

Lincoln Cemetery

Carlisle has two historic Black cemeteries, Lincoln Cemetery and Union Cemetery. Lincoln Cemetery was in use by 1840 but could potentially be several decades older. By the end of 1905, Lincoln Memorial Cemetery was closed, as it was a small parcel that led to significant overcrowding within the cemetery. It was also one of the lowest points in the borough, which led to significant flooding.

In the late 1960s, white community members complained about the appearance of the cemetery. There was no owner of the cemetery grounds which meant most of the maintenance was accomplished by volunteers. In 1968, neighbors of the cemetery petitioned the Borough to take ownership. Despite protests, the headstones were removed by bulldozers and a park was built over the cemetery. The State's Department of Parks and Recreation (now DCNR) funded the project.

Ms. Fleeta Jordan was the only family member to successfully fight back against the Borough's plans. Her family was buried in Lincoln Cemetery and the Jordan tombstone was for years the only visible reminder that this was hallowed grounds. The remains of those buried there still rest under the park. The headstones from the original cemetery remain missing and have likely been destroyed.

Lincoln Cemetery is the eastern-most portion of Memorial Park on Penn Street. A significant archway between the park and the cemetery was constructed in recent years as a memorial to the cemetery. A public art mural along a flagstaff also pays homage to those buried in the hallowed ground.

Over 400 members of our community are buried there. These members include over fifty black heroes of the Civil War, individuals who were enslaved within our community, freedom seekers from the south, and free members of the community. All helped to create the Carlisle that we know today. They were segregated in life and death.