AASLH
TECHNICAL LEAFLET BUNDLE
A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

Cemetery Preservation Help

BUNDLE 027

DESCRIPTION

This technical leaflet bundles offers information on photographing, transcribing, preserving, and interpreting cemeteries. Often we have good intentions but don't know where to start or what needs to be done. This bundle discusses how to preserve the information that a cemetery contains *and* the basic preservation of the cemetery itself. The bundle includes information on conducting walking tours, a main-stay of cemetery preservation associations, and instructions on how to present the not-so-nice history that ultimately ends up in a cemetery.

TL# 242A-Preserving Historic Cemeteries (2008)
TL# 009 – Cemetery Transcribing: Preparations and Procedures (1971)
TL# 092 – Photographing Tombstones: Equipment and Techniques (1977)
TL# 255 – Interpreting Difficult Knowledge
TL# 194 – A Different Path for Historic Walking Tours

DESCRIPTION

This technical leaflet bundles offers information on photographing, transcribing, preserving, and interpreting cemeteries. Often we have good intentions but don't know where to start or what needs to be done. This bundle discusses how to preserve the information that a cemetery contains *and* the basic preservation of the cemetery itself. The bundle includes information on conducting walking tours, a main-stay of cemetery preservation associations, and instructions on how to present the not-so-nice history that ultimately ends up in a cemetery.

AASLH
TECHNICAL LEAFLET #242
A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

Preserving Historic Cemeteries

By the Texas Historical Commission

Editor's note: This technical leaflet was adapted from "Preserving Historic Cemeteries: Texas Preservation Guidelines." The original document is available online from www.thc.state.tx.us/publications/guidelines/Preservecem.pdf

Cemeteries are among our most valuable historic resources. The definition of a cemetery may vary from state to state; the Texas Health and Safety Code defines a cemetery as a place that is used or intended to be used for interment, and includes a graveyard (including single graves), burial parks, and mausoleums. They are reminders of settlement patterns, such as villages, rural communities, urban centers, and ghost towns. They can reveal information about historic events, religion, culture, and genealogy. Names on gravemarkers serve as a directory of earlier residents and reflect the ethnic diversity and unique population of an area. Gravemarker designs and cemetery decoration and landscaping represent a variety of cultural influences that shape the history of a locale: a neighborhood, town, city, or community. Established in large part for the benefit of the living, cemeteries perpetuate the memories of the deceased, those who bequeathed to their communities the amenities that give a place character and definition. In communities with a strong sense of history, people are more likely to protect and maintain cemeteries.

Unfortunately, historic cemeteries do not necessarily remain permanent reminders of our heritage. They are subject to long-term deterioration from natural forces such as weathering and uncontrolled vegetation. Neglect accelerates the process. Development activities and construction projects are also a threat to these precious resources. Vandalism and theft continue to plague both rural and urban burying grounds across the nation as well. What follows is a survey of strategies to aid in the preservation of historic cemeteries. None of these strategies, however, will be successful without the involvement of individuals who have an interest in local culture and history and a commitment to saving the physical remnants of their community's heritage.

All photos Texas Historical Commission

Intricately cast metal gravemarkers indicate a region's ethnic heritage.

Several federal laws protect cultural resources in the United States. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, is the statutory tool for protecting cultural resources. The Act promotes a national policy to preserve historic properties, significant historic and prehistoric sites, buildings and objects that are either eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies that fund, license, permit, or approve construction or similar projects to consider the effects of the undertakings on historic properties. Section 101(b)(3) of the Act states that one of the responsibilities of the State Historic Preservation Officer is to advise and assist federal agencies in carrying out their historic preservation responsibilities and to ensure that all are taken into consideration at each level of planning and development.

Cemeteries are one kind of cultural resource that must be considered by federal agencies during such an undertaking. The 1980 and 1992 amendments to the Act further reinforce cemetery protection measures by requiring federal agencies to develop preservation programs for identifying and protecting

The Example of the Historic Texas Cemetery Designation

A cemetery that is deemed worthy of recognition and preservation for its historic associations is eligible to be designated as a Historic Texas Cemetery. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is the state agency for historic preservation with the responsibility of identifying, interpreting, and protecting our historical resources. The THC works with interested citizens, county historical commissions, and heritage groups to preserve historical resources, including cemeteries. The following provides an overview of the criteria, research methods, and documentation necessary to apply for a Historic Texas Cemetery designation.

For many years, the THC has received telephone calls and letters from concerned citizens about the preservation of historic cemeteries that are located in both urban and rural settings. With the expansion of many urban areas, historic cemeteries are increasingly threatened. Sometimes these cemeteries disappear over a long period of time with the removal of one headstone at a time, while others disappear completely overnight. In rural areas, historic cemeteries are threatened by the breaking up of large tracts of land for residential development, by the absence of fencing allowing livestock to topple and break up headstones, and by the expansion of cultivated acreage. Cemeteries often are the last reminders of early settlements whose historical events, religion, lifestyles, and genealogy are threatened and could be lost forever.

The Historic Texas Cemetery designation was developed to address the problem of the destruction and illegal removal of historic cemeteries in Texas. This designation cannot guarantee that a historic cemetery will not be destroyed, but official recognition of these family and community landmarks highlights their importance and promotes an attitude of respect and reverence by neighboring landowners and the general citizenry. This encourages further preservation of these unique resources.

Two basic criteria govern the approval for the Historic Texas Cemetery designation: One, the cemetery must be at least fifty years old; and two, it must be deemed worthy of preservation for its historic associations. The very nature of a cemetery being a landmark of a family's or community's presence is considered to validate the criteria of historical associations.

The Designation Process

Applicant researches the history of the cemetery, fills out the application, and develops or finds a map for recordation.

Applicant submits application, attachments, and processing fee of $25 to the THC.

THC staff reviews the application and attachments. THC staff may request additional information. When all of the material is in order, the staff will review the application and, upon approval, the Affidavit of Dedication will be mailed to the applicant.

Applicant takes Affidavit of Dedication to the county clerk for recording. The applicant will secure copies of the recorded document(s) indicating the volume and page number of other recordation references and send it/them to the THC.

THC staff issues the applicant a certificate upon receipt of the copy/copies of the recorded Affidavit of Dedication. A cemetery or burial site that has received the Historic Texas Cemetery designation is also eligible to display the Historic Texas Cemetery medallion and an optional name and date plaque or interpretive plaque at the cemetery or burial site. Application for these medallions and plaques are available upon request following the bestowing of the Historic Texas Cemetery designation on a historic cemetery or burial site.

historic properties, and by expanding and maintaining the National Register of Historic Places in a way that considers the preservation of their historical, archeological, architectural, and cultural value.

These preservation laws can affect cemeteries if they are within the boundaries of a federal project area, if they have been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register and if they are to be affected by the development project in some manner. Sometimes cemeteries in a project area must be moved.

The agency involved is usually requested to have professional archeologists make a map of the cemetery and document the gravemarkers and any other features (depressions, fencing, and vegetation) associated with the cemetery. Archeologists and physical anthropologists may be present to identify and study human remains and grave artifacts during manual excavation of the interment. Often information is recorded from the gravestones to provide historical documentation, such as the length of occupancy of a land tract or ethnic affiliations in the community. This documentation can assist archeologists and historians in interpreting other historic properties within a federal project area.

Protection for Historic Cemeteries

Communities can begin to protect historic cemeteries by documenting their locations. Enlist the support of county historical commissions, genealogical societies, Junior Historian chapters, scout troops, or area historical societies. The U.S. Geological Survey publishes topographical maps that identify sites such as cemeteries. These resources are available at store.usgs.gov/locator and maps are available at various subscription sites.

A good way to begin your research is to check with local genealogical groups, libraries, and museums for information, such as early surveys, newspaper archives, vertical files, books and other publications, maps, and photographs. Some cemeteries are small and not identified on area maps; these are often difficult to locate. Talk to the older people in the community, as well as representatives of funeral homes and churches for their recollections of burial grounds. These oral histories are often an invaluable aid to locating small family cemeteries.

Once located, historic cemeteries can again become an integral part of the community. Stage periodic preservation or maintenance events or contribute articles to the local paper about the lives of individuals or families buried in the cemeteries. Encourage students at all levels to explore historic cemeteries and write essays about tombstone design, burial and decoration customs, or community history, including infant mortality, local epidemics, or catastrophic events.

In all cases, however, balance common sense with practical considerations. There are times when publicizing the location of a cemetery is detrimental to its preservation. Vandals can desecrate secluded cemeteries that are located away from the eyes of the protective community. Keep statistical and historical information readily available for public use, but be discreet about the exact location of vulnerable cemeteries.

National, state, and local historical markers provide a focal point for drawing public attention to cemeteries. Historical markers provide an overview of the individuals or institutions associated with a site. In addition to cemetery preservation events and publicity efforts, historical markers also function as tools that will increase public awareness of these important cultural resources. Such awareness and education are among the best ways to guarantee the preservation of a cemetery.

What to Do if a Cemetery Is in Danger

Should you see a cemetery being disturbed by vandals, looters, or construction equipment, regardless of whether it is marked by headstones or a fence, call local law enforcement authorities at once. Be familiar with state laws and how they protect cemeteries and provide a legal framework for removing the grave remains in a dignified manner. Question if a proposed removal of a cemetery is necessary or can remain in its historic context. If removing a cemetery is the only option, all burials must be removed according to legal statutes before the landowner can use the property for any other purpose. The same protection applies to isolated burials. Be sure to inform the authorities of pertinent cemetery laws they might not be familiar with.

After contacting local law enforcement, notify the county historical commission or city historical society, local heritage society, and local newspapers about the destruction of a cemetery. Stay involved. Do not condone the willful destruction with silence or by turning a blind eye. The memory of those who have lived before us should not be forsaken for reasons of expediency or economic gain.

There are some cases in which criminal action is not appropriate, and a civil lawsuit may be the only means of resolving a conflict involving a cemetery. For instance, a county historical commission in Central Texas undertook a survey of the historic cemeteries in the region, and several years later historic fencing and gravestones from one of the surveyed sites were removed. No markers remained to provide evidence of the graveyard, and only the survey could prove the cemetery's existence. Since the site was being considered for development, the records of the county historical commission were crucial to the future disposition of the land. In this case, the descendants of those interred in the cemetery filed suit and were compensated in an out-of-court settlement.

While it is disturbing to lose cemeteries to development pressures, it is perhaps even more disturbing to

lose them to criminal acts of vandalism and looting. Vandalism can range from intentionally pushing over gravemarkers to spray painting graffiti on gravestones. The demand by collectors for vintage artifacts and architectural and landscaping antiques has contributed to the increasing disappearance of elaborately carved gravestones, sculptures, urns, finials, benches, gates, and fencing from cemeteries. This demand also leads to the digging and looting of graves for valuable objects such as jewelry, firearms, buttons, and buckles.

If a cemetery is destroyed, use that fact as a rallying point for the preservation of a community's remaining cemeteries. Nothing can substitute for the preservation efforts of individuals. You and other interested people and groups must develop an active role in the preservation of local cemeteries today in order to walk among the gravemarkers and read the tender thoughts of enduring human emotions tomorrow.

Detailed stone carving turns some gravemarkers into works of art.

Cemetery Preservation

Even though the most disturbing threats to any cemetery are the acts of vandalism and theft, simple neglect of maintenance is perhaps a more common and damaging problem. The following suggestions offer useful information and guidance for individuals and groups who are considering cemetery restoration.

Get Permission. Find out who has legal jurisdiction over the cemetery and get written permission for restoration. If it is on public land, contact the federal, state, or local government entity with the authority to protect the property. If the cemetery is on private land, contact the landowner or his or her representative and descendants and negotiate access, in addition to obtaining the necessary written permission. Cemetery associations are common in most states. If a cemetery association is involved, become familiar with its rules and regulations. If a cemetery is not clearly established in the county deed records, consider recording its existence—this may be the single most valuable act of preservation for any cemetery.

Security. Before any plans are made for preservation or maintenance activities, secure the cemetery. Contact law enforcement officials and ask them to add the cemetery to their route patrols. Request their advice when creating security measures for the cemetery. Develop a good relationship with the local police department or sheriff's office. Create a neighborhood cemetery watch group. Ask them to report

Definition of Terms Used in Surveying Cemeteries

Condition of Carving

Mint: carving is in perfect condition, as though it were just carved.

Clear but worn: carving shows some wear but legibility is not affected.

Mostly readable: carving is difficult to read without directing light across the surface with the aid of a mirror or a flashlight.

Traces: parts of the carving are visible but difficult to read or to determine the whole design.

Illegible: none of the carving can be read.

Underground: stone is laying face down or buried so carving cannot be read.

Overall Condition

Soiled: the surface is covered with dirt but can be easily washed off with water.

Stained: the surface exhibits stains that cannot be easily removed with water.

Delaminating: the stone is splitting off in layers, similar to what happens when interior plywood is subjected to moisture.

Graffiti: designs not part of the original design are drawn, painted, sprayed, or scratched on the stone.

Biological activity: lichen, mold, or mildew is found on the surface.

Erosion: sections of the stone are worn off, usually from wind or water.

Blistering/flaking/scaling/powdering: small or isolated areas are missing or surface of the stone is loose.

Cracked: stone is cracked but not broken into separate parts.

Tilted/fallen/sunken: the stone is not in its original alignment or is partly below the surface.

Open joints: the mortar in the mortar joints is missing.

Fragmented: sections of the stone are broken into many parts.

Losses: parts of the stone are missing, such as a finial (terminating detail on the top of the gravestone).

Previous Visible Repairs

Adhesive repairs: repairs to the stone with epoxy or some other adhesive have not been cleaned off the surface following repairs (may have turned a butterscotch color because of ultraviolet light).

Replacement: total replacement of the original stone, which can be determined by the date of death or the newness of the stone.

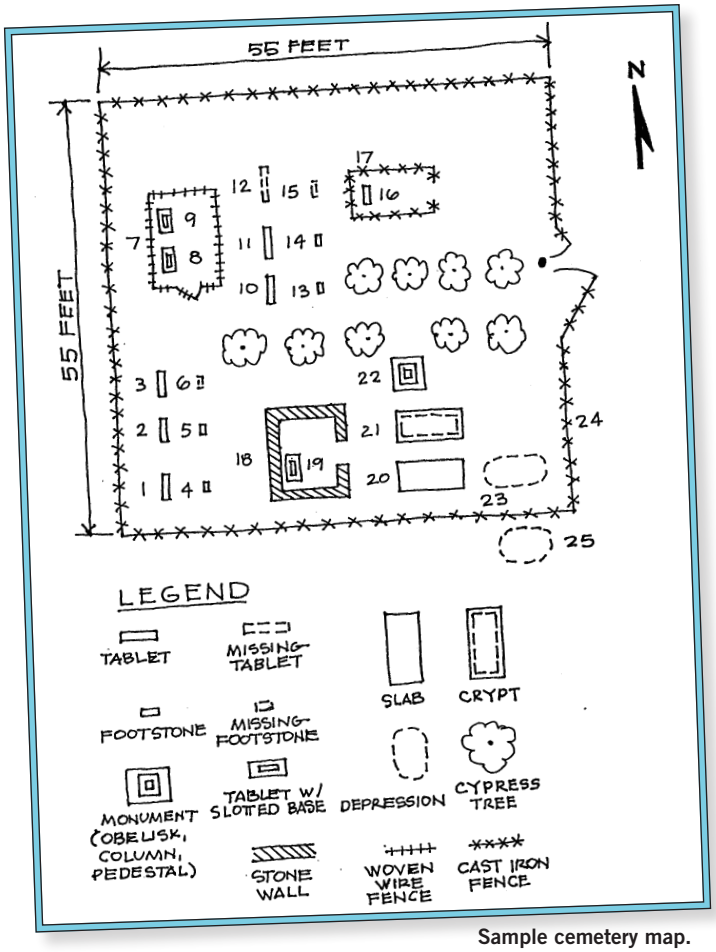
Portland cement: a hard gray material improperly used to repair gravestones or encase fragments (this material is commonly used to construct sidewalks and foundations of buildings).

any suspicious activity to the police. Let the neighbors know that an effort is underway to preserve the cemetery and tell them who to contact if they notice any problems. Establish a written theft and recovery plan, including an emergency contacts list.

If a fence is not in place, erect appropriate fencing that will keep livestock out of rural cemeteries (livestock can knock down and trample gravestones) and deter vandals from entering, while allowing people to see in. Be certain you know the history of the cemetery and are aware if unmarked graves might exist to include them inside the new perimeter fence. When appropriate and practical, use lights to illuminate the dark corners of the cemetery.

Do not restrict access to cemeteries, but consider posting visiting hours, rules, and regulations. Post signs at entrances to let visitors know who and how to contact for access, and to show that the cemetery is maintained.

Survey and Inventory. In order to fully document a cemetery, gravemarkers, fences, and buildings must be recorded. One especially effective strategy is to create a map of the cemetery grounds that includes the location of trees, bushes, fences, gates, and other landscape features (see an example below). Note the location and orientation of each gravemarker, mausoleum, crypt, and monument. Include the orientation of all marked and unmarked graves. Assign each physical feature (headstones, footstone, fences, benches, etc.) a control number that will tie together the written, photographic, and map records.



