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[From Lansing State Journal]

Schneider: Girl Scout's cleanup crew restores dignity to old graveyard

ALAIEDON TWP. - The transformation is truly astonishing.

In two days, 50 to 60 volunteers led by Girl Scout Allison Findlay wrenched Alaiedon Township's DuBois Cemetery from its status as a neglected, weed-infested hilltop and reinvented it as a well-groomed, respectful memorial for some of the township's earliest settlers.

As I wrote in a previous column, the cemetery - the victim, as one township trustee put it, of "benign neglect" on the part of the township - was all but invisible from Every Road. Now the grave stones stand out proudly, silhouetted against the sky. For the moment, the grass around them is parched and stiff as porcupine quills, but an honest rain or two will soften it up and make it green again.

[Enlarge photo](#)



(Photo by Courtesy photo) DuBois before: Girl Scout Allison Fi DuBois Cemetery in Alaiedon Town gravestone of Sarah DuBois, who c

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Some of the volunteers came both days of the weekend. They showed up early with their brush-cutters and string-trimmers; their rakes and shovels and metal rods with which to probe the earth for buried markers.

Revelations

By Sunday evening, they had uncovered nearly 30 new stones. In one memorable instance, a young boy who, according

to Allison, "worked tirelessly for two days" received his reward when he found an unbroken double stone marking the single grave of the Spear sisters - Nina, 3, and Flossie, 5 - who died within three days of each other in November 1885.

Allison and her crew uncovered some good stories as well. An elderly woman - a member of the Every family - said that, according to family lore, 50 horse-drawn

[Events](#) buggies came to DuBois for the burial of John Every, who died at age 68, on June 5, 1887.

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[Music](#)

[People](#) While DuBois has been relieved of its chaos, the work is far from over.

COMMUNITIES

[Bath](#) Allison, who adopted the cemetery for a Girl Scout Gold Award project, will now document the graves, transfer the information to www.rootsweb.com, a genealogy site, and plan for a rededication ceremony in the spring. She's already rounded up a bagpiper, color guard and minister.

[Charlotte](#)

[Delta-Waverly](#)

[DeWitt](#)

Marker fund

[East Lansing](#) Also, Allison will continue to accept donations for a bronze marker listing the names of all the people buried at DuBois. They may be mailed to Allison at 538 Willoughby Road, Mason MI 48854. She hopes to have the marker installed prior to the spring ceremony.

[Eaton Rapids](#)

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[Lansing](#) At a meeting of the Township Board Monday, Allison urged the trustees to visit the cemetery and told them that a man who has relatives buried there has volunteered to keep it mowed free of charge, if the township wished to officially relinquish that responsibility.

[Mason](#)

[Okemos](#)

[Portland](#) In an e-mail describing the meeting, Allison's mother, Marjorie Findlay wrote:

[St. Johns](#)

[Williamston](#) "The board was friendly and seemed genuinely pleased with the work done by the volunteers ... I think they may be hearing positive comments from township residents because they seem to have finally accepted the fact that it's all for the good."

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