

What a Family Researcher may discover when visiting a cemetery

1. Symbolism on a gravestone may include membership in organizations or military service description. For example:

IOOF and/or F,L,T = Odd Fellow membership
IOF = Independent Order of Foresters
Southern Cross of Honor = Confederate veteran

2. Epitaphs/marker inscriptions may describe feelings about the loved one and also their relationships to others. (Father of - - -)

3. Relationships may be discovered.

For example: Sarah Davis might have disappeared in the census, but found in the Davis/Buckley cemetery as married Sarah Buckley.

Often times the marker inscriptions provide the maiden name of women.

Sometimes foundlings with different last names can be located when buried in the same cemetery with families who raised them.

4. Cause of death can be shown on the gravestone marker or surmised.

If there are many deaths in a cemetery in the late 1860s or 1870s, it could be the cholera epidemic which swept Virginia.

Several deaths in 1917 or 1918 could be the World War I Spanish influenza outbreak. Epidemics can be searched on the INTERNET by disease and/or year.

5. When searching the census, copy the names of neighbors too. This can lead to more discoveries. Neighbors often were related by marriage, and together would create a cemetery.

6. While at the cemetery, make inquiries at the office. One might find the names of those buried in a family plot and/or information that a person is buried there without a marker.

INTERNET SEARCHES

Fairfax County Cemetery Preservation Association website:

www.honorfairfaxcemeteries.org

On line Fairfax County cemetery information:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/vr/cem/>

Find a Grave website – over 50 million graves recorded:

<http://www.findagrave.com/>

Symbolism on markers:

<http://www.gravestonestudies.org/faq.htm>

Family search website - search by region

<https://familysearch.org/>