Sample cemetery map.

Bounced light can illuminate difficult to read inscriptions.

Make a written record that includes the following information: control number, date of record, name of cemetery, type of marker, size of marker, description of material used to make the marker, condition of the material, name of deceased, vital dates, description of carving, exact inscription, and any other identifying characteristics.

Record each gravemarker in a systematic method. Divide the cemetery into sections and record the graves down the rows. After completing a section, spot check it to make sure nothing was missed. Have another person recheck the recorded information against stones to make sure no errors are in the transcription.

In order to read partially obscured inscriptions, try recording information in the morning. Most gravemarkers face east. The morning sun may make inscriptions more legible. When it is not practical to record in the morning, use a mirror to angle the sun onto the gravemarker to illuminate indistinct letters and numbers. Never use chalk, talc, flour, etc., as an aid to reading inscriptions on the face of any gravemarker. These materials do not always wash away and may contain chemicals, oils, emollients, or bacteria that can damage the delicate markers.

If time and money allow, photograph each gravemarker, labeling the photograph with the control number. If a computer is available, the inventory information can be easily stored and retrieved using word processing or database software.

Master Plan. Before a blade of grass is cut, before a stone is leveled, before any work is done, it is essential to develop a master plan for the preservation of the cemetery. The master plan will act as a framework for preservation activities and allows for the examination of the interrelationships among the different elements of the cemetery. A step-by-step guide will identify the scope of the work, as well as necessary workers needed to perform it. Trained volunteers may handle

some projects, while others will require professional expertise. The plan should attempt to estimate accurately how much money is required for services and materials. Additionally, the master plan should include goals, priorities, and a realistic time frame for the completion of all project work.

When creating the master plan, consider the customs of those buried in the cemeteries. Often cemeteries contain burials from many different ethnic and religious groups with diverse burial customs. Cemeteries are an expression of a community, including the varied cultural beliefs that make the community unique. Respecting the dead means extending that respect to their living descendants. Input from relatives and other interested individuals should be solicited.

Evaluate the skills of the volunteers working on individual components of the plan. Some aspects of the project will be better left to professionals. Archeologists, architects, historians, and landscape architects are some examples of professionals who could be useful in a cemetery preservation project.

Take into consideration the aspects of the cemetery, including landscaping, and how they will interact. Will grading a road create runoffs that might undermine a monument's foundation? Will stone repair accelerate natural weathering? Should a blown down tree be removed or replaced? Is it part of the overall landscape plan, a memorial tree, or a volunteer sapling? Develop a philosophy of cemetery ecology and incorporate it into your master plan. Some of the worst restoration disasters have been brought about by well-intentioned attempts at improvement.

Preservation and Repair

Historical gravemarkers, fences, and structures are delicate artifacts that must be repaired with care and expertise. Modern repair methods and materials will often harm items created fifty or more years ago. Specially trained craftspeople and conservators should undertake most repairs, though careful volunteers can repair some artifacts within cemeteries.

Gravemarkers. Most historic gravemarkers are carved from one of three different types of stone: marble, limestone, or sandstone. These stones are relatively soft and easy to carve. As a result, they were used extensively in cemeteries during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Unfortunately, because the stones are soft, they are more susceptible to the effects of weathering than harder stones such as granite.

Before beginning any treatment on a gravestone, check it for soundness. Is the surface grainy and crumbling? Are there any large cracks? Are the vertical strata of the stone separating into sheets and flaking off? If the stone has any of these problems, or appears in any other way to be unsound, do not clean or repair it. The marker will require expert care from a stone conservator.

If the stone appears to be sound, cleaning and sim-

Cleaning Stone

Before cleaning any stone, carefully check its condition. If the surface readily falls away, or you notice other conditions that indicate the stone is brittle or vulnerable, do not clean it. Cleaning may irreparably damage the surface.

The Cleaning Process

Use a non-ionic soap. One of the most readily available soaps is Orvus®, commonly used in association with horse and sheep husbandry, found in feed stores. Mix a solution of one heaping tablespoon of Orvus® to one gallon of clean water (it comes in both liquid and paste form). Biocides, such as D-3 Antimicrobial and Enviro Klean Biowash can be used to assist in the removal of biological growth.

Handcrafted gravemarkers share historic cultural value.

Pre-wet the stone thoroughly with clean water and keep the stone wet during the entire washing process. Work from the bottom up, using plenty of water and not allowing the cleaner to dry on the stone.

Thoroughly wash the wet stone using natural bristled, wooden handled brushes of various sizes. The use of plastic handles is not recommended, as color from the handles may leave material on the stone that will be very difficult to remove.

Be thorough. Wash all surfaces and rinse thoroughly with plenty of clean water.

When cleaning marble or limestone, one tablespoon of household ammonia can be added to the above mixture to help remove some greases and oils. Do not use ammonia on or near any bronze or other metal elements.

Lichens and algae can be removed by first thoroughly soaking the stone and then using a wooden scraper to gently remove the biological growth. This process may need to be repeated several times.

Not all stains can be removed. Do not expect the stones to appear new after cleaning.

Do not clean marble, limestone, or sandstone more than once every eighteen months. Every cleaning removes some of the face of the stone. Occasionally rinsing with clean water to remove various accretions, however, is acceptable.

Keep a simple treatment record of the cleaning, including date of cleaning, materials used, and any change in condition since the last cleaning (such as missing parts, graffiti, and other damage). These records should be kept at a central location where the condition of the stones can be monitored over time.

Developed from data supplied by John R. Dennis, Dallas Museum of Art Conservation Lab.

ple repairs may be possible. Test any treatment on a small, hidden portion of the stone. Wait a few days or weeks and evaluate the results. If the test is successful, begin cleaning the whole stone.

The main reasons to clean gravemarkers should be to allow reading of the inscription and carving, as well as removal of dirt and pollutions from the surface. This can be accomplished by using appropriate tools described in the side bar on cleaning stones. Never sandblast a gravestone or spray it with an excessive force of water as it will permanently damage the surface. Chemical cleaners (other than those mentioned) and sealers will also permanently damage the stone. Finally, concrete should not be used in association with historic gravestones. Concrete is stronger than the stone and contains impurities that will harm it. Placing stone fragments in a horizontal position in concrete will increase damage associated with lawn mowers and foot traffic and allow water to collect in the carved portions. Water is the universal solvent.

Other Preservation Concerns. Gravemarkers are the focal point of most cemeteries and are given the first consideration when repairs are needed. Do not forget other cemetery features such as gates, fences, chapels, tabernacles, mausoleums, crypts, gravehouses, and even historic landscaping. Consult with a preservation architect or other specialists before restoring these complex structures or cemetery features. Contact your State Preservation Office for assistance in locating a specialist.

Maintenance. Appropriate maintenance can happen prior to fixing and/or repairing markers. Focus attention on *proper* maintenance. When possible, clear brush by hand. When hand cleaning is impractical, use hand mowers, but not close to the gravestones. For close work, use hand tools.

Be careful when using pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. Acidic chemicals can deteriorate granite. In most instances, organic methods of eradicating weeds and pests are better than chemical methods. Do not burn brush or rubbish near cemeteries. Uncontrolled fires could severely damage gravestones and destroy wood markers or structures.

Funding. Funds for the care of historic cemeteries are particularly difficult to obtain. Yet obtaining funding remains one of the most important tasks in preserving cemeteries, since much of the restoration and maintenance of old gravemarkers and cemetery structures can be costly. Among the most effective ways to secure funding for cemetery preservation and maintenance are:

- Forming a nonprofit cemetery organization.
- Soliciting donations from descendants of the deceased buried in the cemetery.
- Researching bank records for unused trust funds designated to maintain specific graves.
- Requesting help from county commissioners, courts, and city councils. Though they may not be able to allocate funds, they may be able to use county or city equipment and personnel to maintain cemeteries for health and safety reasons.
- Requesting donations from associated businesses, including funeral homes and monument companies. Businesses often look for ways to give back to the community.
- Planning an annual fundraiser.
- Researching area foundation opportunities.

Conclusion

Establishing a cemetery association and perpetual maintenance are the best long-term solutions to the survival of any cemetery. The hard work of maintaining, researching, and recording a cemetery may be worthless if the community is unaware of its existence. Cemeteries are lost to development and vandalism because only a few family members, if anyone, may know of their locations and importance. The community as a whole can take an active part in the preservation, maintenance, and protection of local cemeteries. Civic organizations, church groups, scout troops, and historical societies are all potential assistants in efforts to care for cemeteries.

Educate city and county officials about cemetery preservation issues. Inform state legislators of the need for stronger state laws. Elected officials, who are not always aware of historic preservation problems in the community, will welcome the input. A working knowledge of federal, state, and local cemetery laws is essential, as is an effort to publicize attempts to protect and care for cemeteries when possible.

References

The Boston Experience: A Manual for Historic Burying Grounds. Boston: City of Boston Boston Parks and Recreation Department, 1993.

Jordan, Terry G. *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982.

Preservation Guidelines for Municipally Owned Historic Burial Grounds and Cemeteries. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, 2002.

Strangstad, Lynette. *A Graveyard Preservation Primer*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1988.

_____. *Preservation of Historic Burial Grounds* (Information Series No. 76). Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1993.

AASLH Resources

Newman, John J. "Cemetery Transcribing: Preparations and Procedures." Technical Leaflet #9. Nashville, TN: AASLH, 1971.

Jones, Mary-Ellen. "Photographing Tombstones: Equipment and Techniques." Technical Leaflet #92. Nashville, TN: AASLH, 1977.

Additional Cemetery Preservation Resources

Source: Preservation Maryland
preservationmaryland.org/pdf/Cemetary%20resources.pdf

Books

Anson-Cartwright, Tamara. *Landscapes of Memories: A Guide for Conserving Historic Cemeteries, Repairing Tombstones*. Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1997.

Gayle, Margo and David W. Look, AIA. *Metals in America's Historic Buildings: Uses and Preservation Treatments.* Washington DC: U. S. Department of the Interior. 1980; Revised reprint 1992. To order a copy, write: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325.

Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places. National Register Bulletin #41. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992. www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb41.

Little, M. Ruth. *Sticks and Stones: Three Centuries of North Carolina Gravemarkers.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

London, Mark. *Masonry, How to Care for Old and Historic Brick and Stone.* Washington DC: The Preservation Press, 1986.

McGahee, Susan H. and Mary W. Edmonds. *South Carolina's Historic Cemeteries: A Preservation Handbook.* Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1997.

Sloane, David Charles. *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Thompson, Sharyn and Lynette Strangstad. *Florida's Historic Cemeteries, A Preservation Handbook.* Tallahassee, FL: Historic Tallahassee Preservation Board, 1989.

Wright, Robert Hughes and Wilber B. Hughes III. *Lay Down Body: Living History in African American Cemeteries.* Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1996.

Other Resources

The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works
aic.stanford.edu
Maintains a referral list of professional conservators for treatment of monuments and sculpture.

Association for Gravestone Studies
gravestonestudies.org
A resource for the study of the history of cemeteries and gravestones and their preservation. The AGS annual meeting includes a conservation/treatment workshop.

Chicora Foundation
chicora.org
Chicora is a Columbia, South Carolina, nonprofit heritage preservation organization. Their work includes archaeological and historical research, public education, and work in conservation and preservation with museums, libraries, archives, historic organizations, and private citizens. Chicora offers preservation planning, grave location and mapping, inventory and assessment, research, treatment, and educational workshops for cemeteries.

Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites
rootsweb.com/~mdcpmbs/coalition01.htm
The Coalition was formed in 1991 as a nonprofit organization committed to the protection of human burial sites from unauthorized and unwarranted disturbance by man or nature. Its membership includes historians, genealogists, archaeologists, cultural preservationists, Native Americans, legislative members, and citizens of Maryland who care about their heritage and ancestors.

National Center for Preservation Technology and Training
ncptt.nps.gov
A national preservation center within the National Park Service, which conducts preservation technology research, provides grants, and training workshops. Many workshops involve the appropriate technologies to preserve cemeteries.

Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
nps.gov/frla/oclp.htm
Promotes the stewardship of significant landscapes through research, planning, and sustainable preservation maintenance.

The Political Graveyard
potifos.com/cemeteries.html
This page is a part of a larger site about U.S. political history and cemeteries. The page includes links to resources on cemetery history and preservation organizations, publications, educational programs, discussion groups, and cemeteries.

South Carolina Department of Archives and History
state.sc.us/scdah/cemetery.htm—A page on cemetery preservation.
state.sc.us/scdah/hstcm.pdf—A full cemetery preservation handbook.

Texas Historical Commission
thc.state.tx.us
THC is the author of the original publication on which this Technical Leaflet is based and home of the Texas cemetery preservation program. The website contains information on the preservation of threatened cemeteries and a printable booklet on cemetery preservation guidelines. Click on "cemeteries" and "preserving cemeteries."

technical leaflet

CEMETERY TRANSCRIBING:

preparations and procedures

By John J. Newman
Indiana State Archives

CEMETERY TRANSCRIBING

Cemetery research may supply the only clue to a lost generation in a family. Early vital statistic records generally are incomplete; many Bible records are lost or lay forgotten in attics; and newspaper files before 1900 are incomplete and their obituaries sketchy. Data from cemeteries fill this gap, but their usage depends on their availability and completeness. The following, while aimed primarily for the transcriber of abandoned or rural cemeteries where no formal records exist, can aid any genealogist with clues to locating and accurately transcribing his own family markers.

GEOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH

Adequate preparations in finding cemeteries, proper tools, and personal safeguards dictate the venture's success. Transcribing begins with geographical research in the county or township to discover *all* its cemeteries. Completeness should be the goal; consult maps, local histories and deed records.

Maps supply knowledge on about 80 percent of the cemeteries in a county. These consist of early county maps, which were popular in the 1850's and 1860's, county atlases, which appeared between 1870 and the 1920's, county highway maps, and most important, topographic maps. Early county maps (as well as census records) are valuable for indicating the degree of development in a county at that date; heavily populated areas suggest early settlement and the possibility of a greater number of private cemeteries. County atlases list the majority of cemeteries existing when published. By comparing early and later atlases, one can discover trends in population movements and in cemetery locations.

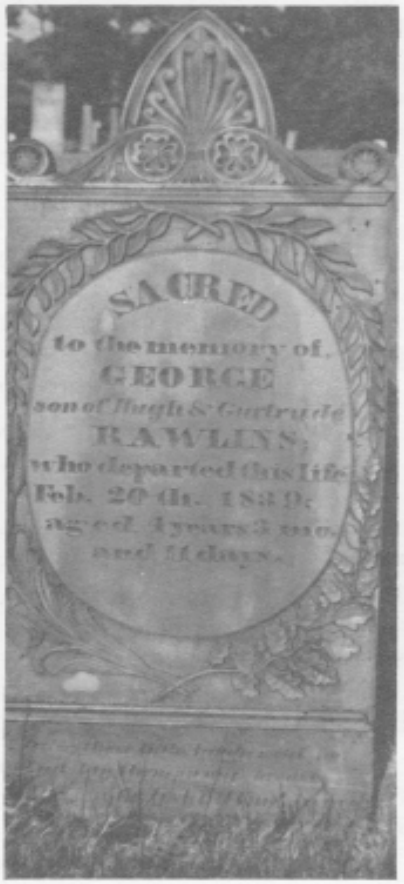
The county surveyor is best versed in his county's geography; his maps list almost all known cemeteries. But his guide, as well as the basis for current maps, are topographic maps. Drawn from aerial photographs, these maps cover a quadrangle of 7.5 X 8.5 square miles, with each mile enlarged to a size slightly over 2.5 inches square, and show forested areas, all roads and trails, streams, most cemeteries, and even buildings. Conservation departments in most states have index maps showing the names of quadrangles in their state. Individual maps may be purchased for a slight cost.

They also are available for consultation in state libraries and in many city and college libraries. While these maps are invaluable for locating cemeteries and suggesting routes to them, many ancient abandoned graveyards, lost in wooded areas, have slipped the mapmaker's attention. Therefore, one must use other sources.

The local historian, who has delved into his county's early records, can locate many "lost" cemeteries. County histories also refer to graveyards, and old obituaries sometimes mention family cemeteries. Farmers are quite knowledgeable in their area's physical features. But the most authoritative of these additional sources are the deed records. In many states deeds mention virtually all cemeteries, often with exact sizes and legal locations. They usually indicate when a cemetery was excluded when the land was sold. One might discover, for instance, a deed reading: "it being understood that the graves shall not be disturbed, but said owners may lay the stones flat and cover them with earth if they choose so to do;" or one stating: "except ten foot Square which the grantor reserves where he has two Children Buried." Today such cemeteries may not exist physically, but deed records perpetuate their identity.

Cemetery locations may be given merely by section or by specific detail in terms of degrees. One can examine deed records quickly by limiting himself to Grantor indices, checking only the "exception" and "description" columns. It is impossible to investigate all deed records, but intuitive historiographical knowledge can eliminate much deed searching.

