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At a time when social classes were at more of a divide than ever before, this was reflected even after death in their burial grounds. In every city, places called potter's fields were the resting places for the poor who could not afford such lavish rituals and in Chicago, that was present in the Cook County Cemetery. With no care or dignity given to their burials, they were placed in mass graves with quicklime that was used to quicken the process of decomposition. Only numbers on wooden paddles identified who was located where. This unseemly display was a stark contrast to what was found further up north by Lincoln Park, where the Graceland Cemetery was the resting place of all of Chicago's elite members of society.

Founded in 1860 by Thomas Bryan, an attorney and entrepreneur, it contained 119 acres at the time of opening. Bryan had a passion for landscaping and gardening as well, with previous forays into the craft including a farmstead called Cottage Hill and a retreat on his estate named Bird's Nest just outside of the city of Chicago a few years prior. Working on the estate with him was William Saunders, a renowned landscape gardener from Philadelphia, one of the few professionals from the field in America. This relationship came in handy later, as Saunders was one of the first designers for Graceland Cemetery.

Rural cemeteries in the United States started out in the east, coming from the ideals of the Parisian burial grounds. Throughout the 19th century, the ideas of these spread west and came to Chicago by 1853, and Rosehill cemetery opened by 1859 that was designed by William Saunders. According to another landscape designer John J. Smith, a colleague of Saunders, Rosehill was on its way to being the best cemetery of Chicago. Unbeknownst to him, however,

Bryan was already scouting out the site for Graceland and would later secure Saunders to be the designer. Rural cemeteries had been his interest since four years prior when Bryan's young son died, and he desired more out of those crowded burial grounds. Searching outside the city limits, Bryan was able to find a plot just two miles north of the city limits and one mile west of Lake Michigan, then called Lake Chicago. To him, it was an ideal location for the sweeping topography that kept it between 17 and 26 feet above the water level of Lake Michigan, allowing the ground to stay dry and safe from major flooding. It also was already home to stunning scenery, as it was located on a spit, a term for a piece of land jutting out over a body of water, and contained plenty of trees providing ground coverage. Additionally, Bryan was convinced that it was far enough beyond city borders that no matter how much Chicago may grow, it would be safe from overcrowding. However, Graceland was far enough out of the city that it overlapped with some inner city suburb development. A place called Lake View was starting to grow, and a hotel in the town's center called Lake View House only drew in more visitors and pushed the town's development further. The proximity of Graceland Cemetery and Lake View ended up being mutually beneficial, as the growth of Lake View pushed more people to visit the views of Graceland, and the emerging popularity of the cemetery drew in more tourists to the town.

In the first layout designed by Saunders, he arranged many curvilinear walkways and carriage paths throughout the existing scenery and planned for plantings alongside them to create everchanging views. Upon Bryan's request, thirty six acres of the north part of the cemetery were reserved as natural parkland. Although they are today used for burial grounds, it is unsure whether or not it was originally intended to be transformed as such eventually. There was also originally a grotto featured to contribute to the parklike atmosphere that was documented in an 1878 map created by cartographer Charles Rascher. However, for reasons unknown, it was

removed at some point before 1886 to create space for more burial grounds. Upon opening, an arched stone entrance gate was constructed, flanked by a pair of building blocks that contained a chapel, offices, and vaults. However, the chapel was moved and now lies in the middle of the cemetery, with an attached crematorium added on to it. The first expansion of Graceland Cemetery took place only a year after opening, as a clause was passed to give the cemetery more power and ability to expand up to five hundred acres, so in 1861 it grew by forty five acres to the west. A second expansion occurred in 1864, adding thirty five acres to the east. It continued to gradually expand until the early 1870s, where conflicts with the town of Lake View prevented any further expansion in that direction for both Graceland and Rosehill. In 1879, a final agreement was reached between Graceland and Lake View, where Graceland sold some of their undeveloped land to Lake View but acquired thirty five more acres in another section, and these would be the fixed boundaries of the cemetery. The boundaries enclosed 125 acres for Graceland Cemetery, which is how it remains today.

