Who is Taking Care of Grandma’s Grave?

Jason W. Church
National Center for Preservation Technology and Training
Why Preserve Cemeteries?
Historical Events

HUNTSVILLE MERIDIAN
LONGITUDE 86° 34' 15" W
Major Thomas Freeman, Surveyor,
U.S. Government Land Office,
established the line known as
the Huntsville Meridian in 1807
which is the reference for all
property surveyed in
North Alabama.
Huntsville Pilgrimage Association

MARTIN MILLER
PVT 42 REGT
ALA MILITIA
INDIAN WARS
1780
1860
A Direct Link to Our History
Documented

First Phase of Surveys

- Historical Documentation (primary resources)
- Historic / Community Photographs
First Phase of Surveys

- Oral interviews
First Step: Documentation

Why is this important?

- Account of the current condition.
First Step: Documentation

Why is this important?

- Record of existing materials.
First Step: Documentation

Why is this important?

- Helps to establish preservation priorities.
Survey Forms / Written Documentation

- Several forms available
- Not all forms serve all needs
- Develop need specific and site specific forms
- Before you begin pick your form
- Decide the “meaning” of all terms on the form
- Train all people involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of interment (circle one): tomb marker family name marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of tomb (circle one): mausoleum vault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of marker (circle all that apply): headstone footstone ground tablet basal ruin cross pedestal obelisk bedstead lawn ledger pedestal column funeral home plaque other:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions (primary stone): Height: Width: Depth (or L):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions (base): Height: Width: Depth (or L):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions (other): Height: Width: Depth (or L):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (circle one): North South East West unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interment status (circle one): active inactive abandoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of interment (circle all that apply): standing ruin fragment relocated altered replica tilted sunken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of interment (circle one): individual family undeterminable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestal (circle one): yes no Base (circle one): yes no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornament (circle all that apply): urn sculpture cross plaque relief decoration incised decoration ornamental vase none other:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture (circle all that apply): sculpture container/vase plaque immortelles none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape (circle all that apply): brick asphalt concrete soil grass vegetation other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enclosure (circle all that apply): curb wall fence none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade slope (circle one): positive negative cross-slope none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of grade (circle one): 0 (low) 1 2 3 (high):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• “Cemetery Conditions Assessment Form” used by NCPTT with an additional “Terms and Definitions” attachment.

• “Rapid Cemetery Documentation Form” and “Rapid Cemetery Documentation Definitions“. These were developed by NCPTT as a disaster response tool.

http://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/documentation/
• Chicora Foundation has a variety of useful Cemetery Documentation Survey Forms available for download.

http://www.chicora.org/cemetery-forms.html

• Texas Historic Commission has a simple user friendly Cemetery Survey Form.

http://www.thc.state.tx.us/learn/publications
## IDENTIFICATION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot identification:</th>
<th>Harrington plot designation:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natchitoches Cemeteries #:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name(s) of interred:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First burial date:</td>
<td>Last burial date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inscription:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stone carver (if known):</th>
<th>Location of mark:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## DESCRIPTION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interment (circle one):</th>
<th>tomb</th>
<th>marker</th>
<th>family name marker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of tomb (circle one):</td>
<td>mausoleum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of marker (circle all that apply):</td>
<td>headstone</td>
<td>footstone</td>
<td>ground tablet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions (primary stone):</td>
<td>Height:</td>
<td>Width:</td>
<td>Depth (or L):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions (base):</td>
<td>Height:</td>
<td>Width:</td>
<td>Depth (or L):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions (other):</td>
<td>Height:</td>
<td>Width:</td>
<td>Depth (or L):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (circle one):</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interment status (circle one):</td>
<td>active</td>
<td>inactive</td>
<td>abandoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of interment (circle all that apply):</td>
<td>standing</td>
<td>ruin</td>
<td>fragment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of interment (circle one):</td>
<td>individual</td>
<td>family</td>
<td>undeterminable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestal (circle one):</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Base (circle one):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornament (circle all that apply):</td>
<td>urn</td>
<td>sculpture</td>
<td>cross plaque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture (circle all that apply):</td>
<td>sculpture</td>
<td>container/vasel</td>
<td>plaque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape (circle all that apply):</td>
<td>brick</td>
<td>asphalt</td>
<td>concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enclosure (circle all that apply):</td>
<td>curb</td>
<td>wall</td>
<td>fence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade slope (circle one):</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>cross-slope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of grade (circle one):</td>
<td>0 (low)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Involve the community.
How would different people describe this?
Headstone, ground supported
Headstone, stacked bases
Funeral Home Plaque
Materials
Identify Materials

