

Program: A Walk Through the Cemetery

Speaker: Jeannie Regan-Dinius, Director of Special Initiatives, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology

Introduced by: Alison Brown

Attendance: 104

Guests: Jason Myers

Scribe: Russell Judd

Editor: Ed Nitka

Our Speaker today was Jennie R. Regan-Dinius. She is the Director of Special Initiatives at the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. She came to the DNR in 2000 and was given the responsibility of Cemetery Registry. She spoke about getting more out of and appreciating your walk through a cemetery. Since the time of the Puritans, tombstones and their symbols have evolved. Religion, culture and economics all have played a part in the type, size and variety of tombstones and symbols that we see.

Many of the early monuments were made of Whetstone because that particular stone was inexpensive, soft and easy to carve. Limestone was later used but it is harder to carve and deteriorates with time. More recently, Granite is used but it is also hard to carve. To cut down on expense, metal 'stones' have been used and once were sold by Sears and Roebuck.

Often symbols and tombstones can tell a lot about the age, religion or origin of the deceased. Catholics often have short stubby crosses for headstones. Baptists frequently have Bible symbols, verses or angels. Lamb tombstones are often seen with children. Portraits are popular with people from Latin America, African-Americans, and people from eastern Europe. Lodge logos such as the Masons, KofC, and Odd Fellows are not uncommon as symbols on headstones. At times one can find an epitaph on a tombstone that will give some insight into the deceased. They frequently are poetic or humorous. Pictures of the deceased sometimes are present and help connect us with the departed. Lastly, look for the name of the carver of the tombstone located on the right down side. Thank you Jeannie for a delightful and informative talk.



Jeannie Regan-Dinius