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## Association for Gravestone Studies e-Newsletter

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### In This Issue:

[2008 AGS Annual Meeting and Conference](#)

[AGS 2008 Conference--Suggested Reading](#)

[Recent Donations to AGS](#)

[Rehabilitating West Cemetery, Amherst](#)

[AGS Members in the News](#)

[Query: Curacao Cemeteries](#)

[Query: Meaning of Initials on Gravestones](#)

[Article: "John 'Walt' Walters: Resurrecting Cemeteries"](#)

[Article: "Lonely in America: Contemplating the Remains of Slavery"](#)

[Article: "Cemetery full, mayor tells locals not to die"](#)

[Friends of Oakdale Cemetery \(Wilmington, NC\) Releases Documentary DVD](#)

[New Publication: Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland, California](#)

[Arkansas Gravestones](#)

[Evergreens Cemetery in Brooklyn, NY Placed on the National Register](#)

[The State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries](#)

[Connecticut Gravestone Network Symposium](#)

[Annual Meeting: Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites](#)

[Annual Meeting: Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery](#)

[Spring Events: Old City Cemetery, Sacramento, California](#)

[Egyptomania and Funerary Architecture Discussed in New Podcast](#)

[Tornado Damage, Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta Georgia](#)

[Book Review: \*Burial Terminology: A Guide for Researchers\*](#)

**2008 AGS Annual Meeting and Conference**

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

Here in Amherst, the snow and ice have come and gone, robins and redwings are singing their spring songs and the crocuses and daffodils are coming into bloom. It's high time to make your conference plans (if you haven't already done so). **The registration form is posted on [the conference page of the AGS website](#).**

In just a few months, we will be meeting at Hampshire College, in the Pioneer Valley region of Western Massachusetts. For a virtual tour of the Hampshire College campus and environs, please click on [www.hampshire.edu](http://www.hampshire.edu). For an historical overview of the area and a preview of the conference schedule, please go to [www.gravestonestudies.org](http://www.gravestonestudies.org) and click on AGS Conferences.

As usual, AGS will offer on-campus lodging and meals, lecture sessions and other events at college facilities. For a guide to other local attractions, and a list of off-campus lodging options, click on [www.amherstarea.com](http://www.amherstarea.com). Note: if you plan to lodge off-campus, PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY--the Amherst area is a very popular destination!

We will be having a **Foil Impressions Workshop, Conservation Workshop and Photography Workshop** again at this year's conference on Thursday, June 19. For details and photos, please click below:

[Foil Impressions Workshop](#)

[Conservation Workshop](#)

[Photography Workshop](#)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Alan Swedlund, Professor emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst--author of the forthcoming book, *Shadow in the Valley: A Cultural History of Illness, Death and Loss in New England, 1840-1916*, to be published by the University of Massachusetts Press.

Would any AGS members who have websites be willing to include information about the AGS Conference on your site? Please email us at [info@gravestonestudies.org](mailto:info@gravestonestudies.org) if you need conference information to post.

**AGS 2008 Conference--Suggested Reading**

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Getting ready to attend the 2008 AGS Annual Conference? Prepare for your trip with the following books. They are all available in [the AGS Bookstore](#).

***Holyoke, Massachusetts: Stories Carved in Stone* and *West Springfield, Massachusetts: Stories Carved in Stone*, By Rusty Clark.**

***Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield***

By Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney (autographed by Kevin Sweeney!).

### **AGS Connecticut Valley Spring Tour**

AGS Connecticut Valley (better-late-than-never) Spring Tour of the Old Westfield Burying Ground (est. 1648) in Westfield, Massachusetts, Saturday, June 28, to be led by Bob Clark; details to be provided in the May issue of the e-News.

### **Recent Donations to AGS**

Two donations were made in memory of AGS member Julia Martha Case of Alexandria, Virginia. She had been a member since 1985. She passed away on February 13, 2008. The donors were her cousins, Joshua Lyndon Case of Carlsbad, California and Dacy Bellingham of Reston, Virginia.

Also, Jessie Farber, a founder of AGS, generously contributed \$500 to AGS to support the AGS *Quarterly*.

The Board of Trustees is very grateful for these gifts.

### **Rehabilitating West Cemetery, Amherst**

Today, West Cemetery in Amherst, Massachusetts, is best known as the resting place of poet Emily Dickinson. A larger-than-life portrait of the poet occupies a prominent place in the Amherst History Mural, a panoply of Amherst history ". . . designed to increase understanding of this ancient burying ground and build support for its restoration."

