

During the administration of Beaumont Parks it was decided to relocate the bodies at the Whiting Cemetery. The cemetery was located within the “Oklahoma” section of Whiting. This cemetery served as Whiting’s first and only burial ground, which was owned by Henry Schrage. By 1913 internments had stopped being made at this site. It was in this year that Standard Oil purchased the land from Schrage. The refinery planned to move the bodies to a Hammond cemetery at its own expense.

According to Henry Schrage’s records there were only supposed to be approximately seven hundred internments. However, when the bodies started to be dug up, the number was closer to eleven hundred. A great many burials had taken place prior to 1882, when the cemetery was platted. The March 19, 1913 edition of the *Whiting Call* stated that these unofficial graves were laid with no regards to the points of a compass, “having been placed at right angles to the ridge of sand which formed the nearest thing to a hill that existed here in those days.”

Undertaker Hellwig was hired to do the gruesome work of relocating the deceased. He was contracted to remove the bodies for \$3 each. Interestingly, Hellwig discovered that there were some bodies that were found in a remarkable state of preservation. One body, for instance, was found wearing heavy leather boots, and another was discovered with several dollars of currency in a pocket of his clothing. In addition, Hellwig stated that some of the bodies weren’t even found in caskets.

The Whiting City Council also hired James Freeman. He was appointed to act as a representative of the city and to keep records of the bodies that were found. The records were transcribed in a special book that was kept at the city clerk’s office. Today,

a copy of Freeman's records can be viewed in the Local History Room of the Whiting Public Library.

The bodies were relocated to the city graveyard, which was a beautiful spot on Hessville Road, near the St. John's Cemetery. The City of Whiting furnished a new burial plot at this location, where the bodies were re-interred. Any family members of the deceased who were not satisfied with this arrangement were given an alternative. The city was willing to have their loved ones re-interred in any cemetery of their choosing. However, city officials would only pay up to \$21 of the cost of the burial, anything over that price would be the responsibility of the family member.