
https://www.nwitimes.com/news/crown-point-cemetery-sexton-searching-for-grave-markers-final-resting-place/article_ef8b520a-8041-5fef-8bd6-a88a712c86ff.html

URGENT

Crown Point cemetery sexton searching for grave marker's final resting place

Mary Freda
Aug 2, 2020



CROWN POINT — Blanche Eberhardt (nee Mandernach) departed from her original burial site in Crown Point nearly 76 years ago.

But a piece of her remained in the city until October, when Historic Maplewood Cemetery Sexton Tom Hawes uprooted Eberhardt's name panel that was once located in the now-razed Crown Point Mausoleum.

The Gary native, who died a day after giving birth to her son Harry Jr. in 1925, was known as one of Gary's most popular young women, according to an April 11, 1925, edition of The Times.

Eberhardt worked in the offices of the Gary Land Co., and was a member of the Gary chapter of the Eastern Stars, as well as an active worker in the women's relief corps., the article reads.

She was **buried in the now-razed Crown Point Mausoleum** on April 13, 1925, just four days after giving birth and eight days after her 22nd birthday.

Though her remains would later be relocated to Calumet Park Cemetery in Merrillville in October 1944, her crypt marker from the mausoleum remained in the city.

While Hawes is unsure of how Eberhardt's gravestone ended up in the front yard of a home less than a mile from the cemetery, he suspects some troublemakers had a hand in its relocation.

Now, Hawes is trying to find the marker a permanent home — one that isn't his driveway.

"I don't know exactly what I'm going to do with it right now. I don't know if I'm going place it back over here (at the cemetery) or not," Hawes told The Times on Thursday, after taking a break from mowing the cemetery lawn.

"Maybe I will on a walkway or something like that or a memorial of some sort over here. I'm not quite sure."

Hawes said only a few markers such as Eberhardt's still exist within the cemetery, adding most are cracked.

Jim Crisman, whose front yard was home to the marker for years, said he first saw Eberhardt's marker when he and his wife moved into their home in late 1991.

"It was there then. I don't know where it came from or who put it there; it was just there," Crisman said.

Crisman said he knew no one was buried beneath the stone, and figured the family had lived in the home at one time and put the marker there after a grave was relocated.

He later discovered that wasn't the case, but he remains unsure of how the stone ended up in his yard.

"It will be nice to have it finally find a home where it belongs," said Crisman, who serves on the city's Historic Preservation Commission. "I'd heard kids were always kind of scared to walk along there because of (what) they thought was a grave."

The old Crown Point Mausoleum was dedicated on May 30, 1912, and the "handsome new building was afterward inspected and commented upon favorably by hundreds who visited it during the day," according to Times archives.

According to a **1912 article reprinted from the Illinois-based Beecher Herald**, the former Historic Maplewood Cemetery mausoleum featured 240 crypts, tile flooring and ceilings that were "handsomely finished and frescoed, bearing paintings of angels and giving the interior a church-like appearance."

Those looking to get a glimpse of times past can visit the Beecher Mausoleum at 301 W. Horner Lane, Beecher, Illinois, to get a feel for what the Crown Point Mausoleum once looked like.

The building was ultimately razed in the 1960s after being condemned following vandals breaking into crypts and destroying name plates, according to Times archives.

Gallery: Crown Point's Historic Maplewood Cemetery

Be the first to know

Get local news delivered to your inbox!

* I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and [privacy policy](#).