West Cemetery (est. 1730) is located in downtown Amherst, just a few miles north of Hampshire College, our 2008 Conference site. Conferees will have an opportunity to visit this historic cemetery at their leisure, stop by the Dickinson plot, wander among the array of 18th- through 20th-century markers and monuments, and view the mural. On Saturday, June 21, town officials and local residents will tell of on-going efforts to record and rehabilitate West Cemetery.



Emily Dickinson, one of the principal figures in the Amherst History Mural



View of the east end of the mural from inside West Cemetery



Work in progress, Spring 2005--pictured, from left to right: Martha Dickinson (Emily's niece), Edward Dickinson (Emily's father), Noah Webster and Col. William Smith Clark (founder of Massachusetts Agricultural College, now UMass/Amherst)



Work in progress, Spring 2005--pictured, from left to right: W.D. Cowls, Stephen Puffer (trolley conductor) and other notable, if less famous, members of the local community

### AGS Members in the News

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An article on **Maddy McCoy** and her work creating a Slavery Inventory Database for Fairfax County, Virginia appeared in the February 28th issue of [the Fairfax Times](#).

**Richard Veit** was interviewed in an article entitled "Digging up the Past Remains a Mystery" in the February 28th edition of [the Asbury \(New Jersey\) Park Press](#).

### Query: Curacao Cemeteries

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AGS Member Laura Leibman sent in this query. She writes: "I am looking for information about the colonial cemeteries on the island of Curacao in the Dutch West Indies. Do you know where I can find a listing of the cemeteries on the island and the dates they were in use?"

Many thanks!

Laura Leibman \_\_\_\_\_

### Query: Meaning of Initials on Gravestones

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This query comes from Rex Cochran. He wrote that "he had three uncles, who died in infancy, and were buried in Crawford County Illinois. Their gravestones have letters on the top. The stone pictured below is to the left (south) of a new stone placed for them. It appears to have "JJU" on the top of it, but the corner is chipped off and I can't tell for sure (I also wonder if this stone is in it's proper location as it is just loosely sitting on a slab of concrete). Can anyone provide any information about the meaning of the letters?"

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**Article: "John 'Walt' Walters: Resurrecting Cemeteries"**

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 AGS Board Member Cathi Taylor sent in this article--it appeared in the [November/December 2007 issue of \*Outdoor Indiana\*](#). It is about AGS member John "Walt" Walters and his work in preserving cemeteries.

**Article: "Lonely in America: Contemplating the Remains of Slavery"**

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 AGS Member Jeanne Swadosh sent in this link. She writes: "I wanted to share an article from the current issue of *Harpers Magazine* with everyone. 'Lonely in America: Contemplating the Remains of Slavery' by Wendy S. Walters discusses the author's investigation of slavery in New England through African American burial sites. Unfortunately, the article is only available online for subscribers to the magazine, but interested readers should check it out at their local library. The article raises compelling and important questions about race, history, and memorialization.

<http://www.harpers.org/archive/2008/03/0081953>

With all good wishes,  
 Jenny Swadosh, Staten Island, NY"

**Article: "Cemetery full, mayor tells locals not to die"**

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 This article appears in [Reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com).

**Friends of Oakdale Cemetery (Wilmington, NC) Releases Documentary DVD**

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 Friends of Oakdale Cemetery announces the availability of a new documentary,

*Oakdale Cemetery, Where Angels and Mortals Meet.* It tells the story of Oakdale, North Carolina's first Rural cemetery, opened in 1855.

The DVD is sold through the Friends' website ([www.oakdalecemetery.org](http://www.oakdalecemetery.org)). The retail price is \$13.00 for members of the Friends and \$15.00 for others.

The DVD will be reviewed in an upcoming issue of the AGS *Quarterly*.

### ***April Events at Oakdale Cemetery***

Saturday, April 5, 2008, 10 AM-12 PM, Oakdale Cemetery Historical Tour: architectural historian Janet K. Seapker will conduct a tour focusing on the history of Oakdale Cemetery.

Saturday, April 12, 2008, 2 PM-4 PM, Spring Floral Tour: Eric Kozen, superintendent of Oakdale Cemetery and a horticulturalist, will offer a tour of the spring foliage blooming in Oakdale Cemetery.

The Friends of Oakdale Cemetery will provide 30-minute horse-drawn wagon tours in the cemetery on Sunday April 27 and Sunday May 4, 2008. The tours will begin at 3 PM. The last tour will depart at 5:30 PM.