Knowledge of the area, especially the location of rivers and land barriers, of nationality groupings of settlers, and of their former residence will also suggest cemetery locations. Early settlers followed river beds into virgin territory, and the majority of cemeteries founded within twenty-five years of a county's formation are located close to these waterways. Samplings of deed records



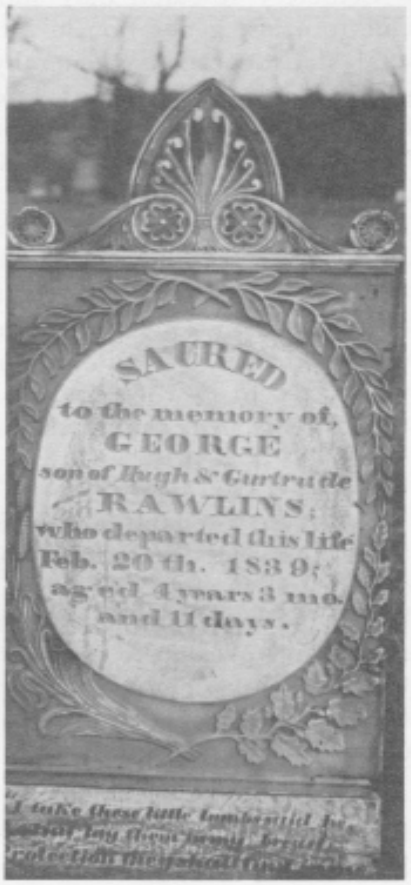


FIG. 1a and b. SANDSTONE. This type of stone generally dates prior to 1850. Being soft, it readily shows the stonecutter's talents. It also weathers easily. If data is completely worn away, compare the general shape of the stone to other legible stones nearby to at least date the stone within a decade of its erection. Usually the simpler the shape, the earlier used. Note the spelling of "Gurtrude." Note the near similarity of the "3" and "9" in "1839" and the difficulty in reading the "4" in "4 years."

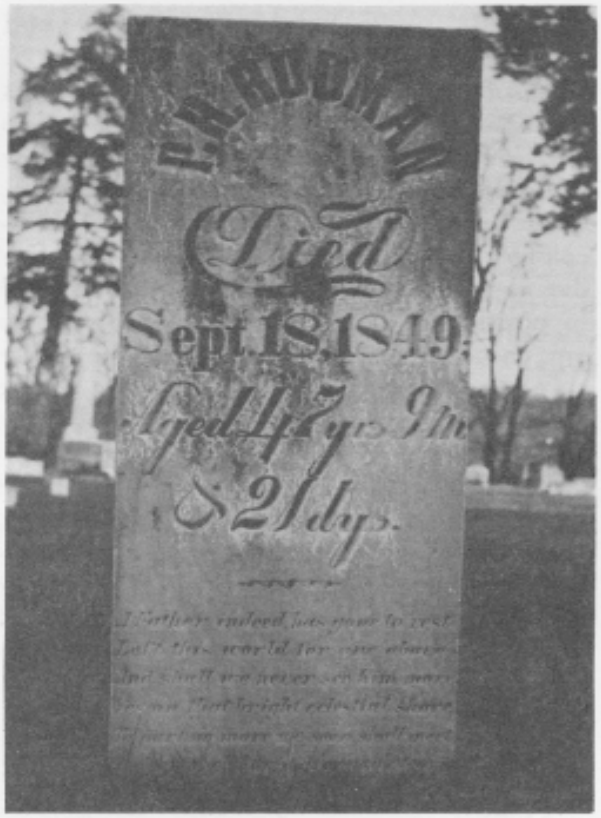


FIG. 2a MARBLE. This type of stone generally dates from the late 1830's to the late 1860's. In the 1860's and 1870's square and usually towering marble stones were used. The latter weathers severely, especially in cities, and can be the hardest to read. Note the script used on this stone, especially the differences in the "4's" and the script "1." If the stone is chipped or worn, one can easily err in reading it. If in doubt, state so in your record.

FIG. 2b MARBLE. This stone represents the square, towering type of stone. Foreign language inscriptions (and stones with unusual symbols) can be translated more accurately through a picture to make a record for an expert's advice. This stone offers a brief history of the person and can simplify a search in naturalization and marriage records. Note the weathering of the inscription. Note the "4" in "14" and "1824."

for sections through which rivers run might reveal several cemeteries. Of later settlement, those of German background had their own church cemeteries. Rarely will there exist private or family cemeteries in areas of their settlement unless a different nationality, as the English, were there before. Settlers from the South, or from southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, tended to have private or neighborhood cemeteries. New Englanders and immigrants often centered their westward movement around their religion and so frequently had church cemeteries.

TOOLS

Having determined cemetery locations, one still needs additional preparations—tools. A garden spade is vital for unearthing sunken tombstones and serves as an excellent lever for fallen stones. If one has to cut his way to tombstones, a small machete for cutting weeds and vines, a hatchet for chopping fallen tree limbs, a masonry hammer for use not only as a small pry-bar but also as a root cutter, a grass-trimmer, and even a chisel for severing difficult roots, are needed. Explore the soil with a thin probing rod, since stones might be buried from six inches to several feet. For the reading of inscriptions, several wire and bristle brushes varying in coarseness, a large putty knife scraper, and chalk can reveal even the faintest lettering. While the use of wire brushes on tombstones is sometimes challenged, if used carefully, *no*

FIG. 3 SOFT GRANITE. This type of stone generally dates from the 1880's through the mid 1910's. The soft, gray granite weathers somewhat and is susceptible to lichen and moss.

damage will result. Monument firms as a matter of policy restore old tombstones with sandblasting techniques. They suggest that removal of dirt, moss, lichen, and vines from the surface prevents roots from forming hairline cracks and chipping. Brushes should be used lightly but briskly and parallel to the surface.

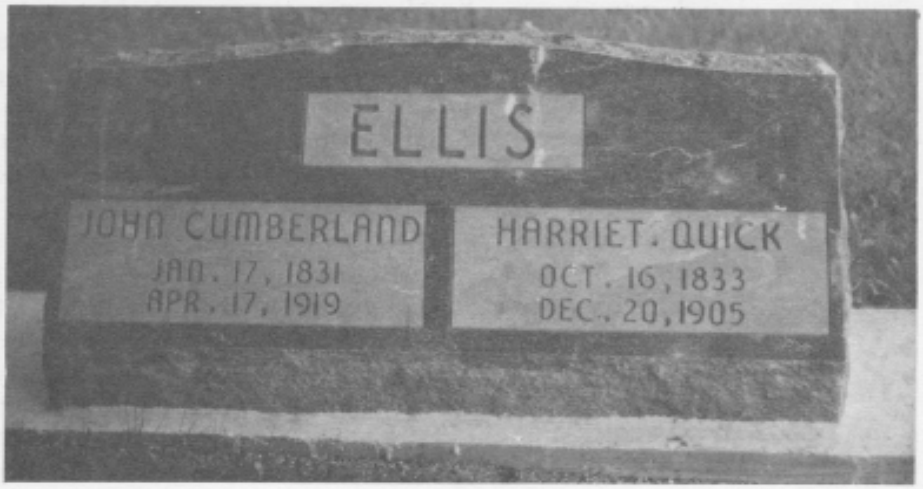
A soft white chalk gives the best results for reading, especially when rubbed into the stone at difficult spots, although yellow chalk offers better contrast on white stones. Charcoal gives good contrast on light-colored, polished marble. Any type of powder can be effective but is hard to control in positioning it on the surface. Rubbings are more time-consuming and the large sheets present a storage problem. Chalk offers the greatest contrast, especially for photographs.

If one wants to measure the size of the stone or area of the cemetery, add twine, rulers, and tape measures to the kit. Finally, a clip board with pads of 4″ X 6″ paper serve as the best means for the actual transcription. Many of these tools, excluding brushes, chalk and paper, are used infrequently, except in overgrown cemeteries.

PRECAUTIONS

Finally, consider personal safeguards. Dress in thick, protective clothing—levi pants or slacks, with a substantial shirt and work gloves. Include drinking water, a first aid kit and an insect repellent spray, and add a poison ivy preventative ointment of 10 percent sodium perborate (which any druggist can prepare). Poison ivy flourishes

FIG. 4 GRANITE. This type of stone, varying in shapes and sizes, dates back into the 1880's and is still used. If it dates earlier than the 1880's, it is a replacement stone, frequently with less data than the original.



in cemeteries, even in winter. After visiting a cemetery, wash your hands immediately as an additional prevention against poison ivy. A boraxo waterless hand cleaner or ordinary alkali yellow laundry soap and plenty of rags serve this purpose well. Now you are ready to transcribe.

PLOTTING THE CEMETERY

Begin by plotting the cemetery. Give its location according to county, township, and quarter section and list all roads and their distances from a town or state highway to the cemetery. Ask permission to cross private land. If stones no longer exist in a cemetery, it is quite important to list the cemetery and this fact in the final copy. Such knowledge can prove quite helpful to a researcher. You might be of additional help by locating references of burials from obituaries or descendants. For a cemetery with stones, measure its exact size, draw a rough map, note any unusual features, and indicate the relative position of each stone.

COPYING

The copy of each inscription determines your real success. One generally encounters four basic types of tombstones: slate or sandstone [figs. 1, 5, 9a], marble [figs. 2a, b, 8, 9a, b, 10], gray granite [fig. 3], and polished granite [fig. 4]. The first type is the oldest, used generally before 1850. White chalk offers excellent contrast with the black slate of New England stones and the brown sandstones of the midwest. These stones usually are covered with moss or lichen and flake easily [fig. 5]. Use care in cleaning them.

White marble stones stain easily and after nearly one hundred years of exposure to the elements, tend to have their inscriptions weathered almost completely away. These often are the hardest to read. Rub chalk into the surface with your thumb or palm and blow the excess dust away [figs. 6a, b, c]. Lichen and moss also attack the gray granite stones, but a light brushing and white chalk quickly make their inscriptions legible. Polished granite tombstones, in popular use since the 1890's, offer the least problem in copying, but if white chalk is rubbed into the lettering, photographing

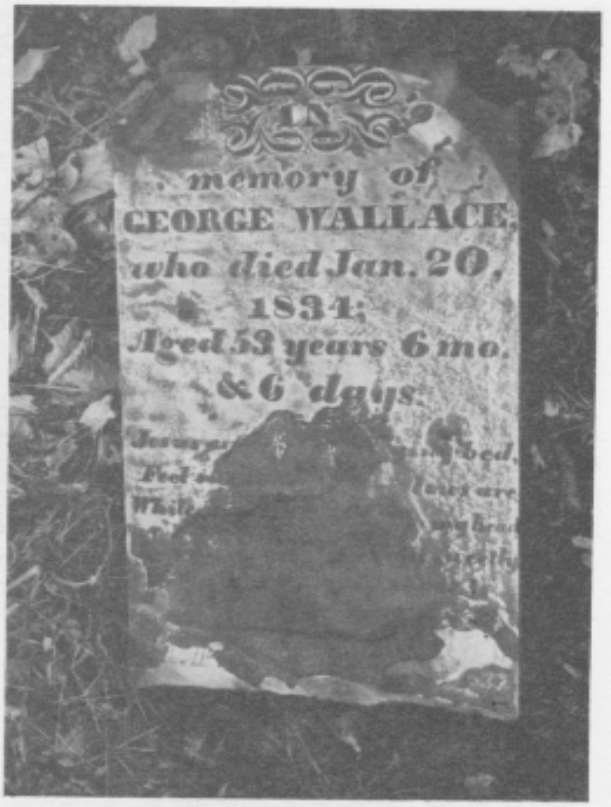


FIG. 5 WEATHERING. On sandstone markers, note how the combination of lichen, moss, and frost have caused this stone to begin to flake away; such stones need pictures made before all the data is gone. Deposit a copy of the picture in a library where it can become public property for the welfare of history. Note: If this stone were partially buried, covering up the last line, one could expect more data since there is no "&" before the "7 mo." Note the "4" in "1834."

becomes sharper [fig. 7]. A cemetery frequently has a variety of these types of stones, and with little experience one can become proficient in reading any type.

In copying, accuracy must dominate. Copy the data on both sides of a 4″ X 6″ card or paper. It is best to work in teams, with each person consulting the stone. Record inscriptions *exactly* as they appear, including "mistakes," as "Henery Eads/son of/Wm & Hariet Eades/died/Dec. 6, 1844/ aged 6 weaks/and 32 days." [figs. 9a, c]. You can correct any errors in a note on the final record. Quakers, for example, reverse the day and month. In copying all tombstones, serve only as a transcriber and not as an interpreter of inscriptions by abbreviating or codifying months or symbols.

FIG. 6a This stone represents a typical situation in reading an illegible stone. Many ignore any reference to this type and those who are accurate merely write "illeg."

FIG. 6b If you brush the stone briskly and rub on chalk, you begin to make out part of the stone.

FIG. 6c If you rub chalk into the stone with your palm and blow the excess away, then this stone is easily readable.

Beware of pitfalls in copying, including mistaking a "4" for a "1" [figs. 8, 1, 2a, b, 5] or confusing one for the other in the following combination: 8-5-6-3-9-2 [figs. 9a, b, c]. Copy accurately the months "Mar." and "May," and "Jan." and "June" [fig. 10]. Distinguish between a "C" and a "G" [fig. 11]. A study of such letters and numbers on preserved stones might offer the key to determining the correct letter on a worn or chipped stone.

Make certain you have included all the inscription. If a stone is partially buried and ends, "aged 66 Yrs, 3 Ms," more data is there; if it ends "aged 66 Yrs & 3 Ms.," you are relatively sure of having the full inscription [fig. 5]. Read any epitaphs since they sometimes mention birthplaces or tell if a "mother" or "father" is "gone" [figs. 12, 2]. Finally, do not rush or work when tired since you then tend to compromise in completeness and become inaccurate.

It is vital to record all burial indicators, including field stones, depressions, and mounds, and it is equally important to indicate their sizes and relationship with tombstones. If, for example, you find two sets of field stones, approximately three feet apart each, and to the right of the stones of a husband and wife, it is possible that these are the graves of their children. If a cemetery has been cleaned with field stones removed and the ground leveled, discover who did the work and when. If it was a WPA project, perhaps a plat of the cemetery containing such grave indicators exists. It may be possible only to learn that a "few" or "many" such signs did exist. Mention such facts in the introduction.

MAKING A PLAT

Such investigation demands a plat of the cemetery. One suggestion a researcher can follow is to number each inscription, sets of field stones, depressions and rises logically in rows, and draw a map, relating the inscriptions' numbers to the map, as follows:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 etc.

Give the number before each name in an alphabetical transcription so one can pinpoint exactly one grave in relation to others. This method has the advantage of showing distances (and family groupings) as well as stone relationships. If the cemetery is large, list graves by numbers in the final record as well as by an alphabetical listing. Merely use graph paper in making the map and pace off distances.

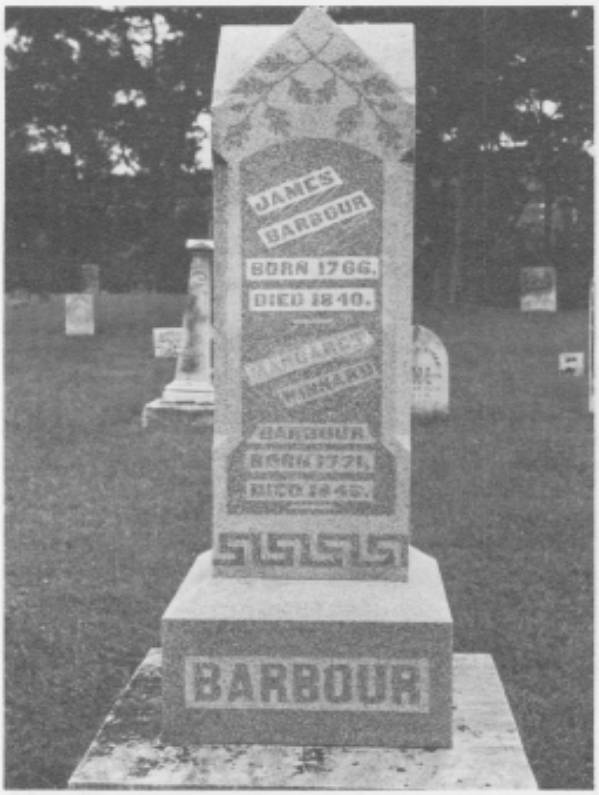


FIG. 7 CHALK. Chalk rubbed into rough surface around smooth letters shows the greatest contrast. Rubbing chalk over smooth surfaces, as over "Margaret," helps but not much. The rest of the stone is hard to read. Note: this is a granite stone replacing an older one.

While your cemetery plat is valuable for giving the cemetery's condition when you transcribed it, do not fail to search for prior plats. Check plat books in the recorder's office at the county court house. If the cemetery was platted, it will give as a minimum lot numbers, and sometimes it may include owners' names. Perhaps years ago an association was created for cemetery care. A plat and records may still exist for such an organization, especially if the cemetery was part of a church society or a large neighborhood. County histories and the local historian are valuable in locating such records. If a large town or city cemetery contains an "old part" for which records no longer exist, and you are interested in locating a family name, check the Grantee deed index book in the recorder's office in the court house. Such diligence and historical investigation could expand greatly the knowledge of burials for a cemetery.

