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Association for Gravestone Studies e-Newsletter

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2008 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting



2008 Conference Logo-
Detail from headstone of
Jonathan Ingram,
Amherst, Massachusetts

2008 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting June 17-22, 2008 Hampshire College Amherst, Massachusetts

In June 2008, we will be meeting at Hampshire College, in the Pioneer Valley region of Western Massachusetts, an area where one can view a considerable variety of gravestone styles and materials within a short drive of the conference site. Twenty years ago, we met at Amherst College, just a few miles up the road from Hampshire.

For a virtual tour of the Hampshire College campus and environs, please click on www.hampshire.edu.

As usual, AGS will offer on-campus lodging and meals, lecture sessions and other events at college facilities. (Please be advised that at Hampshire, all dormitory rooms are single occupancy units. Academic buildings are air conditioned, but dormitories are not.)

For off-campus lodging options, click on www.amherstarea.com.

Here is a preview of the Conference Schedule:

Wednesday, June 18th: PRE-CONFERENCE TOUR, led by Kevin Sweeney. We will visit cemeteries in Deerfield, Northfield and Bernardston, Massachusetts, and there, view the work of 18th- and early 19th-century slate cutters, including Solomon Ashley and John Locke of Deerfield, Jonathan Allen and the Chapin family of Bernardston, and Ebenezer Janes of Northfield. The tour will include a visit to the Memorial Hall Museum at Historic Deerfield (for a glimpse of the museum, click on (<http://www.old-deerfield.org/museum.htm>)).

Thursday, June 19th: WORKSHOPS (Conservation, Photography, Rubbing and Foil Impressions), KEYNOTE ADDRESS, LECTURES and LATE NIGHT SESSION

Friday, June 20: BUS TOURS (choose one of the following three), LECTURES and LATE NIGHT SESSION

EAST SIDE TOUR, led by Kevin Sweeney: 18th- and 19th-century cemeteries along the east side of the Connecticut River--Old Hadley Cemetery in Hadley, Evergreen Cemetery and the Old South Hadley Burying Ground in South Hadley and the Springfield Cemetery in Springfield, Massachusetts.

WEST SIDE TOUR, led by Bob Drinkwater and Rusty Clark: 18th- and 19th-century cemeteries along the west side of the Connecticut River, including Bridge Street Cemetery in Northampton, Park Street Cemetery in West Springfield, and Elmwood or Forestdale Cemetery in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

(For a virtual tour of Bridge Street Cemetery, click on:

www.historic-northampton.org/601081/601506/601507

QUABBIN TOUR, led by Tom and Brenda Malloy: 18th/19th-century cemeteries in the area surrounding Quabbin Reservoir--New Salem, Templeton and Petersham, and Quabbin Park Cemetery in Ware (in the 1930s, during the construction of Quabbin Reservoir, thousands of burials, gravemarkers and monuments were moved to Quabbin Park; for more information, click on <http://www.foquabbin.org/>).

Saturday, June 21st: PARTICIPATION SESSIONS, AWARDS BANQUET and ANNUAL MEETING, LECTURES and LATE NIGHT SESSION

Sunday, June 22nd: tba

Additional information on the conference will appear here, in the e-Newsletter, and on the AGS website (www.gravestonestudies.org) during the next few months. The conference registration form will be available on-line after the first of the year. A print version of the registration form will be included in the Winter issue of the *AGS Quarterly*.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Proposals are solicited for scholarly papers, twenty minutes in length, to be presented during the lecture sessions. We encourage papers on gravestone subjects from around the world as well as specific to the New England region. Presenters are encouraged to incorporate visual images in their paper through the use of slides or power point (the type of visual presentation should be stated).

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION SESSIONS

As part of the Association for Gravestone Studies Conference, we host fifty minute "Participation Sessions," programs conducted in a workshop format where cemetery scholars, preservationists and educators can exchange ideas. These programs are ideal for panels and we recommend including others in your presentation. All Participation Sessions proposals should allow time for questions and audience discussion.

Please send all proposals to: The Association for Gravestone Studies (AGS)
278 Main St., Suite 207
Greenfield, MA 01301
info@gravestonestudies.org

All lecture and participation session proposals should include the paper or session title and a 250 word description of the topic, which focuses on its value to the audience. A brief biography of the presenter should also be included. Presenters are required to register for the conference. All proposals must be received by the close of business on Friday, March 28, 2008.

News from the AGS Office

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We are pleased to announce that we have hired a new Administrative Assistant, Ann Myles. She started work on September 28th.

