

HISTORIC CEMETERY RESOURCES

Technical Paper No. 11



King County

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Introduction

Cemeteries and funerary objects are often 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 other heritage topics. The following resources have been compiled for individuals and organizations interested in cemetery records, research and preservation.

Records & Research

Area genealogical societies, museums, historical societies, pioneer associations, libraries and hereditary associations often have records and publications of interest. Among the organizations with information on cemeteries are:

- Seattle Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 15329, Seattle WA 98115-0329
- South King County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 3174, Kent, WA 98089-0203
- Eastside Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 374, Bellevue, WA 98009-0374
- Seattle Public Library, 1000 Fourth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104-1109
- Pioneer Association of the State of Washington, 1642 43rd Avenue E., Seattle, WA 98112
- Fiske Genealogical Foundation, 1644 43rd Avenue E., Seattle, WA 98112-3222

Many historical societies and museum groups around King County have been instrumental in preserving and maintaining cemeteries. The Association of King County Historical Organizations (www.akcho.org) maintains a directory of area historical museums and organizations. A directory of historical organizations can also be found on the internet at www.historylink.org. A number of churches and religious organizations own and operate cemeteries and maintain records of value to cemetery 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 <http://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. , <http://www.acc-seattle.com/cchistory.html>
- “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 and Youth Projects

Youth and scouting organizations have been involved with a number of cemetery restoration and documentation projects including, but not limited to:

- Hillgrove Cemetery (Highline High School)
- Franklin Cemetery (Cedar Heights Junior High School)
- Mt. Pleasant Cemetery (McClure Middle School)
- Comet Lodge Cemetery (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 of cemeteries are sometimes conducted by heritage organizations. Certain public service and educational projects relating to cemeteries may be grant fundable by programs administered by 4Culture at <http://www.4culture.org/heritage/funding/index.htm>.

Landmarking and Preservation

Some especially significant cemeteries have been listed on historic resource inventories and landmark registers. Most such information is a matter of public record and may be accessed at state or local historic preservation agency offices. Among the cemeteries that have been listed on historic registers in King County are:

- Black Diamond Cemetery (City of Black Diamond Landmark/National Register of Historic Places)
- Bothell Pioneer Cemetery (City of Bothell Landmark/State Register)
- Fall City Cemetery (Washington State Heritage Register)
- Hillgrove Cemetery (King County Community Landmark)
- Newcastle Cemetery (King County Landmark/Washington State Heritage Register)
- Redmond Community Cemetery (City of Redmond Landmark)
- Saar Cemetery (City of Kent Landmark)

Seventy-five cemeteries and burial places are contained in the King County Historic Resource Inventory. Some cemeteries are noted for the celebrities whose remains are interred there, and people come from around the world to visit them. 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, is buried on the Snohomish Indian Reservation on the Kitsap Peninsula.

Technical Publications

- *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.
- *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 <http://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 <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/nrhome.html>
- "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 <http://www.nthp.org>

Legal Issues

Information relating to the discovery of abandoned cemeteries and burials should be referred to state and local authorities. There can be severe legal penalties, including fines and felony charges, for vandalism of cemeteries and funerary objects, including headstones. Washington State has strict penalties for knowing disturbance of any prehistoric Native American burials, abandoned pioneer cemeteries, or other human remains. To report an archaeological site, contact the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, P.O. Box 48343, Olympia WA 98504-8343 or (360) 586-3065. Repatriation of Native American funerary objects and human remains is addressed by federal legislation.

The primary state laws affecting cemeteries, funerary objects and human remains (*Revised Code of Washington* or RCW) are:

- RCW 68.05 and 68.60, which protect historic graves and cemeteries; and
- 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 the Revised Code of Washington, which can be accessed in hard copy at major libraries, or electronically via the internet at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov>. Access to municipal and county codes can be found on the Municipal Research and Services Center web site at <http://www.mrsc.org>.

The Washington Cemetery Board is an agency of state government. 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 P.O. Box 9048, Olympia WA 98507-9048, (360) 664-1555, or internet <http://www.dol.wa.gov/business/cemetery/index.html>.

Other Internet Resources

- Cemetery Records On-line
<http://www.interment.net>
- CRM Magazine National Park Service
<http://www.cr.nps.gov>
- National Park Service Technical Preservation Services
<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/care>
- Washington Cemetery project
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/wa/wacem.htm>
- US GenWeb Tombstone Project
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~cemetery/washington.html>

Other Resources

- The Washington State Cemetery Association, 409 Bremerton Blvd W, Bremerton, WA 98312, pamaluv33@yahoo.com or <http://www.rootsweb.com/~wapsgs>.
- Washington Cemetery & Funeral Association, P.O. Box 478, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043, info@wcfa.us or www.wcfa.us.
- Information about vandalism prevention and appropriate landscape treatment is available at major area libraries.

Recommended Resources for Preservation/Restoration

- Jonathan Appel
<http://www.gravestonepreservation.info>
- Association for Gravestone Studies
<http://www.gravestonestudies.org>
- Chicora Foundation
<http://www.chicora.org/cemetery-preservation.html>
- National Center for Preservation Technology and Training
<http://www.ncptt.nps.gov/category/training/cemetery-monument-conservation-materials-research/>