The Pioneer Cemetery at Crown Hill

"Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty of high ideals."
~ William Gladstone (1808-98), British Prime Minister

The Pioneer Cemetery at Crown Hill reflects Crown Hill's commitment to the community to provide a beautiful and permanent resting place for pioneers who have been relocated to Crown Hill due to the closure of their original cemeteries. It was designed to meet the needs of each pioneer cemetery being relocated and is maintained to reflect the atmosphere of a true pioneer cemetery. It is comprised of three separate cemeteries, each honoring the memory of the men, women, and children who were the early citizens of Indianapolis and the surrounding area.

The first pioneers buried at Crown Hill were originally buried in Greenlawn Cemetery, also known as the City Cemetery, following its establishment in 1821. After Greenlawn Cemetery became full city leaders responded to the need for another cemetery and established Crown Hill in the fall of 1863. Greenlawn was later forced to relocate due to land development and 1,160 pioneers were relocated to Crown Hill from October 1912 until February 1913. Only 35 of this number were identified at the time they were brought to Crown Hill. In addition to the pioneers buried within this lot, several thousand additional burials were moved from Greenlawn to area cemeteries. Among these were 1,616 Confederate soldiers who were reburied in 1933 at the Confederate Mound, which is a National Cemetery located in Section 32 of Crown Hill. Many of those who were instrumental in the acquisition and development of Greenlawn Cemetery became the original developers of Crown Hill decades later.

In the summer of 1999 the Rhoads Cemetery, originally established in 1844 on the Westside of Indianapolis, was relocated to the Pioneer Cemetery at Crown Hill. This cemetery represents five pioneer families, comprised of twelve adults and thirty-four children, and was dedicated late October 1999.

The Wright-Whitesell-Gentry Cemetery was relocated to the Pioneer Cemetery at Crown Hill in June 2008 and was dedicated on June 11. Originally located just feet from the Interstate 69 (I-69) / Interstate 465 (I-465) interchange on the northeast side of Indianapolis, the cemetery relocation was required to allow for a highway project to increase capacity. The relocation of the Wright-Whitesell-Gentry Cemetery was conducted by experienced archaeologists and forensic anthropologists. The Wright-Whitesell-Gentry Cemetery is comprised of thirty-three adults and children representing the three pioneer families. Their graves and marble markers were positioned in the exact same configuration as the original cemetery. The stones date from the 1830s to the 1880s.

All three cemeteries have large granite monuments matching in style and size, and engraved with the names and histories of each cemetery. On the back of the monuments are the pioneer's names (if known) and a diagram to indicate the burial locations of each individual buried there.

The total number of pioneers relocated to the Pioneer Cemetery at Crown Hill is as follows:

Greenlawn: 1,160 (35 identified), moved between October 1912 and February 1913
Rhoads: 46 (12 adults and 34 children from five pioneer families), moved summer 1999
Wright / Whitesell / Gentry: 33 adults and children, moved June 2008
Total: 1,239 Pioneers

Crown Hill
FUNERAL HOME, CEMETERY &
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