolis Baist Atlas, plan #17, 1916
- Lot 133 New Burying Ground/Union Cemetery, Baseball Stadium
- Lot 134 North Burying Ground/Peck's tract, Diamond Reality (Diamond Chain).
- Lot 135 Greenlawn Park Cemetery



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- Map section of Indianapolis showing the location of Greenlawn Cemetery.
- Indianapolis Baist Atlas, plan #17, 1929
- Lot 133 New Burying Ground/Union Cemetery, Baseball Stadium
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- The city of Indianapolis claimed the original four-acre Burying Ground was full and in complete disrepair; it was ordered closed in 1899.
- In 1924, the graves of 2,000 of the city's earliest pioneers were relocated to Floral Park Cemetery.

*Indianapolis News*, June 19, 1925

## BONES OF UNKNOWN DEAD FALL PREY TO THE STEAM SHOVEL

**Thrown Aside by Workmen After Being Scooped Up in Digging of Pit in Old Greenlawn Cemetery—No Provision Made for Burial, Although Mentioned at Works Board Meeting.**

The old Greenlawn cemetery, between Oliver avenue and White river, again is suffering from the encroachments of commercial and civic enterprises. Beside a large pit that is being dug in the cemetery to backfill the Kentucky avenue bridge, is a small pile of bones and skulls, scooped from their resting places by a large steam shovel and thrown aside by workmen.

Some of these may be remains of some of the early residents of Indianapolis; others may be bones of some of the 1,616 Confederate soldiers who died in or near Camp Morton during the civil war and who were buried in Greenlawn cemetery.

At the foot of the Kentucky avenue bridge is another small pile of bones taken from the gravel dumped there by the workmen, more bones of the nameless dead who lay buried in the cemetery so many years.

No action has been taken for the proper interment of these remains, though the matter was mentioned at the last meeting of the board of works. At present they lie on the ground.

### Set Aside as Cemetery in 1822.

The old cemetery was the first "God's acre" of Indianapolis. There in a shady grove beside the river the early pioneers cleared a peaceful resting place for their dead. In 1822, at a meeting of the general assembly at Corydon, the place was set aside for burial purposes in an

act which said that it should contain four acres.

With the industrial growth of the city the plot was deemed unsuitable for a cemetery, and with the dedication of Crown Hill cemetery toward the close of the civil war, many bodies were removed. Many, however, remained; many that could not be identified or whose friends or relatives had passed on.

After the burial of the Confederate dead in the cemetery, the United States government erected a monument to their memory. This to the casual observer is all that remains to mark the old burial ground. It is surrounded by a small iron fence on an unkempt plot of ground and on all sides rise the factories and terminals of the city's industry.

### Transferred to Traction Companies.

The western part of the old cemetery, by special act of the general assembly in 1923, was transferred to traction companies in order that they might erect tracks and termi-

Continued on Page Thirty-seven.

# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

## WPA Workers Find Bones of Pioneers

“...yesterday gave up the skeletons of three former Indianapolis residents believed to have been buried in the free corner, or “potter’s field” of the cemetery. The remains were found by WPA workers employed on a flood prevention project along White River at Kentucky Avenue. Dirt from the east bank of the river, where the old cemetery was located, is being hauled to the west bank, making a wider flood channel and making possible a higher levee on the west side of the river. As the east bank was undermined yesterday, the skeletons were carried down with the dirt.”

*Indianapolis Star, December 17, 1935*

## WPA WORKERS FIND BONES OF PIONEERS



Harry O. Garman examines bones unearthed by WPA shovels.

Old Greenlawn cemetery, the first burial place laid out in Indianapolis and the only cemetery in Indiana where Confederate soldiers were buried, yesterday gave up the skeletons of three former Indianapolis residents believed to have been buried in the free corner, or “potter’s field,” of the cemetery.

The remains were found by WPA workers employed on a flood prevention project along White river at Kentucky avenue. Dirt from the east bank of the river, where the old cemetery was located, is being hauled to the west bank, making a wider flood channel and making possible a higher levee on the west side of the river.

As the east bank was undermined yesterday the skeletons were carried down with the dirt.

### Identification Is Impossible.

Harry O. Garman, chairman of the committee on pioneer cemeteries of the Indiana Historical Society, took charge of the skeletons and will turn them over to proper state authorities. It was impossible to attempt identification, he said, since all cemetery markings were removed several years ago, but he estimated the bodies had been buried at least seventy-five years.

