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BROKEN TOMBSTONES BREAK HER HEART

Volunteer who worked for years to restore cemetery finds it vandalized

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JIM WITMER/DAYTON DAILY NEWS

LISA O'HEARN WALKS AMONG VANDALIZED TOMBSTONES on Monday in the neighboring Kerr and Drill cemeteries on a hill behind Frederick Pike and Northcutt Place Monday. She was instrumental in restoring the cemetery, which was used from 1835 to 1874.

DAYTON — The head of the dainty concrete angel lay at the statue's feet, surrounded by other broken, smashed or uprooted headstones. Lisa O'Hearn tried not to cry on Monday each time she discovered new damage to old grave markers in the adjoining Kerr and Drill pioneer cemeteries, but after years of working to restore them, she couldn't hold back the tears.

"I can't imagine what would bring somebody to want to do this," O'Hearn said. "Where is the reverence?"

O'Hearn helped to organize a clean-up of the cemetery after discovering it while doing a title search a few years ago.

"I saw this tiny piece of land marked 'cemetery' on the map and I was curious," she said.

The two cemeteries encompass little more than an acre tucked behind apartment complexes between Frederick Pike and Northcutt Place just off Needmore Road. About 30 of the cemetery's 50 gravestones had been intact when volunteers last visited

PLEASE SEE CEMETERY ON A8