

PICTURESQUE LINDENWOOD CEMETERY

Good afternoon, everyone. I must admit, when I was notified that the topic of my Quest paper was going to be Picturesque Lindenwood Cemetery, I thought, “What a dead topic!” Lindenwood cemetery ... on West Main Street? There is a section of it visible as you zip by driving south to north, and I have driven past it thousands of times. It looked so ordinary, like you’d expect a cemetery to look. I’m supposed to write a paper on that? So, I set about asking for a change of topic. Via email, I asked Fred Hasecke to intercede for me, and here is part of his email reply in answer to my plea: “The noon program committee was thinking about the many stories, reflections on life and lessons one can learn from those who are laid to rest there while saying a prayer, tending to a grave, walking about, jogging, and looking at the beauty of the world.” Beautiful words. Okay... I’ll just give it a look.

It was a beautiful summer day, and as I drove along the well-groomed paths through Lindenwood, I was overcome with amazement. I had had no idea of the beauty hidden away here. I discovered beautiful small buildings, lovely statuary and monuments. Blooming flowers and bushes punctuated every nook and cranny. I came upon a small building which was the office. It was staffed by three very friendly people and when I told them of my mission, they helpfully gave me a video which PBS had produced about the cemetery in 2009 and a book of 156 pages and upon each page was a picture of and brief biographical sketch of Fort Wayne pioneers and civic leaders who are interred in Lindenwood Cemetery. I was also given a book entitled “The Lindenwood Story 1860-1979”. Once again, I was pleasantly surprised. So, all this just to say, “Today I am wiser about another marvelous asset of Fort Wayne. I hope that you leave today feeling the same way, and promising yourself that on the first nice day, you’ll wander over to 2324 West Main and discover for yourself how picturesque Lindenwood is.

At the present time, Lindenwood is operated by Dignity Memorial, established in 1859 and covers 175 acres. There are currently 74,104 people buried in Lindenwood. At one time it was the largest cemetery in Indiana, and now it is the second largest. Crown Hill in Indianapolis is the largest now.

When *The Lindenwood Story* was published in 1995 it began by saying: “More than 52,000 Hoosiers lie under the shaded, rolling hills of Lindenwood Cemetery, many of whom settled in Fort Wayne during the era of the Old Fort ... the Ewings, Hamiltons, Hannas, Rudisills, Fairfields, Rockhills and the Hoaglands.”

Some of these pioneers indeed lived temporarily in the military post upon migration to Fort Wayne and later settled on land or in the newly-built log houses outside the stockade.

A number of these early arrivals lived to see the coming of the Wabash and Erie Canal and the railroads, connecting Fort Wayne with Chicago, Pittsburgh, and the Eastern Seaboard.

During the early 1800's Fort Wayne emerged from a frontier settlement, and by 1829 the village was incorporated. These Fort Wayne historic milestones came about through the foresight and combined leadership of men like Judge Samuel Hanna, Allen Hamilton, Isaac D. Nelson, Hugh McCulloch, Col. George Ewing, Joseph Edgerton, Jesse Williams and Pliny Hoagland ... all interred in Lindenwood.

They were the same community leaders who in 1859 saw the need for a new and larger non-sectarian and non-profit cemetery in Fort Wayne to replace the old Broadway Cemetery.

Twelve civic-minded men advanced from their own resources \$11,000 for the purchase of 152 acres of virgin-timbered land, to be prepared for the beginning of Lindenwood Cemetery operations. The name was inspired by the abundance of Linden trees on the property.

Under provisions of the original articles of Association, the stock held by the founders was retired in 1877, and on that day, Lindenwood became a public trust.”

Lindenwood’s original five-member board consisted of these memorable people: Hugh McCulloch, first U.S. Comptroller of the Currency and Secretary of the treasury under Presidents Lincoln, Johnson, and Arthur; Jesse Williams, Canal and railroad builder; David Comporet, canal boat engineer and later Pennsylvania Railroad official; Pliny Hoagland, who helped finance the extension of the Pennsylvania Railroad from Crestline, Ohio, to Fort Wayne, and Isaac Nelson, newspaper publisher who became Lindenwood’s first president, holding that office for 31 years until his death in 1891.

