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Ms. Fisher and Mr. Shannon

Hometown History

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Fountain Park Cemetery

Fountain Park, designed by Ashel Stone and donated to Winchester in 1800, has been around for over two centuries. Stone purchased the land from Christian Heaston, the gentleman who the “old cemetery” is named after, for around \$4,000.¹ The city gratefully accepted this gift, and in July of 1880, Winchester decided to have the land officially named a burial ground.²

In the early days of being named a burial ground, it became immensely popular with residents that a park was built on the land. The park had many amenities including a small pond.

Fountain Park is home to nearly 11,000 people buried there. Of those 11,000, over 900 are veterans, whom a majority of their headstones have an American Flag to indicate their status. There are also “hometown celebrities” in the cemetery including: Clinton Armstrong, who had received a medal of honor; Thomas Browne and Jonathan Cranor, who were both Civil War brevet brigadier generals; and James Goodrich, a previous governor of Winchester.³ The lives of these men and women are not forgotten, but are rather celebrated. Every century since the Fountain Park Cemetery’s construction, there is an anniversary for the people who have passed. There are also Formal Dedication Ceremonies, which the first was held on July 3, 1880. On

¹The Historical & Genealogical Society of Randolph County, Indiana, Randolph County Indiana 1818-1990 (Winchester: Turner, 1991), 704 pgs

²Shaffer, Scott, “Fountain Park Paving Project Underway.” Winchester News Gazette (Winchester. In. May. 17, 2022.

³Fountain Park Cemetery, “Fountain Park Cemetery,” findagrave.com, 2022, findagrave.com/cemetery/85045/fountain-park-cemetery

Memorial Day, there are special ceremonies that begin around one o'clock in the afternoon to honor veterans to which anyone can attend.

Mary Evve Mullen, also known as Baby and first child of Elihu and Mahala Edwards Mullen's, died in 1856 when she was one year old from pneumonia. She was buried in Heaston Cemetery in an iron casket with a small window on the front of it in order to see her face inside while it was closed. In 1922, she was exhumed from Heaston due to severe flooding and was set to be reburied in Fountain Park. However, despite the previous conditions, her condition had not changed since she was first buried. Many people who saw her remarked that she was a rather beautiful baby who seemed to be "petrified" like a rock since she had first passed.⁴ Her casket was soon kept in Fountain Park's vault where hundreds of people came to witness the preservation of her body. Her casket was soon kept in Fountain Park's vault where hundreds of people came to witness the preservation of her body.⁵ Yet, Mary was not the only person moved from Heaston, for many of the bodies in Fountain Park were originally buried in Heaston.

Throughout history, there have been many individuals peacefully laid to rest in Fountain Park Cemetery, and the donor, General Asahel Stone's father, has been buried among the others. Fountain Park has some headstones with no bodies actually there. Some bodies are buried elsewhere but their graves are still there for people to easily come and mourn their lost ones. An example of this is a Revolutionary War Soldier buried there named Zachariah Johnston. He is buried on the south farm in Winchester marked with a flag for Johnston. The headstones in the

⁴Randolph County Historical Society. "Fountain Park Cemetery - Fountain Park Cemetery Pamphlet" (Winchester, Fred Davis, 2018)

⁵Randolph County Historical Society. "Fountain Park Cemetery - Fountain Park Cemetery Pamphlet" (Winchester, Fred Davis, 2018)

cemetery are regularly cleaned by the dedicated workers who spend their days working at Fountain Park.

These employees have helped grow the cemetery's income to almost \$309,526 per year.⁶This has helped dramatically in the restoration of the grounds. Some of the new updates in this. First, the roads have all been paved over, the front gate has been changed to a newer, more classy design, and the graves are better taken care of. Fountain Park still has some things that need fixed, and they are working on trying to accommodate those things. “We plan to continue to make improvements, such as paving the remainder of the driveways, at Fountain Park Cemetery in phases as money becomes available to us,” a worker stated.⁷ The cemetery has a lot of support from the community which helps them gain volunteers to keep the grounds in working order.⁸

Since opening is 1880, close to 18 acres of land have been added for new burials in the future. One of the cemeteries most frequently asked questions is where they decide where to bury people. They do this by adding different sections for different people. There is a place for veterans, a place for families to be buried together, and “Babies’ row”, an area dedicated to babies and small children to name a few.

During its life, Fountain Park Cemetery has seen a lot of changes. It was created for the purpose to honor loved ones and bring people together, and it really has. Hundreds of people visit here every year, and each one of them is impacted by the cemetery's powerful environment.

⁶“All Biz - Fountain Park Cemetery”, “All Biz”, 2018
<https://www.allbiz.com/business/fountain-park-cemetery-765-584-3401>

⁷Shaffer, Scott, “Fountain Park Cemetery Paving Project Under Way”, winchesternewsgazette.com. May 17, 2022

⁸Shaffer, Scott. “Fountain Park Cemetery Paving Project Under Way”, winchesternewsgazette.com. May 17, 2022

Who would have thought that a simple gift of acres of land to the city would turn into something so meaningful in just a span of no more than 200 years. In the wise words of General Browne, “It will cheer us in the light and be our solace in the hour of death. It will give our lives at all times and in every struggle, a heavenward side.”

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