Forgotten Cemetery Resurrected after Years of Neglect
Pre-Civil War Burying Ground Rediscovered & Restored

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 15, 2022

WHITESTOWN, Ind. – McCord Cemetery in Boone County was abandoned, nearly forgotten, and in complete disarray. The names of the founders and leaders of the local community that were engraved on the headstones could barely be deciphered. The pioneer cemetery had literally been lost in the woods and underbrush, and was unknown to all but a few of the town's residents. But that was not to be the end of this hidden cemetery's story.

Thanks to the extensive research and work of fifth generation Whitestown resident and local historian, Mike Hancock, and the Worth Township Trustee's Office, the once-forgotten cemetery has been restored, surveyed, mapped, and protected for future generations. Hancock also acknowledges the efforts and contributions made by Janice West years ago to document this cemetery, as her work was a contributing factor in locating portions of the research data.

The story of the restoration of McCord cemetery began in 2016 when booming development threatened to destroy this unique piece of history forever. Since the cemetery no longer showed up on any legal documents or plats, it could have been accidentally plowed under as developers rushed to build homes in the growing area.

Although abandoned, neglected for decades, and completely unknown to most residents, Hancock began his research out of concern for the cemetery and its preservation. He worked with the landowner to transfer the deed for the property to the Township Trustee's Office, ensure the cemetery was properly surveyed and recorded, and to reestablish a legal record of the burial ground on official county documents.

With support of the Worth Township Trustee and Advisory Board, restoration began in summer of 2022. The stones were professionally repaired and cleaned by Stonehugger Cemetery Restoration LLC. Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) was also used to ensure no buried grave markers were missed. Headstones that were badly broken and unreadable had to be carefully pieced back together like a puzzle. One even had to be delicately removed from a tree that had grown around it. But the results are nothing short of astounding.

Before-and-after photos show the amazing transformation. The once dead and forgotten, pre-civil war cemetery has now been brought back to life. Hancock feels relieved that the final resting place for these early Boone County pioneering souls will now be protected and preserved forevermore, since the survey and mapping data has been shared with the Indiana DHPA (Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology.)

"I am thankful for my wife, Cheryl, for her assistance and support through this lengthy and sometimes painstaking process. I am also thankful for the Worth Township Trustee and Advisory Board for their support. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to lead the effort to protect, preserve, and restore this pioneer cemetery," said Hancock. "I am thrilled with the results."

After the project was complete, Rich Green with Historic Archaeological Research reached out to Hancock concerning the massive scope of this particular cemetery restoration. "My crew commented on and were appreciative of all the hard work that went into saving this severely damaged cemetery," wrote Green. "I don't think many cemeteries that have fallen into that level of disrepair ever find their way back to a place of decency and respect."

See before & after photos here: https://worthtownship.org/mccord-cemetery.html

Contacts:
Jim Baldwin – Worth Township Trustee
Email - Trustee@worthtownship.org