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## **Association for Gravestone Studies e-Newsletter**

**Issue #81**  
**January 2010**

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AGS Membership

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We invite everyone with an interest in gravestones and cemeteries to join the AGS.

Membership benefits include:

- The AGS *Quarterly*: Bulletin of the Association for Gravestone Studies
- The next published issue of *Markers*
- The AGS monthly *e-Newsletter*
- Discounts on AGS publications
- Access to the AGS Research Clearing House and Lending Library
- Discounts on AGS conferences

To join, renew, or for more information, visit [www.gravestonestudies.org/join.htm](http://www.gravestonestudies.org/join.htm).

### **Earn a Free Membership!**

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Any member of the AGS who brings in five new members at the Senior level or above within a 12-month period will receive a free membership renewal at the Individual level for one year (free year begins with your next renewal date). New members that you recruit must record your name in brackets, after theirs, on the membership application form.

2010 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting

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2010 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting  
June 22-27, 2010 in Granville, Ohio

**[Please click here for a preview of conference activities.](#) You'll find detailed**

**information about the Wednesday bus tour and the workshops we'll be offering.**

Please note that the conference registration form will only be available on the AGS website or by request from the AGS office for a hard copy. It will not be printed in the *AGS Quarterly*. When the form is ready there will be an announcement in the *e-Newsletter*.



**Our 2010 Conference Logo**

*from the gravestone of Mr. Byron Hayes who died March 6, 1836.  
It is located in Granville's Old Colony Burying Ground, established in 1805.*

**We hope to see you there!**

**Call for Papers and Participation Sessions**

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Call for Papers and Participation Sessions
2010 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting
June 22-27, Granville, Ohio

Proposals are solicited for scholarly papers, 20 minutes in length, to be presented during the evening lecture sessions. Please send your proposal and 250-word abstract by February 1, 2010 to: Program Chair: Dr. Ian Brown, ibrown@bama.ua.edu.

Proposals are solicited for Participation Sessions, 50 minutes in length, to be presented Thursday June 24 and Friday June 25. Please send your proposal and a 250-word abstract by February 1, 2010 to: Participation Sessions Co-Chairs, Robert Keeler and Judy Juntunen, robertk@clackamas.edu, or Robert Keeler, 3005 S.W. Westwood Dr., Portland, OR, 97225.

Student Scholarship Announcement

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A scholarship is being offered for a student to attend and participate in the 33rd Conference and Annual Meeting of the Association for Gravestone Studies to be held at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, June 22-27, 2010. The scholarship will cover registration, room and board for the full conference. There will also be a cash prize of \$200, which will be presented at the conference. The recipient of this scholarship is

expected to present a scholarly paper, twenty minutes in length, during the Friday evening lecture session.

Requirements: The applicant must be a graduate or undergraduate student at an accredited college or university, as well as a member of the AGS.

Application: The application will consist of the title, abstract and text for a twenty-minute paper presentation. The presentation should be in the exact form that will be delivered at the conference, including visuals. Powerpoint is the preferred medium.

Deadline: By April 1, 2010, submissions should be sent as a PDF attachment to an email, a CD, or a hard copy to [ibrown@bama.ua.edu](mailto:ibrown@bama.ua.edu) or Ian W. Brown, Box 870210, Department of Anthropology, The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0210.

### **AGS Website, External Resources Page**

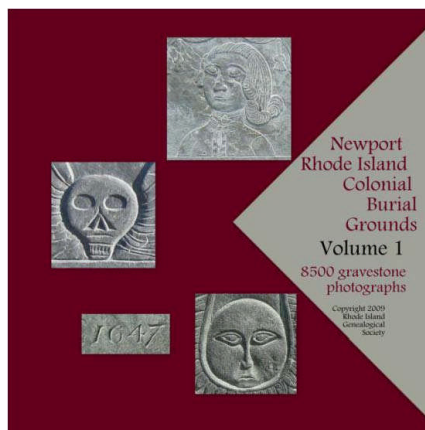
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Have you checked out the [External Resources page](#) on the AGS website lately? We've been adding lots of updates, including lists of carvers, conservators, and cemetery databases, and we've been adding resources listed by state and subject.

If you discover any broken links on the page (or on our site), please email us at info@gravestonestudies.org.

New Book and DVDs: *Newport, Rhode Island Colonial Burial Grounds*

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Following four years of intensive research, AGS member John Sterling, Letty Champion, Barb Austin, and AGS member and editor Cherry Bamberg recently published a book on the colonial gravestones of Newport Rhode Island. The book was written primarily for genealogists, but the two companion DVDs will be of particular interest to AGS members. There are photographs of every extant gravestone--some now missing--in every colonial burial ground in Newport Rhode Island, 8,500 photos in all. These high-resolution digital photos are so sharp that most of the epitaphs can be read.

