

On a recent cool, breezy, sunny, Sunday afternoon Clark County Cemetery Commission President David Abbott and Board Member John Prall tracked through honey suckle, briars and over tree limbs to the old St. Clair Cemetery. The ½ acre cemetery is located off Munk Road near Henryville.

“The cemetery has several stones that are in need of repair. Unfortunately the cemetery has kinda been forgotten by most everyone besides John (Prall). The headstones I saw were early 1800’s. There is a lot of history in that small cemetery,” stated Abbott. “As the Cemetery Commission President, I am asking for some help from the community. We are looking for a group, boy scout troop, school club or church group, that would be willing to volunteer a few hours to help clean up the cemetery.”

Spearheaded by Abbott, the Bower-Work Cemetery on Tunnel Mill Road in Charlestown was cleaned up last Spring by Boy Scout Troop 80 from St. Michael’s in Charlestown. The commission is looking for the same type of volunteer group.

According to Abbott, the cemetery clean up for St. Clair would just be cutting some small trees, removal of a larger tree and tiding up the grounds.

Prall has been working to get the cemetery cleaned up and is excited about what could happen. The cemetery has 40 marked plots with many unmarked. Some are just marked by field stones.

“The oldest or first born in the cemetery was born on January 9, 1795 and passed on March 17, 1870. The last dated tombstone is from John St. Clair, who was born on April 26, 1826 and died on January 3, 1904,” Prall explained.

When asked how he became involved, Prall, laughed, “I think I was the only one who knew where it was. I was the one familiar with where the grave yards were in the area.”

Prall’s heart is truly involved in doing what is best for St. Clair Cemetery. He has a family tie to the local cemetery. He has one great aunt buried in the cemetery but has still yet to be able to locate her plot.

“I know I have a great aunt there (St. Clair Cemetery) but nobody in my family knew her married name so I can’t locate her. We know she was a Caldwell before marrying and that they came from Terre Haute to Henryville,” Prall stated.

The Clark County Cemetery Commission’s purpose is to protect cemeteries in Clark County. Last year, Abbott was approached by a concerned citizen regarding the shape of Bower-Work Cemetery. Since Prall is a member of the Cemetery Board, he was aware of last year’s volunteer effort. Usually the Cemetery Commission does not deal in the cleaning up of the older cemeteries.

“I know there are several cemeteries out there that have probably almost been forgotten. Although we (cemetery commission) don’t normally work on cleaning them up, I hope that we can work with local volunteers to get maybe one or two cleaned up each year,” Abbott stated. “This time of year when the weather is cooler and people are in

hibernation mode, I hope they begin to think about their lost loved ones and make plans to get out and work on some upkeep of their families final resting places.”

He continued, “I know we all get busy and have great intentions of taking care of those that went before us, but a lot of the time, we keep putting it off. Days like today, when I go check out an almost forgotten cemetery, I think how most of us really need to take the time to check on our loved ones’ grave sites.”

The hope of Prall and Abbott is to have a local group to volunteer to help clean up the St. Clair Cemetery.

“We would be so grateful for a group to step up and volunteer to help. I know it is asking a lot, but hopefully we can find a group willing to help out,” Abbott concluded.

If you or your organization would like more information on how to help the Clark County Cemetery Commission clean up St. Clair Cemetery, please contact David Abbott, Clark County Cemetery Commission President, at 502-931-4669.

The Clark County Cemetery Commission is currently meeting monthly at the Sellersburg Library. The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 11, at 7 p.m. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.