

Lindenwood Cemetery, Inc.

Founded: 1859

Location: 2324 West Main Street, Fort Wayne (1859–)

As Fort Wayne grew in the mid–nineteenth century, several community leaders believed the young city needed a larger, nonsectarian, and nonprofit cemetery to replace the older Broadway Cemetery. Efforts to form an association for this purpose began in 1855, and by 1859 twelve established businessmen had advanced \$11,000 for the project. In early July 1859 the group purchased 152 acres of dense, overgrown, and, in some places, swampy land for \$7,627.59. The land was overgrown with linden trees; therefore, when the association was incorporated by the state on 30 July 1859 it was designated Lindenwood Cemetery. The corporation’s board included five of the original twelve investors: Hugh M. McCulloch (later secretary of the treasury under three presidents), Jesse L. Williams, David L. Comparet, Pliny Hoagland, and Isaac D. G. Nelson (who became Lindenwood Cemetery’s first president). The cemetery became a public trust in 1877 when the original investors’ stock was retired. On 30 May 1860 the cemetery was dedicated; the first burial occurred early in July.

Today Lindenwood Cemetery consists of 175 acres of land lying north of West Main Street, south of the Norfolk and Western Railroad (and of St. Francis College, which is just north of the railroad), east of Lindenwood Avenue, and west of Doswell Lane. Many Fort Wayne pioneers are buried within it. The cemetery has natural ravines, gently rolling hillocks, and winding roads. It was designed by John Chislett, a landscape architect from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who later designed Crown Hill Cemetery in

Indianapolis. Chislett, trained in Bath, England, designed Lindenwood according to the eighteenth-century English picturesque style as a park or landscaped lawn cemetery.

John H. Doswell, a London-born florist and gardener, became Lindenwood Cemetery's first superintendent in December 1859.

In 1884 the Achduth Vesholom congregation purchased a section of the cemetery, which they administered as a Jewish burial ground. Over the years many improvements were made on the grounds, including the building of chapels and mausoleums. Prior to the building of the city's war memorial coliseum, the cemetery's parade grounds were the concluding destination of the Memorial Day parade. Upon John Doswell's death in 1900, his son Henry J. Doswell succeeded him as superintendent. He, in turn, was succeeded by William Adams, a grandson of John Doswell, in 1939. The cemetery had only eight superintendents through the 1990s. In 1974 a 110-acre tract of land owned by the cemetery west of Lindenwood Avenue was leased to the city of Fort Wayne for use as a nature preserve. In 1978 the United States Department of the Interior included Lindenwood Cemetery in the National Register of Historic Places.