

WHAT'S IN YOUR CEMETERY?

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CEMETERIES

Church cemeteries probably indicate that there are church records. People may or may not be buried in family groups – but the records will help.

Municipal cemeteries frequently have sections where people are buried in groups, family or association of some kind.

Military cemeteries indicate that the person – or the spouse – served in some branch. There should be military records

Family cemeteries can include small children or infants that were not known. Not everyone will actually be related. Retainers, visitors, etc

It is easy to look in the wrong cemetery! It is common to think your family member is buried in one place when they were buried somewhere else; not necessarily anywhere near where they died.

DEATH CERTIFICATES & OBITUARIES

A death certificate can be important in locating the cemetery. A death certificate can also have lots of other great info on it. But be wary until you have checked it out. Remember, the person giving that info was not the individual you are research – he is the dead person. But someone not at the top of their form – grief, you know.

Obituaries are another help. If they do not give the name of the cemetery, they do have the name of the mortuary – which will know which cemetery. The mortuary will also have records.

Even with a death certificate and an obituary you still want to walk the graveyard

WHO IS IN CHARGE? WHERE ARE THE RECORDS?

Administrative – in the geographic area, county, municipal. Start with the court house to find out which government office processes burial permits.

Make contact, find out if they have the burial records and how far back they go. Also, if there is access to them and how to get that access.

Check for lot purchases. They are real estate purchases and there would be a deed.

Many municipal departments or cemetery offices have kept great records and the people who work there are familiar with them. Ask for help!

CEMETERY INFO

Cemetery offices can have great information.

A map is the basic tool you need.

Documents concerning a specific person might have been collected and kept in the file, copy of the death cert, obituary, correspondence, the bill

Some cemeteries kept a ledger with a chronological listing of burials with lots of details.

CHURCH CEMETERIES

Cemeteries connected to a church can be very useful. The burials may, or may not, be grouped by families. But the likelihood of the church records for that person being available are so good. The person may have been a member of that church all his life, as well as family members. Finding the sexton, or whoever is in charge can be difficult, but very well worth it.

FAMILY CEMETERIES

There is something special about a family cemetery.

The problem comes in that there is rarely any real records kept – because “everybody knows” Even if the area was well kept at one time, it may have been abandoned, now.

But, if the family cemetery you find is well kept and marked and there are records –treasure!

TOMBSTONES

Tombstones can be damaged or destroyed so it is not possible to determine who is buried where. Make an appointment to visit the office of the person in charge. Find out who purchased the lot and any other details.

It is possible that there is someone who knows. Ask!

Check for the stone cutter firms in the area. Many are family firms, been in business a long time. In a small municipality you might locate the firm who provided the majority of the tombstones for the cemetery.

The firm would have records! The name on the stone, who bought & paid for it, where was it placed, etc. Even if the stone is no longer in place, you might learn about it.

VIRTUAL CEMETERIES

We don't actually need to GO to a cemetery. Findagrave and Billiongraves can give us access to places that we just can not get to.

Besides finding the burial place and information on a person you are researching, you can often find someone else who is interested in this same family.

When you are actually in a cemetery, you take pictures and write down the information. Post that information for others to find.