

CEMETERY HERITAGE RESOURCES

Historical Paper No. 15



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Introduction

Cemeteries and funerary objects are often significant heritage resources, of value beyond their traditional role as personal and family memorials or religious sacramentals. They may be historically significant as landmarks, designed landscapes or as repositories of historical information relating to communities, ethnic heritage and a variety of heritage themes. Individuals and organizations interested in cemetery records, research and preservation may find the following resources to be of interest.

RECORDS & RESEARCH

Area genealogical societies, museums, historical societies, pioneer associations, libraries and hereditary associations often have records and publications of interest. Among the organizations having resources relating to the history of cemeteries are:

- Seattle Genealogical Society, P. O. Box 15329, Seattle WA 98115-0329
- South King County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 3174, Kent, WA 98032-0203
- Eastside Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 374, Bellevue WA 98009-0374
- Seattle Public Library, 800 Pike Street, Seattle WA 98101-3922
- Pioneer Association of the State of Washington, 1642 43rd Ave. E., Seattle WA 98112
- Fiske Genealogical Foundation, 1644 43rd Ave. E., Seattle WA 98112

A number of churches and religious organizations own and operate their own cemeteries and maintain cemetery records. Historical societies and museum groups around King County have also been instrumental in preserving or maintaining local cemeteries and records. The Association of King County Historical Organizations, P.O. Box 3257, Seattle, WA 98114 maintains a valuable directory of area historical museums and groups on-line at www.akcho.org. A list of links to historical organizations can be found on-line at www.historylink.org.

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

- *Black Diamond WA Cemetery Records*, 1980, Kent, South King County Genealogical Society.
- “Carnation Cemetery--Carnation, King County, Washington,” recorded by JoAnn Tobler, Karen Pile and Barbara Cartrell, compiled by Clara C. Matthias, *Seattle Genealogical Society Bulletin*, Winter 1989-90, Vol. 39 No. 2, p 51 ff.
- *Cemetery and Death Records for the State of Washington held by Seattle Public Library and Seattle Genealogical Society* by Barbara Anne Baylor Bosley and Jerome Donnergaard Bosley, 1992, Seattle, Seattle Genealogical Society.

- “A Change of Worlds--A History of Seattle Cemeteries” by Laura C. Daly, *Portage*, Vol. 5 No. 1-2, Winter-Spring, 1984, pp. 17-22.
- *Death Certificates of Finns in King County, 1892-1947*, transcribed by Merle A. Reinikka is an on-line document available from the Genealogical Society of Finland at www.genealogia.fi
- *Death Index to Eastside Newspapers 1918-1967*, Bellevue, Eastside Genealogical Society.
- *A Directory of Cemeteries and Funeral Homes in Washington State*, Washington Interment Association and Washington State Funeral Directors Association, ed. by Judy and Chris Barnes, Tacoma, 1989.
- *Duvall, Novelty Hill and Paradise Lake Cemetery Records*, 1984, Bellevue, King County Cemetery Research Group.
- *Family Records of Washington Pioneers, Cemetery Records, Vital Statistics, Family Genealogies, Histories and other Genealogical Gleanings*, Vol. 39, Collected by the Daughters of the American Revolution of the State of Washington, compiled and indexed by Mrs. Irwin C. Harper, State Chairman of the National Committee of Genealogical Records 1970-1971.
- *Index to Fall City and Preston Cemetery Records*, 1984, Bellevue, King County Cemetery Research Group.
- *An Index Of Obituaries From Valley Newspapers Between 1918 And 1935* compiled by Gardiner Vinnedge, 1998, North Bend, Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum.
- *Historical Notes: Calvary Cemetery, Associated Catholic Cemeteries*, 5 pp., www.acc-seattle.com/
- “History of Evergreen-Washelli’s First Hundred Years” by Laura C. Daly, *Portage*, Vol. 5. No. 1-2, Winter-Spring, 1984, pp. 11-16.
- “A History of Cemeteries in the City of Seattle” by Laura C. Daly, 1984, typescript on file, Seattle Public Library.
- “History of the Meridian Cemetery: in the Words of Al Neslund,” *Greater Kent Historical Society Newsletter*, Vol. 7 No. 3, August 1999.
- *Kent Area Obituaries--From Early Kent WA Newspapers*, 4 Vols., 1988-1991, Kent, South King County Genealogical Society.
- *King County Cemetery Directory* by Carolyn Farnum et al, 1981, Bellevue, King County Cemetery Research Group.
- *Maple Valley-Hobart Cemetery Revisited* revised by Mary Daniel, *Seattle Genealogical Society Bulletin*, Vol. 48 No. 4, Summer 1999.
- *Memorial Records of South King County, WA*, 3 Vols., 1981/83/95, Kent, South King County Genealogical Society.