PHOTOGRAPHY

As an additional project, one may wish to photograph tombstones; the following suggestions are helpful. An Instamatic camera might be sufficient, but it has a fixed-focus lens which is inadequate for close work; exact conditions are needed. Polaroid cameras have the advantage of seeing the results immediately, but this camera has the disadvantage of not producing a negative, placing too much value on one picture. Obtain best results by using a camera with 35 mm black and white 20 exposure film with an ASA rating of 125.

In photographing, use a light meter at the stone, even if the camera has an automatic photocell-controlled lens, since the amount of light hitting the photocell may be different from that hitting the stone.

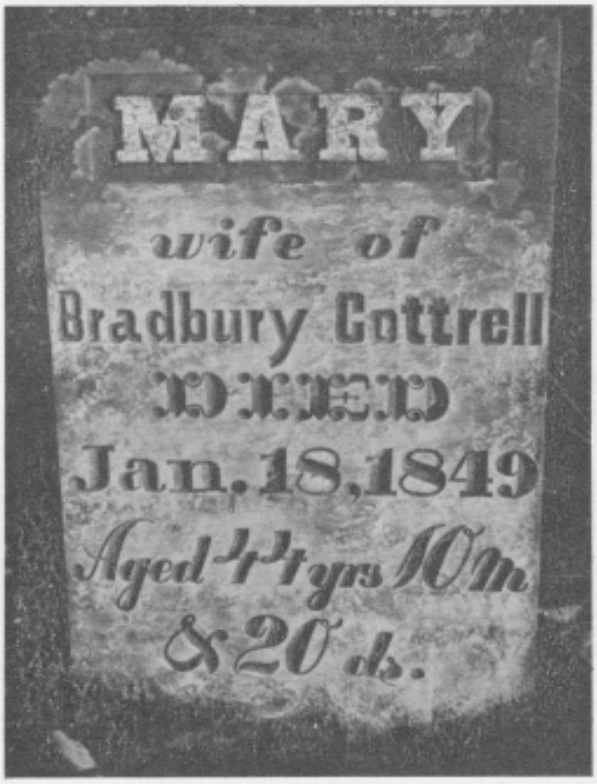


FIG. 8 4-1 COMBINATION. Note the two types of "4". If this stone were chipped one could confuse "44" for "11" and "10 m" for "11 m." If you have difficulty deciphering a four or one, see if there is another similar number on the stone. Note the lichen around "Mary."

FIG. 9a 8-5-6-3-9-2 COMBINATION. Be careful in accurately copying the "2" in "1821" and "22 days" in not mistaking them for a "9." Also copy "Oct. 5th" as it appears. See also Fig. 9b.

FIG. 9b. Under "William Tyner" note that this is a "9" for "9 ds." rather than a "2" even though it is quite similar to the "2" on fig. 9a. Major wear on this stone could cause confusion between the "83" and "5 mo." Script "8's" can cause confusion with a "3" or a "6" if worn or chipped.

Photograph most stones at a distance of about four feet, making certain that the entire stone is centered in the view-finder. Best results are obtained on a hazy day. Each print costs about $0.15, so this project might be limited to small cemeteries, stones written in foreign script [fig. 2b] or containing unusual symbols, or to old, decaying, or broken stones whose data will be gone in a few years.

FINAL COPY

The last step in transcribing cemetery records is the final copy. Organization is the key. In an introduction, describe the cemetery as to kind—family, church or public. Give the cemetery's location, size and its present condition and that of the tombstones. If you have knowledge of the family, give that also. Next tell what you did and give the limitations of your re-

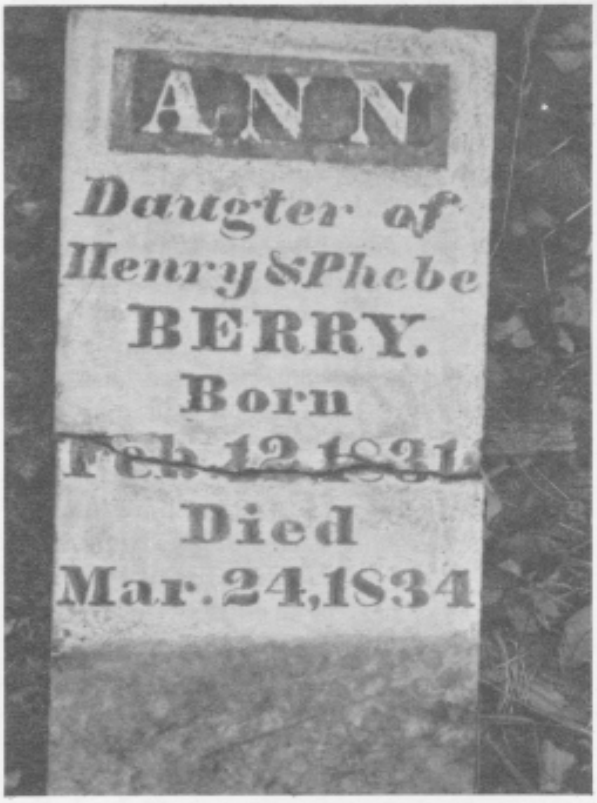


FIG. 9c. When a stone is broken, transcribing becomes even more difficult. For example on this stone an "8" could be confused with a "9." Compare it with the "8" below it. Note the spelling of "Daugter." (Compare picture of stone with written transcription on sample cemetery description.)

FIG. 10 JAN.-JUN CONFUSION. January is frequently abbreviated while June rarely is. Care is needed for reading each letter and number on a stone.

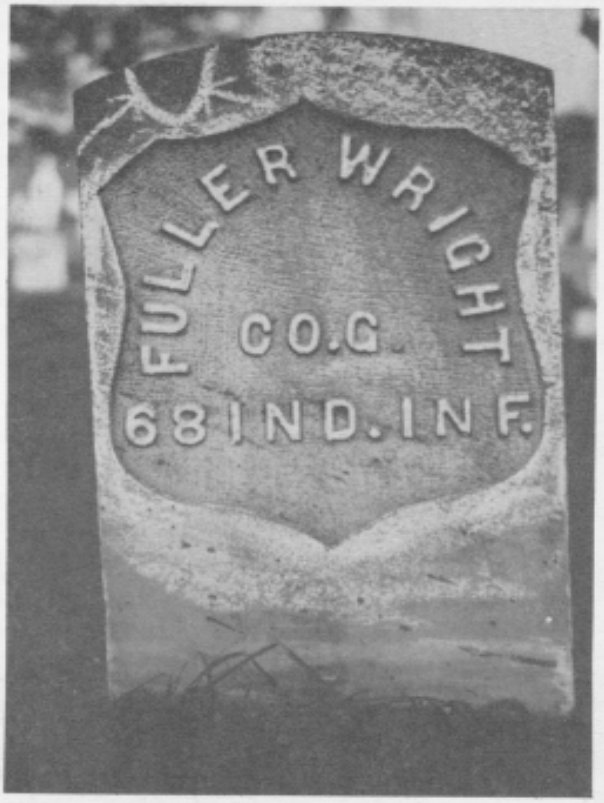


FIG. 11 G-C CONFUSION. Do not confuse "Co. G" with a Co. C. Also on many older government markers, a 5 is frequently confused for a 6. Note the lichen; this hastens deterioration by leading to frost damage and a rough surface, causing confusion in copying. On military stones compare the inscription with the state Adjutant-General's reports.

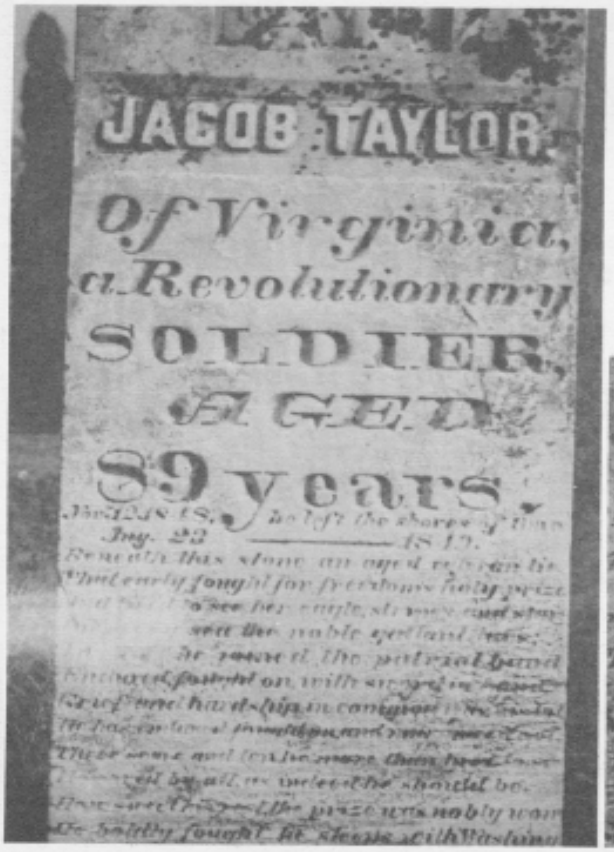
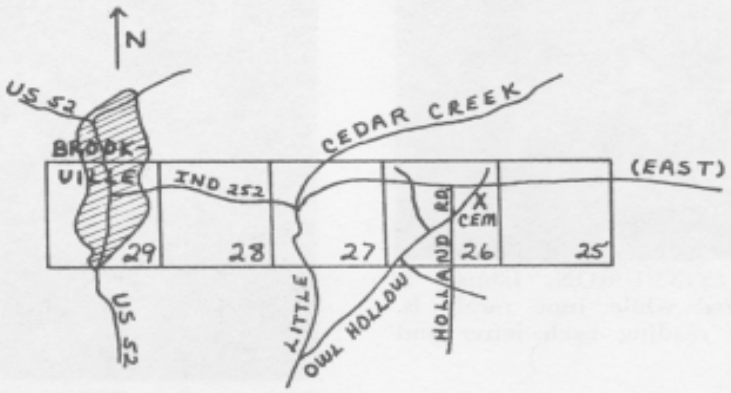


FIG. 12 EPITAPHS. This stone reveals the value in reading epitaphs. His birthdate can be computed and one can gain clues to his military service. Frequently reference to a "father," "mother," or "children" or a birthplace or deathplace, or even the cause of death can be contained in an epitaph, as in fig. 2.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

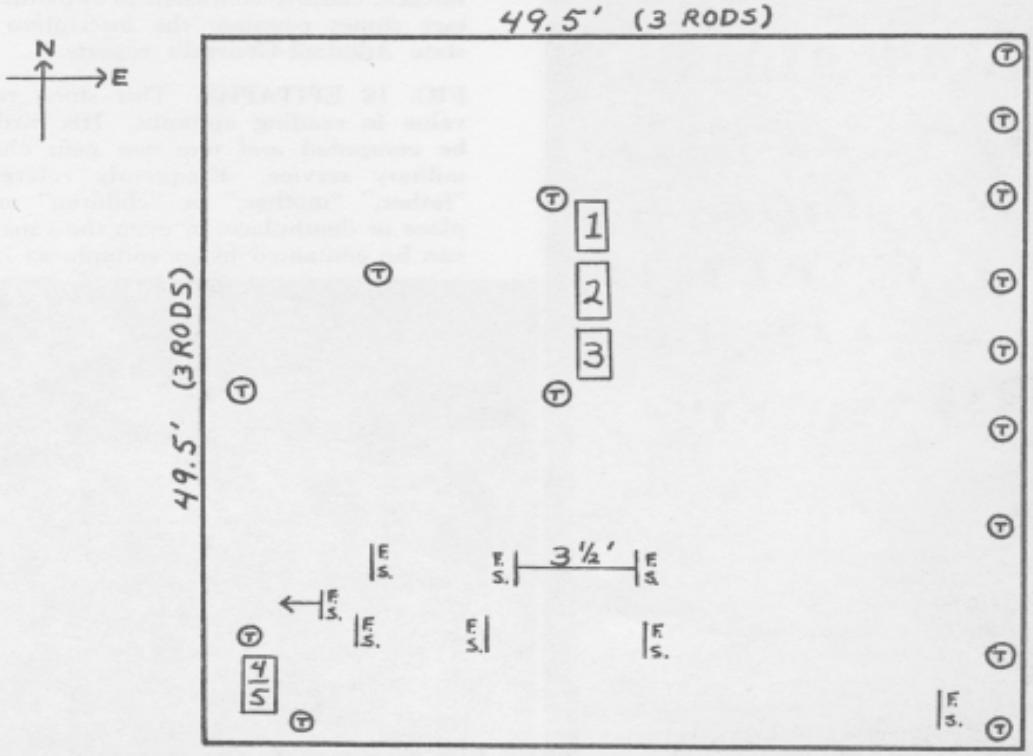
BERRY FARM CEMETERY

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: (Deed Record 6, p. 180, Franklin County, Indiana) Henry Berry to Boards of Commissioners of the County of Franklin: "Beginging [sic] at a Stone Marked SW on the underside N40°E39 Poles from the South West Corner of the North East quarter of section 26 town 9 range 2 West; thence East 3 poles to a stone Marked H on the underside; thence North 3 poles to a stone marked L on the underside; thence West 3 poles to a stone marked I on the underside; thence South 3 poles to the place of beginning containing 9 square rods—the corner stones being placed fifteen inches under ground."



PLAT OF BERRY CEMETERY

F. S. = field stone T = tree



SAMPLE TRANSCRIPTION

BERRY FAMILY CEMETERY

NE¼ SECTION 26 T9N R2W of 1 PM, Brookville Township, Franklin County

Henry Berry Sr., his wife and four children came from Rockingham County, Virginia, to Brookville Township, Franklin County, Indiana, arriving there November 7, 1816. Henry bought 147 acres in the SE¼ 26-9-2 from John Hedley for $588 on July 9, 1817. (No record of purchase for the land on which the cemetery is located has been found.) The Berrys had eleven children, of which nine reached maturity. No relationship has been established between Cyrus Greyer and the Berry family, although Mary Greyer came from Rockingham County. In January, 1869, Cyrus Greyer was living in Shelbyville, Indiana.

The Berry Private Family Cemetery, on the S. & I. White property (1964), 3½ miles east of Brookville, Indiana, on State Road 252, is on the south side of the road, about 500 feet from it. The cemetery is enclosed by cedar trees, many fallen down, and a stone fence, now partially destroyed. All tombstones are removed from their bases; the cemetery is unkempt and cattle wander through at will. The cemetery and all the tombstones were photographed in the Spring, 1968.

See the Cemetery Plat for location of markers.

1) BERRY, A. _____, ANN/Daugter [sic] of/Henry & Phebe/BERRY./ Born/Feb. 12, 1831/Died/Mar. 24, 1834/. SBT "Feb. 12, 1831." Px.

2) BERRY, H. _____, In Memory of/HENRY BERRY/BORN/June 20, 1783/DIED/Sept. 20, 1864/AGED/81 Years & 3 Mo./. "In Memory of" & "Henry Berry" are arched. Px.

3) BERRY, P. _____, PHEBE/Wife of/HENRY BERRY/Born/Sept. 17, 1789;/Died/June 15, 1854./. Epitaph. SBA 1 - r from Sept. to "4" of 1854. Px.

BERRY, S. _____, SARAH BERRY was born June 11, 1816 in Rockingham Co., Va., a daughter of Henry & Phebe Berry, and died 3 miles east of Brookville July 28, 1894, aged 78-1-17. Her obituary is in the *Brookville American*, August 2, 1894, p. 1, col. 6, & states she is buried in the "family cemetery." No stone.

4) GREYER, M. _____, MARY/Wife of/Cyrus Greyer/DIED/Feb. 19, 1860/ AGED/43 years 9 mo. &/10 days./. "Mary" and "wife of" are arched. SBA 1 - r from "Died" thru "Greyer," which is virtually illeg. OSSW Mary E. Greyer. Px.

5) GREYER, M. E. ___, MARY EMELY/Daughter of/Cyrus & Mary/GREYER/ Died Jan. 18, 1855/Aged 16 days./.SBA upward, l - r, thru "Mary" & "Mary" is partially illeg. OSSW Mary Greyer. Px.

NOTE:

SBT	means "stone broken through"	Copied Summer, 1965
SBA	means "stone broken angling"	Photographed, Spring, 1968
OSSW	means "on same stone with"	Typed, October, 1968
Px	means "picture of tombstone"	John J. Newman
		Brookville, Indiana

search, for example, if you were unable to read all stones or if the cemetery's condition might have hidden some stones. Describe unmarked graves by the number of ground depressions and mounds and indicate the size of graves marked by fieldstones. Make a rough map of the cemetery's location and draw a plat, as suggested above. Do not give your record the appearance of being a complete transcription of the cemetery and stones there; a person can be buried with no indication of the fact. Such suggestion of "completeness" can mislead a researcher.

Organize the inscriptions in a logical, consistent manner. The following may serve as a guide:

(5) EADS, H. ____, In Memory of/ HENRY EADS/ born/in the year 1755 / died / August 23, 1843. Stone broken at base & between "in the year" & "1755." On same stone with Mary Eads. A Rev. War soldier — Md. S322226. "in Memory of" is arched.