The first member to be laid to rest inside the gates of Graceland Cemetery in April of 1860 was Bryan's son, Daniel Page Bryan, in his second interment. The cemetery was officially dedicated in August of that year, naming Bryan as the president with the treasurer being a longtime friend, G. P. A. Healy. Since then, an estimated 175,000 people have been buried at the Graceland cemetery. By the time the 1860s came around, walls dividing family plots were beginning to fall out of favor, so while there are walls present to separate the burial grounds, they are not allowed to be more than a few inches high. Although there are a few names more notable than others when visiting today, most of the people at Graceland cemetery did contribute to the local history of Chicago, if not beyond. Some of them may have been famous in their day but their names are now long forgotten, while others historians struggle to find information on what

they achieved in their life. Stories like these make up the majority of those buried here, but walking around the grounds there are plenty of recognizable names. McKim, Mead, and White designed the Kimball monument, with the two marble slabs on the ground between the columns being representative of the pianos they made. Another monument they designed was a parthenon replica for Potter and Bertha Palmer, in which their sarcophagi lay visible to the public. There are giants of Chicago industry including William McCormick and Family, Marshall Fields, and the Medill and Patterson Families. Along a path near the middle of the cemetery is a number of graves for notable figures in Black history, including Richard T. Greever, the first Black Harvard graduate, Lloyd Garrison Wheeler, the first Black lawyer in Illinois, and John Jones and his wife Mary Richardson Jones, who made a difference in Chicago society as free persons of color, eventually playing a critical part of the Underground Railroad.

Along one footpath is what is coined as mausoleum row, which starts off with a crypt for Louis H. Boldenweck, a factory businessman who in one of his buildings fell down an elevator shaft. Next is a mausoleum made of red granite for Gustav Wilke, a contractor who was one of the first to incorporate the steel frame into his buildings. A tomb that was originally meant for William Wrigley Jr. was sold to one of his vice presidents Amariah G. Cox, and beyond that is a vault for the Raffington family. Another notable stop along the mausoleum row is the statue called The Crusader, built for the tomb of Victor Lawson. He had been the publisher for *Chicago Daily News* for almost fifty years when he died, but despite his high society status he was one for plain tastes. It was announced upon his death that only a simple headstone would mark his place in Graceland, but his heirs commissioned Lorado Taft to sculpt a crusading knight, and it is devoid of Lawson's name.

Graceland cemetery is also the final resting place of a number of architects. Marion Mahony Griffin was an architect who worked with Frank Lloyd Wright and played a large role in developing and popularizing the prairie style. She was also the first licensed female architect in Illinois. One of the more simple grave markers is for Laszlo Maholy-Nagy, the first director of the New Bauhaus school of design, and another for the family of George Grant Elmslie, an architect and draftsman who worked with Wright and Louis Sullivan. Frederick W. Wolf was an architect that specialized in brewery design, and he has an unusual gravestone in that the figure on the staircase is descending instead of the usual ascension to heaven. Pierce Anderson was a principal in the firm that grew from Daniel Burnham's once he died, and his columnated mausoleum is pink. There is also the Holabird Plot, the burial place of architect William Holabird, who founded the influential architecture firm Holabird and Roche. A section to the back of the cemetery is home to many architects including Richard Nickel, Jacques Brownson, Stanislaw Gladych, and Walter Netsch. At the front of the section is the marker for engineer and architect Fazler Khan, who was responsible for the design of Chicago's Hancock Building and Sears Tower. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe is also buried nearby, with a simple black rectangular headstone perfectly representing his architectural ideals. Daniel Burnham is also laid to rest in Graceland, on an island that was not initially intended to be used as burials, but now the plot is home to many of his relatives. Finally, after designing so many tombs for others here, Louis Sullivan himself was buried in Graceland Cemetery. At first his grave went unmarked as he was out of fashion at the time of his death which led to a lack of funds, but those who admired his work added a stone five years afterwards. A modest granite stone is what was eventually used as his headstone, with a bronze ornamental piece set in the front and a paragraph describing his achievements on the back.