- *Obituaries from the Renton, WA "Record Chronicle" Newspaper*, 1991, Kent, South King County Genealogical Society.
- "Pioneer Cemetery" by Hilda (Hemmingson) Meryhew, in *White River Journal*, newsletter of the White River Valley Museum, July, 1997, pp. 3-6.
- *The Pioneers of Lakeview: A Guide to Seattle's Early Settlers and Their Cemetery* by Robert L. Ferguson, 1995, Seattle, Thistle Press.
- "Seattle's Jewish Cemeteries" by Meta R. Buttnick, *Nizcor*, newsletter of the Washington State Jewish Historical Society, Summer, 1997.pp 3-5.
- "Seattle Cemetery: A Pioneer Graveyard" by Sally Gene Mahoney, *Seattle Genealogical Society Bulletin*, Summer, 1995 p.179 ff.
- "Stories in Stones," (Vashon Island) by Marjorie Stanley, n.d., typescript on file, Seattle Public Library.
- "The Story of Maury Island Cemetery," recorded by Mr. and Mrs. Leonard W. Stevens, 1973 typescript on file, Seattle Public Library.
- *Vashon Island Cemetery, King County, Washington State*, compiled from tombstones and the records of the Island Mortuary by the Tillicum Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, August, 1979.
- *Washington State Death Index, 1907-1996*, microfiche, Washington State Archives, P.O. Box 40238, Olympia WA 98504-0238. (Records from 1891-1907 are not automated, but are manually searchable through registers organized by County.)
- *Washington State-King County Death Records Index 1891-1907*, 1996, Bowie, MD, Heritage Books.

EDUCATIONAL & YOUTH PROJECTS

Youth and scouting organizations have been involved with cemetery restoration and documentation projects. Several school based or oriented projects around King County have worked with local community and heritage groups to preserve or interpret cemeteries, including projects at:

- Hillgrove (Highline High School)
- Franklin (Cedar Heights Junior High)
- Mt. Pleasant (McClure Middle School)
- Comet Lodge (Cleveland High School)

The Hillgrove Cemetery Restoration Project, which was a partnership between the Burien Heritage Society and Highline High School was funded under a King County Cultural Education grant. It has produced curriculum materials that may be of interest to other organizations considering school-community projects involving cemeteries. The Mt. Pleasant Cemetery Project, sponsored by the Queen Anne Historical Society, won an award from the Association of King County Historical Organizations. Tours are sometimes conducted by heritage organizations using cemeteries as a subject. Information about some of these projects is available from the Heritage 4Culture Program at the address given above. Certain public service

and educational projects relating to cemeteries may be grant fundable by the Heritage 4Culture Grant Programs.

LANDMARKING & PRESERVATION

A few cemeteries that have been recognized for their importance to history are listed on historic resource inventories and landmarks registers. Most such information is a matter of public record and may be accessed at state or local historic preservation agency offices. The significant history and architectural characteristics of certain cemeteries may qualify them for landmark status. Among the cemeteries designated as landmarks in King County are:

- Black Diamond Cemetery (Black Diamond/National Register)
- Bothell Pioneer Cemetery (Bothell/State Register)
- Fall City Cemetery (State Register)
- Hillgrove Cemetery (Community Landmark Register)
- Newcastle Cemetery (King County/State Registers)

Many more cemeteries are listed on historic resource inventories at the municipal, county and state levels. Some cemeteries are noted for the celebrities whose remains are interred there, and people make pilgrimage from around the world to pay their respects. In the Seattle-King County area, examples include: Jimi Hendrix (Greenwood/Renton) and Bruce Lee (Lakeview/Seattle). There is an innovative method of accessing information about the Lee gravesite; it appears on the internet at www.centrimedia.com/leegrave/behind.html. Chief Seattle, for whom the city was named, was buried on the Suquamish Indian Reservation on the Kitsap Peninsula.

TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS

- *The Black Diamond Historic Cemetery Gravestone Photograph Documentation Project Final Report*, November 2006, copy on file, Heritage 4Culture Program.
- *The Boston Experience: A Manual for Historic Burying Grounds Preservation*, 2nd Ed., Boston Parks and Recreation Department, 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118 or (617) 725-4505.
- "Cemeteries as Science Labs" by Linda M. Easley, *Science Scope*, Vol. 29 No. 3, Nov-Dec. 2005.
- *A Graveyard Preservation Primer* by Lynette Strangstad. For information, contact the Altamira Press, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks CA 91320 or (805) 499-9774 or internet at www.altamirapress.com
- National Register Bulletin 41: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places*. For information, contact the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127. An online version is available on the internet at www.cr.nps.gov/nr/.
- "Preservation of Historic Burial Grounds" an "Information Series" booklet by Lynette Strangstad. For information, contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 or internet at www.preservationnation.org.

LEGAL ISSUES & CONCERNS

Information relating to the discovery of abandoned cemeteries and burials should be referred to state and local authorities. Washington State has enacted tough laws relating to the knowing

disturbance of any prehistoric Native American burials, abandoned pioneer cemeteries, or other human remains. To report an archaeological site, contact the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 48343, Olympia WA 98504-8343 or (360) 586-3065. Issues relating to repatriation of funerary objects and human remains have also become the focus of stringent federal legislation in recent years. There can be severe legal penalties, including fines and felony charges, for vandalism of cemeteries and funerary objects, including headstones.

The Washington Cemetery Board is an agency of state government, housed in the Department of Licensing. It is interested and involved in policy development and legal issues relating to cemeteries. It licenses certain cemeteries around the state and monitors financial resources associated with them. The Board can be a valuable resource and may be reached at (360) 664-1555, P.O. Box 9012, Olympia WA 98507-9012, or internet at www.dol.wa.gov/business/funeralcemetery/fcboard.html. The Board licenses and regulates approximately 145 - 150 cemeteries in Washington. It does not regulate church cemeteries or cemeteries operated by counties, cities, towns, cemetery districts, or other government entities. Abandoned and historic cemeteries come under the jurisdiction of the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. The number of the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer is: (303) 866-2136.

A number of federal and state laws affect cemeteries, funerary objects and human remains. Two of the more significant state laws (*Revised Code of Washington* or RCW) are:

- RCW 68.05 and 68.60 which protect historic graves and cemeteries
- RCW 27.44 and 27.53 which protect archaeological sites and Native American graves, petroglyphs and pictorial records.

For a more complete listing of federal, state and other legislation, some of which affects historic cemeteries, consult *Technical Paper No. 20, Legislative Inventory*, available from the Heritage Publications Program at the above address. The Revised Code of Washington can be accessed in hard copy at major libraries, or electronically via the internet at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/>. Access to municipal and county codes can be found on the Municipal Research and Services Center web site at www.mrsc.org.

OTHER INTERNET RESOURCES

Associated Catholic Cemeteries

www.acc-seattle.com/

Cemetery Preservation Guidance/WA Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

www.dahp.wa.gov/pages/HistoricSites/CemeteryPreservation.htm.

Cemetery Records On-line

www.interment.net

Cemetery Studies

www.angelfire.com/ky2/cemetery/

Comet Lodge Cemetery

www.interment.net/us/wa/king.htm

www.worldperc.com/comet/faqs.shtml

CRM Magazine National Park Service

www.nps.gov/history/crm

Cultural Landscapes as Classrooms: Mt. Auburn Cemetery (select Classrooms)

www.tclf.org

Historic Cemetery Project / Virtual Atlas of the Pacific Northwest

<http://academic.evergreen.edu/projects/virtualatlas/education/educationhome.htm>

National Park Service Technical Preservation Services

www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/

Teaching With Historic Places / Mt. Auburn Cemetery

www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/84mountauburn/84mountauburn.htm

OTHER RESOURCES

- The *Association for Gravestone Studies* is a non-profit organization founded in 1977 for the purpose of creating an awareness of the importance of gravestones as a part of our heritage. For information contact the Association at 278 Main Street, Suite 207, Greenfield, MA 01301, (413) 772-0836 or internet at www.gravestonestudies.org.
- The Washington State Cemetery Association at P.O. Box 103, Port Orchard, WA 98366, (360) 871-5694 offers a variety of resources.
- Cemeteries and gravestone studies are also of concern to some folklorists, and "Foxfire" type books produced by students and schools have included information about them.
- Information about vandalism prevention and landscape design techniques is available at major area libraries.

This information is available upon request in alternative formats for persons with disabilities. TTY Relay 711.

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