The most accurate publication of inscriptions is to print the inscription exactly as it appears on the tombstone—allowing a printed line for each line on the stone, including all arched lines and peculiarities. Unfortunately this method becomes expensive in space and money for publishing large cemetery records.

It is important to remember that your record is source material; therefore, give the inscription *exactly* as it appears on the tombstone. If you want to correct or add any data, give it in parentheses after the inscription. Conclude your copy with your name and the date.

Cemetery transcribing can be considered an art. It requires skill, interest, and ability, all developed through patient practice. As your artful experience grows, transcribing becomes personal in the techniques used. Any method is efficient if it does not sacrifice accuracy and completeness.

Satisfaction results if your transcription appears as a verbal image of the stone itself. With cemeteries slowly being destroyed—by farming operations, by vandals, by nature—your accurate record grows in value. Not only will your art aid researchers throughout the country if placed in major libraries, but it will also serve future generations when tombstones have worn to smooth remembrances or become some thoughtless individual's doorstep.

John J. Newman, a native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, graduated from Marquette University in 1963. He earned a masters degree in history from Indiana University in 1967 and taught high school in Wisconsin and Indiana for several years. Early in 1970 Newman was appointed field representative for the Indiana Division of the Indiana State Library, and in November of that year he became State Archivist for Indiana.

Newman began tracing his family as early as 1958 and has since developed an avid interest in genealogy. He has transcribed numerous cemeteries, working in New England, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, Kansas, California, Oregon, and Montana, as well as the entire state of Indiana. It is from such research and field experience that this technical leaflet on cemetery transcribing has developed.

TECHNICAL LEAFLET 9

Technical Leaflets are published by the American Association for State and Local History for the purpose of bringing useful information to persons working in the state and local history movement. The series does not follow the same categories month after month, since the selection of subject matter is based upon varied inquiries received by the Association's home office. The leaflets, which are detachable from the magazine, are copyrighted © and should be cataloged as part of HISTORY NEWS.

American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 9, HISTORY NEWS, Volume 26, No. 5, May, 1971 *Cemetery Transcribing: preparations and procedures.*

This replaces an earlier leaflet 9 which has been discontinued.

Reprints are available for $.50 each. For information on bulk rates, write to the Association at 1315 Eighth Avenue, South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

technical leaflet

PHOTOGRAPHING TOMBSTONES:

equipment and techniques

By Mary-Ellen Jones
Manuscripts Division
The Bancroft Library
University of California
Berkeley

Introduction

WHY PHOTOGRAPH TOMBSTONES? Data found on tombstones is indispensable for the study and writing of state and local history. It also constitutes primary source material for other studies, including religious symbolism, epitaphs, folk art, styles in carving and lettering, trends in cemetery furniture, demography, genealogy, and various aspects of social history. Recording this information can be done by photographing the stones, transcribing the data, or making rubbings. Photography has certain advantages over the other methods because a well-made photograph usually can record more information in less time. The purpose of this leaflet is to show how to make consistently good photographs and compile accurate and valuable field notes.

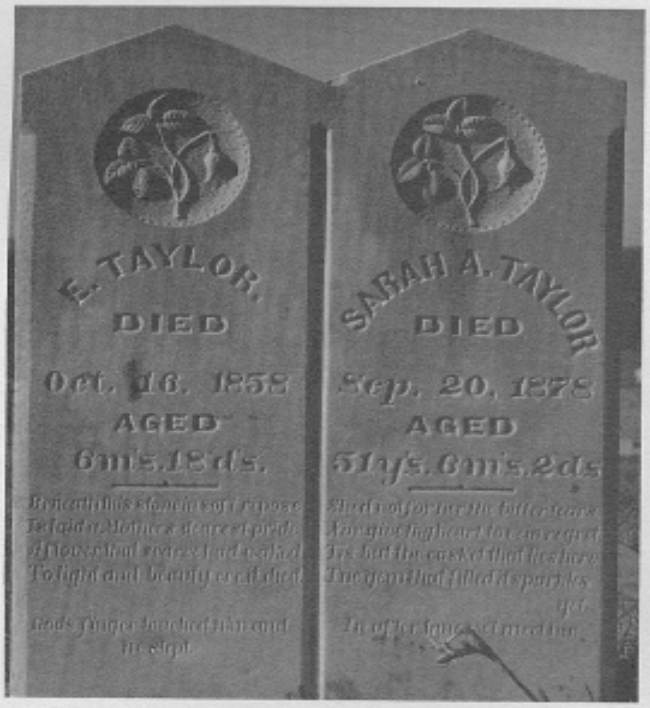
PHOTOGRAPHY VS. TRANSCRIBING. Cemetery transcribing of names, dates, and epitaphs is valuable for many research purposes. However, a photograph can record—and sometimes more accurately—not only that information but also the motif, lettering, and shape of the stone. Even though this additional information is of little or no value for your research purposes, your photograph will preserve it for others.

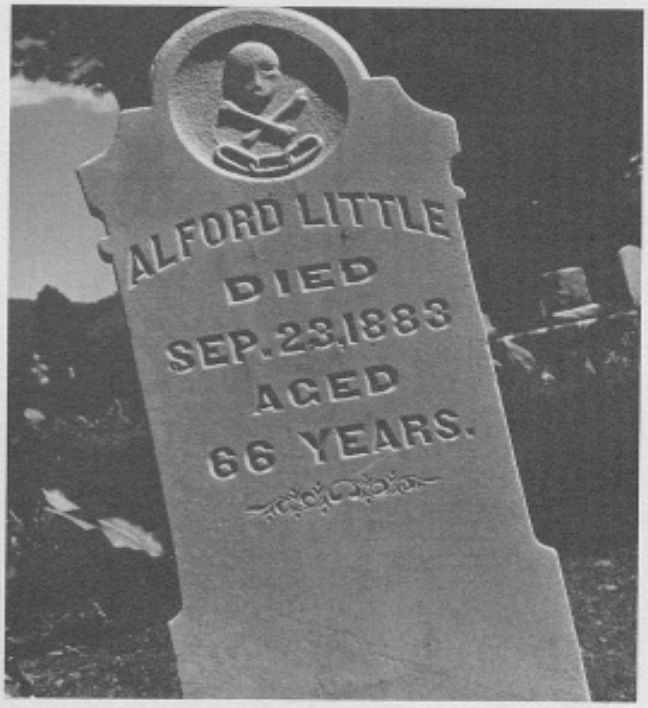
PHOTOGRAPHY VS. RUBBINGS. Many photographs can be made in the time it takes to make one good rubbing. Negatives are more permanent, much less bulky to store, and prints can be made from them as often as necessary, including long after the tombstone has ceased to exist. In addition, photography records the motif, which sometimes cannot be rubbed on nineteenth century

stones. A rubbing, on the other hand, can be of great value when the tombstone is so badly weathered that the inscription is too faint to photograph. Another important use of a rubbing is to bring out the stonecutter's signature, which often is only faintly incised and sometimes is so close to the ground (especially if the stone has broken at the bottom and been reset) that it cannot be photographed.

Photographic Equipment

CAMERAS. I have found the twin-lens reflex the most satisfactory camera for photographing tombstones. The full, negative-size, ground-glass focusing assures precise focusing and facilitates adjusting the camera angle to eliminate distortion. Its waist-level viewing system is a definite advantage when photographing objects consistently close to the ground. Also, the 2¼ by 2¼ negative is large enough to allow maximum enlargement even with severe cropping. The 35mm single-lens reflex is only slightly less satisfactory, and many would argue that its advantages outweigh any possible disadvantages. The 35mm film is less expensive than 2¼ by 2¼ and larger sizes, if you buy bulk film and load your own cassettes. Most slide projectors accommodate 35mm slides only, which makes this the most practical camera to use with color film. Through-the-lens focusing assures precision, and many reflex 35mm cameras also allow extreme close-ups with precision focusing. One disadvantage is that the smaller the negative the more careful focusing must be to obtain adequate enlargements. The disadvantage in terms of tombstone photography is that the eye-level viewing system requires more bending and kneeling than waist-level viewing to get the lens down to tombstone level and thus avoid distortion. Trying to photograph stonecutter's signatures, which are found at the bottom of the stones, requires some truly unique gymnastics! My method of working is to carry a twin-lens reflex loaded with black and white film and a 35mm single-lens reflex camera loaded with color slide film. Although in theory any camera can be used, in practice the





better suited your camera is for the unique requirements of tombstones the more valuable will be the results. Fixed-focus cameras are not made to record the extreme sharpness and detail required to make a photograph of research quality. Cameras with only one or two shutter speeds cannot handle the varied lighting conditions usually encountered in cemeteries.

FILM. Black and white film should be used to compile your basic archive. It not only records detail and texture better than color but also is more stable. With proper processing and storage, black and white negatives last many years and can be duplicated if signs of deterioration occur. Image stability of color film is short—an estimated fifty years or less. Color slides and prints are useful for illustrated lectures and other research purposes but should constitute your secondary file only. Polaroid film is not of archival quality; prints must be copied on black and white film to be preserved. Black and white film with an ASA rating of 125 (Plus X) is fast enough to permit hand-held exposures and slow enough to be extremely fine grain. Color film with an ASA rating of 64 (Kodachrome 64, Ectochrome X, or Ectochrome 64) is ideal for the same reasons and is slightly more stable than higher speeds. Although faster film can be used for very low-light conditions with some loss of detail and increase in grain, I have found that more consistent results are obtained by using one film and learning what it can do.

ACCESSORIES. The standard lens on most reflex cameras is satisfactory for virtually all field work. If you want to photograph a stonecutter's signature, motif, lettering, or some other detail, you can use one or more auxiliary lenses attached to the front of the standard lens or one or more extension tubes which, on cameras with interchangeable lenses, fit between the camera body and the lens. Your camera manual is the best source of information on what is available for your camera. I highly recommend the use of a hand-held exposure meter even if your camera is equipped

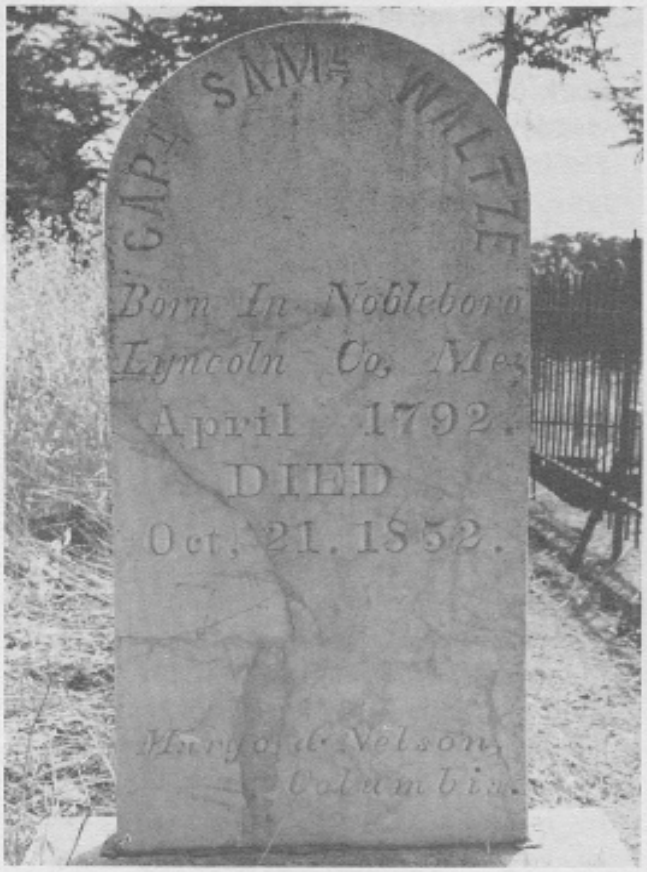
with a built-in meter. Readings will be more accurate and exposure more precise. Filters can improve many photographs when used effectively. Your camera manual lists the series (size) required to fit your camera. With black and white film, a filter is not necessary on hazy or overcast days. On sunlit days under blue skies, a yellow (K2) filter records stone most naturally while a red (A) filter will enhance texture. Since most filters require an increase in exposure, open the lens one f-stop when using a yellow filter and three f-stops when using a red filter. The most useful filter for color film is the skylight (1A), which reduces the bluishness of stones photographed in open shade or on heavily overcast days. No increase in exposure is required, and many photographers leave it on all the time with both black and white and color film to protect the lens from dirt and scratches. A polarizing filter can be used with all film to darken blue skies and enrich color. It can be very helpful but frustrating to use effectively. *Filters & Lens Attachments* (Kodak Photo Book AB-1, $1.95) contains an excellent explanation of when it will work and when it will not. A lens hood should be used at all times. I have several times tried to use a tripod but have always returned to hand-held exposures as being quicker, easier, and more than satisfactory ninety-nine per cent of the time. Few tripods that are short enough to be of value are also flexible and sturdy enough to be reliable; an unsteady tripod gives a false sense of security and is worse than none. Other accessories which should be part of your field equipment are a cable release for use either routinely or for slower shutter speeds, lens tissue, a camel hair brush (comes in a retractable case like a lipstick), and a small rubber ear syringe to remove dust from both inside and outside the camera.

Photographic Techniques

KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of knowing your equipment and film. Read your camera manuals, film data sheets, and all instructions that come with the accessories you carry. Learn the difference between the field-of-view of your focusing screen and the actual picture area so that you can move in as close as possible to the stone and still include it all. If your twin-lens reflex does not have parallax correction, learn by practice how to avoid cutting off part of the stone. Work the bugs out at home so you can fully utilize your time in the field.

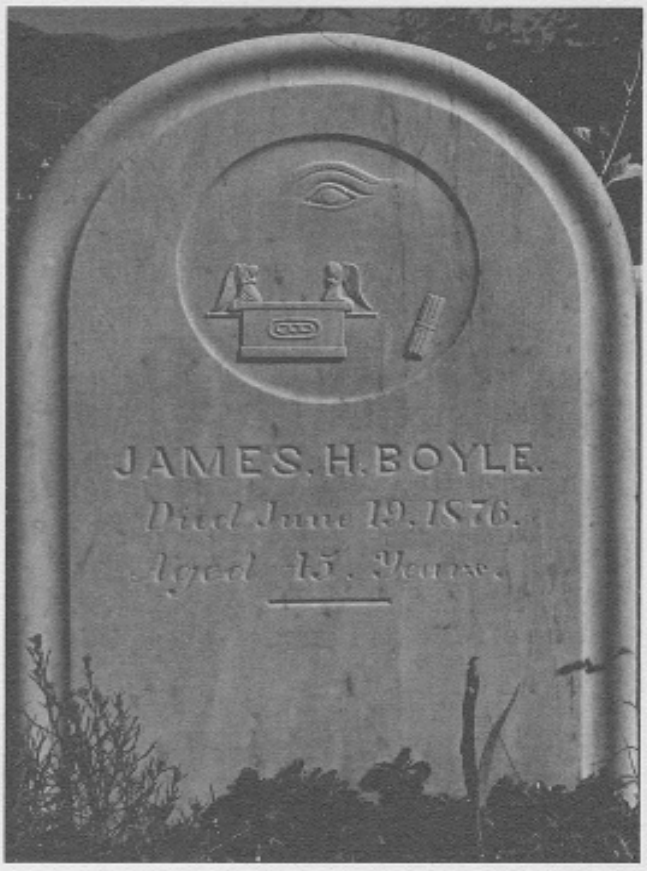
LIGHTING AND EXPOSURE. It is perhaps easier to photograph tombstones on an overcast day when light hits all areas with equal intensity, but I prefer side lighting, which renders textures and lettering the sharpest. Metering is slightly more difficult but with practice presents few problems. Use a hand-held exposure meter; read the highest and lowest values to determine the average value for correct exposure. This method is also necessary when a stone is partially shaded. When in doubt about the correct exposure, the best insurance is to bracket—two stops either side of "correct" for black and white and one-half to one stop either side of "correct" for color. One of those three exposures is bound to be the correct one. Use flash only as a last resort—if the stone is completely surrounded by growth and you can get no reading. If possible, hold it above the lens and aim it down to stimulate sunlight. Flash on the camera often produces a hot spot where it is reflected off the stone, especially if the stone is highly polished.