- **marble**
- **limestone**
- **concrete**
- **zinc**
LEWIS H. HAMILTON/
BORN FEB. 2, 1922 /
DIED JAN. 20, 1978 /
BECAME A /
MEMBER OF ST /
JOHN BAPTIST /
CHURCH /
IN HIS EARLY DAY

Lewis H. Hamilton b. 2-2-1922 d. 1-20-1978
FLORINCES JACK “S”(b.w.)ON/
DIED. “S”(b.w.)EPT 2. . 1946/
AT S . 2 . W. 34 ST/
“S”(b.w.)AV GA

FLORINCES JACKS*ON/
DIED. S*EPT 2. . 1946/
AT S . 2 . W. 34 ST/
S*AV GA

* Indicates backwards letter
Iconography

Stories in Stone; A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography by Douglas Keister
Historic Landscape
Locate or Create a Site Map

- Several electronic programs available
- Can be a simple location map
- To an interactive GIS / GPS data base
Locate or Create a Site Map
Photodocumentation
Do not use

- Shaving cream
- Flour
- Caulk
Photodocumentation
Photodocumentation
Photodocumentation

Faithful to her even unto death

AGE 74

Faithful to her even unto death
Documentation
Documentation
Plants as Grave Markers
Plants as Grave Markers
“Unconventional” Grave Markers
Cemetery Fencing Survey

Cemetery Name: Laurel Grove North Cemetery

Cemetery Address: 802 W. Anderson St. Savannah, GA 31415

Lot / Section Number: 1232

Lot Physical Location: West of aisle 17

Lot Name (Predominate): Rutherford

Fencing Type: Wrought with cast iron details

Fence Manufacturer and Date: Unknown

Fence Description: Round cast posts are topped by a sphere. Each panel is wrought iron with a hair pin and bow pattern which connects to the runners with a cast detail. The shorter hair pin has a cast arrow head top. The gate is labeled "John Rutherford."

Lot Map:
Preservation Priorities
Preservation Priorities
Who are they?

Census Records
City Directories
Court Records

Church Records
Death Records

www.rootsweb.com
www.ancestry.com
www.findagrave.com

Your Guide to Cemetery Research
by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack
Who are they?
Cemetery Care
Cleaning Issues

- What is the reason for cleaning the monument?
  - Soiling
  - Staining
  - Particulate Matter/Gypsum crusts
  - Biological growth
  - Vandalism/graffiti
Why Should We Clean?

- Readability
Soiling
Biological Growth
Metallic Staining
Deterioration/Gypsum Crusts

Sugaring
Deterioration/Gypsum Crusts
Vandalism
Cleaning Issues

- What are some considerations regarding cleaning methods?
  - Acceleration of deterioration
  - Loss of original materials
  - Long-term stability of monument
  - Long-term affects of cleaners
Mechanical Cleaning

- **Acceptable**
  - Low pressure, power-washing (less than 300 psi)
  - Mechanical agitation using soft bristle brushes

- **Unacceptable**
  - Sand blasting
  - High-pressure power-washing (greater than 300 psi)
  - Grinders
  - Wire brushes
Do’s and Don'ts of Cleaning

- *Never* Use A Wire Brush, Nyloxi Brush or Power Equipment
Do’s and Don'ts of Cleaning

• High Pressure Washing
Do’s and Don'ts of Cleaning

- Don’t Harsh Cleaners Such As Acids and Strong Bleaches

![Image of Clorox bottles with prohibition sign](image1)

[Image of damaged headstone](image2)
Do’s and Don'ts of Cleaning

- Do No Harm
- Do select the gentlest cleaning method to accomplish the task
- Do perform small tests before cleaning the entire stone
- Do follow manufacturers’ recommendations
- Do follow manufacturers’ safety guidance
- Do exercise patience.
Equipment
Basic Cleaning

- Follow manufacturer’s instructions
- ALWAYS use soft bristle brushes
- NEVER use a wire brush
- NEVER use power tools, such as power washers, grinders, or sanders
Application of Cleaners

- ALWAYS Soak the Stone Before Cleaning
- Start Cleaning From the Bottom and Work Up
- Use a Small Circular Motion
- Use Lots of Water
NPS Preservation Brief 48
“Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries”
Upcoming Hands-on Training

- June 16-17, 2017 Gloucester, MA
  http://ptn.org/events/gravestone-preservation-workshop

- June 24, 2017 Tuscaloosa, AL
  Association for Gravestone Studies
  https://www.gravestonestudies.org/conference/register

- September 23, 2017 Janesville, WI
  https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/events/cemetery-basics-workshop-janesville/
Where to Get More Information

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