The book and the DVDs were published by the Rhode Island Genealogical Society. There are three options: The book alone is \$35, the two DVDs alone are \$29, and the

combination of book and DVDs is \$59. Shipping is \$4.95, and the DVDs ship free. Please order online from <http://rigensoc.org/publications.htm> or by mail from RIGS Books; P.O. Box 211; Hope, RI 02831.

[To learn more, please click here.](#)

### **Podcast Interview with AGS Trustee Joy Giguere**

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The University of Central Florida Department of History Public History webpage features a podcast of an interview with AGS Trustee Joy Giguere. Joy spoke about what the Association does and how one can consider the cemetery a window into the past.

To listen to the podcast: <http://publichistorypodcast.blogspot.com/>.

AGS Member in the News: Ruth Shapleigh-Brown

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Ruth Shapleigh-Brown, AGS Member and Executive Director of the Connecticut Gravestone Network, was featured in the January 2010 issue of *Connecticut Magazine*.

To read the article, [please click here](#).

[Connecticut Gravestone Network Website](#)

### **AGS Member in the News: Bob Carlson**

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AGS member Bob Carlson was featured in the November 2009 issue of *The Cape Cod Times* (Massachusetts) magazine. The article is about his efforts to catalog Cape Cod's gravestones. The article is linked below.

[Cape Cod Times](#)

Two Additional Tributes to Helen Sclair

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In the December 2009 *e-Newsletter* we reported the death of Helen Sclair, Chicago's "Cemetery Lady." Below are two tributes to Helen:

1) Chicago's WTTW-TV website features a video entitled "We remember Chicago's 'self-described' cemetery lady, who died two weeks ago."

<http://video.wttw.com/video/1371687619/>

2) An obituary posted on Chicago's Newberry Library website. Helen volunteered at the library's book fair for many years.

<http://www.newberry.org/giving/events/Bookfairblog/default.asp?postid=1043>

**Guided Tour: Manassas City Cemetery, Manassas, Virginia**

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"Stories in Stone" guided tour through the Manassas City Cemetery

April 25, 2010, 3 pm

The focus will be on Confederate memorial & burial traditions. Admission: \$15.

For more information, contact:
(703) 368-1873, manassasmuseum@ci.manassas.va.us

News and Events, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver, BC

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**Mountain View Cemetery is now on [Facebook](#).** The new page features up-to-date information about events there.

*Upcoming Events:*

**Sunday, February 7, 12:30-1:30 pm**

Location: Fireside Room, Unitarian Church of Vancouver, 949 West 49th (at Oak)  
**Glen Hodges, Manager of Mountain View Cemetery and Paula Jardine, Artist in Residence at Mountain View Cemetery, to talk about Green Burials**  
Sponsored by the UCV Environment Committee [www.ucvenvironment.wordpress.com](http://www.ucvenvironment.wordpress.com)

**Saturday, February 20, 11:00am-11:00pm**

Location: Celebration Hall, Mountain View Cemetery  
Access to the site is at 39th and Fraser St  
**Altared, by Jan Wade and Nhan Nguyen**  
<http://grunt.ca/programming.html>  
*Altared* is a new grunt gallery project by Vancouver based artists Jan Wade and Nhan Nguyen focusing on altar pieces or shrines, which both artists have explored extensively within their work over the past two decades.

**Saturday, March 6th 5-10pm**

Location: Celebration Hall, Mountain View Cemetery  
Access to the site is at 39th and Fraser St.  
[www.5.paulwongprojects.com](http://www.5.paulwongprojects.com)  
**One More Than Three**

Life, death and everything in between are constantly evolving. The idiom for death in Chinese is four. This site will bring together light and dark, silence and sound, living with the dead, and the 4 virtues: truth, bravery, non-violence and generosity transforming the modernist Celebration Hall into an installation space for encountering video art. \$10 at door or [purchase tickets in advance](#).

Mountain View Cemetery--Where Vancouver Remembers  
[www.vancouver.ca/cemetery](http://www.vancouver.ca/cemetery)

**Event: ICCFA Annual Convention & Exposition**

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The International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) will hold its 2010 Annual Convention and Exposition in San Antonio, Texas, March 10-13, 2010.

Topics include:

- Green funerals and burials
- Technology (Social Networking, Internet Security)
- Story of the Steel: Veterans and War Memorials

For more information and to register, visit www.iccfaconvention.com.

Article: *Keeping history alive--in a cemetery*

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This article, linked below, is about proposed repairs at the Weissensee cemetery in Berlin, Germany.

