

# Cemetery Records – Gathering, Archiving, Storing and Accessing

## Agenda

9:00-9:15 Welcome

9:15-10:15 Types of Records to Retain

Kuri Gill – Oregon Historic Cemeteries Program

Judy Chambers – Logan Pleasant View Cemetery

10:15-10:45 Archiving & Storing

Kuri Gill

10:45-11:00 Break

11:00-12:30 Partnerships in Storage and Access

Kuri Gill

Rob Gaskil – Estacada Funeral Chapel & Estacada Cemetery Maintenance District

Judy Chambers – Clackamas County Family History Center & Museum of the Oregon Territory

Carol Surrency – Oregon Historic Cemeteries Association & Genealogical Forum of Oregon

12:30-2:00 Lunch on your own & gather at Clackamas County Community College Computer Lab

2:00-4:00 Databases

Kuri Gill

Carol Surrency – general cemetery database

Dirk Siedlecki – Jacksonville Cemetery database

Judy Juntunen – Crystal Lake Cemetery database

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## Types of Records to Retain

### Things to Consider...

- Is the cemetery still operating?
- Is there a non-profit organization?
- Cemetery Ownership – current & long term
- Your goals for the cemetery
- Size of the cemetery
- Your ability to maintain them

The emphasis here is on the records directly related to the cemetery. If the cemetery is operating as a business or connected with a non-profit, church or other support group those organizations should maintain the business and organization records. These types of records are not addressed here. These records should be kept whether they are copies or originals.

### Property Records

- Deeds
- Maps
- Plots
- Declaration as a cemetery
- Records of transfer
- Tracking of owners

### Inventory & Condition Records – physical features (markers monuments, structures, fences, etc.)

- Periodic Inventories
- Condition reports
- Records of repair and removal
- Photos are great

### Burial Records

- Plat map – locations of burials
- People known and suspected to be interred
- History, biographical info, photos, genealogical info about individuals

### History of the Cemetery

- Any info, records regarding land claim, land donation, formation, photos, family history, etc.

### Contacts

- Associated groups (Friends of, churches, associations, fraternal organizations, etc.)
- Descendants
- Business affiliations or supporters

### Other

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## Archiving & Storing

### Archiving

Information is only useful if you can find it. Have your records sensibly organized for those who follow behind you.

#### Tips...

- Create Subject Folders
- Relate it to your specific situation
- Make a table of contents and an index (helps to find records and notice if they are missing)
- Don't use stickers
- Do use permanent ink on folders
- Don't use metal paper clips or staples
- Do use dividers, folders, plastic clips

### Storing

These may be the only records in existence for the cemetery. Here is how to preserve them as long as possible.

#### **Limit Handling**

- If it is something you use regularly make one copy to work with
- Wear 100% cotton gloves (for old originals)

#### **Use Acid Free Everything**

- Make copies onto acid free paper
- Interleaf photos, original documents, etc. with acid free sheets
- Store in acid free folders and boxes
- Acid Free folders and paper are available at many office and craft supply stores, for boxes try Gaylord.com, Light Impressions or a local museum

#### **Keep Away from Light**

- Sunlight is deadly for everything
- Incandescent light is best – heat is the problem so keep the source far from the records and have good ventilation
- Florescent light – has UV so, it should have filters

#### **Keep in Stable Conditions**

- We can't provide the ideal for the records, so keep in mind that fast and big changes in temperature and humidity are really bad.
- Encapsulate – put the item in a folder, then in a box, then in a trunk, then in a closet
- Keep away from outside, bathroom and kitchen walls
- Keep away from heating and cooling sources

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## Partnerships in Storage & Access

In order to preserve the information in perpetuity, it is important that it remain intact, well documented and accessible. Too many times we have heard stories about something being left at the former President's house and lost track of, or Mr. Soandso died and his children threw it out not knowing what it was.

IF NOTHING ELSE MAKE COPIES OF EVERYTHING AND STORE SOMEWHERE ELSE THAT MORE THAN ONE PERSON KNOWS ABOUT.

If the cemetery does not have permanent and accessible location for records, find a partner. A great way to get more support for the cemetery and keep records safe and accessible!

- Genealogical Society
- Historical Society
- Local Library
- Local Museum
- Mortuary or Funeral Service Provider

### Things to Consider

- Current partnerships
- Longevity of organization
- Accessibility
- Ability of organization to care for and store the records
- Any requirements, like initial fees to cover cost to the organization
- Loan or Donation?
- Written agreements – access, distribution, etc.

# Cemetery Records – Gathering, Archiving, Storing and Accessing Computer Databases

One way to have information accessible and usable is to put it all into a computer database. There are many, forms of databases out there to accomplish this. You must choose carefully what is ideal for your organization.

Things to consider...

Resources

- Funds for technology and software
- Knowledge of technology and software
- Resources of partner organizations
- Longevity of equipment, software, etc.
- Compatibility with other equipment & software

Uses of the database

- Track burials
- Track condition and repairs
- Create maintenance plans
- Burial indexes, biographies, etc.
- Create interpretive plan
- Research
- Use on the internet
- Use of photos, maps, scanned item, etc.
- Other

Who is using it

- All volunteers who work from home
- One workstation with several users
- Visitors and researchers