One of the most prominent areas of the Graceland Cemetery is an intersecting footpath triangle that is home to the tombs of Peter Schoenhofen, George Pullman, and Martin L. Ryerson. With its large presence, Peter Schoenhofen's Pyramid is a very noticeable monument. It was designed by architect Richard Schmidt, who also designed some of Schoenhofen's breweries. Just the door to the pyramid is 84 inches tall, and is inspired by the gateways in Egypt. The tomb as a whole draws in symbols from multiple religious ideologies, as Schoenhofen himself was not tied to one particular religion. George Pullman had a very secure burial; after the scare of Abraham Lincoln's corpse being held for ransom, he was concerned that unhappy employees would do the same for him. Above ground, however, is a singular tall corinthian column on a large concrete slab that is covering the coffin, all in the name of security. The Ryerson Tomb is the third of this triangle, also taking some inspiration from the Egyptian style mausoleums. Designed by Louis Sullivan, it merges the style of a pyramid on the top with a base taking the form of a mastaba, both made of black stone.

The grandeur of Graceland is evident in the sweeping landscape and elaborate tombstones found within its gates, showcasing the values as a resting place for the elite and well-known members of society. However, another cemetery in Chicago was opened with the goal of being a burial ground of equal opportunities.

Seeking to be a remedy of the social divides present amongst the dead, the Bohemian National Cemetery was founded as a non-denominational burial ground for anyone of Bohemian descent. The idea started when in 1876 a lifelong Catholic Mrs. Marie Silháneck was denied burial in the St. Adalbert Cemetery, a Czech Catholic cemetery. According to the pastor Joseph Molitor, she had not said confession before her death and could not be allowed to be buried on the consecrated grounds of the church. This sparked outrage among the community, and a group

named the Czech freethinkers, led by Frank Zdubrek, called for a place where any Bohemians could be buried among their fellow countrymen without seeking permission from a priest. It is estimated that only twenty-five percent of the Czech population at the time identified as Catholic, and the non-religious far outnumbered those who were. After a year of collecting donations from fraternal societies, the Bohemian National Cemetery was opened in 1877. It was said that on these grounds, “the pilgrim who has arrived at the end of life’s journey, can enter without being questioned about his religion, color, or nationality. Equal rights are accorded to all.” (Rosenow 54). This was evident in the fact that twenty five years after opening, they welcomed burial to someone who was once a strong critic of the Czech freethinkers that was denied burial in a Catholic cemetery.

At a time where many immigrants were distrusted and the Czech population faced discrimination and abuse by other immigrant communities, the success of the Bohemian National Cemetery was seen as a beacon of hope for the Bohemian people. Therefore it became a source of pride that the community wanted to maintain. The Bohemian Cemetery Association worked hard to maintain the landscaping and gardening of the place, and upkeep its natural beauty that was widely praised. Bohemian National Cemetery became a place where Czech people were able to celebrate their ethnic heritage and cultural pride, and yearly the cemetery held a celebration to pay respects to their ancestors and others buried there. During the annual celebration called Declaration Day at the end of May, when people gathered all over the country to honor their fallen heroes and ancestors, the Bohemian National Cemetery drew in crowds of thousands of people, far more than St. Adalbert and Resurrection, the other Bohemian cemeteries in the area. Such festivities included a parade through the streets of the Pilsen neighborhood, speeches in the cemetery, and finishing up the day with two keynote speakers, one native-born and one who

spoke Czech. It became a space to honor the sacrifice made by their ancestors and the hard work of immigrants that brought progress to the country they now called home.

