



GUS PEARCY | THE LEBANON REPORTER

**COMMUNITY MARKER:** Reece Thompson of Lebanon restored a cemetery in Thorntown used for an African American community established in the mid-19th Century and gone by 1920s.

## Paying tribute

*Early African American cemetery commemorated*

BY GUS PEARCY  
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Through the efforts of an Eagle Scout, the Indiana Historical Bureau will dedicate Boone County's eighth state historical marker, remembering one of the earliest black communities at the site of the "colored cemetery" at 5 p.m. today. Afterwards, attendees are invited to Sugar Creek Historical Society's annual ice cream social at the Thorntown Heritage Museum at 124 N. Main St.

Around the Civil War, newly-

freed, African American slaves began seeking a new place to live. According to research written by author Shannon Hudson, two Boone County communities attracted many emancipated slaves due to a large Quaker presence. Members of the Friends Church opposed slavery and had a reputation for helping slaves escape before and during the war.

The Sugar Creek Community was one of the communities in Boone County established in Thorntown. It was a thriving

community of blacks. The community had an African Methodist Episcopal or AME church, a school on the northwest corner of Vine and Franklin streets, and a black Masonic Lodge.

Lebanon Reporter



More photos on our website at reporter.net

See CEMETERY on 6

## Parking paint the

BY GUS PEARCY  
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Nobody seems to know how the Lebanon High School National Honor Society chapter has been selling parking spots for students, but it's been at least 15 years. NHS sponsor and LHS teacher Jenny Gaha said the spots go for \$30 and sold in the spring. The NHS covers school parking fees and painting over of last year's designs so that all students get a fresh "canvas" to paint on. The NHS also has a share of the proceeds to support charities.

Painting starts a week before



**ACT ONE:** Grandmother Janet watch Emma Glauber paint her design of the sun shining over the parking spot for the entire school.

## Man killed in i

BY MARIA FLORA  
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A Crawfordsville man has died after an industrial accident at Fukushima in Jamestown.

Philip Dalton, 51, was operating an overhead crane by remote Monday when the load pinned him against another machine, causing severe internal injuries, Jamestown Police Chief Aaron Clapp said in a press release Friday.



Boone County Senior Services, Inc., 515 Crown Pointe Drive, Lebanon. Free independent instruction on how to use your SmartPhone, eReader, tablet, laptop or use one of the computers. Work on your projects or pick from the instructor, Yvonne Frankewich. Call BCSSI for an appointment.

#### CICOA SENIOR MEAL

**SITE** — 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday, Thorntown Public Library, 124 N. Market St., call 765-436-7348 to reserve a seat.

Boone County Senior Services Center, 515 Crown Pointe Dr., Lebanon. Bring your own games and organize your players.

If interested in playing bridge please contact Jim at 765-482-3638.

#### THURSDAY

**ART CLASS** — 9:30 a.m. — noon at BCSSI. Instructor Shirley Luttrell is happy to work with beginners, intermediate students and any medium; oils, acrylics or watercolors. Cost is \$5 per class.

#### FUN & FIT FOR OVER 50 —

Pavilion Wellness Center, Witham Health Services, 2605 N. Lebanon St., call 765-485-8126.

#### CICOA SENIOR MEAL

**SITE** — 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday, Thorntown Public Library, 124 N. Market St., call 765-436-7348 to reserve a seat.

**EUCHRE** — 7:30 p.m., for ages 50 or older, Lebanon Senior Citizens Club, 707 S. Lebanon St., Lebanon.

#### FRIDAY

#### CICOA SENIOR MEAL

**SITE** — 11:30 a.m. Monday through

N. Market St., call 765-436-7348 to reserve a seat.

**EUCHRE** — 12-3:30 p.m., for ages 50 and older, Lebanon Senior Citizens Club, 707 S. Lebanon St., Lebanon.

**COMMUNITY BINGO** — 2-3 p.m., for ages 50 and older and includes refreshments, Essex Nursing and Rehabilitation, 301 W. Essex St., Lebanon, call 765-482-1950.

**BINGO** — 6 p.m., for ages 50 and older, Lebanon Senior Citizens Club, 707 S. Lebanon St., Lebanon.

**CLOSED FOREVER**  
Restaurant north owners who are ing kitchen. Nan positions for this

#### SPOTS

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are based on what student is into. Seven their names into the Most students have how long the painting but most have fa



**ORANGE PROJECT:** S helps best friend B parking spot on the High School.

#### ACCIDENT

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assistance program has notified and will be available for any team member needing support."

FTIC shut down production in the area where De was injured and worked officials to gather information, Cantu said.

The company also notified the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the incident, she said.

## CEMETERY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

There was also a "colored cemetery" on County Road 825 West, just a half mile north of Indiana 47.

Reece Thompson of Lebanon was looking for an Eagle Scout project in 2016 and landed on restoring this cemetery after reading a 2013 article written by Rod Rose for *Boone Magazine*, produced by *The Lebanon Reporter*. He started a Colored Cemetery Committee to preserve the cemetery and history of the settlement. He even enlisted the help of Ball State University to bring out ground penetrating radar to seek headstones that may have sunk.

The GPR from Ball State illuminated objects like stones or an old barb-wire fence, but it couldn't tell what most of the objects were. Thompson got a Department of Natural Resources permit and probed and dug for possible headstones.

"I found sea shells because African Americans would lay sea shells where they're buried," Thompson said. "Also pieces of plates. It was just piles of gravel. We ended up not finding any headstones."

Research shows 47 to 49



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**STONE RESTORATION:** Thompson sprays a compound used to restore the grave markers in the "colored cemetery" which will be rededicated in a special ceremony today in Thorntown.

people are buried in the cemetery. Obituaries just mentioned a burial in Thorntown. The cemetery was never officially named. It was always called the colored cemetery. Thompson's Eagle Scout project was focused on restoring the cemetery. He raised \$19,500 to do the

radar, replace the stones he could find and erect a black ornamental fence appropriate for a cemetery.

Thompson earned his Eagle Scout badge in 2017 long before the fence or the large donations. He now studies public safety at IUPUI and wants to be a police officer.

According to the wording on the marker, the community was established around 1850, according to census data. By 1870, the Sugar Creek Community had more than 170 residents. Most became farmers and some owned property, despite Indiana's constitutional prohibition of a black settlement.

The colored cemetery was established because blacks and mulatto residents were not allowed to be buried in other Thorntown cemeteries. Records are not clear, but researchers believe the earliest burial was in 1878. The last burial was in 1935. At the dedication, Thompson said descendants of the people buried in the cemetery are expected to be special guests.

"Most people in Thorntown had no clue," Thompson said of the colored cemetery. "They knew it was here, they don't know anything about it though. Having that sign will commemorate what was here."

For more information about the Indiana Historical Bureau marker, visit the website at [www.in.gov/history/markers/3819.htm#boone](http://www.in.gov/history/markers/3819.htm#boone). To learn more about Thompson's Eagle Scout project and the restoration of the colored cemetery, visit the website at <http://eagleproject.homestead.com>.

visit  
**Mobile**  
Alabama

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