

Cleaning Techniques for Historic Memorials





What is the reason for cleaning monuments?

Readability / Aesthetics

Vandalism/graffiti

Soiling

Staining

Biological growth



Why Should We Clean?

- Readability
- Ascetics



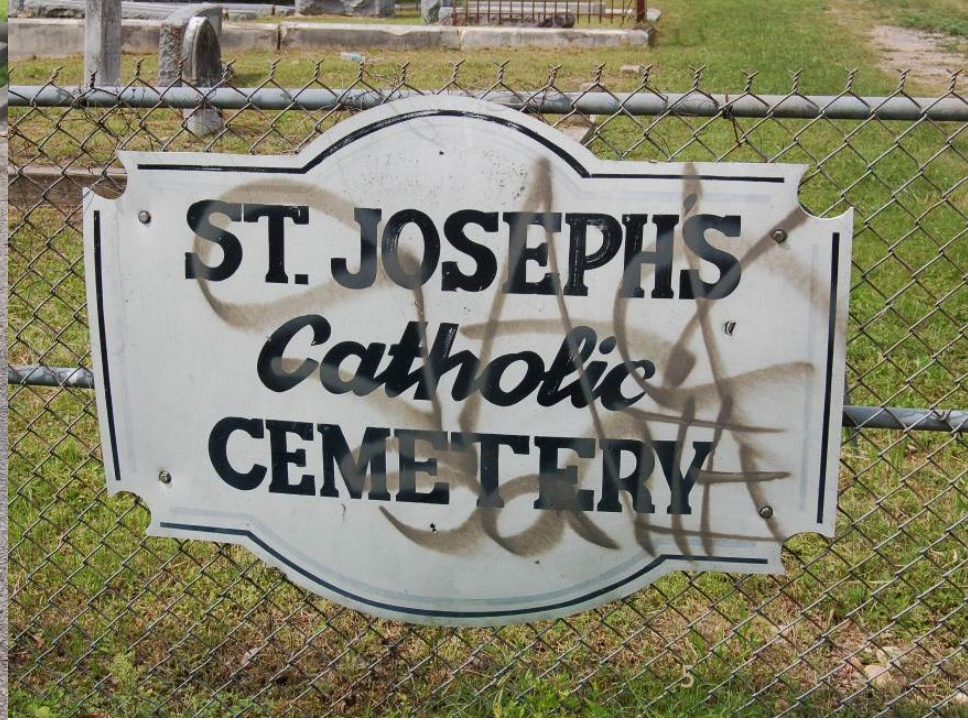
Graffiti Removal Factors

- Stone Type
- Surface Condition
- Temperature
- Moisture Level
- Time Frame
- Paint Type
- Paint Color



Vandalism

Report to Police
not local news as
this could lead to
copycat crimes



Graffiti resources

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/preservation-matters-maintenance-graffiti-removal-from-historic-features.htm>



PRESERVATION IN PRACTICE: MAINTENANCE

**GRAFFITI REMOVAL FROM
HISTORIC FEATURES**

Graffiti resources

[Preservation Brief 38: Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry \(nps.gov\)](#)

Preservation Briefs

See Preservation Briefs 1–50



Some of the web versions of the Preservation Briefs differ somewhat from the printed versions. Many illustrations are new and in color; Captions are simplified and some complex charts are omitted. To order hard copies of the Briefs, see [Printed Publications](#).

PRESERVATION BRIEFS

38

Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry

Martin E. Weaver

[Identifying the Graffiti and the Masonry](#)

[Graffiti Removal Methods and Materials](#)

[Testing](#)

[Health and Safety Considerations](#)

[Environmental Considerations](#)

[Barrier Coatings](#)

[Preventing and Controlling Graffiti](#)

[Development of a Treatment Plan](#)

[Selecting a Barrier Coating](#)

[Tips for Successful Graffiti Removal](#)

[Summary and References](#)

[Reading List](#)



Poultice to remove pig graffiti. Photo: NPS files.



Why Should We Clean?

Soiling



Why Should We Clean?

Dirt





Why Should We Clean Repair Work



Why Should We Clean?

Repair Work



Why Should We Clean?

