

Collection #
M 0784

ROBERTS CEMETERY ASSOCIATION CEMETERY RECORDS, 1873–1911

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Processed by

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 box
COLLECTION DATES:	1873–1911
PROVENANCE:	Lucille Anderson, R. R. 51, Box 284, Terre Haute, IN 47805, April 1987
RESTRICTIONS:	None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1999.0613X

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Rural settlements in Indiana provided a place of refuge for many free persons of color and newly emancipated slaves prior to the Civil War. Though slavery was prohibited by law in the Northwest and Indiana territories, and by the 1816 Indiana State constitution, it existed during the time period. In 1851 when the Indiana State constitution was revised, Article XIII forbade blacks and Mulattoes from entering the state. In an effort to enforce Article XIII, an 1852 enactment instructed county clerks to compile the Register of Negroes and Mulattos for their given county. Lawmakers advocated colonization of blacks who made Indiana their home. Theoretically, violators of Article XIII could be fined, generating funds to assist with colonizing Indiana's black residents.

Evidence suggests that a large proportion of early black settlers migrated from North Carolina and Virginia. Many came with the assistance of the Society of Friends. Blacks from North Carolina established the Lost Creek Settlement in the northern section of Vigo County in 1823. These individuals had been persuaded by the laudatory comments of Bowen Roberts, an explorer who found the land to be "full of promise."

The Lost Creek Settlement maintained the largest number of black farmers in the state. Residents were able to acquire land from private owners and government land grants. The settlers were prosperous homesteaders with some residents obtaining relatively large amounts of land. Among those who achieved land ownership was Kinchen Roberts from Virginia, the proprietor of 280 acres of land and the namesake of the Roberts Cemetery. Kinchen Roberts married Nancy Stewart. Their son, Bannister, was the first individual to die at the settlement. The couple owned the land that became the Roberts Cemetery. Five years after the death of Kinchen Roberts in 1870, his son Reddin Roberts, donated 1½ acres of land for the purpose of burying the residents of Lost Creek, Nevins Township, and Otter Creek. The property of Kinchen and Nancy Roberts was used earlier in the settlement's history, when in 1835, the couple made available land to be used for the community's first school which also served as a church.

Sources: Materials in the collection

Xenia Cord, "Rural Settlements in Indiana before 1860." *Black History News & Notes* 27, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, February 1987), pp. 4-8. Reference Collection, rr E185.93 I4 B5 No. 25.

Coy Robbins, "Roberts Cemetery Burials, Vigo County, Indiana (1866-1911)," 17 February 1996. (Black History Program Files, Indiana Historical Society)

Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era 1850-1880*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1965. Reference and General Collection, F526.H55

Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1957; Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993. Reference Collection F521.I38.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The pages in this one-volume ledger have separated from the spine, and it is stored flat in one box. It contains burial records for the Roberts Cemetery of the Lost Creek Settlement in Vigo County, Indiana, dating from 1873 to 1911.

The entries include the name of the deceased, his/her parents, date of death, and the grave location within the cemetery. In some cases the name of the minister who conducted the funeral services, the date of the funeral, and the text from which the lesson derived are listed. The ledger also includes a listing for the memorandum and bylaws, as well as a section designated for the officers and trustees of the Roberts Cemetery Association.

The condition of the record book is very fragile. Some pages are numbered; most are not. There is an index to the ledger, but it is very hard to read.

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0784).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.