MISCELLANEOUS. As with all photography, awareness of background is important. A tree "growing" out of the


CAPT SAMS WILTZE
Born In Nobleboro
Lyncoln Co. Me.
April 1792.
DIED
Oct. 21. 1852.
Margaret Nelson
Columbia


DIED


JOHN W. LYAN.
BORN
IN NEW ORLEANS
SEPT. 23. 1812
DIED
FEB. 8. 1872;
AGED 60 YEARS
DE. PROFUNDIS.
H. Coyle


JAMES. H. BOYLE.
Died June 19. 1876.
Aged 15. Years.

top of a stone is distracting and often can be avoided. Look both sides and above—parts of other stones, trees, bushes, etc., usually can be eliminated from view or made less noticeable by moving the camera slightly to one side or the other. Another way to help eliminate unwanted background objects is to use a wide lens opening which throws them out of focus and thus puts more emphasis on the stone itself. However, on a sunny day, the reading off a tombstone may be too high to permit a wide lens opening. In order to avoid distortion, keep the lens parallel with the face of the stone. Also, lower the camera (i.e., yourself) to the level of the stone instead of shooting down at it from a standing position. Most work will be done on one knee or both. When using a camera equipped with eye-level viewing, don't be surprised to find yourself having to lie flat on the ground to photograph a small stone or the lower part of any stone. Some eye-level viewing cameras are built to take a waist-level view finder or an angle-viewer accessory which converts them to waist-level viewing. When using your camera very close to the ground, several bean bags (approximately 6″ by 8″ by 1½″) make a very reliable "tripod." Sometimes grass and weeds must be removed from in front of the stone before photographing it. Remove no more than necessary to reveal all information. If you must clean the face avoid excessive wear by brushing as little as possible. A block of styrofoan (2″ by 4″ by 6″) is sometimes more effective than a brush and is still relatively gentle. Automatically cleaning every stone is unnecessary and not really desirable—patinas built up over the years often enhance the photographs. Doing your own darkroom work will enable you to develop film and make prints to archival standards and help assure maximum negative and print life. Some custom photo labs also process to these standards. An excellent book on processing (currently being revised) is *Procedures for Processing and Storing Black and White Photographs for Maximum Possible Permanence* available from East Side Gallery, Box 68, 723 State Street, Grinnell, Iowa 50112.

Documentation of Field Work

GENERAL CEMETERY DATA. A cemetery without a breeze (sometimes gale force) is rare indeed and trying to take field notes on paper is futile—it flutters, bends, and tears. A 5″ by 8″ ruled index card on a clipboard is the most practical approach. Compiling reliable and valuable field data requires alertness, patience, and careful and consistent work habits. After arriving at a cemetery and before doing anything else, establish a card for that cemetery by recording the following: state, county, city or other geographic unit, name of cemetery, date, and other pertinent data, such as approximate size and date span, general condition, degree of vandalism, whether fenced or not, abandoned or in use, and the best time of day for photography. If a cemetery is especially hard to find, write down how you got there while it is still fresh in your mind. Jot down anything else that you think might be useful for subsequent visits, such as where to obtain the key if the gate is locked or any hunches that come to mind, such as the potentially fatal impact of a new subdivision being built nearby. The latter can be an important factor in determining priorities for future field work.

TOMBSTONE DATA. Record all names and dates on all sides of the stone and the name of the stonecutter when it appears. His signature is generally found near the bottom—usually on the right. If the epitaph or any other information is badly weathered and might

not photograph clearly, write it down or make a rubbing. Annotate all rubbings immediately with the name on the stone. Any questionable or illegible letters or numerals should be enclosed in brackets with a question mark. A guess recorded as fact is misleading and can result in inaccurate history. Legible notes eliminate the need to transcribe later (each transcription multiplies the chance for error), so read and record all data slowly and carefully. Write on one side of the card only; transfer enough geographic information to each additional card to assure correct identification.

FILING FIELD NOTES. Field notes should be filed geographically by state, county, and city. My field work is done mainly in California, so my file is arranged alphabetically by county and broken down further by city and cemetery name within each city as the file increases in size.

FILING NEGATIVES. Negatives, which are 2¼" by 2¼", can be cut into single exposures and filed alphabetically by name. They should be placed in cellulose acetate or polyethelene jackets seamed on the side and then in a letter-size envelope (3⅝" by 6½") on which is recorded the name, state, county, city, and name of the cemetery in which the stone is located. Filing 35mm negatives is more complicated since they should not be cut into single frames. They should be cut into strips of four or five frames and also placed in cellulose acetate or polyethelene jackets inside an envelope. Since this method results in recording four or five names on each envelope, alphabetical filing is not possible. You can assign a single number to the entire strip and then identify each frame on it by the edge number and name, i.e., 1:1 Jones, John, 1:2 Thompson, George, etc. These negatives should be filed numerically by strip number which requires the creation of a 3" by 5" card index of names with reference to strip number location. This system of filing field notes geographically and negatives alphabetically results in a cross index to information.

FILING PRINTS: Prints should be placed in glassene or acetate jackets and then in acid free file folders arranged alphabetically by name. Geographical data relating to the location of each stone should be written on the folder.

Clothing

Many cemeteries are havens for poison oak or ivy, foxtails, mosquitoes, ticks, and chiggers, plus snakes and other wildlife. Heavy jeans, a long sleeve shirt and boots provide protection from these and from sun, wind, dust, and mud. Non-skid boot soles help prevent slipping and falling on hilly, irregular surfaces, which is both rough on the body and costly when cameras are damaged. Pockets are always useful for a pen, lens cap, lens brush, and other small items. Finally, a hat—wool for winter and wide-brim straw for summer—often can be the key factor in determining how long you can work, if at all. It is silly to arrive at a cemetery only to realize that it is just too hot or too cold to function.

Miscellaneous Field Equipment

A soft rag, brush, or block of styrofoam will clean most stones. A pocket knife or pruning shears will cut through all but the thickest growth. There are rubbings kits complete with instructions sold in art supply stores and elsewhere but for purposes discussed in this leaflet, I simply use white shelf paper, held in place with masking tape, and a black lumber crayon. Towelettes are very refreshing when working in hot, dusty, waterless cemeteries. It is a good idea to carry insect repellant and also a snake-bite kit when working in remote areas.

Conclusion

The equipment and techniques described here work for me, and they will work for you. But no two photographers work alike; my words are not carved in stone (no pun intended), so if you think other methods will produce equally valuable photographs and accurate field data, try them.

A darkroom technique I use consistently is severe cropping of the negative to eliminate background and allow the stone to fill the frame. This alone can turn an ordinary print into a better than average one. Other techniques I use are dodging over-exposed areas (i.e., holding back light) and burning in under-exposed areas (i.e., giving more light). If I must photograph a stone from a position from which distortion is unavoidable, I can usually minimize or eliminate it in the print by using one or two blocks of wood of various sizes under one edge of the enlarging paper holder. In addition, I print with variable contrast paper (as opposed to graded printing paper), which allows me to increase contrast by changing filters and thus heighten the effect I want to achieve. Unfortunately, there is no darkroom technique to add detail to the print if it is not in the negative or bring into focus a fuzzy image. These are the results of good equipment and careful work habits.

The task of photographing old tombstones is urgent—they are vanishing rapidly as a result of increased vandalism and outright theft, natural weathering accelerated by air pollution, and urban expansion. The pictorial representation becomes of inestimable value when the original no longer exists. Approach every tombstone as if you are the very last person who will ever be able to photograph it. Make the best photographs your skill and equipment can produce and keep accurate field notes. The results will not only be of lasting value for your own research and writing of history but also will constitute your legacy to future generations when they begin to write. Photographing tombstones is hard work. It is also endlessly fascinating, completely enjoyable and—be forewarned—hopelessly addictive.

Mary-Ellen Jones's photographs have been published in the San Francisco *Chronicle* and other bay area newspapers. In 1972, her photographs of tombstones of the California Gold Rush region were exhibited at The Bancroft Library, where she has worked as a manuscripts cataloger since 1964. She holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of California at Berkeley and has studied photography at the Berkeley High Night School and under Ansel Adams at Yosemite, California.

TECHNICAL LEAFLET 92

Technical Leaflets are published by the American Association for State and Local History for the purpose of bringing useful information to persons working in the state and local history movement. The series does not follow the same categories month after month, since the selection of subject matter is based upon varied inquiries received by the Association's home office. The leaflets, which are detachable from the magazine, are copyrighted © and should be catalogued as part of HISTORY NEWS.

American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 92, HISTORY NEWS, Vol. 32, No. 2, Feb., 1977. *Photographing, Tombstones: equipment and techniques.*

Reprints are available. For information on prices, write to the Association at 1400 Eighth Avenue, South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

AASLH
TECHNICAL LEAFLET #255
A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

Interpreting Difficult Knowledge

By Julia Rose, Ph.D.

Increasingly, public historians are talking about finding ways to interpret histories of oppression, tragedy, and violence that encourage visitors and other audiences to reflect on the roots of society today. Interpretations of traumatic histories ask audiences to acknowledge the human toll and the varied viewpoints enveloped in histories of oppression. Such social justice education demands both emotional and intellectual engagement from audiences; engagement not easily carried out. Museum workers and public historians explain that their audiences often express resistance to hearing about oppression. Why? What makes oppressive history difficult to interpret? Why do museums refer to histories of oppression and violence as "the hard stuff"? What is at stake?

Julia Rose

Allendale Plantation cabins on display at the West Baton Rouge Museum in Port Allen, Louisiana, document life on a sugar plantation where enslaved laborers and then wage paid laborers cultivated sugar cane. Visitors are engaged in conversations throughout their guided tour allowing visitors to ask questions and discuss slave life and the radical transitions African Americans navigated during the Reconstruction era and the Civil Rights era on south Louisiana sugar plantations.

In the middle of the twentieth century, the rise of social history asked us to recognize the contributions and events of the common person. This paved the way for museum workers and other public historians to grapple with long held biases against researching and interpreting the histories of oppression against minorities, women, and "other" populations, and the pain these groups endured. The long-held tradition of focusing on white, male, majority populations has given way to a genuinely widespread movement to elevate, interpret, and study histories of common persons. The results include contextualized and integrated social histories that recall a complex maze of relationships among historical players, their historical times, and relevant material culture. These histories tend to reveal stories of pride and shame and stories about achievements and afflictions.

Interestingly, social history scholarship not only asks us to find out what happened to marginalized or silenced populations, but also asks us to take on the immense challenge of engaging audiences in interpretations about traumatic histories. Audiences, including museum visitors, attendees to films and lectures, museum workers, and public historians are faced with learning about historical traumas. These audiences are learners and they deserve effective strategies to engage in the learning of histories of oppression.

Defining Difficult Knowledge

The hard stuff in museums and other public history venues includes interpretative content about histories of mass violence, racism, enslavement, genocide, war, HIV/Aids, slavery, and other traumatic events. Educational psychologist Deborah Britzman calls the hard stuff "Difficult Knowledge." Audiences, visitors, public history workers, and learners in general who wish to avoid, forget, or ignore traumatic histories will turn away from the difficult knowledge that they cannot stand to know or bear to hear. The person faced with learning difficult knowledge that she or he cannot bear to know represses that information and returns to it through expressions of resistance that appear as negativism, irreverence, jokes, and denials.[1]

Traumatic histories can instigate negative responses from all types of learners making some public history presentations and museum experiences uncomfortable, confrontational, or even appear illegitimate. Responses are unique to each person. Everyone does not have the same level of tolerance for learning histories of oppression, which makes the job of developing equitable and sensitive interpretation strategies for history about difficult knowledge extremely challenging.[2]

Much is at stake. Interpreting difficult knowledge questions how people understand history and how they have long viewed the world. Exhibits, collec-

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Visitors to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum pass under this gate, a cast taken from the original entrance to the Auschwitz death camp, inscribed with the ironic phrase Arbeit Macht Frei (Work Makes One Free).

tions, and historic sites about difficult knowledge can be disruptive and can interfere with a visitor's individual reality. The history of hate or violence can be felt as a confrontation to an individual's sense of morality and pains the individual to accept the history of such horror. The immediate expressions of resistance are signals that an internal learning crisis has formed for that individual. The new difficult knowledge is in conflict with how the learner understands the history. Britzman explains the learner cannot transcend the internal conflict caused by the difficult knowledge. Instead he or she must work through the internal conflict in an emotional and cognitive process to make sense of the new difficult knowledge. The learner may exclaim, for example, "That is unbelievable!" or "That is not what I read!" [3]

Julia Rose

The Sick House at Welham Plantation during the antebellum period served as a hospital for the sick and infirmed slaves. The Sick House is on exhibit at the LSU Rural Life Museum.

Consider for a moment the internal risk of learning difficult knowledge. Think about the possibility of how this can put the learner at risk by disturbing his or her innermost understanding of himself or herself. Does the history of the Jim Crow South, for example, raise personal questions about how the learner understands race relations and how he or she sees race relations today impacting his or her life? Does the history of preserving the gates at Auschwitz in Poland raise emotional feelings in the learner that makes him or her want to change the subject and not talk about the Holocaust? Does the learner feel implicated, self conscious, or threatened? Do some of our responses to the difficult knowledge lead us to resist a particular interpretation because it is too much to bear? At stake is "my understanding of what I believe to be true." Difficult knowledge can lead to learners resisting information in an exhibit so vehemently that he or she will just shut down and refuse further engagement with the subject, the exhibit, or the presenting institution.

> "A social scientist cannot change the data, only record and analyze it. The first few "dirty words" [referring to racial slurs used in interpreting American slavery at a living history site] elicited some nervous laughter in a room of 600 people, but we all got over it. But our issue is can our audience get over it? How can we show them hard issues honestly? Can living history do this, or are we only good for the cheery stuff?"
>
> —Association of Living History, Farms, and Agricultural Museums Member [4]

A common discussion among exhibit planners and museum workers is a plea for the interpretation to provide "just the facts" and an interpretation of history that is neutral and not controversial. In reality, a historical interpretation will always come from some particular viewpoint and facts are always delineated by a history's authors. The task for museum workers and public historians, then, is to take into account the learning crisis difficult knowledge will invariably incite in some audiences. At stake is the individual learner's comfort and at risk is the individual experiencing a stressful learning crisis that is too much to bear.

How then do museum workers and other public historians approach interpreting difficult knowledge given these insights into the emotive and cognitive powers of difficult knowledge to impede learning and jeopardize an individual's sense of self?

Julia Rose

Slave cabin on exhibit at Audubon State Historic Park at Oakley Plantation in St. Francisville, Louisiana. Shoes resting against the hearth help illustrate the presence of an enslaved man who lived in this antebellum cotton plantation dwelling.

The 5Rs of Commemorative Museum Pedagogy Reception

One strategy for enabling learners in history institutions to engage with difficult knowledge is called "Commemorative Museum Pedagogy" (CMP). CMP provides ample time for the learning process to unfold to allow the learner to work through his or her learning crisis. CMP is made up of five stages designed to provide a sensitive learning setting. The five stages of CMP are easily remembered as the "5Rs": *Receive*, *Resist*, *Repeat*, *Reflect*, and *Reconsider*. They are all parts of a nonlinear cognitive process for learners to make sense of a disruptive history.[5]

1. Receive

Audiences are likely willing to learn new historical information when they arrive at an exhibit or public history venue. Other than school groups on a field trip, audiences choose to come and spend time reflecting on the historical content in an exhibition or presentation. At the beginning of the experience or presentation, the unknown is how committed each individual is to learning about the history presented. Also not evident is how much each individual feels he or she already knows about the subject interpreted in this venue. Museum workers and public historians can provide welcoming introduction spaces. They can include disclosure statements about the kind of difficult knowledge contained in the exhibit or presentation, and they can inform visitors that subject matter in the exhibit or presentation could be upsetting or controversial.

2. Resistance

Audience members are also learners who will respond to difficult knowledge in unique and personal ways. When new information is perceived as disruptive to the learner's understanding of history, or challenges the learner's sense of self or moral senses, he

> "Some people believe that ignoring the past or whitewashing it (literally) will allow healing to occur; that we can get on with a just world by simply looking forward from today; that there need be no account of the past, no dredging up of old skeletons, no probing of old wounds. We fundamentally challenge this assertion. We believe that without a full and open discussion of the past, its relation to contemporary inequalities and oppressions, and considerations of how to respond to these historical and contemporary inequalities, true healing cannot take place. Sites that pride themselves as providing history to the masses have an important role to play in this process—either as maintainers of oppressive patterns or as teachers for a just future."[6]

or she will react by repressing the new knowledge in a negative way. These negative responses are indicative of the individual experiencing a learning crisis. Resistance can be detected through individuals' verbal expressions saying that the difficult knowledge is unpleasant, uncomfortable, false, or not worth thinking about; resistance can also be heard in the guise of biases, jokes, or sarcasm. Physical responses are also indicators of resistance such as leaving, attending to minor distractions, or moving quickly through the exhibition. Resistance is indeed a personal response and includes the healthy intellectual responses to contemplate, challenge, and research information and interpretations. Resistance occurs in degrees of internal disruption and is not always an indication of a visitor's lack of knowledge but rather an indication that the difficult knowledge presented is impacting that visitor in a new way. Resistance to difficult knowledge is part of a normal learning process. The phenomenon of resistance includes the most learned as well as the most inexperienced visitor.

3. Repetition

Learners will begin grappling with information they find disruptive and repeat particular parts of difficult knowledge in a variety of ways. Repetition allows the learner to consider more deeply the content he or she finds hard to accept. The learner can repeat a story again and again aloud or to himself or herself, or ask the same questions, or read a text multiple times, all as parts of the learning process for working through the difficult knowledge. Learners will likely mix expressions of resistance and repetition. It is important to recognize that the 5Rs of CMP do not necessarily happen sequentially. For example, a learner can move from expressions of disbelief to explaining his or her own personal connections to the history and back to disbelief multiple times.

