

How To Analyze the Family Cemetery Research Checklist

Lisa Lisson of Are You My Cousin?

3 Steps to Analyze the Family Cemetery (Or Family Plot Within a Cemetery)

1. Make note of the location and ask “Why?”

Why is the family cemetery/plot here in this location? Is your ancestor in a cemetery “out in the middle of nowhere”? Why? What is the history of that land? Could it be the old home place or the family farm? Why is your ancestor buried in this location?

2. Note who is buried close by?


Anyone buried in the family cemetery or family plot within a larger cemetery is important to your research. This person(s) could turn out to be a relative and/or close associates of your ancestor. If not now, this information may be helpful to you in future research.

Make note of where each person is buried in relation to your ancestor.

3. Examine your ancestor’s stone.

Note the spelling of your ancestor’s name and any dates on the stone. Be aware information on a gravestone can be incorrect!

Observe the gravestone markings or designs leading to further clues about your ancestor’s life.



Tip: Take close-up photographs of symbols on your ancestor's gravestone to look up later as needed. [[Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography](#) is a nice resource to learn more about gravestone symbolism.]

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