

BASIC PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES

Regular maintenance is the best preservation procedure. When abandonment and neglect have resulted in severe damage to fences, landscape features, vegetation, markers, or monuments, responsible repairs should be undertaken as quickly as possible. No matter the level of repair or preservation necessary, there are a few essential rules that should be followed in planning a course of action:



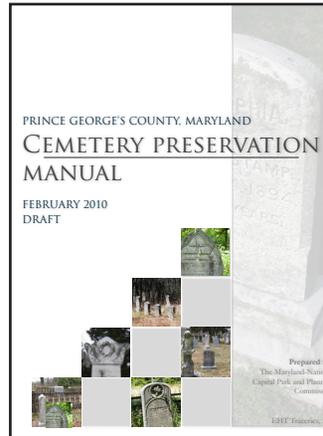
- **Do no harm:** use the gentlest and least intrusive methods available.
- Do nothing that cannot be undone.
- Design all work to retain and preserve the historic character of the cemetery.
- Repair, rather than replace, damaged historic features.
- Quick or easy fixes are not always the best options.
- Assume unmarked graves exist and avoid ground disturbing activities.
- When in doubt, consult a professional.
- Document all changes.

Document existing conditions by taking notes and photographs before starting any work on a cemetery. This will ensure an accurate record of the cemetery preservation effort and will assist future researchers and conservators in understanding changes to the cemetery.



For more information on cemetery preservation in Prince George's County, please reference the

*Prince George's County
Cemetery Preservation Manual.*



Questions? Please contact:

The Maryland-National Capital Park
and Planning Commission
Historic Preservation Section
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

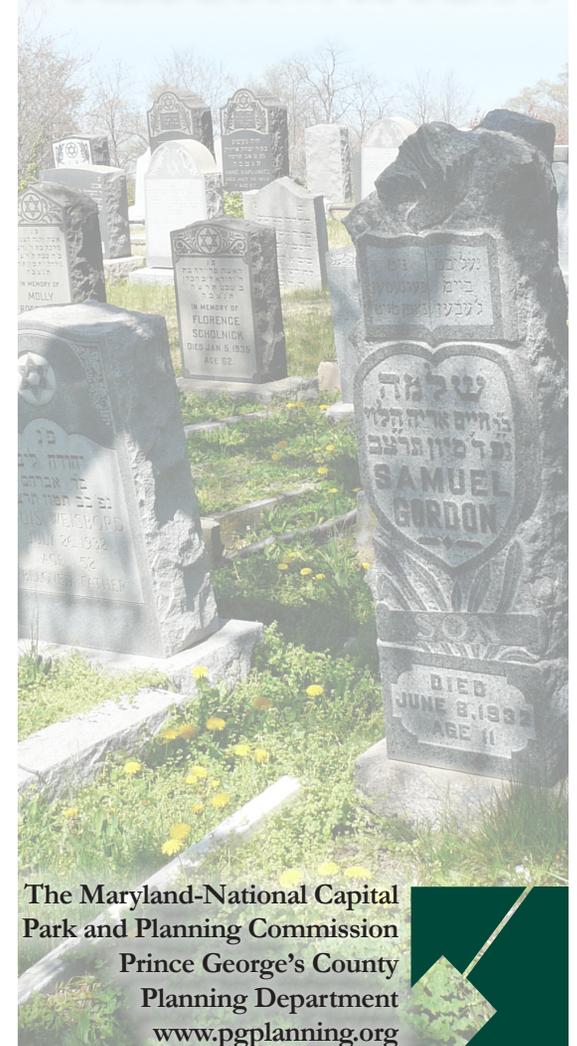
Website: www.pgplanning.org

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PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
MARYLAND

CEMETERY PRESERVATION



The Maryland-National Capital
Park and Planning Commission
Prince George's County
Planning Department
www.pgplanning.org

HISTORIC OVERVIEW



There are nearly 250 cemeteries listed in the *Prince George's County Historic Sites and Districts Plan*. Cemetery types found in Prince George's County include:

- Native American Burial Grounds
- Family Burial Grounds
- Slave Cemeteries
- Church Cemeteries
- Jewish Cemeteries
- Association Cemeteries
- Memorial Parks
- Veterans' Cemeteries
- African American Cemeteries

WHY PRESERVE CEMETERIES?

Historic cemeteries contain information on the county's social, cultural, and historic heritage. Cemeteries provide genealogical data and information on the history of a particular place, religious practice, and lifestyle. They also display the folk art of tombstone carving and preserve the natural features of the landscape. Regrettably, many cemeteries—especially family burial grounds—have been abandoned and suffer from neglect.

The poor condition of these cemeteries limits the ability to convey the historical and cultural significance.



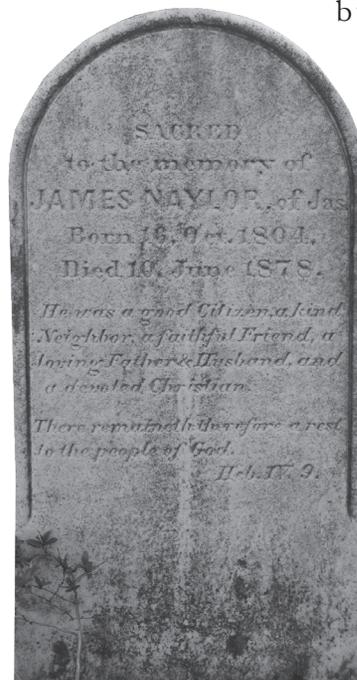
CEMETERY PRESERVATION

Preservation—the retention of historic features through conservation, maintenance, and repair.

Initial phases of cemetery preservation can be carried out by a community, group, or individual. Tasks within the initial phases of cemetery preservation include:

- Documentation
- Research
- Planning

Additional preservation efforts include: cleaning the cemetery site, cleaning markers, and resetting gravestones. Some of this work is best performed by professional conservators; however, there are tasks that are ideal for trained volunteers.



Through these efforts, a cemetery can be stabilized and restored as a contributing element of Prince George's County's cultural landscape.

PLANNING FOR PRESERVATION

Establish Ownership & Get Permission

The first step prior to beginning any cemetery preservation project is to establish the ownership of the cemetery.



Safety

Cemeteries, particularly abandoned or deteriorated sites, can pose a number of safety concerns. Take precautionary steps when visiting cemeteries.

Developing a Cemetery Preservation Plan

It is critical to develop a written plan of action before beginning any preservation work in a cemetery.

Organization

Community support from local residents is critical to cemetery preservation efforts. The support and input from local organizations and residents ensures long-term preservation of the cemetery.

SURVEY & RESEARCH

The first step toward developing a preservation plan is to document the history and current condition of the cemetery. The survey and documentation process follows the steps listed below:

1. General Cemetery Survey
2. Individual Marker Survey
3. Historical Research
4. Cemetery Map
5. Other Surveys (e.g., Vegetation or Archeological Surveys)