[\*The Sydney Morning Herald\*](#)

**Article: *Preserving the legacy behind bones of the brave***

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This article, posted on the charlotteobserver.com, is about Robert Bohrn, who uncovered the bones of an African-American soldier on Folly Island, South Carolina, more than 20 years ago. Bohrn is working with the state of South Carolina to erect an historical marker near the site.

The AGS President's Bully Pulpit

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I hope I will be forgiven for bragging about something I actually had nothing to do with, but feel good about nevertheless. A couple of weeks ago the University of Alabama, the institution I have called home for the past twenty years, was in the news quite a bit. The win over the Texas Longhorns secured the seventh National Football championship for Alabama in the modern era and the second acquired in the time that

I have been here. I myself am an accomplished couch potato on Saturday afternoons, as I find no pleasure being in the midst of mobs, but I am enamored by those who follow their teams, pushing them onward to greater heights. The Bully Pulpit that I offer this month is a small tribute to all those fans out there that nudge their teams to victory.

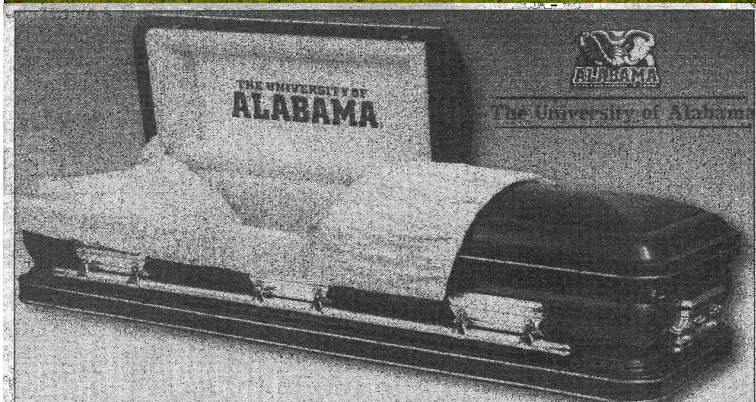
What does this have to do gravestones? Lots, as I have been finding out. For the past decade I have been teaching a course at Alabama called "Marking Graves: Self and Society in Death." Each time that I teach the class my students and I spend one afternoon a week surveying the cemeteries of Tuscaloosa County. There are approximately 250 in the county, so we still have a few left to do. As might be expected, there are many unusual discoveries to be made in cemeteries when one moves from urban to rural burial grounds. I have reported on various folk markers found in Anglo-American and African-American cemeteries, but there is another feature that stands out rather dramatically in local cemeteries-the sports fan. And I say "sports fan" rather than simply "Alabama fan" because there are a lot of Auburn fanatics in Tuscaloosa County and the two do not mix well.

In Tuscaloosa County, Alabama fans tend to dominate for one very obvious reason-proximity to the University. I have noted over the years that devotion to the University of Alabama is increasingly making its presence on gravestones. There are plenty of examples of such, but Thomas Granger Brewer's marker in the Union Cumberland Church Cemetery, shown below, is a fair representation of the practice. It exhibits the distinctive red letter "A" in one corner and "BAMA" in the other, with "ROLL TIDE," that frenetic chant, occurring in the tympanum. In this particular case a plastic, foam "huggie" containing a Pepsi bottle repeats the familiar cheer.

Due to the location of Tuscaloosa's historic Evergreen Cemetery, on any given Saturday both the living and the dead bear witness to unearthly roars that emanate out of Bryant-Denny Stadium. Legend has it that one super-fan arranged for his grave to be situated right at the northeast edge of the cemetery. The word on the street is that he wished to be buried closer than anyone else to the doors of the stadium. "Thanks for stopping by" really is a most hospitable addition to his inscription, one that I myself find very comforting. These "Bama gravestones" are a perpetual reminder to those who come after, just how important sports can be in life and where one's allegiance lies. I suspect we will see more of this in the years to come.

Alabama logos, phrases, and grave decorations are becoming the norm in local cemeteries, but for those who wish to carry their allegiance somewhat deeper, Alabama coffins are now available as well. I know this might seem strange to some readers, but in big conferences like the SEC, football truly is a most serious matter. Consequently, being buried in luxurious crimson and white really does not seem to me to be all that unreasonable a fashion.

--Ian W. Brown



Georgia-based Collegiate Memorials is selling caskets with NCAA logos and school insignias. Urns are available for fans with different final wishes.

