

Cemetery Safety and Etiquette



Cemetery Preservation

Cleaning, resetting or repairing stones badly needs to be avoided at all costs. Some cleaning solutions, including bleach, can cause a lot of damage.

Organizations like the Association for Gravestone Studies (AGS) provide training and conservation workshops, where participants can learn how to do these things safely and correctly, and also know when to call in an expert conservator.

<https://www.gravestonestudies.org/>

A Graveyard Preservation Primer 2nd Edition can be obtained through the AGS web site.

These sites also have some great ideas for cemetery preservation & education -

<http://chicora.org/>

National Center for Preservation Technology and Training

<http://ncptt.nps.gov/>

We would like to thank The Association for Gravestone Studies for providing us with some of the information for this brochure.

Other Resources

Find A Grave

<http://www.findagrave.com/>

Gravestone Artwear & Rubbing Supplies

<http://www.gravestoneartwear.com/>

<http://www.gravestonerubbingsupplies.com/>

Gravestone Casts and Artwork-

<http://www.gravestonegirls.com/>

Books-

'New Jersey Cemeteries and Tombstones-History in the Landscape' by Richard F. Veit and Mark Nonestied

'Your Guide to Cemetery Research' by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack

'Stories in Stone-A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography' by Douglas Keister

'Making Paper & Fabric Rubbings by Cecily Barth Firestein

'Lasting Impressions' by Paulette Chernack and Cassandra Davidson -

<https://gravestone.myshopify.com/products/lasting-impressions-by-paulette-chernack-ca>

Cemetery Safety

A cemetery is an outdoor history museum, wildlife refuge, botanical garden and art gallery.

The people buried there lived and helped make their community what it is today.

It links us with the past and provides us with a sacred place for everyone to visit.

Once you learn to appreciate one gravestone's symbolism and beautiful design you are more likely to become involved with and responsible for conservation of cemeteries in your community. However, before entering a cemetery you need to bear the following in mind:

Enter a cemetery with great care, walk slowly, watch for uneven ground and footstones.

In overgrown graveyards check yourself for ticks.

Do not lean on markers. Many older markers can be unstable.

Falling markers have been known to fatally crush children and adults.

Whenever possible enter a cemetery with another adult. Children should always visit with an adult.

Taking Rubbings & Foil Impressions

SOME GRAVESTONE RUBBING DO'S AND DON'TS

Please DO—

Check to see if rubbing is allowed in the cemetery.

Get permission and/or a permit, as required.

Rub only solid stones in good condition.

Become educated; learn how to rub responsibly before rubbing a gravestone.

Use a soft brush and plain water to do any necessary stone cleaning.

Make certain your rubbing paper/foil covers a larger area than where you will be rubbing.

Avoid magic marker-type pens or other permanent color materials that could bleed through your paper.

Test paper before working on a stone to be certain that no color bleeds through.

Rub gently, carefully.

Leave the stone and graveyard in better condition than you found it.

Take all trash with you.

Please DON'T—

Don't attempt to rub deteriorating marble or sandstone, or any unsound or weakened stone (for example, a stone that sounds hollow when gently tapped or a stone that is flaking, splitting, blistered, cracked, or unstable on its base).

Don't use detergents, soaps, vinegar, bleach, or any other cleaning solutions on the stone, no matter how mild!

Don't use shaving cream, chalk, graphite, dirt, or other concoctions in an attempt to read worn inscriptions. Using a large mirror to direct bright sunlight diagonally across the face of a gravemarker casts shadows in indentations and makes inscriptions more visible.

Don't use stiff-bristled or wire brushes, putty knives, nail files, or any metal object to clean or to remove lichen from the stone; soft natural bristled brushes, whisk brooms, or wooden sticks are usually fine if used carefully.

Don't attempt to remove stubborn lichen. Soft lichen may be thoroughly soaked with plain water and then loosened with a gum eraser or a wooden popsicle stick. Be gentle. Stop if lichen does not come off easily.

Don't use spray adhesives, scotch tape, or duct tape. Use masking tape.

Don't leave masking tape, wastepaper, colors, etc., at the grave site.