

BILLINGSLY CEMETERY – REPORT - 17 MARCH 2008

IBERIA, MISSOURI, USA

The Billingsly Cemetery is virtually inaccessible. The cemetery sits upon Steve Perkins privately owned land. The only way to view the cemetery is through Steve Perkins permission, or if you know the adjacent land owner, Roy Keeth. We were lucky in that our cousin Roy Keeth, drove us through the muddy pasture in his 4x4 Chevy pickup, and got us there without any problems. The quest to view the cemetery now includes the passage through multiple cattle gates. Once through the field, you walk the rest way in. The cemetery is sectioned off with barbwire, but cattle have obviously gotten through, as there is cattle excrement throughout the cemetery. I saw at least two rabbits while visiting the cemetery, for many have made their home there. Deer droppings indicate that cattle are not the only visitors. I honestly have never seen a cemetery in such a horrible shape. The entire cemetery is an overgrown thicket of trees of vegetation. We literally dug our ancestors fallen tomb markers out of the earth, and wiped them with a squeegee that Roy had in his truck. If you ever plan on visiting Billingsly Cemetery, you will need a 4x4 vehicle, a weed eater, sturdy shoes, a shovel, clippers, and a stiff wire brush. You may want to take some paper and pencil to do some marker rubbings, as many tombstones are hard to read. A bottle of water is good to have to wash the surfaces off for readability. Fallen trees and curious cattle have been the demise of many markers located there. It would be a great service if the Miller County Historical Society, and or relatives ancestors of the buried, could come together and team up to preserve this cemetery, which I fear will soon be lost if action is not taken. I took many photos to document the cemetery. Here are a few:

Photo 1: This is the cattle gate you must pass through on Steve Perkins property, in order to access the Billingsly Cemetery. The cemetery is behind the cattle in this photo, in that wooded grove thicket.



Photo 2: This is a photo showing how you must shoo the cattle, then open the gate, then drive the pickup through, then quickly close the gate behind you so the cattle do not get out. I am in the truck, looking out the front windshield. You can see the cemetery which is in the wooded grove behind the cattle there in the pasture.



Photo 3: We pulled the truck up to the cemetery barbwire fence. There is no entrance gate, you just climb over or under the barbwire to access the cemetery.



Photo 4: Billingsly Cemetery has been ravaged by time, cattle, overgrown vegetation and falling trees.



Photo 5: Most markers in the cemetery have been knocked over, and many are buried in the earth.



Photo 6: After much feeling around, and digging around, we came across a couple Slone markers. Both markers had been broken off their stand, and were buried under overgrown grass. We unearthed them and cleaned them off the best we could with the limited resources on hand. In the photo below you can see the marker of Laura Slone before we completely unearthed it from the ground and growth. It had been broken at the base.



Photo 7: Markers of Ida and Laura Slone, daughters of William Thomas Slone and Susannah Thompson Slone.



Photo 8: Close up of Laura Slone, daughter of William Thomas Slone and Susannah Thompson Slone. The Marker had been broken off at the base and fell backwards, being buried under growth over time. We unearthed it and before we left, propped it against its original tombstone base.



Photo 9: Another close up shot of Laura Slone's tombstone marker.



Photo 10: Ida Slone, daughter of William Thomas Slone tombstone marker. Sister of the above mentioned Laura Slone.



Photo 11: Close up of Ida Slone daughter of William Thomas Slone tomb.



Photo 12: Infant son of William Thomas Slone and Susannah Thompson tombstone marker. This marker was not buried in the ground completely, which allowed us to locate the other Slone markers, due to proximity. This marker was broken off, but it appeared someone had stuck it back in the ground right side up, as only the lower three inches of it were underground, and it was stuck in front of the stand it had broken off of.



Photo 13: This photo depicts how the marker had broken off the original stand, and someone Had propped it up in front of the stand, and the lower three inches were buried in earth.



Photo 14: This is most likely a Slone marker, as it was located right next to the other Slone tombs. It is a simple marker that has the initials I.S. carved upon it.



Other surname tombstone markers:

Since the cemetery is so very hard to access, I took it upon myself to photograph some of the markers located there, in hopes these photos would assist others seeking their ancestors. The photos are in no particular order, but all are located in Billingsly Cemetery, Iberia, Miller County, Missouri, USA. There is a list of those buried in the cemetery which you can download at the Missouri Gen Web Miller County website. Some surnames of those buried include: Slone, Rowland, Simpson, Earp, Dickenson, Franklin, and more. Here are some random tomb photos:









J. FRANKLIN
1887 - 1888



JAMES B.
ROWLAND

MISSOURI

BY

TRP K. H. REGT. CAV.

FEBRUARY 22 1888

FEBRUARY 10 1914





This Report and the accompanying photographs are courtesy of Sonja Slone. Sonja would also like to thank her cousin Roy Keeth for accompanying her, as there is no way she could have accessed the cemetery without his gracious help and assistance. The photos were taken on 17 March 2008.