The original forty acres of Bohemian National Cemetery were designed by John V. Benes, who laid the plots out in a grid like fashion that mirrored the street network of the city. Benes drew inspiration from Roman city planning as well with their long streets terminated by vistas if public squares and monuments. Along the main road from the entrance, Benes placed three different circular interruptions, each of them between twenty and thirty feet in diameter. These circular areas were designated for public monuments and the gathering of crowds. The straight, tree lined streets were a distinguishing feature of Bohemian National Cemetery that set it apart from the other rural or lawn cemeteries at the time. The first expansion happened in 1902 to the south and east, with flowing curvilinear paths running through the plot that was designed by August Petrtyl, assimilating the style back to the typical rural cemeteries of the area. Another expansion happened to the north just four years later, with landscape architect Jens Jensen following the same pattern. Today, the cemetery contains a total of a hundred and twenty six acres.

The most striking feature of the cemetery is the limestone gatehouse done in a Gothic revival style. What started out as only a wooden fence and sign upon opening in an attempt to ward off trouble from the neighboring town of Jefferson turned into a full gatehouse with a bell tower that the Bohemian National Cemetery Association was able to build just a year later. In 1893, a new gatehouse designed by Jan Krivanek was erected, the beginning of the Gothic revival style structure that is still present today. An addition in the Arts and Crafts style was added in 1907, designed by Anton Rusy, that provided men and womens restrooms, to the right and the left of the existing structure respectively. Another key structure in the Bohemian



National Cemetery is the crematorium, dedicated in 1919. Built in the Renaissance revival style, it features ornate decorations by artist John A. Mallin. Additionally, a classical revival office building was opened in 1926.

While it may not be home to international heroes and the most elite residents, Bohemian National Cemetery does take pride in those buried within its gates. One of its most notable residents is Anton Cermak, the first Czech Mayor of Chicago. He was born in the village of Kladno near Prague, and his family immigrated to the United States while he was still young. After only three years of elementary school, he was forced to work in the mines in order to support his family. At age nineteen, Cermak started his own moving business in Chicago and soon began to be more involved in local politics, being voted in state legislature and eventually as mayor of Chicago in 1931. As he was a strong proponent for Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidential election, he joined him on his victory parade in Miami, Florida. Unfortunately, someone tried to assassinate Roosevelt with five gunshots but instead they hit Cermak. He fell out of the car, and Roosevelt carried him back in, rushing him to the hospital. The last words that Cermak said were to Roosevelt, "I am glad it is me instead of you." These words are now carved on Cermak's mausoleum in Bohemian National Cemetery. Other well-known names who were laid to rest in the cemetery include Otto Kerner Sr., a judge and former Illinois Attorney General, Elsie Paroubek, a five year old victim of a kidnapping and murder, Charles J. Vopicka, the United States ambassador to a number of eastern european countries, and Wanda Stopa, the first and still youngest assistant United States district attorney from Chicago.

Another key feature of Bohemian National Cemetery is its monuments. The first one to open was a tribute to the fallen soldiers of the Civil War on May 29, 1892. Thousands of Bohemians gathered to watch the unveiling of this statue and to them, it was a message that

reflected the immigrant experience. Former senior vice commander of the Department of Illinois H. S. Dietrich gave a speech at the ceremony about his hopes for assimilation, but for those gathered it felt like the first time they were able to grasp a sense of national pride for their new country. Here in a place that was representative of their heritage, they were being celebrated as part of American history, something they had never experienced before. The cemetery went on to host a number of other monuments including a World War I and World War II monument, a Spanish War Veterans monument, and even a monument that is part of the brick wall of Wrigley Field, where fans of the Chicago Cubs baseball team could be memorialized. One of the most notable for citizens of Chicago is the memorial commemorating victims of the SS Eastland shipwreck.