Ann is a Boston native who moved to Greenfield in 2000. She has taught young children since 1989, most recently working in Early Intervention with 2 year olds with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Ann has previous administrative experience working as an office manager in a wholesale diamond business, and as an assistant manager of silver jewelry at Shreve, Crump & Low in Boston. Ready for a career change, Ann is enjoying using her computer and business skills at AGS, and she has recently started braking for old graveyards.

Welcome Ann!

### From the *Markers XXV* Editor, Richard Meyer

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With the sudden death of Gary Collison in September, it has become necessary to take temporary steps to insure that *Markers XXV*, which Gary had begun work on, is completed and in the hands of AGS members before the June 2008 annual conference. Accordingly, Richard Meyer, who edited *Markers X* through *Markers XX*, has agreed to assume the editorship on an interim basis (he and Gary will be listed as co-editors for this issue). The AGS Board of Trustees approved this arrangement at their meeting on October 27. Dick has made it clear that he does not wish to continue his editorship after this issue is completed, but that he will be happy to assist the Board in finding a suitable person to undertake the task on a permanent basis. It is hoped that this appointment may be made by the first of the year in order to give the new editor time to acclimate and begin work on *Markers XXVI*. In the interim, any queries and/or submissions should be directed to Dick. His contact information:

Richard E. Meyer

Editor, Markers

407 19th St. NE

Salem, OR 97301

Tel: 503-581-5344

Email: keind@comcast.net [fastest] or meyerr@wou.edu [sometimes delayed by 1-2 days]

AGS Connecticut Valley Fall Tour

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AGS Connecticut Valley Fall Tour, Saturday, November 17--Al and Betsy McKee will lead a tour of Longmeadow Cemetery (est. 1675). The McKees live across the street from the cemetery, in the house formerly owned and occupied by stonecutter Hermon Newell. During the tour, Al and Betsy will tell of their research on Newell and his successor, "the follower". Afterward, we will visit the Old Hampden Cemetery (est. 1755) to see more of the work of local sandstone cutters.

We will meet at the Longmeadow Cemetery on Williams St. (Rt. 192) at 10:30 AM. For more information, inquire at [info@gravestonestudies.org](mailto:info@gravestonestudies.org).

DIRECTIONS: from Route I-91, exit 1, take Route 5 south to Longmeadow Center; turn onto Route 192, eastbound--Longmeadow Cemetery will be on your right, next to the church.

This event is free and open to the public

### Cemetery Inquiry

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This query comes from AGS Member Jason Church. He writes:

"Dear AGS Members,

I am sending you these pictures on behalf of anthropologist Rolonda Teal. She is doing research on African American cemeteries, in conjunction with burial and religious practices. In the attached pictures you will see objects that are bound in cloth and cord and purposely nailed and tied to trees in various cemeteries. The trees eventually grow around the objects. Rolonda is looking for any information that members may have as to the purpose of these bundles or packets; also, any information that people may have on where to find cemeteries that have similar treatments. These bound objects have been observed in central Louisiana. Similar bundles have been observed in large bushes in the coastal Georgia region.

Please respond to Rolonda at rolondat40@aol.com or Jason at jason_church@contractor.nps.gov."





A Note From Helen Sclair, Chicago's "Cemetery Lady"

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 Longtime AGS Member Helen Sclair called the AGS office with this message:

"I am so happy AGS is carrying Segal's field guide [*A Field Guide to Visiting a Jewish Cemetery* by Joshua L. Segal, Rabbi]. I find it superb; have bought it for friends, and feel it to be valuable for any library."

Helen frequently lectures at AGS and other conferences. She is the former Midwestern Regional Columnist for the *AGS Quarterly* and was the 2004 recipient of the Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award.

To order Segal's book, please visit [the AGS bookstore](#).

### **Online Book Reviews**

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 In the June 2007 e-Newsletter we featured a link to an online book review of *The Secret Cemetery*. The review was written by AGS member Kimberly Kenney. In this issue, we're pleased to link to her reviews of *Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery* and *Silent Cities: The Evolution of the American Cemetery*. Both reviews are posted on bellaonline.com. We will also be reviewing *Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery* in an upcoming *AGS Quarterly*.

[Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery](#)

[Silent Cities: The Evolution of the American Cemetery](#)

Preliminary Report on Survey of Lincoln County, Kentucky Cemetery

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 AGS Member Mike Bieling sent in the following link. He writes: "It is a report from the University of Kentucky's Program for Archaeological Research, entitled 'Exploring a Silent City: Excavation and Analysis of the Holmes-Vardeman-Stephenson Cemetery, Lincoln County, Kentucky,' by Donald W. Linebaugh, Ph.D. and Shawn Phillips. It was presented at the 18th Annual Kentucky Heritage Council Archaeological Conference on March 4, 2001."