### Loyalty takes a deeper meaning

**Query: Where is this monument?**

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This query comes from Valerie Bryant. She writes:

"I'm looking for help in locating a picture of a particular gravestone or

gravemarker a friend saw while vacationing in New England as a kid. She believes it may have been in New Hampshire or Vermont. She was in a haunted mansion book store, and could see the cemetery from across the street. In the cemetery was a statue of a young girl playing blindman's bluff: her arms are outstretched, she is blindfolded, and presumably, her lover is following her.

I have Googled this topic to no end, and still can't find what she remembers. I'm really hoping someone can point me in the right direction.

Thanks,
Valerie, spikesgirl98@hotmail.com."

Query: Obelisks

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AGS Member Mike Bieling sent in these questions:

By a circuitous route, I received an inquiry from Jim King of Winchester, Kentucky, about a monument in Winchester Cemetery dedicated to Thomas Scott, representative to the state legislature, county surveyor, justice of the peace, and high "sherif" of Clarke County. After Scott's death in 1839, the Clarke County court erected an obelisk to his memory, a photo of which is attached. I also attach a photo of the inscription and a close-up of the material used for the monument.

Jim's first question involved the material, which I hazarded from the photos and the date, is marble, though I do wonder about the substantially darker appearance of the shaft of the obelisk and the two three-tiered sections. Could they be of a different material than the pedestal, or do they just shelter it from weathering? There are quite a number of limestone quarries in Kentucky, though I see no mention of marble. **Does the AGS have a member or contact in Kentucky knowledgeable about monument materials who might be interested in visiting Winchester Cemetery with Jim to help determine this?**

Jim also asked about obelisk terminology, most of which I was able to answer, except for a generally accepted way of describing the relative degree of taper of the shaft, which can vary enormously from short and stubby to tall and slender. Gradual? Sharp? **Is there a customary vocabulary to describe obelisk taper? Or are there useable engineering terms for relative taper, in screws, etc.?**

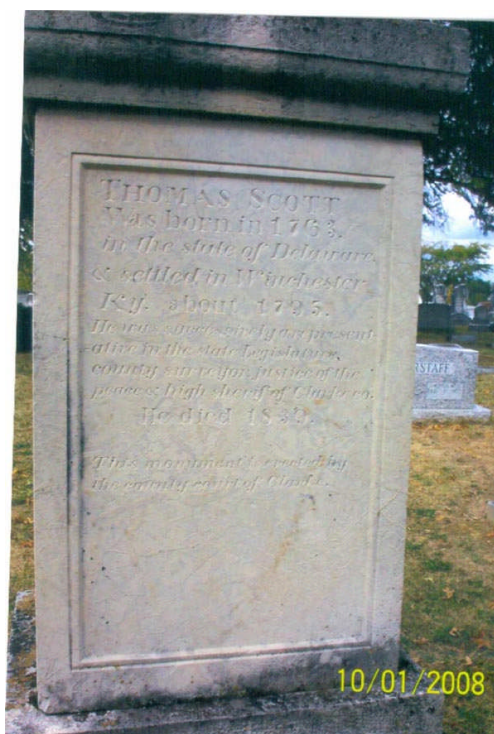
Another question Jim asked concerned the time period during which obelisks were popular. I was able to trace the modern use of pyramid symbolism to Baroque monuments erected in Italian churches by the celebrated sculptor Bernini. According to Peggy McDowell's and Richard E. Meyer's *The Revival Styles in American Memorial Art*, "the first obelisk design to be used as a monument in America is a brick construction erected in 1792 by the French consul on his estate in Baltimore. . .to commemorate Christopher Columbus upon the tricentennial celebration of his historic voyage" What I wasn't able to say so definitely is when the last obelisk monuments were installed in North American cemeteries. The most recent of which I am aware locally is quite a grand one erected by the United Mine Workers as a political statement in 1914. **I would be interested to know the most recent dates of obelisks that members have observed in their local cemeteries.**

Jim's final question concerned the identity of the quarry from which the stone for the monument came, and who carved it. From this, I take it that he has examined all of the surfaces of the Scott monument for a maker's name or mark, without success. I

did tell him that the inscription--"This monument erected by the county court of Clarke"--suggests that a search of the county court records or county archives might indicate whether bids were called for a monument for "Sherif" Scott and, if that was the case, who won the job, or who was paid for the marker. Bookkeepers sometimes made other interesting notes in the ledger, too. **I wonder whether the AGS has a member or local expert on grave markers in Kentucky, who might be able to use lettering and spelling styles, material type and source, and other features of the monument to identify the maker?**

Mike Bieling  
Duncan, B.C., Canada

[oldcemeteryian@shaw.ca](mailto:oldcemeteryian@shaw.ca)





**Contact Information**

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phone: 413-772-0836
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