The Eastland disaster was a tragedy that took place on the Chicago River, where a large passenger ship was docked to take employees of the Western Electric company located in Cicero, Illinois to a picnic in Michigan City, Indiana. The ship was already more top heavy than it was built to handle, due to laws requiring additional lifeboats following the sinking of the Titanic, and some of the ship's 2,572 passengers gathered on one side of the boat to wave goodbye. This caused the Eastland to tip towards its port side when it pushed away from the shore and capsized. It was only halfway submerged, but many of the passengers were already below decks and were unable to escape. Many of the workers at Western Electric were immigrants, and of the 844 total victims, 220 of them were Czech. Bohemian National Cemetery had just opened up Lot 16 right before the disaster, and it was quickly filled by those who perished on the SS Eastland. It hosts the largest number of victims from the shipwreck out of any cemetery, and right on the corner of Lot 16 is now a monument in remembrance of all of them.

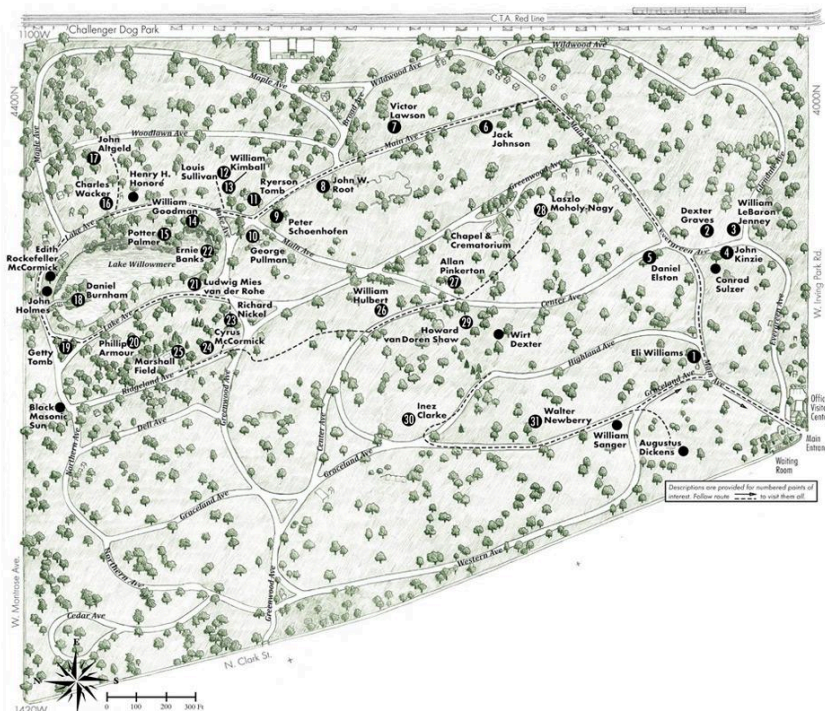
Another claim to fame for the Bohemian National Cemetery is that it is home to the largest collection of tree tombstones in the United States. Though they were largely popular in Victorian Europe and made their way to the U.S. in the late 1800s through the 1920s, they eventually lost their favor as they were highly expensive. The superintendent of Bohemian National Cemetery loved them, but those at places like Graceland and Rosehill did not see their appeal. As a whole, these tree tombstones represented a life cut short, but their elaborately carved limestone had the potential to say so much more. The symbols that the tree contained were a representation of what the passed soul valued in life. If the sleeves of clasped hands were both masculine and feminine, it denoted marriage. Ivy could either symbolize immortality or friendship, and ferns indicated frankness or humility. Wheat was a symbol of the final harvest, and therefore a remarkably long life. Anchors are a sign of hope, and could also resemble a cross, and grapes were a representation of Christian faith. Mushrooms are a representation of decay and rebirth, and could also hide the carver's signature mark. Finally, a book on the tree represented the journey that the deceased took throughout their life. In some cases, like for Matek Sidlo, a carving of a train on his tree tells the story of how he died, as he was involved in a railway accident. Wandering around the cemetery, there is never a tree tombstone too far, and one could hear the story of those who are buried beneath them if they look hard enough.