Mr. Garman said the history of Indianapolis can be read easily in the river bank where excavation has been made. Near the river bed, he said, are found pieces of crockery of a type used by pioneers. There are also wagon wheels, iron tools, pots and bustles of past generations.

Higher up are parts of early automobiles, glassware and rubber materials and twenty feet above the river bed are found pieces of modern plumbing and radio tubes.

### Site Is Abandoned Dump.

The site of the present digging is an abandoned dump, believed to be

the first in Indianapolis. It is at the edge of Greenlawn cemetery near the potter’s corner, and was described in an early publication as “a pond of stagnant water, covering about two acres of ground, that corrupts this atmosphere much to the disgrace of our city authorities.”

Greenlawn cemetery was laid out in 1821, less than a year after the city of Indianapolis was founded. First to be buried there was Daniel Shaffer, a member of the committee which selected its site, just one week after the cemetery was laid out.

For many years bodies were buried unmethodically, each family choosing a portion of the cemetery which appealed to them. In later years, when the cemetery was abandoned, work of removing bodies was handicapped because of the irregularity in their burial. Some, mostly in the potter’s field, never were found.

### Additional Plat Laid Out.

In 1834 an additional plat was laid out. In this part burial was in an orderly manner in family lots. Here most of the city’s pioneer residents, many of their names now being recorded in history, were buried.

During the Civil War 1,616 Confederate soldiers who died as prisoners of war in Camp Morton, then located on Alabama street, were buried in trenches in a section of the cemetery.

When the cemetery was abandoned to make room for industrial plants, all known bodies were removed to other cemeteries, and in 1931 the bodies of the Confederate soldiers were removed to Crown Hill cemetery by order of Congress.

The monument to their honor was moved to Garfield park, and on Oct. 28, 1931, military funeral services for an unknown Confederate soldier wrote the final chapter to Greenlawn’s history and the 1,616 Confederate dead.

# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

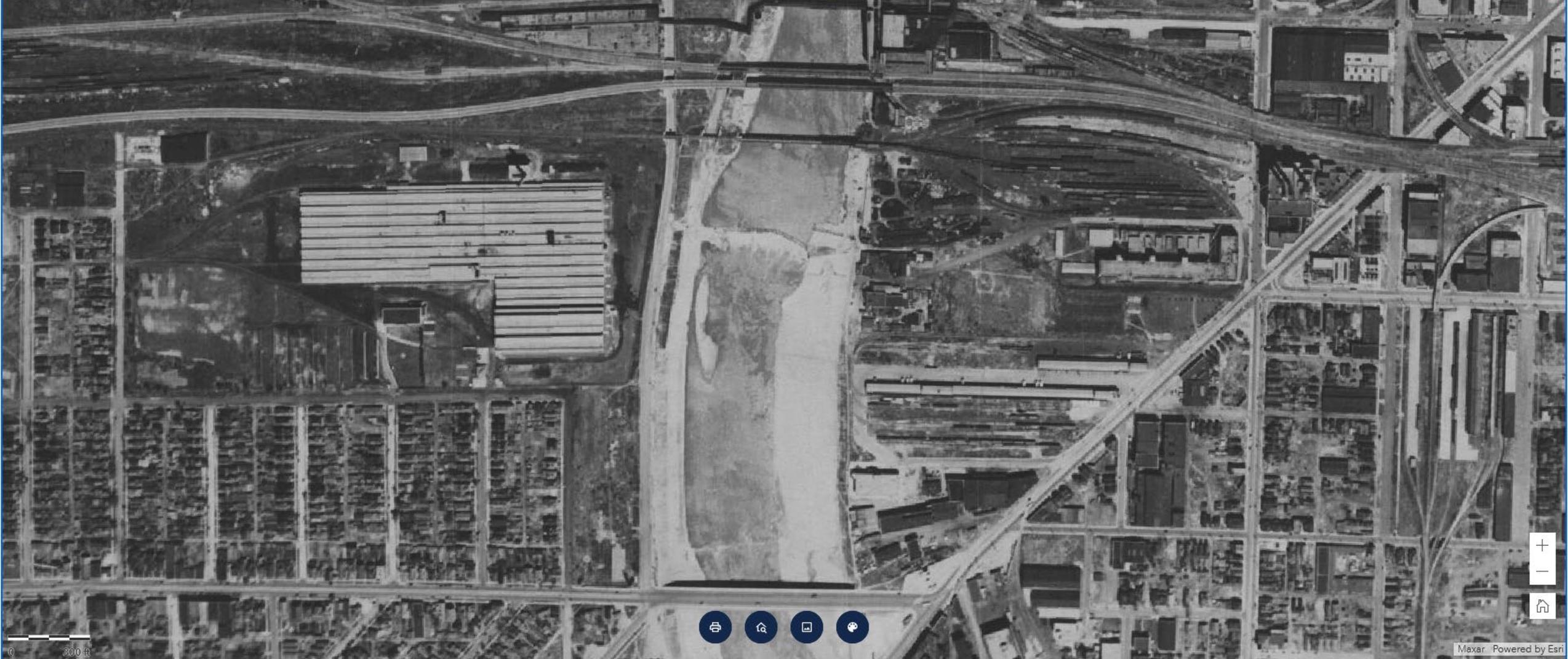
John Dustman, 1820-April 30, 1855

Diamond Chain employees display a Fisk Metallic Burial Case, commonly known as a “cast iron coffin,” of John Dustman after it was unearthed and cleaned prior to this image being captured and before the coffin was reinterred at Crown Hill Cemetery, section 235, lot 247. The Fisk Metallic Burial Case was patented in 1848 by Almond Dunbar Fisk. The cast iron coffin was a popular selection for wealthy individuals in the mid-19th century. The average cast iron coffin costs upwards of one hundred dollars, while the average pine wood coffin costs less than five dollars. Cast iron coffins were often a deterrent to graverobbers.





# MapIndy



0 300 ft



Maxar. Powered by Esri

MapIndy

Zoning

Stormwater Impervious Area

Mapping Application for Public Safety

# MapIndy



Lat/Lon: 39.760934 -86.171673  
x/y (ft): 186112.832 1644011.323



Maxar, Microsoft Powered by Esri

MapIndy

Zoning

Stormwater Impervious Area

Mapping Application for Public Safety



0 200 ft

MapIndy

Zoning

Stormwater Impervious Area

Mapping Application for Public Safety



# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

## Bulldozer Digs Up Corpse

For the third time in the history of an Indianapolis firm, bulldozers preparing for a company expansion have unearthed remains of a long-forgotten cemetery.

Diamond Chain Co., 402 Kentucky, was built on the site of the abandoned Greenlawn Cemetery. Bulldozers were excavating for a 25,000 square foot warehouse Tuesday when century-old tombstones were plowed up, said project engineer Robert Barton.

After more probing, workmen found a dark spot on the ground with what

appeared to be the remains of a coffin, a few bone fragments and what seems to be an intact human leg bone, he said.

"The coffin had long since decayed," Barton said.

Jack Milby, a Diamond Chain executive, said a medium-sized cardboard box containing the clay encrusted bones and casket fragments will be sent to Crown Hill to be placed with the other Greenlawn occupants. Also to be sent, he said, are the headstones of Mary Winston, Hanna Hornaday, Phillip Kraus, John W. Schmitt and Aegidius Nactner.

*Indianapolis News, October 16, 1980*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1980

## Factory Expansion Uncovers More Cemetery Remains

By THOMAS LEYDEN

A box of bones, casket remnants and five ancient headstones temporarily housed Wednesday at the Diamond Chain Co., 402 Kentucky Avenue, are the latest artifacts recovered from a long forgotten Indianapolis graveyard.

For the third time in the chain manufacturer's history, abandoned gravesites from Greenlawn Cemetery were unearthed during an expansion project.

Bulldozers were leveling an 8-foot deep excavation for a 25,000-square-foot warehouse Tuesday when the century-old tombstones were plowed up by their blades, according to project engineer Robert N. Barton.

AFTER MORE probing the workmen found a "dark spot" on the ground with what appeared to be the remains of a coffin, a few bone fragments and what seems to be an intact human leg bone, according to company officials. "The

coffin had long since decayed," Barton said.

The construction crew had uncovered the site of 159-year-old Greenlawn Cemetery, nicknamed "Pioneers' Shrine" and temporary resting place for more than 1,600 Confederate prisoners from the Civil War.

The bodies of civilians buried there were moved before the turn of the century. In 1931, the federal government moved the bodies of the Rebel soldiers, who had died in Camp Morton on North Alabama Street, to Crown Hill Cemetery.

The Greenlawn site had been chosen in 1821 by a citizens' committee trying to find space for a new cemetery to replace the nearly full municipal graveyard, which often was overrun by flood waters from the White River, according to a 1931 newspaper story.