The first cemetery in Fort Wayne, the old Broadway Cemetery, was then purchased by McCulloch, the bodies having been moved to the new cemetery during the first year of its operation, and the Fort Wayne City Council, in 1886, accepted the property from Mr. and Mrs. McCulloch with the stipulation that the land be converted into a park and named “McCulloch Park”. That park still exists today on Broadway adjacent to the General Electric and features a large gazebo which was used for band concerts in the 1920’s and 1930’s. Interestingly enough, that park still retains the grave of Samuel Bigger, seventh governor of Indiana, who came to Fort Wayne to practice law after his four-year term. He died three years later, in 1846. When the bodies were removed from the Broadway Cemetery, the remains of the governor were left in the original burial place for legal reasons. Colonel Robert S. Robertson, Fort Wayne Lawyer, politician, and former lieutenant governor of Indiana, in 1877 failed in his move to get state legislation passed to provide for the transfer of Bigger’s body to Lindenwood, and there were no family survivors to sanction the moving.

When the property for Lindenwood was first purchased, it was described in these words: “The land was in an exceedingly wild condition, nearly the whole ground being covered with timber and thick

growth of underbrush. The “approach” or “entrance” to the cemetery was an impassable marsh, and sixty-five acres off the south end of the ground was put under fence for burial purposes.

The program for the dedication of the cemetery was June, 1860 and was attended by notables from every church and office in the city. It was mentioned in early historical notes that the only transportation to Lindenwood’s dedication was by horse and carriage or by boat over the Wabash and Erie Canal from the city to the cemetery. Cemetery records indicate that a single grave space sold for \$5.00. Many large family plots, accommodating as many as fifty graves, sold for \$250.00. Opening and closing of an adult grave cost \$4.00 and for a child’s grave, \$2.00.

Of special interest to us here today is that John Doswell, the great-great grandfather of one of our members, Susie Meyer, was the first Superintendent of Lindenwood. He had studied at Kew Gardens in England, and it was he who created the grottoes, gazeboes, bridges, and sunken gardens of Lindenwood. That’s pretty amazing.

The 100th anniversary of Lindenwood was observed quietly on Memorial Day, 1960, when trustees gathered at the cemetery office to reflect on the cemetery’s operations of the past century. However, on that day as well, as on all other Memorial days, hundreds of people came to reverently honor families and friends at gravesides.

Lindenwood was once the destination of every colorful Memorial Day parade from downtown to Lindenwood’s old parade grounds. This tradition changed upon the completion of the War Memorial Coliseum. And during the 100th anniversary observance of Lindenwood, Cliff Milnor ... I’m sure many of you will remember that name as a well respected columnist for the Journal Gazette ... wrote in his column Lines and Angles: “The land which is now Lindenwood was acquired by treaty from the Potawatomi Indians in 1826. A copy of this treaty exists today and was given by President Frank Bohn to the Fort Wayne-Allen

Country Historical Museum. The tract of land, taken into the United States by the treaty, was first granted to Francois Dequindre of French and Indian ancestry. The land passed into the hands of Pierre Bruillett, who sold it to John and William Hamilton, from whom George Ewing obtained it in 1847. He sold it to Lindenwood in 1859.” Wow ... that might be more than you wanted to know, but how blessed we are to have this so well documented.

Oh, and another statistic about the cemetery which is well documented ... and I thought just a little amusing ... Lindenwood was the site of 30 body snatchings where bodies were stolen for medical studies.

Lindenwood gained national historic status in 1978 when it was approved for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of Interior, and the news of this recognition was gratefully received by the Lindenwood staff, board of Directors and friends of the cemetery. Congressman Dan Quayle and Mayor Robert Armstrong paid tribute to Lindenwood by presenting them with a plaque, placed on granite, which stands near the main entrance, and it reads: LINDENWOOD CEMETERY “Founded 1859 – Dedicated May 20, 1860, was enrolled on the National Register of Historic Places, February 17, 1978 by the U.S. Department of Interior. Here in Lindenwood, thousands of Memorials relate to local, state, and national history.” Only one other Hoosier cemetery, Crown Hill of Indianapolis, is in the National Historic Register.

