

## PRESENT DAY COLLINS CEMETERY

"Collins Cemetery, located at the corner of Harvey Road and Ethel Avenue in Muncie, is one of the five cemeteries in Center Township. The burial grounds are situated on a high bank over-looking a chain of ponds which previously formed the White River.

"The land for a free burial site was deeded by Thomas Collins to School District No. 3 in Center Township, on February 26, 1847. Prior to this date, it was a graveyard, though inaccurate records and misplaced tombstones make it nearly impossible to determine the earliest burial. Available records name the eldest stone as 'Nottingham, 1833,' but that stone cannot be located. Now, the eldest marked tombstone is 1835 on the grave of Mary Howell.

"Among the older stones, there are four that mark the burial sites of war veterans. A single Revolutionary War soldier, Joshua Howell, is buried there, and three Civil War soldiers, John Shafer, John Tom, and Jacob Warfel, are buried there also.

"Originally, after it was donated, the land was managed by three appointed trustees in School District No. 3. In time, however, the citizens eventually failed to select new trustees and the cemetery grew up in brush and weeds. In 1928, Collins Cemetery Association was organized, and the group raised money to use to improve the grounds.

"In recent years, the graveyard has fallen to disrepair, and today, despite a new, six-foot, chain-link fence and a metal sign naming the site, the grounds have a somewhat disorderly appearance. Nature has taken its toll on many of the older tombstones. The freezing and thawing of many springs have caused numerous stones to crack and break. Vandals have also had a part in disorganizing the cemetery. The broken-off stones have been moved aside and stacked out of the way by summer mowers.

"Huge bushes which once engulfed as many as twenty tombstones have been removed in the past few years, however, much work remains to be done. Missing stones need to be located and broken markers need to be reconstructed and re-set in concrete before the graveyard will be as beautiful as it once was."

Holly Costill, who has grown up living next to Collins Cemetery, wrote the above article. We appreciate her interest in this site. Over the years, several groups have recorded the tombstones. The first known record was done by Elizabeth Medsker Wierback and Eugene Studebaker Wierback in 1941. In 1956 Paul Revere Chapter DAR made a record, followed by the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints about 1960. Finally, it was recorded by R. Petro & Osborne in 1971. Most of these records are available at the Genealogy Library at the Resources Center.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We have moved to a larger format partly to please those readers who requested larger print. We welcome material for our newsletter particularly information on historical activity in communities around Muncie. The next newsletter is tentatively scheduled for June. Please send material to the Alliance address by Mary 15th. Thank you. Jane Beekman