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Old cemetery stone wall nears completion

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Contributor

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This section of the completed cemetery wall shows where workers used salvaged pieces and parts of tombstones framing them within the wall.



Workers check out one of many broken tombstones.

The old cemetery stone wall building project began in spring of 2007 with a few Greenfield Historical Society Members assisting local stone mason, John Daugherty and his two helpers, Teddy Higginbotham and Everett Harvey.

The 2007 City Council gave its blessing to the project, which would cost the city of Greenfield nothing. The volunteer work crew labored diligently every Saturday throughout the spring, summer, and fall of that year and began again in spring 2008.

Work progressed slowly but continued throughout the summer and fall and was nearly completed. Donations were received to pay for the sand, coloring, and mortar by private area citizens.

Many residents drove by and stopped to look and enjoy the progress as well as commend the workers. Others walked by every Saturday and made a point of going inside the walled area to admire the difference already visible from the outside.

Regardless of age, sex, or nationality, people were encouraging and positive about the project.

Now comes the time to complete the project. Just a few more Saturdays and the commitment made to the city will be honored.

Citizens saw the need for the wall, both to save the stones from theft and destruction and to do something positive for the city.

It is something our grandchildren and future generations can be proud of and take pride in. In some small way we honor those who came before us.

We rescued broken and lost tombstones and foot stones and where the graves could not be found, placing thrown away markers inside as a part of the wall as a memorial.

We may not know who they are or when they were born or died, but we do know they lived and died here in Greenfield and helped make it a better place. We honor them for that.

Now it is time to begin again. Workers will meet at the old cemetery on McArthur Way Saturday, April 18 at 8 a.m. The existing stretch of wall should be finished quickly.

Then a 2nd stage will begin at the opposite end of the wall. There is enough stone to complete an archway on the opposite side of the gate to make a lovely entrance.

But this time we will need more help. It is time for more volunteer laborers to assist. Saturdays will be "meet at the cemetery wall" days and with a concerted effort we will finish the project before spring is over.

If you can't help lift, move, or clean rocks, come by with a cool drink for workers or a snack. These are always appreciated. Beyond that it will take a few more donations to purchase the rest of the needed sand and mortar.

There is something everyone can do. This is a project that helps beautify our city, brings us closer together, and proves that people working together can and do make a difference.

For donations or other information contact Earlene Scott at 937.981.3638. Donations are also accepted by Sandra McNeil at the Home Building and Loan on Jefferson Street in Greenfield.