

Graves of Greenbush Cemetery tell history of Lafayette

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NOTABLE GRAVES AT GREENBUSH

Sandford Cox was born July 1, 1811 in Richmond and is remembered primarily for his dedication in documenting Lafayette's early years of development. The author, lawyer and teacher wrote a book titled "Recollections of the Early Settlement of the Wabash Valley," though it is more affectionately known now as "Old Settlers." According to the book's foreword, Cox served as Tippecanoe County's deputy county recorder for 22 years. Cox, whose first name is spelled in historical documents as "Sandford" and "Sanford," died October 4, 1877. **Albert Smith White** was born on Oct. 24, 1803 in Orange County, N.Y., but spent much of his life and energy in Indiana. White felt a connection with the area and respected its progress, spending several years representing Hoosiers in government. White served in Congress and practiced law, though his talents and interests were expansive. He pushed to have railroads chug through Lafayette and succeeded, increasing the city's population and progress. White's final duty to the state was as a judge on the U.S. District Court for Indiana. He died Sept. 4, 1964. **Caleb Scudder** was born April 11, 1828. His claim to fame is as the first male born in Lafayette, or so says the stone beside his grave in Greenbush Cemetery. However, skeptics point out the city was founded three years before Scudder entered the world, making his proclamation unlikely. According to his obituary, he took after his father in "the furniture and undertaking business." Scudder and his wife, Sarah, never had biological children, though they were foster parents. He died Sept. 1, 1888. His obituary reads, "In the death of Caleb R. Scudder, the community deplores the loss of an upright and noble hearted citizen, perfect in every personal relation of life."— Sources: Mary Anthrop, L.A. Clugh, "Old Settlers" by Sandford Cox and "Commemorative Book of Tippecanoe County, 1826-1976" from by the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

Once a tranquil property located nearly a mile north of Lafayette, Greenbush Cemetery is now a weathered graveyard polluted by the sound of cars along North Ninth and Greenbush streets.

But that doesn't take away from the beauty genealogist L.A. Clugh sees when she walks between graves, grazing the top of headstones and speaking casually about the men and women buried several feet below.

"I'm connected here," Clugh said, looking up from a broken headstone she tried to piece together.

"Lafayette was a town that showed promise and it was these pioneers that dug in (who) put down their family roots and talents in business; they fought to make Lafayette the success it was," she said. "They worked together, invested together, fought for the local causes together. They created the military units together. Lafayette survived to grow because of the pioneers that are buried at Greenbush today."

The history

Greenbush Cemetery was conceived out of desperation when the city's graveyard — where St. Boniface Church now sits — ran out of plots in the 1830s.

About the same time, Lafayette trustees purchased land about one mile north to become the city's burial ground, according to the Greenbush Cemetery tour guide booklet.

In 1847, a group of local movers and shakers — including John Purdue, Godlove S. Orth, Cyrus Ball and David Ross — purchased the land that is now a buffer between main city roads and a residential neighborhood.

By 1848 it was incorporated and kept up by the Greenbush Cemetery Association. The property expanded once more in 1865.

The cemetery is now under the ownership of Fairfield Township since the signing over of the deed from a private association in June. The original section, or the northwest corner, still belongs to the city of Lafayette.

The old section is identifiable by the length of unknown Civil War Union and Confederate soldier graves along Greenbush Street.

Part of a movement

Mary Anthrop, local historian and social studies teacher at Central Catholic Jr.-Sr. High School, called Greenbush “a popular haunt” in its day, indicating its design reflected that of the rural or garden cemeteries springing up along the East Coast.