GREENLAWN WAS described in the article as being, "on high ground, beautifully marked by trees and overlooking the river." But Greenlawn was caught between the river and the growing commerce and population of Indianapolis, according to Stewart D. Tompkins, director of Crown Hill.

Crown Hill replaced the graveyard and all the bodies of civilians were supposed to have been exhumed and reburied in Crown Hill in the 1890s, according to Jack R. Milby, a Diamond Chain executive.

But apparently through sloppy recordkeeping and missing headstones, not all the bodies were found.

During Diamond Chain construction projects in the 1940s and in 1965 other evidence of the cemetery was uncovered, so this discovery was not shocking, Milby said.

A MEDIUM-SIZED cardboard box containing the clay encrusted bones and casket fragments will be sent to Crown Hill to be placed with the other Greenlawn occupants, Milby said, as will the headstones of Phillip Kraus, Mary Winston, Hanna Hornaday, John W. Schmitt and Aegidius Nactner.

## Appeals Court Upholds Ruling In Roberts Case

The wife of Nashville businessman Clarence Roberts is not entitled to collect \$640,000 in life insurance from three companies because she was unable to prove in a trial that he was dead, the Indiana Court of Appeals ruled Wednesday.

The appeals court refused to grant a new trial to Geneva Roberts, who sought a reversal of a Brown Circuit Court decision last year which ruled in favor of Wabash Life, Occidental Life and Modern Woodman of America insurance companies in refusing to grant her the insurance money.

Mrs. Roberts alleged her husband died in a fire Nov. 18, 1970, in a garage at their house.

Testimony during the trial showed that the blood type of the body found in

*Indianapolis Star, October 16, 1980*



10/16/80 Back-filling and  
compaction - south side of bldg.



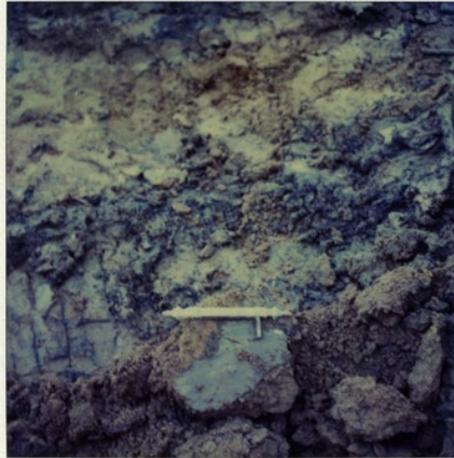
10/14/80 View of rubble in  
excavated material



10-22-80 Tombstone #9 (A-12)



10/16/80 Tombstones and  
remains stored in garage



10/13/80 Excavated Grave  
Coffin Handle



10-21-80 Tombstone #8 (A-6)



FIGURE I. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH (2022) SHOWING THE PROJECT LOCATION WITHIN INDIANAPOLIS.



