

Cemetery Records – Pamela Brigham

There are several ways to access cemetery records for your ancestor.

First, you'll need to try to find where your ancestor is buried. Check your ancestor's death certificate or obituary for this.

If this doesn't work, you can just search the online sites for your ancestor's name; however, keep in mind that many people have the same name. Additional verification would be needed to confirm the headstones of your ancestors. Information regarding several online cemetery sites are listed below.

Once you do find where they are buried, if there is not information online about it, (i.e., photos) or if you just wish to see the area, then you can visit that cemetery. After the online sites information is information about visiting cemeteries.

Find A Grave - <http://www.findagrave.com>

This site allows you to search for your ancestor's burial records in cemeteries globally. You can search for a cemetery by name or you can search for all the names of your ancestor within a specific cemetery. This is key for seeing if potential ancestors are buried in the same cemetery.

The site allows you to contribute by taking photos of headstones and transcribing the photos. You can also create memorial pages for your ancestors and include additional information about your ancestor that may not be available at the cemetery. The site also allows users to make requests for photos of headstones which users can respond to.

To make the contribution easier, Find A Grave does have a mobile app.

Billion Graves - <http://www.billiongraves.com>

This site allows you to search for your ancestor's burial records in cemeteries globally. It's not clear the total number of grave records they have available. They allow you to search for a specific cemetery and allow you to search within that cemetery for specific names.

The site does require you to provide your e-mail to join before returning results to you. The site allows you to contribute by taking photos of headstones and transcribing the photos. You can do either one or both. The site also allows for users to submit requests for photos. The site makes contributions easier with their Billion Graves mobile app.

Billion Grave offers BG Plus. The following are components of BG Plus:

- Virtual Walkthrough – online do a walk through of the cemetery.

- Map It – put your search results into an interactive map.

- Record notifications – get notified when your ancestors headstone is added.

- Ad Free – no ads for distraction.

- Priority Support –get faster support.

Interment.net - <http://www.interment.net>

This site allows you to search for your ancestor's burial record in cemeteries globally.

You are able to browse to specific cemeteries. Each cemetery contains a list of names with birth and death dates. The site does not contain photos of the headstone. The site has very detailed instructions on how you can submit transcriptions of headstones for a cemetery. The site is focused on accuracy of the information entered about each cemetery. You can search the site. The search box is powered by Google so you should use similar search terms when using this search.

Visiting the cemetery

Contact the cemetery before you go

This is key to do to make sure you don't show up and the cemetery is closed or you can't find your ancestors. The cemetery may only be open certain hours. Typically, public cemeteries are open from dawn to dusk; however, they may not be open every day of the week. Some cemeteries are private and you may need to make an appointment for a visit.

The cemetery office can provide information on where your ancestor is buried within the cemetery. Some graves in cemeteries are unmarked, or the grave markers may be buried after years of being out in the open. The office may have additional details about your ancestor's burial as well. They may have such information as who paid for the headstone, or who attended the burial.

Contacting the office also allows you to confirm any guidelines and restrictions they may have regarding headstones. They may not allow for rubbings of the headstone since it can damage some stones. They may or may not allow for you to do some cleaning of the headstone while visiting. Most cemeteries shouldn't have any problem with you taking pictures of the headstone.

Visiting a cemetery – etiquette/guidelines

Be Safe – snakes, gopher/rodent holes, sunken ground, overgrown shrubbery. There can be hidden dangers on the ground when you're walking around a cemetery. Be careful where you step!

Be respectful – other visitors may be there to mourn a loved one. Don't interrupt services of other people at the cemetery.

Dress comfortably – you'll probably be walking around a lot, so comfortable shoes are a must!

Pack accordingly:

- Mirror – used for reflecting light to better see headstone.
- Camera – for taking pictures
- Fully charged phone – can be used for taking pictures, taking notes, or used to call in case of emergencies.
- Water, soft brush, scissors – for cleaning the headstone and making it more readable.

- Garden kneeling pad – necessary if you'll be cleaning a lot of grave markers on the ground.

Where to find more info

There are many blogs that have discussed cemeteries. Here are just a few:

- Geneosity: Cemeteries a Research Library for Genealogists
http://www.geneosity.com/cemeteries-a-research-library-for-genealogists/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=sendible&utm_campaign=RSS
- Geneosity: Packing for the Cemetery: Genealogy Style
http://www.geneosity.com/packing-for-the-cemetery-genealogy-style/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=sendible&utm_campaign=RSS
- Ancestry: Tips for Finding and Visiting your Ancestors in the Cemetery
<http://c.mfcreative.com/mars/landing/findagrave-instagram/cemetery-guide.pdf>
- Ancestry: Cemetery Etiquette: What you need to know for that cemetery trip
http://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2013/11/04/cemetery-etiquette-graveyard-dos-and-donts/?o_xid=57458&o_lid=57458&o_sch=Social
- Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography by Douglas Keister: https://www.amazon.com/Stories-Stone-Cemetery-Symbolism-Iconography/dp/158685321X/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3O2JRVCUW1DU9&dchild=1&keywords=stories+in+stone+douglas+keister&qid=1623811366&srefix=Stories+in+stone%2Caps%2C230&sr=8-1