



For Immediate Release  
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Contact: Amy Lamb, Media Relations Manager  
(317) 232-1878 or [alamb@indianahistory.org](mailto:alamb@indianahistory.org)

## Cole Thompson Will Receive Award of Merit for Youth Leadership in History

**Indianapolis**—The Indiana Historical Society (IHS) is pleased to announce that Cole M. Thompson of Lebanon, Ind., will receive an Award of Merit for Youth Leadership in History during IHS's annual Founders Day event on Monday, Dec. 2, at the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center, located at 450 W. Ohio St. in downtown Indianapolis.

While projects by individuals are not eligible for IHS's annual Outstanding Event or Project award, members of the IHS Awards Committee felt strongly that Thompson's project deserved recognition.

"When we realized Cole's fantastic work did not fit the requirements of any existing award categories, it was clear his project still deserved special recognition," said Bill Bartelt, IHS trustee and chair of the Awards Committee. "It's exciting to see a young person invest so much time and effort into a historically-based project, and we hope to continue recognizing other young historians in the future."

In November 2011, Thompson read an editorial about the abandoned, vandalized Mechanicsburg Cemetery and decided to take on its restoration as his Eagle Scout project. After months of research and acquiring the proper permissions, he raised more than \$3,000 through private donations from individuals, clubs and local businesses, as well as grants from Boone County Youth as Resources and Boone REMC.

For three months, Thompson and more than 35 volunteers spent three days (565 total hours) donating their time, energy and muscle. The cemetery has about 200 headstones, more than 85 percent of which were in need of being up righted, repaired or reset. All of the stones needed, and received, cleaning.

"I believe in preserving history, encouraging others to come together and helping the needs of the community," Thompson said. An inscription on the new sign for the cemetery read "We owe our pioneer ancestors a better monument than a forgotten grave amid bramble and thicket."

Eagle Scout Cole Thompson part of the Crossroads of America Council, Sugar Creek District, Troop 350 in Advance, Ind.

For more information on the Mechanicsburg cemetery restoration, visit [http://cemetery.homestead.com/Mechanicsburg\\_Cemetery\\_Restoration\\_PP3.pdf](http://cemetery.homestead.com/Mechanicsburg_Cemetery_Restoration_PP3.pdf).

### About the Indiana Historical Society

Since 1830, the Indiana Historical Society has been Indiana's Storyteller™, connecting people to the past by collecting, preserving, interpreting and sharing the state's history. A private, nonprofit membership organization, IHS maintains the nation's premier research library and archives on the history of Indiana and the Old Northwest. IHS also provides support and assistance to local museums and historical groups, publishes books and periodicals; sponsors teacher workshops; and provides youth, adult and family programming.

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*For more information and/or images, or to schedule an interview, please contact Amy Lamb, Media Relations Manager, at (317) 232-1878 or [alamb@indianahistory.org](mailto:alamb@indianahistory.org).*