

History of a haunted cemetery

Looking back, from page A1

place, but his neighbors were inclined to put a grain of salt on his tale.

It should be noted that despite the fact that the area attracted settlers, the land was poor. Stepp is barely mentioned in the *Histories of Morgan, Monroe and Brown Counties, Indiana*, the par-

ticular history of Marion Township states that he "sold corn and bacon." Even so, the land was not known for its fertility, and repeated tree-cutting and harvests left it barren and eroded. In fact, in time some of the land was up for sale for delinquent taxes.

Meanwhile, the Stepp Cemetery continued to be the final resting place for the children and grandchildren of the original settlers. The tombstone reveal the harsh

statistics of frontier life — the deaths of children, young adults, as well as those surviving to middle age.

The Collier story may have given the area a spooky reputation in its early years, but it was nothing compared to the stories and variations that accumulated in the years afterward.

NEXT WEEK: The lady in black.