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June 19, 2006

Brown County ILGenWeb Project
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilbrown/brown.htm>

Attn: Mr. Ken Huffman

Dear Mr. Huffman,

I am writing to solicit your interest and support in two areas, regional history and the fiscal needs of a very old cemetery in the vicinity of Mt. Sterling, Illinois. I have enclosed a copy of my recent correspondence to the proprietors of the Bell-Keith Cemetery for your enlightenment. It is my hope that you will find the story informative and perhaps useful to the visitors of your website.

The Bell-Keith Cemetery in Brown County Illinois, is located just north of Mt. Sterling at the end of Township road 1325 N, one-half mile east of County route 99. The cemetery rests on a picturesque knoll bordered on two sides by trees and two sides open farmland.

The cemetery derives its name from the progenitors of the Bell and Keith families. It was the Bell family that settled the area as early as 1830. As time passed, the burial grounds were used for extended family members and friends of the families. The cemetery contains the remains of about 180 people that have been interred during its 140-year history. Articles pertaining to the history of the people and the cemetery are well represented in the history books of Brown County.

The matter of funding the perpetual care of the grounds has become difficult for the proprietors of Bell-Keith Cemetery. This is due in part to sales or the lack thereof. The cemetery no longer sells plots for future burials. Further, the law requires that the cemetery place bonds in escrow. These bonds do not accrue enough in interest to generate adequate capital for the operating fund.

Circulation of the history of the cemetery and of the people interred there is one of the means available to solicit donations to replenish the cemetery's operating fund. Publicity regarding the current crisis of the cemetery may unveil other opportunities including aid from County, Township or other sources.

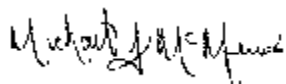
I have been researching the history of the McMeins family for several years. I am a member in good standing of numerous area historical societies including the Versailles Area Genealogical & Historical Society. I have had the pleasure of obtaining Pioneer and First Settler certificates for members of the McMeins family in Adams and Brown Counties in Illinois as well as Prairie Pioneer status with the Illinois State Genealogy Society. I have also submitted James McMeins' history to the Military Wall of Honor in Jefferson County, Missouri.

In the event that you find the story useful then herein is my written permission to publish as you see fit. This permission includes the clarifications and edits that may be required to best serve your genealogical web page. The source information will be made available upon your request.

I understand that the material may not be suitable for use on your web page. In that event, I would be grateful if you could pass the information to friends or relatives that may have an interest in the cemetery. The cemetery will benefit from any exposure it receives from publication on your web site

I thank you for your time and anxiously wait your response.

Sincerely,



Michael J. McMeins

encl. Bell-Keith Cemetery correspondence with enclosures, dated June 16, 2006