APARTMENTS

PARKING

APARTMENTS

STADIUM

HOTEL

OFFICE

PARKING

PLAZA

RETAIL

RETAIL

HENRY STREET BRIDGE

HENRY STREET

GARDENER ROAD

WEST STREET

SOUTH

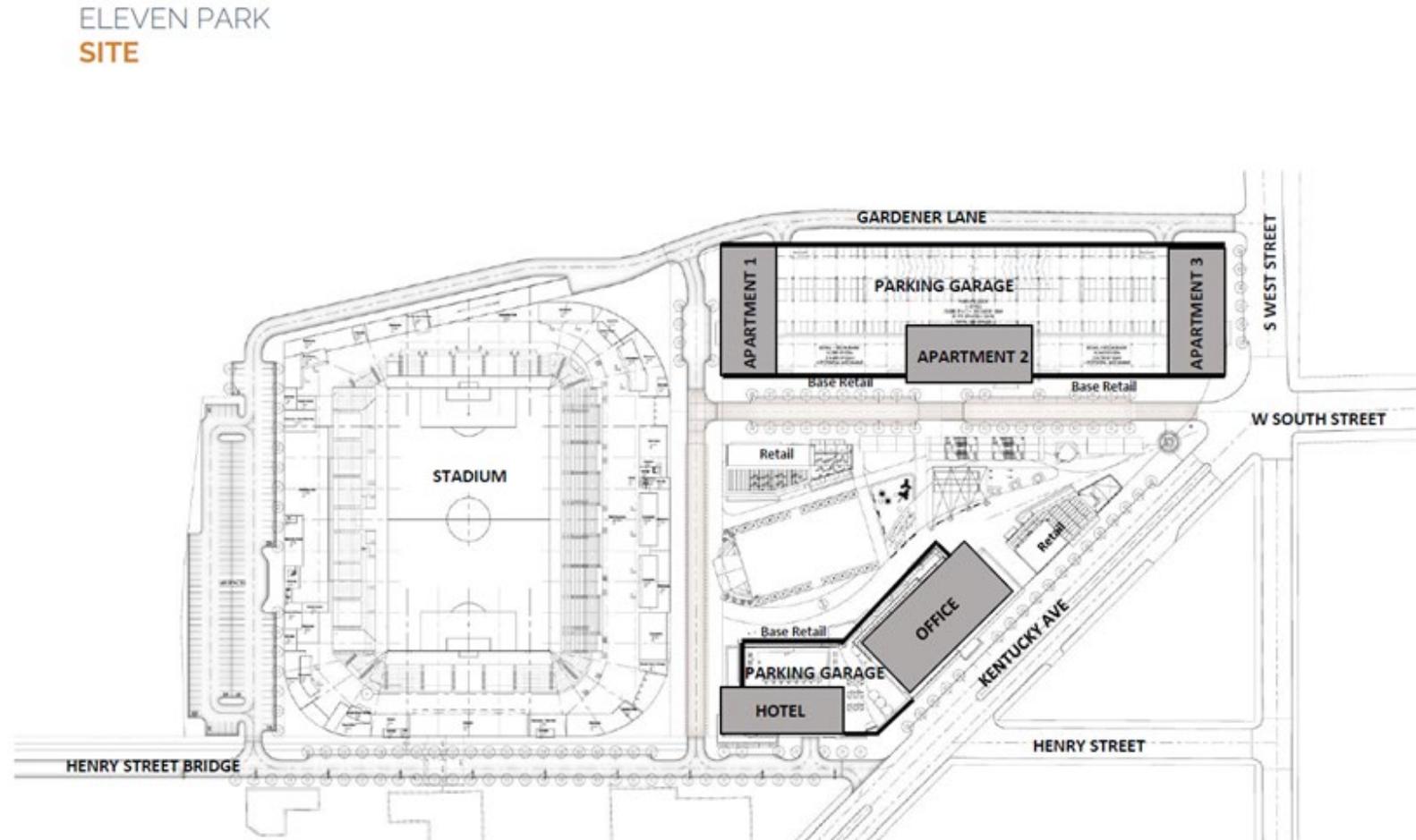
KENTUCKY AVENUE

SEVEN DRIVE

ELEVEN PARK DRIVE

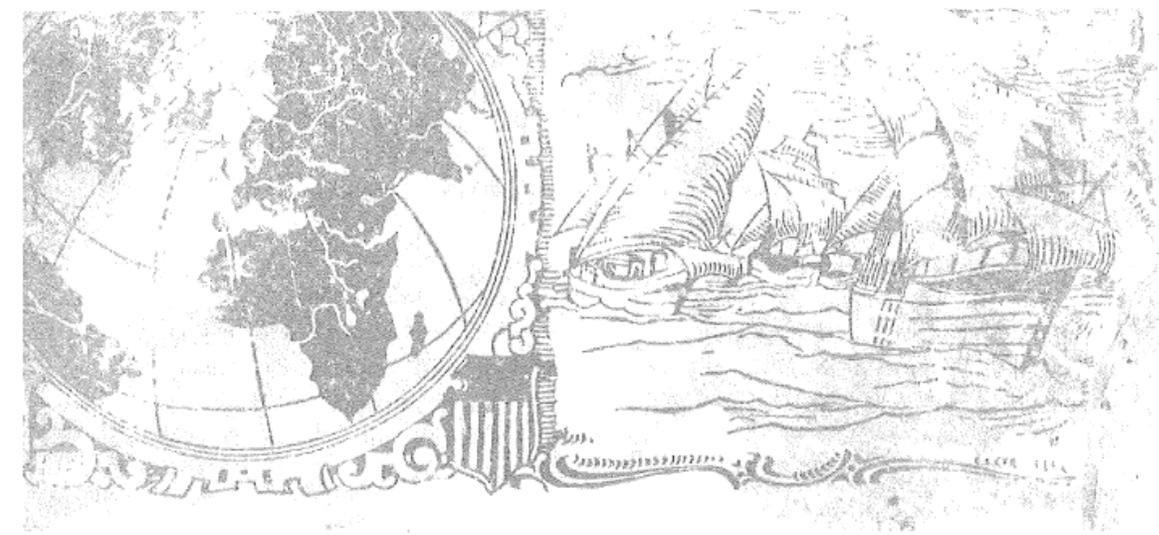
# Greenlawn Cemetery site redevelopment

- Conceptual Rendering of Eleven Park Site Plan. Courtesy of Keystone Group.
- The illustration shows complete redevelopment of the entire 25-acre Greenlawn Cemetery site.
- Weintraut & Associates, “Authorization Request: Archaeological Monitoring Plan for Eleven Park in the Old Greenlawn Cemetery (CR-49-6), City of Indianapolis, Center Township, Marion County, Indiana,” March 2023, Figure-4, Page-8.







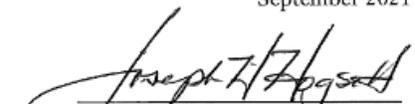


**Henry Street Bridge Project:  
Development Plan Near A Burial Ground  
(IC 14-21-1-26.5)  
City Of Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana**

*Prepared for*  
**Crawford, Murphy & Tilly (CMT) & City of Indianapolis**  
*Contact: Cassie Reiter*

*Prepared by*  
**WEINTRAUT & ASSOCIATES, INC.**  
P.O. Box 5034 | Zionsville, Indiana | (317)733-9770 | (linda@weintrautinc.com)

September 2021

  
Joseph H. Hogsett  
Mayor of Indianapolis  
Chief Executive of Marion County  
*October 21, 2021*

Date

**Development Plans Near Burial Grounds (IC 14-21-1-26.5)**

**The overall nature and timeframe of the project:** The Department of Public Works, City of Indianapolis proposes to construct a new bridge over the White River and to construct an approach to the bridge on Henry Street from Kentucky Avenue. Construction will begin in May 2022 and will be completed by September 2024.

Preconstruction investigations will occur in the fall of 2021; this burial ground development plan has been prepared to account for preconstruction activities within the bounds of the former Greenlawn Cemetery, a burial ground.

**The location for the project by section, township, range, county and address:** The project is located in Section 11, Township 15 North, Range 3 East, as shown on the Indianapolis West, Indiana, United States Geological Survey (USGS 1954) 7.5-Minute Map. The address is: 402 Kentucky Avenue, Marion County, Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Any prior disturbance of the area:** The area has undergone much disturbance over the past 125 years. Graves, stones, vaults, and fences have been established and removed; fill has been placed upon burial plots; a baseball field was constructed and demolished atop the easternmost section ("New Burying Ground"); the Diamond Chain Company Complex was con-

structed, added onto, and the surrounding area covered with concrete.