For tour rates and more information, visit <http://www.oakdalecemetery.org/>.

### **New Publication: *Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland, California***

AGS Member John Martine sent in a link to [The Alameda Sun](#) about this new book.

Dennis Evanosky's new book, *Mountain View Cemetery* features Mountain View Cemetery's landscape, architecture and personalities. It retails for \$24.95 and is available online at [www.evanosky.info](http://www.evanosky.info) (a \$5 shipping/handling charge will be applied to online orders).

### **Arkansas Gravestones**

Please take a moment to check out [www.arkansasgravestones.org](http://www.arkansasgravestones.org). It is the website for a new group whose goal is document every stone in every county in Arkansas. So far they have completed many cemeteries in Lawrence county, and have found many unknown (i.e. unrecorded) stones in cow pastures and other places as a result of their efforts.

They are looking for volunteers to be county coordinators. So far they have about 10 counties covered.

### **Evergreens Cemetery in Brooklyn, NY Placed on the National Register**

To read the press release and see photos from the cemetery, [please click here](#).

### **The State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries**

The State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries (SAPIC) will be holding their annual meeting April 12, 2008, at 10 AM at the Johnson County Historical Society Museum in Coralville, Iowa.

SAPIC is working to identify all cemeteries in Iowa and to provide guidance regarding preservation and legislative issues. [Their informative website](#) contains links to Iowa cemetery laws and procedures, county cemetery updates, and general information about gravestone restoration and other topics.

### **Connecticut Gravestone Network Symposium**

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The 2008 Connecticut Gravestone Network symposium will be held Saturday, April 5th at the South Senior Center, 70 Canterbury St., East Hartford, Connecticut.

There will be lectures:

- Irving Slavid from the Monument Conservation Collaborative will do a session on cleaning and repair
- Robert Young will be discussing White Bronze markers
- and more!

Plus: displays, exhibits and sales tables from various historic groups.

[www.ctgravestones.com](http://www.ctgravestones.com).

### **Annual Meeting: Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites**

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The Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites (CPMBS) will be holding it's 17th Annual Meeting on April 26, 2008 at 8:30 AM at the Sandy Spring Museum in Sandy Spring, Maryland. There will be an open forum on cemetery protection/preservation topics and a field trip to local cemeteries and the Slave Museum.

Preregistration is required by April 12, 2008. Please visit [www.cpmbs.org](http://www.cpmbs.org) for more information.

### **Annual Meeting: Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery**

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The Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, Rochester, New York will be holding it's 2008 Annual Meeting on April 2, 2008 at 7 PM at Saint Anne Church in Rochester. There will be two guest speakers. Sarah Harvey will present "Hyman and Jeanette Komesar." The Komesars share a unique gravestone in the B'rith Kodesh section of Mount Hope. Caitlin Powalski will discuss " 'I Take Thy Hand:' Isaac and Amy Post, Spiritualism and Progressive Reform in 19th Century Rochester." Isaac and Amy Post were leading social activists at the height of Rochester's progressive era.

A reception will follow the meeting and presentations.

For more information: visit [www.fomh.org](http://www.fomh.org).

### **Spring Events: Old City Cemetery, Sacramento, California**

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Saturday, April 5 at 10 AM: The Medical Bag History Tour. Guide: Dr. Bob LaPerriere.

Saturday, April 12, from 9:30 AM - 2 PM: Open Garden--Garden Tours and Heritage Rose Sales.

Saturday, May 3, at 10 AM: Sacramento & California History Tour. Guide: Bill Mahan.

For more information on Old City Cemetery, visit [www.oldcitycemetery.com](http://www.oldcitycemetery.com).

### **Egyptomania and Funerary Architecture Discussed in New Podcast**

Kevin Kuharic, Director of Restoration for Atlanta's Historic Oakland Cemetery Foundation, is part of a new podcast. In "Die Like an Egyptian," a false door from an Old Kingdom Egyptian tomb sparks a lively talk about death, burial, and Egyptomania in America.

The Michael C. Carlos Museum hosts "Carlos Conversations," a series of podcasts that uses works of art in the museum's collection to spark conversations between distinguished members of the Emory University faculty. Kuharic joins Peter Lacovara, Curator of Egyptian Art, and Gary Laderman, Professor of Religion.

