

New Albany National Cemetery
1943 Ekin Avenue
New Albany, Indiana 47150

Description

The New Albany National Cemetery, established in 1862, is located about one and one-half miles north-east of the town. The site is rectangular in shape. The main entrance is in the center of the southeast side and is protected by a steel gate, supported by stone piers, constructed circa 1869, with a pedestrian gate on the left. From the entrance going toward the back portion of the cemetery, a drive extends through the cemetery, encircling three circular plats of ground. The first circle contains the flagpole, constructed in 1949; the next, the largest of the three, contains burials (Section G); and the third contains the rostrum. The grounds are enclosed by a sandstone wall, two feet by four feet in height, based upon limestone and coped with sawn limestone. A utility building is located in the southeast corner of the cemetery, and a committal service tent is situated nearby. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones.



The utility building is a single-story brick structure constructed in 1936 with an addition in 1949. The original section was a garage served by an overhead door and a simple panel door. The addition provides two additional garage bays with overhead doors. Each has a strip of six small windows. The roof is composition shingles.

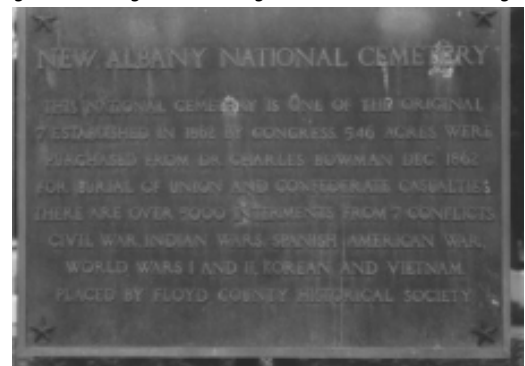
The brick and iron rostrum was constructed in 1931 and is situated upon one of the circles. The rostrum is elevated over a brick foundation. It is two bays by three bays, divided by square brick piers supporting a ribbed tin pitch roof over open work frame rafters. The projecting eaves show exposed rafters. The flooring and stair risers and treads are concrete. In 1982, the Veterans Administration restored it to its original condition.



Significant Monuments/Memorials

Just outside the cemetery wall is a plaque placed by the Floyd County Historical Society, inscribed as follows:

NEW ALBANY NATIONAL CEMETERY
THIS NATIONAL CEMETERY IS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL
7 ESTABLISHED IN 1862 BY CONGRESS. 5.46 ACRES WERE
PURCHASED FROM DR. CHARLES BOWMAN DEC. 1862
FOR BURIAL OF UNION AND CONFEDERATE CASUALTIES.
THERE ARE OVER 5,000 INTERMENTS FROM 7 CONFLICTS
CIVIL WAR, INDIAN WARS, SPANISH AMERICAN WAR,
WORLD WARS I AND II, KOREAN, AND VIETNAM.
PLACED BY FLOYD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Unfortunately, the plaque contains erroneous information. Congress established no specific national cemeteries in 1862. Congress authorized the President to establish national cemeteries pursuant to the Act of July 17, 1862, and fourteen national cemeteries, including the New Albany National Cemetery, were created in the latter half of that year.

This plaque was installed in 1973, replacing the original plaque which was inscribed with information that the land for the cemetery was purchased from a Dr. Morgan Vance family, when the land was actually purchased from Charles Bowman in 1862. In 1984, the Historic Preservation Officer for the then Veterans Administration contacted Mr. John Cody, Jr., an attorney in New Albany, and an active member of the Floyd County Historical Society. Mr. Cody located the records of sale by Mr. Bowman to the government. According to Mr. Cody, it was Major T. W. Fry(e) of the military hospital in New Albany who recommended a national cemetery at that location and Dr. Crozier of the hospital staff who drew up the original design, later approved by the War Department. Dr. Bowman was a civilian resident and practicing physician in New Albany. He donated a great deal of his time to treating the soldiers in the Federal hospital. The present plaque was later erected containing the correct inscription as to the donor of the property.

A family plot, 10 feet by 15 feet, located in Section D contains the remains of several members of the Vance family. The earliest burial was the interment of Morgan Vance in 1872. A paper was found on file at the national cemetery which contained directives from the Secretary of War and the Quartermaster General of the United States concerning the burial of Morgan Vance and his family, listing the names and dates of burial (all had been reinterred from other cemeteries). Mr. and Mrs. Cody wanted more information on Morgan Vance and, after research at the New Albany Library and the National Archives, it was discovered that Vance's widow had friends in high positions in the United States Government. Within two weeks of her requests to government officials, authorization was granted for Vance to be reinterred in the New Albany National Cemetery. A year after his death, his widow was again writing letters and she was notified by the Quartermaster at Jeffersonville that the Superintendent at New Albany National Cemetery would set aside a suitable lot of convenient size to accommodate burial of other family members. Morgan Vance's remains were reinterred in the national cemetery on May 12, 1872. In July 1883, Susan Vance's mother's remains were reinterred in the Vance lot, and in 1901, eight children were reinterred, all in one grave. In 1904, Dr. Howard Vance was interred in the fourth grave. In 1905, Susan wrote to the Secretary of War requesting space in the Vance plot in the national cemetery for the future interment of herself and her three surviving children. Subsequently, Secretary of War W. H. Taft, allowed the lot to be enlarged, but on the express condition that nobody but Mrs. Vance be interred in that lot. On July 16, 1915, the cremated remains of Mrs. Susan Vance were interred in the same grave with her mother. There are 13 interments in the four gravesites.

There are two monuments, each seven feet, six inches in height, and made of an original cast-iron seacoast artillery tube, secured by a concrete base, one on the east side of Section G and the other on the west side. The inscription on the cast-bronze plaque affixed to the monument located on the west side reads as follows:

UNITED STATES
NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERY
NEW ALBANY
ESTABLISHED 1862
INTERMENTS 2798
KNOWN 2,131
UNKNOWN 677



Civil War Activity in Area

New Albany was the northern end of a river transportation system that began at New Orleans. As such, it could serve as part of the evacuation route for the wounded from much of the western theatre of the war. Many wounded were transported by boat to New Albany.

In 1862, the United States Government decided to establish a government hospital in New Albany. Instead of purchasing a building, several schools and other buildings were rented by the Government. Dr. Thomas Fry, formerly a brigade surgeon under Union General Lewis Wallace, was brought in to supervise the hospitals. When the Civil War began, Wallace organized the 11th Indiana Infantry Regiment and was appointed Colonel of that regiment. Doctors Sloan, Alexander, and Bowman attended the wounded, and the ladies of the Union Aid Society acted as nurses.