**A statement of whether federal or state funds or licenses are involved in the project:** No federal or state funds are being used in the project; however, the project will need a 404/401 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

**Map showing the location of the burial ground in relation to the project:**

*Construction details for activities within 100 feet of the cemetery:* Current work will include two geotechnical borings about 8 to 10 inches in diameter that will extend to depths of 100 to 150 feet below surface.

*Reference to nearby landmarks:* The burial ground is not visible but existed beneath the present-day Diamond Chain property. The property is located at the corner of Kentucky Avenue and West Street in Indianapolis, Indiana.

*Location of the burial ground and project area on the appropriate United States Geological Survey 7.5' quadrangle map:* At its greatest extent, the burial ground, the former Greenlawn Cemetery, is located in the SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec 11, T15N R3E and the the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec 11, T15N R3E.

# Greenlawn Cemetery

## Indianapolis

- Mayor signs off on the plan September 2021
- Construction scheduled to begin ~~May 2022~~
- Construction wrapped up September 2026
- DPW agrees to archeological removals before construction activities April 2024
- Site exploration 2-test boring 100 to 150'
- It is not known how many burials will be disturbed by construction at the former Greenlawn cemetery.
- Because of the lack of grave markers and records, any human remains, or burial artifacts encountered will most likely be out of context and treated as an accidental discovery.
- Section 106 investigation was part of the permitting process, with USACE as the lead agency.
- Any situ human remains, burial objects, grave markers, or other burial-related items will be recovered and reinterred at a later date.
- If human remains are encountered, they will be removed by an anthropologist. Taken to a laboratory for examination and possible identification. At some point in the future, the remains will be reinterred at a local cemetery, and a report will be written that the citizens will be able to access.

**Emergency.**

SEC. 2. Whereas, an emergency exists for the immediate taking effect of this act, therefore, the same shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage.