**Metallic staining
Include cand iron
stains**





Why Should We Clean? Metallic staining



Metallic Staining

Akemi Marble
Rust Remover



Metallic Staining

Akemi Marble
Rust Remover



Before and After Metallic Staining Treatment



Biological Growth

CORDIE

DAUGHTER OF
L. & M. J. JONES
DIED
Oct. 5, 1897

Rest in peace

MOTHER
LOUISE WEIR
JAN. 13. 1864
FEB. 29. 1932



D/2
Biological
Solution



Don't
Freak
Out! It
will turn
Red, Pink
Orange





Use Soft Brushes or tools like chop sticks, lollipop sticks



leaning reveals details



IN
MEMORY OF
EDWARD C.
SON OF
FRANCIS &
ELIZA M. KNAPP
BORN IN
Marietta Ohio
Apr. 12, 1841.
died
Mar. 30, 1846.
occasioned by
the Kick of a horse
aged 5 y'rs.



Before, During and After



Before, During and After



Before, During and After

Don't Use abrasive methods on fragile Monuments



Mechanical Cleaning

Acceptable

- Low pressure, power-washing (less than 300 psi)
- Mechanical agitation using soft bristle brushes

Unacceptable

- Sand blasting
- High-pressure power-washing (greater than 300 psi)
- Grinders
- Wire brushes

Do's and Don'ts of Cleaning

- Never Use A Wire Brush, Nyalox Brush or Power Equipment





Don'ts use
mechanical abrasives



Don't Pressure wash



DELIA MARGIT

Born

Feb 11, 1839

Died

Jan 18, 1901

Do Not pressure wash especially
on soft stones like marble

ETHEL
FRANCES BATH
SEPT. 11, 1879
MAY 26, 1957
AT REST

- **Don't Use Harsh Cleaners Such As Bleaches**



Don'ts Use Bleach



Don't Use Muriatic Acid



Don't Use
Muriatic Acid



Application of Cleaners

- **ALWAYS** Soak the Stone Before Cleaning
- Start Cleaning From the Bottom and Work Up
- Use a Small Circular Motion
- Use Lots of Water





Basic Cleaning

- Follow manufacturer's instructions
- **ALWAYS** use soft bristle brushes
- **NEVER** use a wire brush
- **NEVER** use power tools, such as power washers, grinders, or sanders

What are some considerations regarding cleaning methods?

- Acceleration of deterioration
- Loss of original materials
- Long-term stability of monument
- Long-term affects of cleaners

Do's and Don'ts of Cleaning

- Do No Harm
- Do select the gentlest cleaning and most appropriate method to accomplish task
- Do perform small tests before cleaning the entire stone
- Do follow manufacturers' recommendations
- Do follow manufacturers' safety guidance
- Do exercise patience.



Cemetery Care is fun



You can clean a lot of in a short period of time

More Information

Preservation Brief 48 Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries

www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/48-preserving-grave-markers.htm

48 PRESERVATION BRIEFS

Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries

By J. Douglas Brown, Chief, Preservation Division



Grave markers in historic cemeteries are often made of soft, porous materials like sandstone, limestone, and marble. These materials are susceptible to weathering, erosion, and biological growth. This brief provides guidance on how to identify, assess, and preserve these markers.

The National Park Service's Preservation Division has developed this brief to help park managers and staff understand the importance of preserving these markers and the steps they can take to do so.

This brief is intended for use by park managers and staff who are responsible for the care and maintenance of historic cemeteries.



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Types of Grave Markers

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National Center for Preservation Technology & Training

Home About Programs What We Do Online Resources

Cemetery Conservation

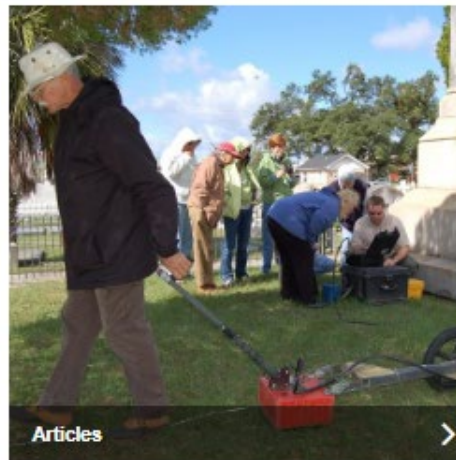
Cemetery Conservation >

These cemetery conservation resources have been developed to help people and communities care for cemeteries and grave markers. Whether you wish to clean the headstone of a loved one, volunteer to help clean cemeteries and monuments, or wish to learn more about conservation, weathering, and landscape maintenance, these resources can help guide you. Please check back as we continue to add to this online resource.