Again, if you have never been to Lindenwood, I cannot urge you enough to treat yourself to a visit ... to wander through the natural ravines and gently rolling hillocks. Visit one of the cemetery’s old formal gardens with a pagoda in the background. During the 1800’s, cemetery workmen built a number of stone pagodas which still stand ... a beautiful angel statue is featured in the “Garden of Paradise” and an eight-foot memorial sculpture of “Praying Hands” was installed in 1972. The 2 ½ ton memorial was designed and executed by Pompeian studies,

Carrara, Italy. There is a lovely building which serves as the service center for the cemetery which was formerly the Palm House located on the bass estate where St. Francis college is now located ...and the Frank E. Bohn Memorial Chapel and Lindenwood's first two garden-type mausoleums, containing 264 crypts, were dedicated in 1967. A small chapel named Chapel of the Woods is extraordinarily beautiful, and the first mausoleum, known as "Gardenview" was erected in 1976 and contains 396 crypts. Picturesque Lindenwood cemetery is dotted with small, unobtrusive, interesting memorials and buildings ... all creating a city of memorials to the rich heritage of Fort Wayne.

As we wander about this lovely tribute to the past, we find that it is a fact that many of the prominent people from our area are buried in this oasis of peace and beauty. It would take me an hour to name all of them, but I'll just share the names of the ones I recognized ... hoping that many of you remember them too:

Harry W. Baals: Elected mayor of Fort Wayne in 1934 and served four terms!

Paul Baer: America's first World War I Ace. Within 45 days after he had began combat flying, he had downed 16 German planes. Our municipal airport was named after him. Paul lost his life in 1930 when a mail plane he was flying crashed during take-off.

Edward A. Barnes: Former general superintendent of General Electric

James Barrett: Senior member & founder of Barrett, Barrett & McNagny. Also served 2 terms as Indiana state senator.

John H. Bass: Founder of the old Bass Foundry & Machine Works

Minette Baum: One of Fort Wayne most prominent Social Workers.

Sylvanus Bowser: Inventor of the self-measuring gasoline pump. Founded Bowser Co.

Dr. Herman Duemling: Founder of Duemling Clinic

Charles Ewing: First lawyer in Fort Wayne and first Judge of Allen County Probate Court.

Oscar G. Foellinger: Publisher of the News Sentinel

Col David Foster : Father of City's fine park system. Helped organize Wayne Knitting Mills

Marx Frank: Founder and president of Frank Dry Goods

John Franke: Founder and president of Perfection Biscuit Co.

Mrs. Eliza George: Noted Civil War nurse ..buried with full military honors

John Earl Growth Sr.:President of Earl Growth & Co. department store.

Arthur Hall: Founder of Lincoln National Life Insurance Co.

Max Irmscher: Prominent building contractor

Margaret Ann Keegan: Devoted entire life to community service.

J.Ross McCulloch: Prominent banker

Samuel Morris: Prince of Kroo tribe in Liberia...Studied a year at Taylor University and became known as a famous Christian mystic and "Apostle of Simple Faith." Died at age 20

Joseph Nuttman: Engaged for half century in commercial business in Fort Wayne..

Victor Rea: Founded Rea Magnet Wire in 1933

Henry Rudisill: One of our early pioneers, helped to lay the foundations of a thriving village.

Art Smith: Fort Wayne's Bird Boy, originator of sky-writing, king of "loop the loop", and one of the Nation's early air daredevils. He died when his U.S. Airmail plane fell in Ohio. Smith Field, the airport north of the city, was named for him.

Theodore Thieme: Founder of Wayne Knitting Mills

Samuel Wolf : Co-founder of Wolf & Dessauer store

Fred Zollner: Think softball and the Zollner Pistons...3 league championships.

I found this so impressive ... so many brave, innovative people who gave us so much. Yes, a cemetery is a place of memories ... a dormitory where so many are peacefully sleeping ... and Lindenwood is foremost in loveliness ... and honor ... and quiet respect. Truly, a picturesque oasis of peace and beauty.