## CHAPTER 176.

AN ACT concerning the "public burying ground", in the donation lands, of the city of Indianapolis, mentioned in the act of the general assembly of Indiana, approved December 31, 1822, and found in the acts of 1822-1823 at page 28, and declaring an emergency.

[S. 344. Approved March 7, 1923.]

**Preamble.**

WHEREAS, An act of the general assembly of the State of Indiana, approved December 31, 1822, entitled "An act giving the citizens of Indianapolis a public burying ground," and found in the acts of the general assembly of the State of Indiana for the years 1822-1823, at page 28, designated and appropriated as a public burying ground the lot of ground "known by the citizens of Indianapolis by the name of the grave yard, and at present made use of as such," being the real estate hereinafter more particularly described; and

WHEREAS, before and after the passage of said act, said lot of ground was made use of by the citizens of Indianapolis for a public burying ground; and

WHEREAS, said lot of ground has not been used as a public burying ground for a great many years last past; and is no longer used as such; and

WHEREAS, The town and city of Indianapolis has from the date of the passage of said act claimed title to said lot of ground, and has exercised the rights of ownership therein, and has paid municipal assessments of several thousand dollars on said lot of ground; and

WHEREAS, The State of Indiana has never, since the passage of said act aforesaid, claimed any right, title or interest in said lot of ground; and a doubt exists as matter of law as to the legal title to said lot of ground, and it is desired to remove such doubt and confirm the title in the city of Indianapolis; now therefore,

**Burying Ground—Title Vested in City of Indianapolis—Conditions.**

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the general assembly of the State of Indiana,* That title to the square parcel of ground in Marion county, Indiana, above referred to, containing four (4) acres, marked "Burying Ground" on the map of the donation lands of the town, now city, of Indianapolis, filed in the office of the recorder of Marion county, Indiana, on July 5, 1831, by the agent of the State of Indiana for the town of Indianapolis, which plat was approved by the general assembly of the State of Indiana by an act approved February 9, 1831 (Acts of 1831, page 82) said parcel of ground being more particularly described as follows, to wit:

Beginning at a point which is sixty (60) feet south of a point in the south line of out lot one hundred thirty-five (135), which last mentioned point is 419.04 feet west of the south east corner of said out lot 135; from the point of beginning running thence south, at right angles to the south line of said out lot 135, 417.78 feet to a point; thence west 417.78 feet to a point; thence north 417.78 feet to a point; thence east 417.78 feet to the place of beginning, and containing four acres,

be and the same is hereby confirmed in the town, now city, of Indianapolis, as of the date of the passage of said act of December 31, 1822, free from any right, title or interest of the State of Indiana therein; and that the city of Indianapolis may use the same for any municipal purpose, and that appropriation of the same as a public burying ground, made by said act of 1822 aforesaid, shall not be deemed to prevent the use of the same by said city for any other municipal purpose. If such municipal purpose shall not be consistent with the use of said ground as a burying ground, said city of Indianapolis shall remove, or cause to be removed, all remains of persons buried in said grave yard, and shall reinter the same, or cause the same to be reinterred, in some other burying ground in said city, and shall remove or cause to be removed, to the new graves all monuments, head stones or other markers over the remains so removed. The right of such city to hold and use such ground for any purpose shall be subject to the exercise of

any authority conferred by act of the present session of the general assembly of the State of Indiana to appropriate and acquire such ground for interurban railway freight and express terminal purposes, and if so appropriated and acquired the damages assessed in the appropriation proceedings for the hereinbefore described ground shall not be less than forty thousand dollars, and such damages shall be the property of the city of Indianapolis.

SEC. 2. Whereas, an emergency exists for the immediate taking effect of this act, the same shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage.

## CHAPTER 177.

AN ACT concerning coal mines.

[S. 138. Approved March 8, 1923.]

**Coal Mining—"Mine" and "Operator" Defined.**

SECTION 1. (A) *Be it enacted by the general assembly of the State of Indiana,* That the term "mine" as used in this act includes the working in every shaft, slope or drift which is used or has been used, in the mining and removing of coal from and below the surface of the ground. The term "operator" as used in this act, is hereby defined to mean any corporation, company, firm, person, proprietor, lessee, or occupier of any coal mine in this state or any person upon whose account the mine is operated.