On one occasion, at a training session at a historical plantation site, museum workers who could not immediately accept a revised narrative that included the history of the site's enslaved community repeated out loud the new slave life information, saying it was not believable or was insignificant. Others repeated the portions of the regular tour narrative they were attached to, or portions that were in jeopardy of being edited if the new slave life histories were incorporated. These museum workers did not necessarily refuse resisted knowledge, in many instances they repeated the resisted information aloud and reread the new tour narrative and secondary history sources. They were eager for opportunities to repeat information as they reflected on the possibility of expanding the current tour to include slave life history.[7]

As learners work through repressed difficult knowledge by way of repetition, each new piece of knowledge has to be fit into his or her internal psychic reality. This rebuilding of the learner's inner world characterizes the successful work of learning difficult knowledge.[8]

Greater Oklahoma City Chamber & CVB

> **"Volunteering at the Memorial has become one of the most meaningful experiences in my life. During my career, I worked with people from across the United States and we would often talk about where we were on 'history changing' days and how our lives were changed. Visiting with people at the Memorial, I've seen how events have affected people not only nationwide but worldwide."**
>
> **—Docent Gayle Bryan (2009)**

4. Reflection

Learners are entitled to sufficient time to reflect on the difficult knowledge they are grappling with on a tour or in a presentation. Opportunities to talk about their thoughts and ask questions are important for people to work through the information they find challenging. Reflection can be entwined with expressions of repetition when the learner continues to repeat information and questions. Not all reflection

What Museum Workers and Public Historians Can Do:

1. Use CMP as a framework to more effectively engage audiences in difficult knowledge.

The 5Rs give learners time and resources to work through difficult knowledge.

a. **Reception:** Provide a welcoming introduction that includes disclosure statements that difficult knowledge is contained in the venue that could be upsetting or controversial.

b. **Resistance:** Anticipate negative responses from learners and allow them to be aired with the understanding that expressions of resistance are likely indicative of the individual experiencing a learning crisis.

c. **Repetition:** Arrange the learning setting to include avenues to revisit artifacts and displays or to reread information. Make information available to learners to review online or in print to study at their own pace.

d. **Reflection:** Ask learners if they have questions. Provide opportunities for conversation or places to sit down to encourage learners to reflect on the difficult knowledge.

e. **Reconsideration:** Offer learners opportunities to respond by providing places for them to share their ideas or comments. Offer social action information that is relevant to the theme of the difficult knowledge. Ask learners, "What do you think?"

2. **Design interpretations that encourage empathy from visitors.** Consider including cameos of individuals or groups that recount the traumatic historical journey of one person or a group. Visitors will care about the condition of historical communities and individuals when the interpretation includes rich descriptions of real people who are recognizable as men, women, and children with familial and communal relationships to one another and to the world. Such multidimensional representations work to encourage empathy, moving learners to truly care about historical individuals; herein lay the questions about immorality and injustices that difficult knowledge raises for learners.[9]

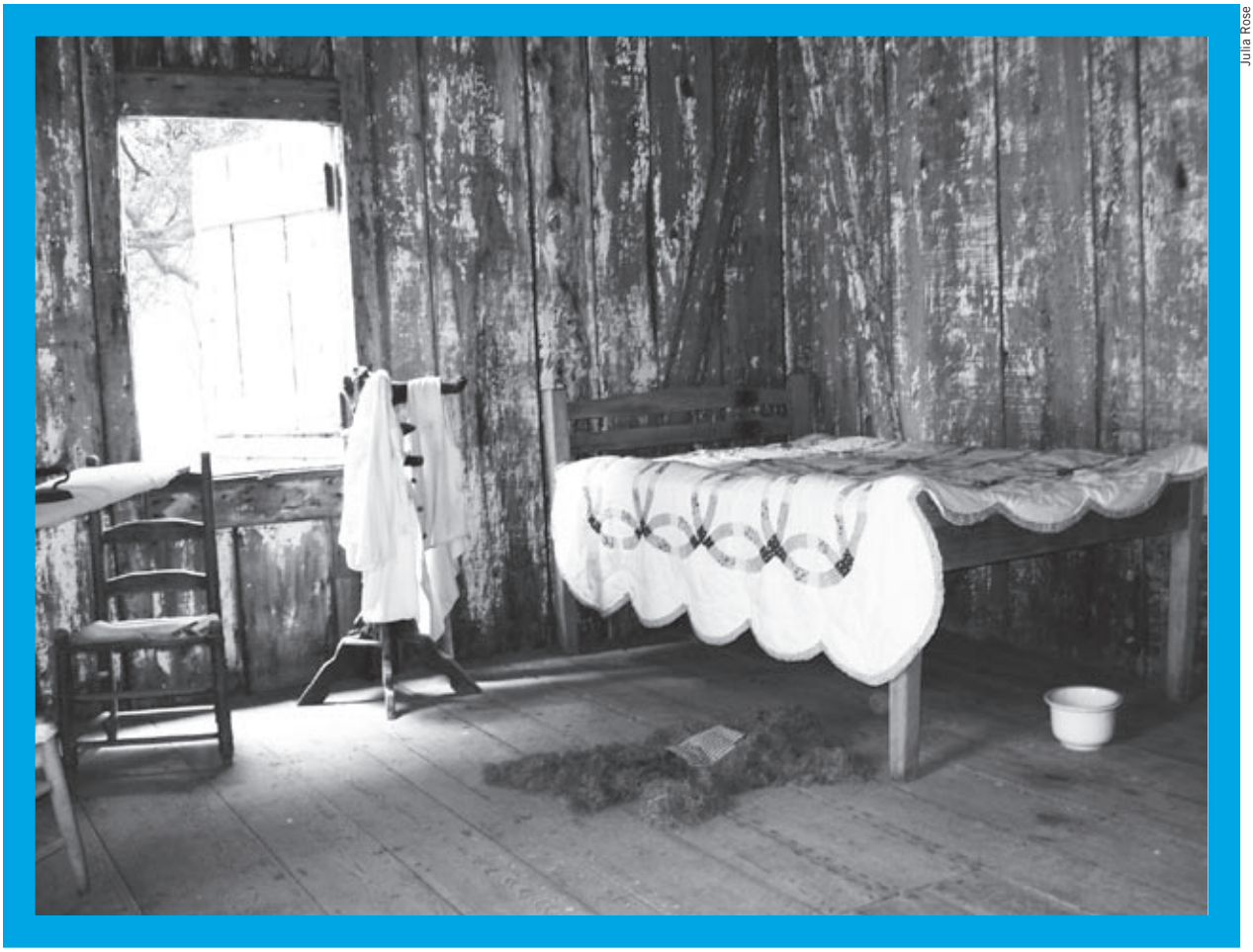
What Museum Workers and Public Historians Should Not Do:

- Assume your interpretation is neutral.
- Believe facts are unquestionable.
- Believe your audience sees the world the way you see the world.
- Rush your audience to understand an interpretation.
- Ask audiences to "get over it."
- Avoid histories of oppression, violence, or tragedy.

3. **Avoid objectifying human experiences.** The words we use to interpret history can unintentionally create a buffer between the learner and the human suffering entwined in history. Generic and anonymous descriptions make it less painful to talk about violence and oppression. Language can lessen learners' immediate resistances but simultaneously disengage learners from reflecting on the human consequences of the violence or oppression. Avoid words like "slave" or "troops" that objectify the people we intend to interpret by leaving out their identities and human attributes.

4. **Recognize that difficult knowledge will generate varying degrees of audience engagement.**

5. **Recognize that engagement in learning difficult knowledge is succeeding when learners show evidence of the 5Rs and demand to know more.**



Julia Rose

Historically furnished sugar plantation cabins from Allendale Plantation provide settings for interpreting life from the slavery era through the Civil Rights Movement. Pictured is the interior of a field worker's cabin c. 1870. West Baton Rouge Museum, Port Allen, LA.

happens immediately in the museum or lecture hall. Learners in a museum, for instance, might ask for more information from a tour guide, reread exhibit labels, purchase books in the gift shop, or pursue more information about the difficult knowledge after they have left the exhibit. Providing opportunities for conversation or places to sit down in an exhibit or presentation will encourage learners to reflect on the difficult knowledge.

> "A group of high school students on a tour at Magnolia Mound Plantation in Baton Rouge, Louisiana were led inside a slave quarter dwelling on exhibit. A fifteen-year-old African American woman refused to continue on the tour and would not enter the two-room 150-year old cabin exclaiming, 'I will not go in there, that is not me!'"[10]

5. Reconsideration

Learners will offer verbal expressions about how they reconsider difficult knowledge. For example, they might make analogies between the difficult knowledge and another point. "A-ha" moments are a part of reconsidering difficult knowledge and reconsideration is also evident when learners talk about their personal connections to the difficult knowledge. (For example, when walking along the reflecting pool at the Oklahoma City National Memorial, some visitors recount where they were that tragic day in 1995.) But not all responses are verbalized. Nonverbal evidence of reconsideration includes more subtle cues like head nodding, eye contact, note taking, lingering, and continued participation in viewing the exhibit. Reconsideration reveals an audience's further engagement in difficult knowledge.

Conclusion

Learners who are engaged in working through difficult knowledge respond, while others simply shut down and refuse further engagement or consideration of the topic. Indifference is one way to resist difficult

knowledge. *Each learner who is engaged will find opportunities to repeat and reflect on the information to make sense of the traumatic history, internally or aloud.* This is a key point. The learner actively engaged in learning demands more information and opportunities to think and respond to the difficult knowledge.

Successful social justice education aims to move learners to respond because responses signal that the learners care. Responses can vary widely among individuals. They range from visitors joining the museum, purchasing books, making contributions to a cause, contributing to a blog or writing an editorial, to less demonstrative actions such as discussing the difficult knowledge with others outside of the exhibition, or perhaps changing one's opinion.

Not all audiences will agree with the information on an intellectual level. That is reasonable for any project. However, the key difference between an intellectual challenge to difficult knowledge and resistance to learning is that the learner who is intellectually challenging content cares enough about the difficult knowledge that he or she continues reflecting on the subject, while the learner who shuts down is unwilling to grapple with the pain the difficult knowledge raises for him or her.

Last Word

If we could erase memories that haunt us, would we? Attempts to forget will diminish our capacity for empathy. A challenge for museum workers and public historians is to understand how to impart the histories of oppression and violence in meaningful and sensitive ways that do not shut down audiences' willingness to learn. Historical interpretations of difficult knowledge, framed through CMP, encourage audiences to respond to the histories of oppression and violence enough to care what happened in the past and eventually to demand to know more and respond in the present.

Julia Rose, Ph.D., is the Director of the West Baton Rouge Museum in Port Allen, LA. She is a member of the AASLH Council and serves as Program Chair for the 2011 AASLH Annual Meeting. She can be reached at rose@wbrmuseum.org.

Suggested Reading

Britzman, Deborah P. *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects: Toward a Psychoanalytic Inquiry of Learning.* Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1998.

Linenthal, Edward T. *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum.* Penguin Group, NY: 1995.

Simon, Roger, Sharon Rosenberg, and Claudia Eppert, eds. *Between Hope and Despair: Pedgagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.

Irwin-Zarecka, Iwona. *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994.

Endnotes

[1] Deborah P. Britzman, *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects: Toward a Psychoanalytic Inquiry of Learning* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1998).

[2] Julia Rose, "Rethinking Representations of Slave Life at Historical Plantation Museums: Towards a Commemorative Museum Pedagogy," (dissertation, Louisiana State University, 2006).

[3] "Working through" is a part of the process of grieving first identified by psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud in his description of mourning. See *Basic Freud: Psychoanalytic Thought for the 21st Century* by Michael Kahn, NY: Basic Books, 2002.

[4] ALFHAM listserv 2 February 2011.

[5] Rose dissertation.

[6] Jennifer Eichstedt and Stephen Small, *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums.* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002) 270.

[7] Rose dissertation.

[8] For theoretical explanations on working through new knowledge in the context of loss in learning see works about the educational theories by Melanie Klein and Anna Freud, including Deborah Britzman *After-Education: Anna Freud, Melanie Klein and Psychoanalytic Histories of Learning;* and Juliet Mitchell ed. *The Selected Melanie Klein.*

[9] Julia Rose, "Name by Name, Face by Face: Elevating Historical Representations of American Slave Life," *Exhibitionist*, 7:2 (Fall 2008): 37-43.

[10] Julia Rose, observation of her students at Magnolia Mound Plantation, Baton Rouge, LA, 2003.

HISTORY NEWS TECHNICAL LEAFLET

A PUBLICATION OF THE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

A Different Path for Historic Walking Tours

BY RON THOMSON

There is a formula that goes something like this: building construction date plus the name of the original owner or architect multiplied by several architectural terms equals a satisfactory entry for a historic district walking tour brochure. For example: *"Architect F. J. Pope designed this Romanesque revival structure in 1894 and had his offices on the top floor. The unusual corner entrance is supported by stone columns with carved capitals in the Romanesque style."*

Even a casual sampling of walking tours confirms a heavy dependence on facts and dates. The primary motivation of the typical historic district tour seems to revolve around the transfer of information: *"This Queen Anne residence was built during the 1890s. The D. R. Jones family was the original owner and kept the house until 1985, when it was purchased by Gertrude Franks."*

Like gingerbread on a Victorian, building descriptions are embellished with architectural terms:

"Exhibiting the same elaboration of entry and windows as the Hunter house at 52 N. Washington, the Spencer house has an ogee-arch at the front gable, and a barrel-vaulted front porch supported by paired Italianate posts."

Who is the intended audience for entries written like this? Will they capture and hold the attention of the general public, an eighth grade student, or even most residents who live or shop in a historic district? Will most of those who admire the Spencer house know an ogee-arch when they see it? Will they remember the term a week after they have read it? Will they find it relevant assuming they even think about it?

If the sponsors of a historic district walking tour assume and are satisfied with a very narrow definition of audience, perhaps a factual, architecturally-based approach makes sense. If, however, one of the goals is to make historic structures interesting and relevant to a broader audience, these types of tours risk failure. Assuming that a walking tour will both entertain and promote preservation, both sponsors and authors need to consider taking their tours down a different path. If they seek protection, they need to understand that concern for historic structures often begins with appreciation. Simply put, sponsors need to take a detour. They need to follow the path that leads to interpretation, not information.

This interpretive alternative is hardly an uncharted thoroughfare. In fact, others have not only passed this way before, they have left detailed directions. Guides who showed visitors through the interiors of historic structures faced a similar fork in their own road decades ago. They pioneered thematic tours steeped in social history. Similarly, scriptwriters for audio visual programs learned how to bring their stories to life with accessible, descriptive language. In both cases, the secret to increased relevance and more attentive audiences lay in the application of now time-tested interpretive techniques. (See, for example, *The Interpreter's Guidebook* by Kathleen Regnier, Michael Gross, and Ron Zimmerman, *Interpreting for Park Visitors* by William J. Lewis, and *Interpretation of Historic Sites* by William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low.)

Consider the following advice:

1. First of all, **think about the meaning behind the facts**. Freeman Tilden in his classic book, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, placed this principle at the foundation of effective interpretation. Make connections and discuss relationships, he said. To see how this idea works, compare two entries from a historic walking tour: "The cream brick Greek Revival facade was remodeled about 1892 with two metal-clad bays, and changes were made to the roof line." And, "Red brick was rarely used for building during the early days because it had to be imported and was therefore much more expensive than the brick made of local clays, which when fired, produced a cream colored brick." (*Old Main Street Historic District*, Racine, Wisconsin). The first entry gives information, the second equates cream brick with local manufacturers and cost. It allows those taking the tour to realize why there are so many buildings in Racine made with cream not red brick. And, when they see a red brick structure, they now know that it cost big bucks.

"Red brick was rarely used for building during the early days because it had to be imported and was therefore much more expensive than the brick made of local clays, which when fired, produced a cream colored brick."

2. Find ways to make the tour relevant. Establish links with the likely experience of the individual taking the tour. By writing that, "No American downtown was ever complete without a 'five and ten cent store,'" the Racine tour reminds many of childhood, of the days when they bought candy from the counter in the local five-and-dime.

3. Include social history. Use your tour to illustrate how times have changed. How does it make you feel when you walk down a street knowing that "any respectable Victorian lady refused to be seen on this block where gentlemen frequented saloons and billiard halls"? Next time you drink a cup of coffee think about the fact that "even the famous Maxwell House Hotel, whose coffee Teddy Roosevelt proclaimed 'good to the last drop,' had a side door entrance for women." Write about history that may no longer be evident: "In the 1960s, this street was the center of Nashville's civil rights movement." (All from Nashville's *CityWalk*). Or, "Blast furnaces introduced industry to rural America." (From *Discovering Pennsylvania's Allegheny Heritage*). Explain cause and effect. "Industrial development led to neighborhood development." (*South Side Walking Tour*, Seneca Falls, New York). Or, "Williamsville owes its existence to the falls of Ellicott Creek." (*Buffalo Tours*, Buffalo, New York). Explain how historic structures contributed to a community's social fabric or to the quality of an individual's lifestyle. "Rural churches were community centers, the sites of baptisms, communions, marriages and funerals. Churches also reinforced acceptable social behavior." Or, "A secure weatherproof barn was crucial to a farmer's livelihood." (From *The Farmers'*

Walking tour brochures can be designed in a variety of formats and are often attractive souvenirs.

Museum in Cooperstown, New York).

