Oregon Heritage Bulletin
TIPS, IDEAS, & PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OREGON HERITAGE
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Cemetery Records Management Approaches

Historic cemetery records are critical materials documenting local history. They are important for cemetery management and for research. Historic cemeteries are managed by a variety of organization type with equally varied capacity to maintain the cemetery and the records. No matter the size and resources of the organization, records can and should be preserved and accessible. This document provides a checklist of considerations to determine the most effective records management, storage, access approaches for the organization.

Considerations

ORGANIZATION

Goals

- Priorities for cemetery care
- Engagement with descendants and community
- Long-term success of the organization
- Disaster resilience work
- Maintaining licensing requirements for active cemeteries

Needs

- Active cemetery licensing requirements
- Requests for information
- People
- Training
- Equipment acquisition and maintenance

Resources

- People
- Training
- Funding
- Ongoing capacity
- Storage facilities
- Digital storage facilities

PARTNERSHIP POSSIBILITIES

- Libraries
- Museums
- Genealogical Forum of Oregon and local or regional genealogical societies
- Oregon State Archives (local governments, special districts)
- Cemetery Association of Oregon
- Colleges and Universities

RESOURCES

- Section 106 compliance mitigation project
- Historic Cemeteries Grant

DECISIONS TO MAKE

- Do you want the information accessible to the public online?
- Do you want the records associated with mapping?
- Do you want the records preserved digitally?
- What are the benefits of digital records?

DIGITAL DECISIONS

Storage methods

- Cloud (internet access can be an issue)
- Hard drives in multiple locations
- Stored with other organizations
- Do you have capacity to track and update storage method?
- Records collection information
- Is it going to be searchable online?

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Formats

- What is the best file format for long term?
- Do you have the capacity to pay attention to changing formats to update them?

BASIC STEPS

Paper records

- Card files, ledgers, etc.
- Store in a safe space.
- Make multiple copies and store in different places.

Maps

- Make multiple copies and store in different places.

Digital Records

- Search for existing records.
- Online search – Find-A-Grave, Million Graves, etc.
- Scanned copies of records saved digitally.
- Maps
- Take really good photos.

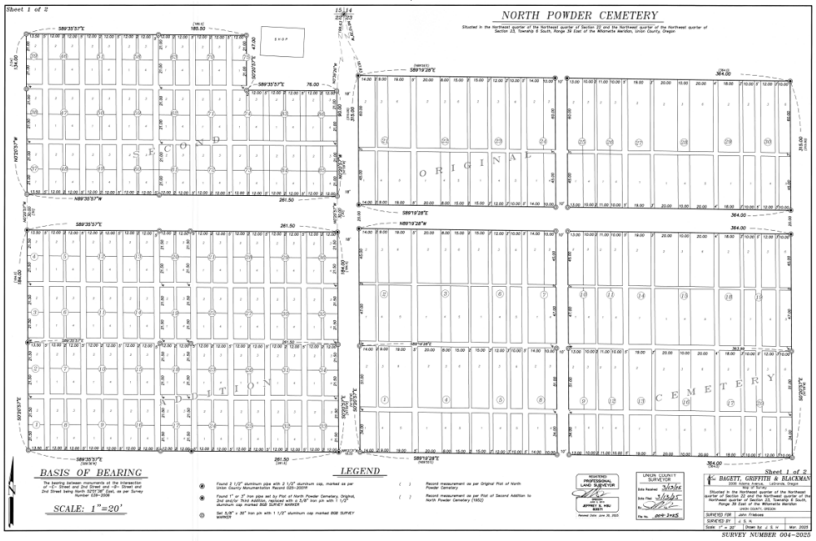
2ND LEVEL STEPS

Paper records

- Card files, ledgers, etc.
- Archival Storage
- Maps
- Archival Storage

Digital Records

- Scanned copies – Searchable PDFs
- Spreadsheets
  - » Google is free, others work
  - » Information is entered so that it is searchable.
- Maps
  - » High quality scan for digital record.



3RD LEVEL STEPS

Digital Records

- Scanned copies – Searchable PDFs
  - » Database
- Maps
  - » Geographic Information System (GIS) based maps – This are searchable and based on the locations of the burials. These can be linked to the record database.

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