

Lagatha Paysinger: Cleaning and Fencing the Austin Croney Harlow Cemetery

In this Austin-Croney-Harlow cemetery are many field stones, and I've been told that slaves are buried there, you've heard that. My husband, Bob Paysinger, and I started cleaning off that cemetery back in '50, '73, '73, 1973. We went down there and we could not get in there to find my grandparents' grave. It was so thick with bushes and briars and all kinds of trees and things, and we just turned away, and decided we were going to do something about it. So we went back, later that year, and started with a two bit axe, just cutting away, and we made ourselves a path in there. There was a locust tree growing up in my grandmother's grave, that my husband cut with that axe, to get it out of sight. And, as the years went on, every January and February, the first warm days, we would go down there and we would cut away, cut away, and cut away until we finally got it sort of cleaned off. Then in later years we continued that, until the last time we were down there was in 2005. . . Then, I decided I was not satisfied with just that, because I was afraid that the farm tractors, whatever, would damage the stones, and maybe run over some field stones and move them. So we decided we would put a fence up. So, through donations from Croney's and Harlow's, we established a bank account, and we got the fence put up. And now, since my husband is gone, and I no longer care to go down there to do that, I don't know who is going to contain that cemetery. I just hope somebody, somebody will care enough to do it annually, because that's the only way that you can keep up with it is, is to do it annually.