Remember that interpretation is never devoid of facts. Facts are, as Tilden says, the raw material of interpretation. An entry discussing a church in Seneca Falls, New York, includes the date the sanctuary was constructed and enlarged, but the reader also learns that Irish-Catholic immigrants built the church with a donation from a rich industrialist who "believed a church would help stabilize the growing immigrant community." (*South Side Walking Tour*, Seneca Falls, New York). Interpretation explains motivations and describes emotions. It places the facts in context.

4. Draw analogies that increase understanding or that help the audience see a subject from a new perspective. "Carpenters' Hall served as an excellent advertisement for members of the Carpenters' Company. This well-built headquarters demonstrated the quality craftsmanship that could be expected when a company member agreed to construct a building." (*Independence National Historical Park: The Story Behind the Scenery*).

5. Encourage self-discovery. Help your audience to really see. "As you look at this large brick house, find three things that you think show that the owner was wealthy." (*Bishop White House*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). Encourage imagination. "The year is 1850 and a large crowd is gathered on the grounds of Market Hall, where politicians often delivered public speeches. The crowd's attention is focused on the triangular-shaped Courier Building. From a second floor wrought-iron balcony on the Montgomery Street side of the building, the famous Daniel Webster

speaks." (*Historic Clinton & Hanover Squares*, Syracuse, New York).

6. Use language that brings the scene to life. Be descriptive. Use each of the senses. "The smell of fresh cut alfalfa from the field to your left fills the air in July as provisions for the wintering animals are put up. The thundering hooves of up to two hundred horses and mules can still be heard as wranglers move the animals between the ten pastures on the 5,000-acre ranch. The concrete slab to your left is all that remains of a garage and bunkhouse that burned down in 1982. (Remember, no smoking on the tour.)" (*Ninemile Remount Depot & Ranger Station*, Lolo National Forest, Montana). Notice how much factual material is communicated, but passed along painlessly. Use words to trigger familiar noises in the visitor's head. "At the time of the Chinese New Year, the festivities spilled out into Granite Street with firecrackers and music played on gongs, drums, cymbals, and flute." (*Granite Creek Walking Tour*, Prescott, Arizona). Or, "The two-toned 'beeeeeee-ohh!' of the compressed-air fog siren once made horses skittish five miles away and caused guests at Slater's Hotel to ask what wild animal made such a noise." (*Split Rock Lighthouse*, Minnesota).

National Park Service, Yorktown, Virginia. Colonial National Historical Park.

7. Personalize the tour. Discuss the human implications of events. Write that "Theodore Roosevelt equated Sagamore Hill with contentment" and then proceed to point out the things that the president enjoyed about family life. (From *National Parks and the New York Experience*). Tell stories that visitors will enjoy and remember. Use quotes that breathe life into inanimate structures. "Because of the warm climate the houses are built with a sort of corridor called a hall. In this the residents live when the cold season is over, because the doors at the two ends admit a flow of air which helps one to breathe during sometimes suffocating heat, especially on a day when the atmosphere is filled with lightning, and claps of thunder succeed one another with dreadful reverberations." (*Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey*, referring to Norfolk, Virginia.) Compare the vastly different moods triggered by the following two quotations: "I enjoy here everything that a reasonable mind can desire." (Benjamin Franklin, content in the home where he spent the last years of his life.) And, "My life had its beginnings in the midst of the most miserable, desolate, and discouraging surroundings." (Booker T. Washington about his birthplace, a small rural Virginia plantation.)

8. Have a theme. Historic house tours have undergone a radical transformation because they no longer just catalog facts about furniture. Instead, experienced interpreters find the threads that stitch the pieces of a house's history together. By following those threads they weave memories that linger long after the dates fade from visitors' minds. You can do the same with a historic district. A tour of Middlebury, Vermont, is organized around the prevalence of marble—marble quarries, marble-related businesses, marble sidewalks, marble statues, and marble columns. A tour in Buffalo, New York, states its theme up front— it "will put the lie to the myth that public agencies can't sponsor good-looking buildings." (See the case study of Seneca Falls, New York, for a more complete discussion of the effective application of themes.)

A thematic approach allows you to focus and reinforce your message. Still, you can tap into the richness of your district by offering different tours at different times of year. A spring tour might take visitors to colorful gardens while a summer tour could highlight hometown, bandstand, and flag-waving patriotism. In each case, from the beginning, the audience has a center of focus, a story that they can follow and retell. When you use a theme, entries usually flow one into another and your audience keeps walking and reading.

9. Follow the creative process often used for audio visual programs: **write the script first, and then add the illustrations**. Begin your research, locate possible stops, search for themes, then dig deeper for the details that will bring the story to life. Prepare well-written interpretive text that can stand alone. Then "illustrate" it with the historic structures. Tours that follow this advice encourages additional uses for the walking tour. They are often read at home in a recliner. "Both day and night, the Fire Island Lighthouse has a distinctive visual signature. Boat captains learn to recognize the two broad black and two white stripes painted on the lighthouse. But even in the dark, they know that the light from Fire Island snaps through the night every 7.5 seconds." (*National Parks and the New York Experience*). Of course each entry must refer to what the reader might see on-site, but when well done, it interests even the reader who is far away. Try to

send your message to this much broader audience.

10. Be creative with your titles and opening lines. Follow the lead of news reporters. Capture the audience's attention with your first sentence. "This bell meant business." (*Ninemile Remount Depot & Ranger Station*, Lolo National Forest, Montana). "Small towns are full of surprises." (*Dateline America* about Angel's Swamp, California). "Gold motivated men to literally move mountains." (*Gin Lin Trail*, Rogue River National Forest, Oregon).

11. Finally, take another look at format. Never assume that your walking tour must be a publication, or only a publication. Certainly brochures are flexible. They can be designed in many different sizes and shapes, one color or brightly illustrated. They can be attractive souvenirs. They might be given away free of charge or sold to generate income. But what about other media? (See the case study of Jamestown, Virginia, for more on media alternatives.) Have you considered an audio cassette or CD? With an audio program the world of sound, music, and narration opens up to you. Should the tour be supplemented with signs? The CityWalk in Nashville, Tennessee marks each stop on their walking tour with human silhouettes that symbolize the topic discussed. For example, a saxophone player marks the center of the city's nightlife. For special occasions or for special impact, what about adding the human touch? Actors in period clothing are increasingly used to supplement walking tours. They allow visitors to meet, at least for a moment of transposed time, a building's architect, a housekeeper, or a gardener.

Remember there are significant reasons for applying these interpretive techniques to walking tours:

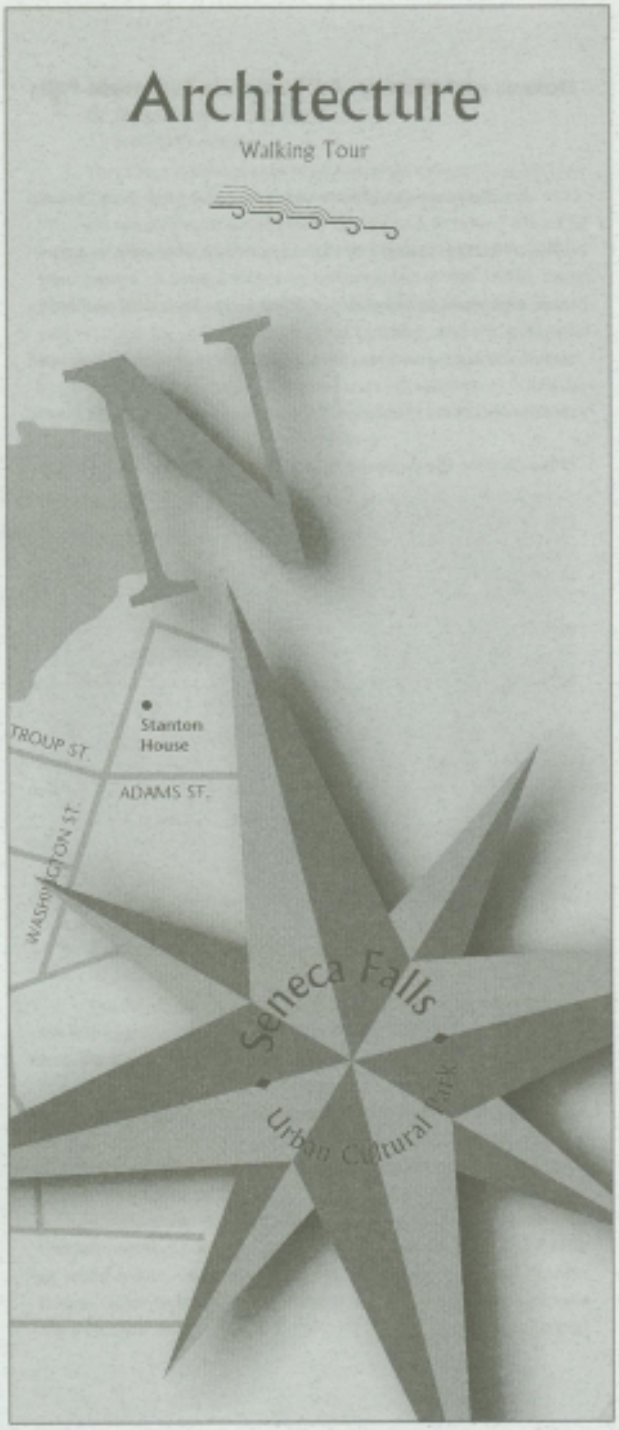
- They provide an enhanced experience that can be enjoyed by an expanded audience.
- They build new support for preservation, based on deeper understanding and appreciation of historic structures.
- They send the preservation message via different media that might reach different ears.
- They can demonstrate the economic benefits of historic preservation, a goal your local business community will surely appreciate. If you succeed in convincing tourists to walk your district, why not point out where they can eat, shop, relax, etc.? Tie the historic to the commercially interesting. (See the case study of the CityWalk in Nashville, Tennessee.)

As you plan your walking tour, make a conscious decision to explore beyond the well-trodden but primarily informational route taken by so many in the past. Look for ways to use proven interpretive techniques to enliven your presentation. Create a journey that will survive fondly in the minds of both loyal and entirely new audiences.

Walking Tours with a Theme: The Case of Seneca Falls, New York

Seneca Falls, in upstate New York, depends upon partnerships to interpret the history of the town, the 1848 Women's Rights Convention, and the women's rights movement. Interpretive tasks are divided among Women's Rights National Historical Park (a unit of the National Park Service), the Seneca Falls Urban Cultural Park (one of fourteen such parks in the State of New York), the National Women's Hall of Fame, and several county and city governments, museums, and organizations. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Heritage Areas System provided funding for a series of three notable walking tour brochures, written by Margaret McFadden.

These brochures stand out because they successfully adapt thematic interpretation to historic districts. Each



The architecture of Seneca Falls, New York is the theme of just one of the city's three historic walking tours.

tour covers a slightly different geographic area and presents the town's structural heritage from different points of view. One tour, for example, focuses on industrialization and the impact that industrial and technological change had on Seneca Falls and its citizens. "The process of industrialization," the tour text points out, " caused great upheaval and confusion by changing virtually every aspect of life." New jobs, new working conditions, new homes, new neighbors, and new social and family structure, all accompanied the growth of industries along the Cayuga-Seneca Canal that ran through Seneca Falls. Stops on the tour include several factories and shops, a church, and the homes of mill owners and workers.

The unrest that accompanied industrial change provides the theme for a second tour. "The Seneca Falls convention happened when it did because of the coming together of visionary leaders with an atmosphere open to social change." This tour, then, focuses on the reform movements that touched the lives of Seneca Falls residents. Stops interpret industrial unrest (related to working conditions), religious agitation (related to abolition and women's rights), the transportation and accompanying communication revolution (railroads made the world a smaller place), Jacksonian democracy (expansion of the franchise for white men, in contrast to the continued enslavement of African-Americans), legal reforms (again including the rights of women), even changes in fashion (changes in women's clothing now associated with resident Amelia Bloomer).

The third Seneca Falls tour focuses on architecture. It makes the point that "architectural styles reflect the tastes, values, and concerns of people in a given time, expressed in three-dimensional form." Colonial Revival, for example, can be tied to "new interest in America's past caused by the nation's centennial in 1876." Italianate architecture, on the other hand, was "inspired by the poets and painters of the Romantic movement, who looked to the European past for inspiration in the face of rapid changes transforming the nation." Queen Anne homes display an eclectic mix of design elements popular with architects hired by America's newly rich. Text at other tour stops similarly discusses Dutch Revival, Tudor Revival, Gothic Revival, Federal, Second Empire, and Greek Revival buildings. Wherever necessary, the reader learns about construction dates and building occupants. In most cases, however, the tour concentrates on how each structure fits into the broadest historical context, gives a few pointers on how to identify different styles, and interprets the social ramifications of each shift in architectural taste.

The tour route not only introduces visitors to history, it accommodates the basic needs of all tourists.

Broadcasting on Multiple Channels: The Case of Jamestown, Virginia

When compared to most historic districts, Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in America, is largely invisible now. Most of the structures are gone, except for below ground features discovered by archeologists. From afar, a visitor might wonder what there is to see. But not for long. Soon after they arrive, visitors are engaged in the colony's fascinating stories. How does this happen? What lessons can be learned from how Jamestown faces this challenge of vanished history?

Success depends upon the excellent use of a variety of interpretive media. Jamestown sends its interpretive message over several channels, not just one. It broadcasts to those who listen better than they read, those who are attracted by a touch of drama, those who can become lost in fantasies triggered by the Elizabethan accent of an actor, or those who love to look at each detail of a painting. Jamestown shuns dependence on the traditional walking tour brochure. Instead, visitors find:

- Paintings by contemporary artist Sidney King, now used on exterior "wayside" exhibits. King's paintings not only help visitors imagine what Jamestown's structures looked like, they bring the streets of Jamestown to life once again. Residents gossip over fences, debate the political issues of the day, or hoe weeds from their gardens. Chickens scratch the ground and dogs pant in the Virginia heat.
- During the summer, visitors strolling along The Back Streete might encounter an actor in period clothing who slips into a first person presentation. As visitors listen, even this long ago decayed village seems more tangible. Imagine how well this technique might work among structures that still exist.
- Other visitors rent a tape recorder in the park's visitor center and listen to an audio tour as they walk through the town. Tapes like these introduce visitors to the sounds of the past, the noises of everyday life, the cadence of English as it was spoken hundreds of years ago.
- Exhibits and an orientation film in the Jamestown visitor center and, of course, programs presented by interpreters round out the interpretive media brought to bear on the history of Jamestown. Viewed in its entirely, Jamestown's interpretive program serves as a valuable catalogue of options.

As a case study, Jamestown has obvious application to districts that include significant landscapes, battlefields, and sites rather than only structures. But the interpretive tools used there are also easily adapted to even the most structurally intact urban historic district.

Nashville's CityWalk was developed with a variety of audiences in mind, including adults and children.

Silhouettes of historical characters mark key stops of the CityWalk tour.

User-Friendly History: The Case of Nashville's CityWalk

Stops along Nashville's CityWalk are located along a green "time line" painted on the sidewalk. At each location, the traditional historical sign gives basic information about the site. But the creators of CityWalk aspired, from the beginning, to transcend the usual. They never intended to offer only facts, dates, and information. From the outset, they adopted a "user-friendly" approach to touring downtown Nashville.

They knew, for example, that their audience would include children *and* adults so they designed tour stops that would engage both groups. At each of tour's fifteen locations, the Metropolitan Historical Commission, working with Paine/Pomeroy, Inc., a marketing and communication firm, imagined appropriate historical characters and constructed them in silhouette. These figures became icons for the history of each site—a jazz musician coaxes melancholy from his saxophone, a World War I doughboy returns to his Nashville sweetheart, a Civil War soldier trudges resolutely toward battle, a preacher exhorts the wayward to repent. Via these symbolic human images, it's easy to relate to and remember the historical essence of each stop.

The path of the tour itself deserves special mention. As is the case with all such walking tours, careful thought went into the selection of the historic sites. But in the case of CityWalk, planners also chose streets that took visitors past many of the amenities of downtown Nashville—restaurants, hotels, and shops as well as the convention center and Capitol. The tour route not only introduces visitors to history, it accommodates the basic needs of all tourists. Merchants, of course, are enthusiastic. "It's been good for everyone," says one shopkeeper along the tour's green line. CityWalk is not only good interpretation, it appears that it is good public relations and good economics. "Don't miss Tootsie's Orchid Lounge," the brochure suggests, "across the alley from the Ryman Auditorium (home of the Grand Old Opry), where Opry stars relaxed for a beer and a chat with Tootsie between shows."

CityWalk is not only good interpretation, it appears that it is good public relations and good economics.

Ron Thomson studied history as an undergraduate at Moravian College and as a Thomas Jefferson Fellow at the University of Virginia. He learned and practiced interpretation during his twenty-one years with the National Park Service. Now a free lance interpretive specialist, he operates Compass, a small business that specializes in interpretive planning, training, and writing. Contact him at 18 Ravine Park North, Oneonta, NY 13820; (607) 432-7912 (voice or fax); or send an e:mail message via ThomsonR@hartwick.edu.