Each podcast brings together experts from different disciplines to look at museum objects in new and unusual ways. Kuharic and the other panelists discuss how the influence of the ancient Egyptians can be seen in the burial traditions of 19th century America. The podcast can be found at <http://www.carlos.emory.edu/podcasts/>

For information about Oakland's history, art, and architecture, please contact Kevin Kuharic.

About Kevin Kuharic:

For nearly twenty years, Kuharic has researched Atlanta's Oakland Cemetery. He speaks publicly about its history, and writes about its landscape and historic preservation projects. He received the Jenny D. Thurston Award for an Outstanding Preservation Professional from the Atlanta Urban Design Commission and appeared in the PBS documentary "A Cemetery Special."

Contact: Kevin Kuharic, Director of Restoration & Landscapes  
Historic Oakland Cemetery Foundation  
404-688-2107

### **Tornado Damage, Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta Georgia**

AGS Member Stephen Johnson sent in the following link. Atlanta's Oakland Cemetery was damaged by a tornado on March 14th. The link is to [the Georgia Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Natural Resources](#). There are photos and information about the damage caused by the tornado.

Another article also appears on [the Historic Oakland Cemetery website](#).

### **Book Review: *Burial Terminology: A Guide for Researchers***

This review of *Burial Terminology* is reprinted with permission from *Historical Archaeology*, 41(2):221. Another review will appear in the Winter/Spring issue of the *AGS Quarterly*.

*Burial Terminology: A Guide for Researchers*, by Roderick Sprague  
AltaMira Press, Lanham, MD, 2005. 288 pp., 33 figs., 8 tables, refs., index. \$34.95

paper.

Available from: [www.altamirapress.com](http://www.altamirapress.com).

As evidenced by the sheer number of works referenced in this book, the need for a consistent system of burial nomenclature is readily apparent. *Burial Terminology* presents a comprehensive guide for use by researchers when describing human burials encountered during archaeological investigations. Roderick Sprague's objective is the establishment of terminology that is consistent across disciplines to allow for easier description of burial and disposal practices. The focus is placed on what Sprague terms "disposal of the dead" (p. 2), rather than the mortuary/funerary activities preceding what is represented archaeologically. Sprague, with research interests in funerary and historical archaeology, is no stranger to the issues faced when encountering human burials.

The introduction includes a brief overview of terminology previously used to describe mortuary activities. Sprague notes that this work pulls together vocabulary used by prehistorians, historical archaeologists, forensic anthropologists, and ethnographers from North America, Western Europe, Australia, and Asia (p. 6). Chapter 2 provides an historical background of burial terminology through a discussion of publications produced over the past several hundred years. It is effective in illustrating the abundant number of studies that have been produced. Sprague is not the first to call for a consistent system of burial nomenclature. The historical background is useful in supporting the notion that a classificatory system needs to exhibit categories that are "mutually exclusive and all inclusive" (p. 18).

Chapter 3 presents the field guide, composed of 12 sections accompanied by relevant terminology for use when describing burials, including form of disposal, body preparation, individuality, articulation, position, deposition, orientation and alignment, grave goods, disposal container, features, description of disposal area, and demography (pp. 28-36). Tables list the suggested terms to be used and those that should be avoided when describing burials. This is helpful in providing readers with an organized list of terms discussed in chapter 4. Sprague clarifies that suggested terms are by no means the final word on what should and should not be used for burial descriptions and notes that there is much room for local variation and continual modification. Two supplemental sections, excavation data and data recording, provide suggestions for the proper use of terminology in the field and an excavation checklist to ensure the collection of all relevant data. Chapter 4 provides an in-depth discussion of Sprague's favored burial terminology as well as terms that should be avoided for each of the above-mentioned sections. Where applicable, the discussion includes the context in which both ideal and less-applicable terminology are used in research literature.

Well researched and written, *Burial Terminology* is extremely useful for researchers dealing with human burials, whether in a prehistoric, historic, ethnographic, or forensic context. Illustrations are useful in conveying sometimes confusing terminology. Perhaps one of the most valuable sections of the book is the extensive reference section. Since obvious space constraints hinder the complete discussion of some sources of terminology or typological systems mentioned, the reference section makes it possible for scholars to locate the sources for additional information. As Sprague notes, "it has been suggested that [a consistent system of burial terminology] is an impossible task, but we shall never know unless we try it" (p. 25). Consequently, this work is successful in providing an extensive reference list and a basic framework from which to build a consistent burial terminology for researchers.

--Review by James G. Parker, Department of Anthropology, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858-4353.

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