<http://www.uky.edu/AS/Anthropology/PAR/vardeman.htm>

### **New Publication: *Greene County and Mesopotamia Cemetery***

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*Greene County and Mesopotamia Cemetery* is a new publication by AGS Member Kim Jacobson.

Greene was the most populous county in Alabama in 1850 and was widely regarded for its thriving and elegant communities. Mesopotamia Cemetery, first known as Oak Hill Cemetery, was established around 1822 on present-day Mesopotamia Street in Eutaw.

Jacobson's book includes more than 200 photographs that tie the marble tombstones of the Greene County and Mesopotamia cemeteries to the people who shaped Greene County's past.

The book is arranged chronologically, starting with the establishment of Mesopotamia Cemetery in 1822, in conjunction with the Mesopotamia Presbyterian Church, and continuing through the Mexican War and Civil War eras.

One of Jacobson's interests is early-Alabama marble carvers and, in her book, she ensured, there is a full chapter on Mesopotamia marble carvers, as well as a chapter on iconography and epitaphs.

*Greene County and Mesopotamia Cemetery* is in stock at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

### **New Cemetery Brochure from the Texas Historical Commission**

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The new brochure, *Rescuing a Historic Cemetery*, from the Texas Historical Commission, is now available on their website. It provides tips on how to start researching cemetery records and conduct cemetery surveys. The brochure also gives information about the RIP Guardian program for neglected historic cemeteries, and how to get additional assistance for your project.

To download the publication, visit [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us), select "Cemeteries," then "RIP Guardian" and scroll down to the bottom for the link to the PDF.

For more information about the RIP Guardian program, contact Anne Shelton at [anne.shelton@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:anne.shelton@thc.state.tx.us) or (512) 475-4506.

### **Statewide Cleanup of Rhode Island Cemeteries, November 3rd**

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After the great response to the April "Earth Day" statewide cleanup of historical cemeteries, the RI Advisory Commission on Historical Cemeteries will be having another one on November 3rd.

Members of the commission are hoping to get volunteers to "adopt" a cemetery near their home or a favorite of theirs anywhere in the state.

As an example, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War are having a clean up on Saturday the 3rd at Cranston #22 on Budlong Road starting at 9 AM. On the 4th they will be in West Warwick at WW#25 and #26 on Parker Street.

We are always looking for volunteers, not just to clean, but to research deeds at city hall or on the computer. GPS readings are needed to have the cemeteries put on plat maps to protect them from developers plowing them under. Some cemeteries still need to be recorded. The Carpenter Cemetery in East Providence is only half recorded.

Mentors for High School students twice a week in Providence are needed.

If anyone has any interest in historic cemeteries and can help in any way, please call (401) 789-3503 or e mail [eviewhee@verizon.net](mailto:eviewhee@verizon.net) for more information.

### **Mount Auburn Cemetery Wins National Trust for Historic Preservation Award**

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#### **Mount Auburn Cemetery Wins National Trust for Historic Preservation Award Trust Recognizes 175 Years of Excellence in Caring for One of Nation's Most Significant Cultural Landscapes**

Mount Auburn Cemetery, located in Cambridge and Watertown, Massachusetts, announced today it has received the prestigious Trustees' Emeritus Award for Excellence in the Stewardship of Historic Sites from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Mount Auburn is one of 21 national award winners the National Trust for Historic Preservation honored during its week-long 2007 National Preservation Conference in the Twin Cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

Established in 1831, Mount Auburn Cemetery is not just a burial ground. . .it is also a natural oasis for hundreds of thousands of visitors a year who come to enjoy the cemetery's vast greenery and array of artwork.

"Unlike many preservation showplaces, Mount Auburn doesn't lend itself to dramatic before-and-after images," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "Instead, the story here is about wise stewardship and an enduring determination that this historic place will remain what it has always been: a place of honor for the dead, a place of beauty and inspiration for the living."

[www.mountauburn.org](http://www.mountauburn.org)

### **Article: Mausoleum May be Constructed in Rome, Georgia Cemetery**

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The City of Rome, Georgia, is considering construction of a much-needed mausoleum at historic Myrtle Hill Cemetery. The article, linked below, is from the *Rome News-Tribune*.

[http://news.mywebpal.com/news\\_tool\\_v2.cfm?  
npid=680&show=archivedetails&ArchiveID=1306802&om=1](http://news.mywebpal.com/news_tool_v2.cfm?npid=680&show=archivedetails&ArchiveID=1306802&om=1)

### **Articles: Scanning Technology Reveals Lost Gravestone Text**

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Two articles were recently published about a scanning technique used to read illegible words on headstones.