Videos >

View practical how-to tutorials on how to properly clean grave markers, safely reset headstones, repair iron fences, and document.



Articles >

Learn sound maintenance techniques for cemeteries that are sustainable, cyclic, non-invasive, and do no harm.



Cemetery Preservation Course >

The following is intended to help support the understanding of methods and practices of preserving the resting place of our ancestors.

More Information

National Center for Preservation Technology and Training

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/ncptt/cemetery-conservation.htm>

Association for Gravestone Studies

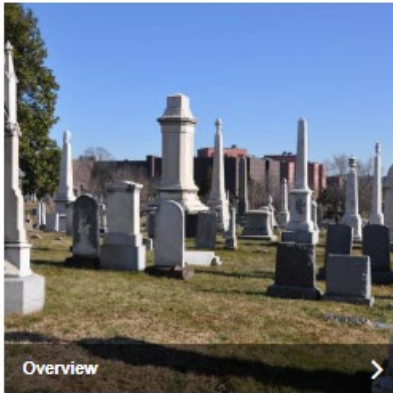
www.gravestonestudies.org

ARTICLE • CEMETERY PRESERVATION COURSE

Cemetery Preservation Foundation

The following is intended to help support the understanding of methods and practices of preserving the resting place of our ancestors. For many these sites are of value for reasons from the historical understanding of our forebearers and the intersection of societal groupings to the objects of art or intangible heritage they contain. The value of preserving these sacred spaces allows us to understand our past and what we value as a society. Many sites and people do not know where to start in preserving the resources they manage or cherish especially as the integrity of their physical spaces becomes unstable as time passes. These pages are meant to give a foundation to discuss the challenges of preserving our ancestors' resting places and give direction in formalizing an approach to maintaining or in many cases saving these sites.

WHERE TO START



Overview



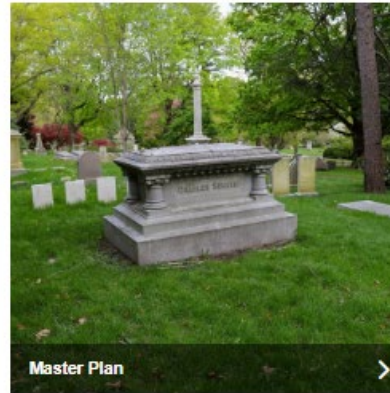
An overview of the methods and practices of preserving a gravesite.



Ethics



When approaching any cemetery project, we need a basis for decision making.

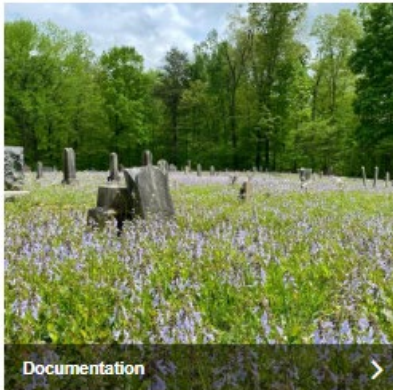


Master Plan



A Master Plan is a road map that shows us where the cemetery is and where it is going.

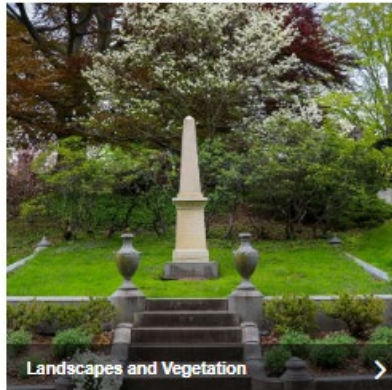
UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE



Documentation



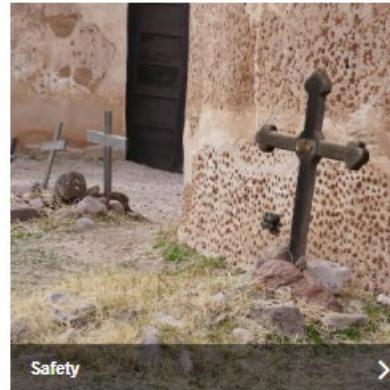
How to review and document a gravesite and markers on a micro and macro level



Landscapes and Vegetation



How to manage vegetation in a gravesite.



Safety



Encouraging the public to visit and explore public burial grounds and cemeteries increases awareness of the value of these sacred sites.

[NCPTT](#)

[Cemetery Preservation Foundation \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

National Park Service

National Center for Technology and Training (NCPTT)

