



## A NEW BEGINNING!

Union Campground Cemetery  
Valley Water Mill Road  
Springfield, Missouri

April 12, 1994

To enter the grounds of the cemetery is to step back in time. The muffled sounds of the highway traffic fade into the background and only the murmur of a nearby stream breaks the silence. The years of neglect and abandonment fill your vision, yet there is an awareness of what nature has created--a wild and beautiful setting.

At first you do not see the tombstones. Then, here and there, you begin to notice a stone or two, darkened with age, names and dates almost illegible. As you continue to stroll over the uneven ground, other headstones and footstones appear, with some having only jagged rocks as markers. Evidence of vandalism assaults the senses as you notice stones toppled to the ground, many broken in two and a few even moved to other parts of the cemetery.

However, in spite of all this abuse the graveyard maintains a proud dignity. The numerous grand, old trees stand ever vigilant over the three acres as if protecting the precious memory of our ancestors. Springtime has created a carpet of wildflowers in shades of blue, yellow, pink and white. May apples have pushed through the layers of leaves and an occasional clump of daffodils can be seen in full bloom.

Realizing the necessity of preserving and restoring this special part of our heritage, fourteen descendants (plus husbands/wives and friends) came together for a meeting on March 13, 1994 at the Greene County Public Library to discuss the need to form an association. Anne Appleby volunteered to chair a committee to investigate procedures to become incorporated and she volunteered the services of her son, David Appleby, to complete the appropriate forms. We are indebted to him for donating his time and expertise and only hope that someday soon we will be able to meet him personally and extend a hand of gratitude and friendship. David has a law firm in Ozark, Missouri. Note: Until we are incorporated and obtain tax exempt status, we cannot accept donations.

Officers were elected to serve in the initial phase of "our beginnings" and the names are:

Jean Rayl, President  
1853 E. Gretna  
Springfield, Mo. 65804  
Telephone: (417) 881-4456

Elaine Mott, Secretary  
2835 S. Fort, Apartment 906  
Springfield, Mo. 65807  
Telephone: (417) 886-1296

Viola Nimmo, Treasurer  
Rt. 10  
Springfield, MO. 65803  
Telephone: (417) 833-2025

UPDATE: A clean-up day was held on March 30, 1994 and seven hearty individuals braved a cool and windy day to attack the buckbrush, fallen limbs and other debris. A site was cleared for the Decoration Day activities in May and a path was cleared for visitors to enter from the hill on the northwest corner of the cemetery. The McMurry family had already "enjoyed" a work day a week or so before as they cleaned and cleared the McMurry plot. Many thanks to those who have taken the time to help in the restoration process.

SURVEY: Appreciation is extended to Rick Wilson of the Wilson Surveying Company, Springfield, Missouri, for conducting a very thorough survey of Union Campground Cemetery FREE OF CHARGE. He provided us with a grid of the grounds showing where his crew found gravestones. His generosity benefits not only our association but the community at large.

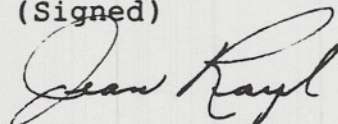
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Decoration Day celebration on the grounds has been scheduled for Saturday, May 28, 1994, at 11:00 A.M. with a covered dish dinner followed by a short program and a SHORT meeting. The food committee, under the direction of Grace Adams (417) 886-4110), will provide table service including paper plates, cups and napkins. Please bring folding chairs for yourself and guests you plan to invite. You should also call Grace to let her know how many will be in your party. Plan to set aside this day!

SPECIAL: We have heard either by letter or long-distance call from: Bob Adams, Ft. Scott, KS; Raymond Ellison, Anaheim, CA; Pam Galindo, Clovis, CA; Barbara Hoffman, Merritt Island, FL; Don & Nettie Lou Rathbone, Lees Summit, MO; Betty and Robert Ray, Bella Vista, AR; Dorothy Turner, Elko, NEV.

PUBLICITY: Be sure and read the May edition of Springfield Magazine. Mabel Carver Taylor, a good friend and professional free lance writer, has an article on the cemetery and early settlers in the Valley Water Mill area.

(Signed)



(Please contact me if you have had a change of name, address or telephone number.)