The tree tombstones are not the only sculptural wonder within the gates of Bohemian National Cemetery. There are plenty of other ornate headstones, including family mausoleums with stained glass windows, large carvings on tall slabs of stones, and even hundred foot high obelisks. Additionally there are two statues not used as headstones, famously called The Mother and The Pilgrim. Both were created by Czech-American sculptor Albin Polasek, who was the head of the sculpture department at the Art Institute of Chicago. The first one, called The

Mother, was commissioned by the Bohemian National Cemetery for its 50th anniversary celebration. Standing in front of the crematorium, it is a tribute to motherhood with its bronze depiction of a woman carrying her baby to her chest while sheltering her other son with her robe. Only a year later, Polasek was commissioned to create another bronze statue, this time by the Stejskal-Buchal family for their mausoleum. It was designed to appear to be walking towards the entrance of their mausoleum, and it is titled The Pilgrim. However, to some people it looked like the grim reaper with its hooded cloak covering the face. This started the urban legend that if the pilgrim eventually reaches the front steps of the Stejskal-Buchal Mausoleum, that is the day that Doomsday will come.

The story of how Bohemian National Cemetery sought to be an equalizing space beyond death is well represented in the story of my ancestors. My grandfather James D. Medek was a hundred percent Bohemian, with all four of his grandparents immigrating from Czechoslovakia to Chicago when they were children. On his father's side of the family, there were a total of nine Medeks buried in an unmarked plot. The first buried were his infant aunts and uncle in 1889, and then his grandparents James and Mary Medek in 1946 and 1948, all the way to his aunt Lillian Mary Medek in 1971. The plot went unmarked for over a hundred years until the 2010s, when James D. Medek bought a headstone commemorating the Medek Family buried there. On the other hand there was his mother's family, the Pelikans. The Pelikans were able to pay for a family headstone with a large plot for all its members, and upon the first burial purchased perpetual care, which meant that the cemetery would clean the gravestone for the rest of its existence, or at least until the cemetery could not afford it anymore. Each member of the Pelikan family who is buried there also received their own individual headstone. Both sides of the family, however, were granted burial rights, and equal dignity in death. There is no social class

separation in death to be found at Bohemian National Cemetery as both the poor and wealthy were laid to rest alongside each other. Descendants of all the cemetery's inhabitants are free to walk among the plots with equal dignity afforded to them, no matter their social status. My family is able to walk just two minutes from one ancestor's grave to the other, which is not something that can always be said for those whose families come from differing economic classes. The goal of Bohemian National Cemetery to create a place where everyone is welcome is still well maintained to this day.



Map of Graceland Cemetery



Landscaping of Graceland Cemetery



Potter and Bertha Palmer monument



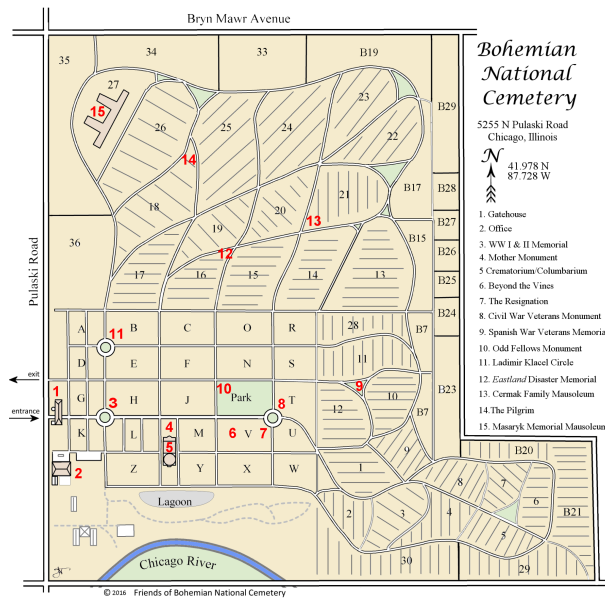


Peter Schoenhofen's Pyramid

Ryerson Tomb



Pullman munument



map of Bohemian National Cemetery



Gatehouse at Bohemian National





Treestone for Matek Sidlo





Anton Cermak Mausoleum





The Pilgrim statue