**Maps—Maps of Mine—Refusal—Inspector.**

SEC. 2. (A) The operator of each mine shall make or cause to be made, an accurate map or plan of the workings of such mines on a scale of not less than two hundred feet to one inch, showing the area mined or excavated, the arrangement of haulage roads, air courses, break throughs, brattices, air bridges, or overcasts, and doors used in directing the air currents in such mine, the location and connection with such excavation of the mine of the lines of all adjoining lands with the names of the owners of such land so far as known, marked on the map. Such map shall show a



## STATE OF INDIANA

Eric J. Holcomb, Governor

Casey E. Pfeiffer, Historical Marker Program Director

### INDIANA HISTORICAL BUREAU DIVISION INDIANA STATE LIBRARY

140 North Senate Avenue, Room 130  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2207

Telephone: (317) 232-2537

TDD: (317) 232-7763

E-mail: [cpfeiffer@library.in.gov](mailto:cpfeiffer@library.in.gov)

Internet: [www.in.gov/history](http://www.in.gov/history)

October 5, 2023

Dear Leon,

Congratulations! The application you submitted for Greenlawn Cemetery, in Marion County, for the 2023-2024 Indiana State Historical Marker Program, has been approved by the Indiana Library and Historical Board and is one of three applications this year to be awarded the full \$3,300 through the William G. Pomeroy Foundation marker grant funding.

IHB staff will contact you once we begin work on this marker and will keep you updated on our progress. We will do additional research, fact checking, and editing of the proposed marker text for clarity, to meet space limitations, add historical contexts, or sharpen points of significance. Once the text is edited by our agency, we will send it to you for comments and approval.

Applicants are responsible for obtaining site permission and for any related costs associated with it. Please begin working with the property owner as soon as possible to obtain the necessary permission or permits to have the marker located on that site. I have enclosed a copy of the Site Permission form along with this letter. The property owner should complete this form. Please keep in mind that if the marker will be installed along city right-of-way additional permits may be required. Contact your city early in the process to determine what is needed.

**Exception:** If the proposed location is on a state right-of-way please let us know as soon as possible so that we may work with INDOT to obtain the necessary permission for the site.

**Note:** Our marker manufacturer has been working through an extensive backlog of marker orders from across the country accrued during the pandemic that has resulted in much longer production turnaround times. As a result, please be aware that we may not be able to meet dedication dates listed in your application. IHB recommends holding off on planning a dedication until we are able to place the order for your marker and receive confirmation of a completion date from our manufacturer.



Indiana Historical Bureau  
Serving Indiana since 1915.  
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#### IHB staff will place the order for the marker with our manufacturer once:

1. The final text is approved and IHB receives the signed Acceptance of Text form from the applicant.
2. The applicant obtains site permission for the marker location and submits the Site Permission form to IHB.

Please note that applicants are also responsible for the installation of the marker, except in instances where the marker will be located along state right-of-way. The Pomeroy funding covers the cost to manufacture the marker and its post as well as shipping and delivery, but it does not cover installation or any other costs associated with the site. I have enclosed a copy of our Installation Instructions along with this letter.

Thank you again for your interest in the Indiana State Historical Marker Program! We look forward to working with you on this marker. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

*Casey Pfeiffer*



Indiana Historical Bureau  
Serving Indiana since 1915.  
Equal Opportunity Employer

# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

Bring It On! – February 19, 2024:  
Indianapolis Development and Greenlawn  
Cemetery Remains

- On today's edition of Bring It On!, hosts, Clarence Bone and Liz Mitchell, speak with Leon Bates, local Indianapolis historian and former guest of Bring It On!, and Judith Thomas, Deputy Mayor of Neighborhood Engagement for the City of Indianapolis, about respecting the remains from Greenlawn Cemetery as the land is being developed. In addition, the city is putting together a commission to recommend how best to memorialize the history of Greenlawn once the bridge project is complete.

<https://wfhb.org/news-public-affairs/bring-it-on-february-19-2024-indianapolis-development-and-greenlawn-cemetery-remains/>



# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

**PBS**

## **Secrets of the Dead**

- S16 Ep5
- The Woman in the Iron Coffin
- Premiere: 10/3/2018 | 00:55:11 | TV-PG |
- Follow a team of forensic experts as they investigate the preserved remains of a young African American woman from 19th-century New York and reveal the little-known story of early America's free Black communities.
  
- Streaming until: 3/13/2024 @ 11:59 PM EDT

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/woman-in-the-iron-coffin-about-the-film/3923/>



# Greenlawn Cemetery Indianapolis

Leon E. Bates

Ph.D. Student

Department of Pan African Studies

University of Louisville