

A Walk Among the Tombstones: Preparing for and Presenting a Cemetery Tour

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1. Reasons for presenting a cemetery tour

- a. To raise the profile of your society.
- b. To foster enthusiasm and cooperation in the community.
- c. To highlight a local cemetery.
- d. Please, no scary or haunted tours.

2. Selecting a cemetery and other details

- a. Always dialogue with the cemetery and get their permission first.
- b. Is the cemetery walkable?
- c. Will you have reenactors?
- d. To charge or not to charge?

3. Selecting your subjects

- a. Don't just highlight the rich and famous.
- b. Perhaps the tombstone—or the stone carver—is the feature.
- c. Look for patterns in burials. Many deaths around the same time may indicate a sickness outbreak. Especially true with families.
- d. Did you find a tombstone older than the cemetery? There's a story there.

4. Give yourselves lots of research and prep time

- a. Create a list of possible subjects and divide amongst the presenters.
- b. Some of your subjects may not pan out, so to speak.
- c. If you involve reenactors, you may need more prep time.

5. Preparing for the tour

- a. Weather contingencies are a must.
- b. Consider using a portable microphone.
- c. Do *at least* one practice run-through of the tour.
- d. Try to keep each stop to five minutes and the entire tour to two hours.

6. To record or not to record?

- a. Consider a virtual tour.
- b. YouTube is your friend.
- c. Record your tour to DVD and make it available for purchase.
- d. Add copies of the DVDs to your local libraries.
- e. Contact your local public access tv group to see if they will record the program and broadcast it in the future.

7. Reap the benefits of your work

- a. Gain new memberships.
- b. Gain additional cemetery information provided by the audience.
- c. Collect feedback from the audience for future tours or programs.
- d. A job well done may translate to future tours at other cemeteries.

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