Article one is [posted on BBC News](#).

Article two is [posted on the Pittsburgh Tribune Review](#).

### **Article: Prisoners to Patch Up Old Gravestones in Vermont**

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The article appears in [the Barre-Montpelier Times Argus](#).

### **Article: Dog Walking Program in Congressional Cemetery Causes Tension**

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 AGS Member Mike Trinkley, Director of the Chicora Foundation sent in this article posted on [the Washington Post](#) website and his comments. The Chicora Foundation is a non-profit preservation organization.

"We (the Chicora Foundation) have long discouraged the use of cemeteries for dog walking: (1) it is disrespectful and fails to recognize that, first and most fundamentally, cemeteries are sacred sites, (2) feces and urine are damaging to both the landscape and the stones, (3) dogs, especially off-leash, present a significant liability to the cemetery, and (4) it looks bad, giving the public the impression that cemeteries are really nothing more than large park areas; by logical extension, if dog walking is ok, why not playing rugby. --Mike Trinkley"

AGS Member Website Link

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 Please take a moment to check out the [Georgia State Historic Preservation Office's website](#), where you will find detailed information about preservation, historic resources and preservation basics. Additionally, they have a page devoted to [cemetery preservation](#) where you will find information about Georgia laws, information about preservation, FAQs, and publications you can order.

#### **Articles: Cemetery Workers' Strike in Montreal, Quebec**

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 The following two articles from the *Victoria Times-Colonist* concern complaints about conditions in Canada's largest cemetery, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, in Montreal, subsequent to a four month lock-out of cemetery workers by the city.

<http://www.canada.com/victoriatimescolonist/news/story.html?id=cae47fe1-86e0-42d0-ac43-6408d97876e7>

<http://www.canada.com/victoriatimescolonist/news/canada/story.html?id=2f3452d3-f4d2-46cd-abf1-bbcf38da7b0c>

Article: Stolen from U.S. History: Artifacts

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 The article, linked below, is to CBS News.com. It is about looters raiding historic places, taking mementos and relics at the rate of \$500 million a year.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/04/26/national/main1548259.shtml>

#### **Recommended Website Link**

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 Please take a moment to check out this link, recommended by an AGS member. It is to the website for [The Terebinth](#), a national, independent society which dedicates itself to the preservation and maintenance of funerary culture in the Netherlands. The site is mostly in Dutch, with a couple of pages in English.

Article: Southern Graveselters

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 AGS Member Mike Bieling sent in the following link. He writes: "I recently came upon an interesting paper entitled *Southern Graveselters and English Lych-gates: The Search for Culture Trait Origins*, by Dr. Gregory Jeane (also an AGS Member), in Vol.

III of 'Tributaries,' published by the Alabama Folklife Association (see <http://www.alabamafolklife.org/>). This paper argues that the roots of the Upland South cemetery tradition of erecting house-form shelters over graves can be traced to the use of Lych-gates at the entrances to English cemeteries, and not to the influence of eastern North American indigenous peoples, as is sometimes suggested. The paper can be viewed at:

[http://www.samford.edu/~dgjeane/lych\\_gates.html#](http://www.samford.edu/~dgjeane/lych_gates.html#)."

**Article: Danvers (Massachusetts) State Hospital Tour**

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 The article was featured in *The Epitaph*, the e-newsletter of the Worcester, Massachusetts based group The Gravestone Girls. This article is about their visit to Danvers State Hospital in Danvers, Massachusetts, which has been closed for twenty plus years. They were given a tour of the facility, including the hospital cemetery. The article includes photos from and information about the cemetery.

Back issues of *The Epitaph* and other information about The Gravestone Girls is available on their website, www.gravestonegirls.com.

[Danvers State Hospital Article.](#)

Holiday Gift Idea

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 Are you looking for a holiday gift idea? What about a membership to AGS for someone in your extended family or an acquaintance who has expressed an interest in cemetery studies and would appreciate the benefits of AGS membership? If so, go to the membership page at [www.gravestonestudies.org](http://www.gravestonestudies.org) and print the membership form. Fill the form out with the recipient's information and write a note on the form that the membership is a gift from you. Send the form, with the appropriate payment, to The Association for Gravestone Studies, 278 Main St., Suite 207, Greenfield, MA 01301. A packet of materials will be sent to the recipient that will include a letter from the AGS president explaining that the membership is a gift from you or, if you wish, the packet can be sent to you for your personal presentation of the gift.

**Contact Information**

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 The Association for Gravestone Studies
 278 Main Street, Suite 207
 Greenfield, MA 01301
www.gravestonestudies.org
info@gravestonestudies.org
 (413) 772-0836
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