



JOE MAHONEY/TIMES-DISPATCH

Volunteers Marvin L. Harris (left) and Ron Hicks refuel their power tools while clearing overgrowth at Evergreen Cemetery in the East End of Richmond. "We need people to help us out," Harris said.

Fall cleanup set for Evergreen Cemetery

'We're going to fix this,' volunteer says of effort at 60-acre Richmond site

BY ELLIOTT ROBINSON
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Much work has been done, but there is much more to do. Last Thursday, a roll-off container was filled with overgrowth that once obscured countless graves in Richmond's Evergreen Cemetery.

From the grave of Maggie L. Walker, it once again was possible to see the grassy, oblong area where burials occur.

The graves of Walker and businessman and newspaper editor John Mitchell Jr. had a fresh layer of decorative stone.

But weeds and tall grass cover the active burial site. In total, only 5½ acres of the graveyard have been cleared. The rest of the 60-acre site remains covered



Marvin L. Harris has headed up the recent push to restore the historic cemetery. Five acres have been cleared.

in thick brush and trees.

"We're going to fix this," said Marvin L. Harris, who has spearheaded the recent push to restore the cemetery.

The situation was far worse in the spring. Before Harris and a rotating cadre of volunteers began tackling the brush, it was difficult to tell that

To help

Contact Marvin L. Harris at (804) 240-1418 or mharris@mapinv.com to volunteer or for more information.

the tangled forest was the final resting place of thousands of the region's African-Americans.

"It hurts my heart to see the money people put into the headstones in those times and you can't find them," Harris said as he stood at the grave of Alfred D. Price, founder of A.D. Price Funeral Home.

Recently, Price's headstone was uncovered. It wasn't the first time. Less than five years ago, that portion of the cemetery had been cleared. After that effort waned, overgrowth, vandals and other illicit uses returned.

But Harris and a core group of volunteers have not been deterred since the initial cleanup in May.

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