

Dickson (Pioneer) Cemetery

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Digging into Q-C cemeteries

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Long overdue burial

The story behind the Dickson or Pioneer Cemetery at Black Hawk State Historic Site, Rock Island, is one of the more interesting ones regarding final resting spots.

Legend has it that the cemetery was the first non-Indian burial place in Rock Island, and a strange final burial took place on the grounds. John Long, one of the killers hanged for the murder of Col. Davenport, was finally laid to rest there in the 1970s, more than a century after his hanging.

Apparently Mr. Long's remains were moved from place to place in the years following his hanging in October of 1845. His bones were displayed in the Black Hawk park museum until about 1975, but plans to bury the skeleton included one unexpected task: getting the county coroner to issue a death certificate to prove Mr. Long was legally dead.

Although Mr. Long's body may not have always been treated with respect, it was put to rest properly. "He got a pretty good burial; I think he had two ministers. It wasn't too bad for the scoundrel that he was," said Mr. Vogeles of Chippiannock Cemetery.

Mr. Long's grave is currently unmarked.