

Crown Hill: History, Spirit, Sanctuary

By Douglas A. Wissing, Marianne Tobias, Rebecca W. Dolan, and Anne Ryder. Photographs by Marty N. Davis

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Marked by the highest ground in Indianapolis, Crown Hill Cemetery is one of the capital city's greatest natural and man-made assets. Straddling the former Maple Road, now 38th Street, this remarkable tract of land relates the history of Indianapolis as no other place can. In 1928, Anna Nicholas wrote *The Story of Crown Hill*; now her work has been expanded by coauthors Douglas A. Wissing, Marianne Tobias, Rebecca W. Dolan, and Anne Ryder, and photographer Marty N. Davis, who collectively have captured the remarkable essence of this important place.

Cemeteries are holders of memories; of days gone by and of people who were. Without them, grave markers are only names. Memories bring the names to life, connecting and intertwining with one another to create the story of a place. Reading such memories through the recollections told here offers renewed meaning and purpose to those who are interred at Crown Hill. Who knew that Richard Jordan Gatling held a patent on a mechanical seed planter whose technology would result in the invention of the first machine gun, the Gatling Gun; or that during John Dillinger's internment, 5,000 onlookers were held at bay until the burial was complete—when unleashed, they confiscated flowers and

handfuls of mud as mementos from the gravesite. Crown Hill is home to numerous politicians, including President Benjamin Harrison, Vice President Charles Warren Fairbanks, and Mayor Thomas Taggart, the latter who organized a consortium that developed French Lick Springs Hotel into the posh gambling resort that thrived during the Roaring Twenties.

The beauty of Crown Hill has never been documented so artistically as in Davis's photographs. From the dawning of spring, through summer and the color of autumn, and finally the starkness of winter, the images speak to the vibrancy of life and the repose of death. The authors have artfully coordinated text and imagery to create their chronicle of the cemetery's history.

On an early morning, walkers, cyclists, and drivers entering the cemetery through the Gothic Gate on 34th Street find themselves on the cemetery's winding roads—to the Gothic Chapel, past the field of white marble tombstones, then on to President Harrison's gravesite, and inevitably on the road up to Crown Hill. Atop the hill stands the tomb of James Whitcomb Riley—an Ionic-columned peristyle, open to the sky, the perfect crown for the cemetery, celebrating the famous Hoosier author. The authors describe the visitor's view from

that spot: “the long view down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, past the modest neighborhoods to the spires and monumental buildings of the Indianapolis skyline, a vista that mirrors the cemetery’s obelisks and tombs and no-less-beloved markers of common humanity. The view gives rise to the realization that a cemetery is a mirror, however imperfect, of its society—reflecting a people’s grandiosity, pettiness, pain and inequity, along

with their soaring hopes, unshakable courage, and enduring love” (p. 325).

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Dreams of Duneland: A Pictorial History of the Indiana Dunes Region

By Kenneth J. Schoon

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The geography of the Midwest is not flamboyant. Its primary landscapes of forests and prairies are both more subtle and more subject to heavy editing by human activities than are the canyons and mountains of the American West. Lake Michigan’s duneland fringe has seen substantial editing, as its dunes were mined for road construction and leveled for industrial sites. A nationally important steel industry and its attendant deepwater ports grew up alongside its farms, towns, and cities. But through it all, miles of windswept dunes remained, sheltering wetlands and forests between their rolling crests.

Kenneth Schoon has created a virtual tour of the dunelands—its natural areas, its history, and its com-

munities. His is the work of both a native son and a scholar; he has created a coffee table book for the eye and for the mind. Its mix of archival and modern photographs allows the reader to sample pages at will, knowing that the accompanying text will provide additional insight and context. Readers will become familiar with all manner of the region’s aspects, appreciating the many waves of change that have rolled through and the wildness that nevertheless remains.

Dreams of Duneland is a lightly edited volume, and readers will occasionally find themselves at odds with some of the author’s choices. As a conservation biologist, I was interested in the history of the creation of the state and national parks that