

Camp Morton

Camp Morton Boundary Marker Dedication Indianapolis, Indiana October 25, 2003

History of Camp Morton

At the beginning of the Civil War the animal barns and stockades of the Indiana State Fairgrounds, located in Indianapolis, Indiana, were converted into a training ground for newly recruited soldiers. The camp was named after Oliver T. Morton, certainly the most famous, powerful and tenacious state governor of Indiana in that or any subsequent era. After Grant captured Fort Donelson in Tennessee on 16 February 1862, the camp began to be used as a staging area for captured Confederates who suffered northern winters in inadequate shelter, a misery further compounded by limited rations, promulgated by Commissary General of Prisoners as a cost-saving measure. From 1862 to 1865, the camp would reach a peak population of 5,000. During this period there were 1,763 deaths and more than 150 escapes—at times achieved by throwing stones to draw fire and then simply rushing the guards. After the war, despite the privations they experienced, former prisoners remembered Camp Morton with some fondness by erecting a statue of its 1862 commander, Colonel Richard Owen in the State Capitol. To learn more about Camp Morton, please visit the following web site:
<http://freepages.history.rootsweb.com/~indiana42nd/campmorton.htm>

Where was Camp Morton Located?

Over the years the exact location of the original Camp Morton

became uncertain. Several years ago, the Brothers of the Ben Harrison Camp, determined to rectify this situation by designing markers, researching the exact boundaries, and raising money to manufacture them. A task finally achieved in the summer of 2000 when four markers were installed at each corner of the old camp boundaries. The markers now delineate the area bounded by Talbott Avenue to the west, Central Avenue to the east, Twenty-Second Street to the north, and Nineteenth Street to the south.



On 15 July 2000, Mike Baldwin, chairman of the Camp Morton Marker committee of the Ben Harrison Camp, carefully guides a marker stone onto its pedestal.

The Dedication Ceremony

On October 25, 2003, the Ben Harrison Camp, with ceremonies at the Herron-Morton Place Historic Park located at 19th and Alabama Street, honored the twenty-one organizations and individuals who supported the creation and placing of the markers that now denote the four corners of Camp Morton, the Civil War prison camp for captured Confederate soldiers. Particularly recognized for their substantial contributions was the Herron-Morton Neighborhood Association and the Indiana Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.



Terry Henson, Indiana Division Commander of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, accepts a replica plaque of the Camp Morton camp boundary markers. The plaque recognizes the generous gift of the SCV to the project. He is flanked by Bruce Kolb, Commander of the Ben Harrison Camp (now PCC), and Alan Teller, Department Commander SUVCW (now PDC).



One of Four Camp Morton Boundary Markers, Located at 19th and Talbott Ave.

Note:

In honor of this event, the Ben Harrison Camp also had a Camp Morton medal struck (as shown below). The Camp still has a limited supply of these medals available. If you are interested in purchasing one, please contact our [Camp Secretary-Treasurer](#).

