



## **Burial Grounds in Kings County**

History 4343: Public History

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## Planning Report

The topic of my project is burial grounds within Kings County, with my goal being to raise awareness about the large number of cemeteries in Kings County by researching, locating, and discussing the condition and ownership of the sites. Burial grounds are a very important part of our history that should not be neglected or forgotten, and it is necessary to maintain them in order to preserve the rich genealogical connections to the area. I am focusing on three areas relating to cemeteries: maps, origin/ownership, and condition.

### The Interpretive Plan

My ultimate objective is to cause people to realize what a rich historical area exists within Kings County. In terms of learning objectives, I want visitors, both locals and students, to understand the locations of cemeteries and the number of denominations within the county. Also, I have been realizing that students are very unaware of any geography outside of the university. By using a large map as the focus of my display, I hope that it will draw attention and allow students to learn what a rich, beautiful, and cultural area surrounds Wolfville. Behavioural objectives include a hope that people will leave with an interest to visit the cemeteries themselves, and even help with positive preservation rather than vandalism and neglect. Also, by including a self-guided tour, I hope that people will visit the cemetery, as it is so close, and realize the number of figures important to the university and the community that are buried there. Emotionally, I hope visitors can appreciate the rich history provided by the burial grounds of Kings County, and therefore understand the importance of cemeteries to a society's history.

In my opinion, visitors should want to learn this information because of, as previously stated, the history it provides for our region. For many students and the majority of locals, these burial grounds are directly related to them due to their ancestors being buried in the area. I hope that visitors, students, locals, and faculty, will leave the exhibit and use the information presented to raise awareness of burial grounds within the area, which will lead to an appreciation of the cemeteries and ultimately assistance in preservation.

My interpretive principles include provoking interest to visit and ultimately aid the preservation of cemeteries, relating the burial grounds and their history to the community, and revealing the amount of cemeteries and the variety of ownership.

Various aspects of my display will prove a balance in the exhibit load. One of the highest load exhibits is a Type 2, therefore, our self-guided tour will cause people to do something while the exhibit is inert. This should be a success as it causes the visitor to experience an interactive aspect of our exhibit, should they choose to take a tour booklet across the street to experience the cemetery. The inclusion of the Burial Grounds Care Society will also be a Type 2 exhibit, as the visitor can pick up a brochure and choose to do something, for example, contacting the society and experiencing other burial grounds within Kings County. It will be balanced by a Type 3 exhibit, which is the display of the map, chart, and photographs.

## The Display Plan and Materials

By mapping the cemeteries, I am determining the various locations of the cemeteries in the county. This is to create awareness of the extent of burial grounds nearby, as there is a shocking number within the area. I have plotted approximately 110 local cemeteries on a large county map. This is the focus of my display, with charts and photos surrounding the map. By displaying this map, I am presenting my scholarly research that involved finding the approximate location of each cemetery, and presenting it in a dynamic, colourful form that appeals to a variety of audiences. I know that this form is effective, as I have shown it to a number of my friends from various areas of study. Not only are people surprised at the amount of cemeteries nearby, they are curious to see the various concentrated areas of burial grounds within the county and exactly where Wolfville is situated in relation to other communities in the area.

Raising awareness about the condition of burial grounds in King's County is necessary for the public to understand their role in the preservation of local history. By comparing burial grounds, I am seeing the differences between cemeteries of varying ownership. Therefore, I will be listing and then comparing the variety of cemeteries by religion, family, or municipality, as it is a surprise to discover the large amount of diverse backgrounds present in a relatively small region. This will draw attention to Acadian and First Nations burial grounds in the area. These two groups are unique to our area and largely neglected. It is necessary to raise awareness about these groups, as few people are aware of the local presence of these cemeteries. This is largely due to the fact that the majority of these sites are difficult to reach and not well preserved. The various ownership and origins of the burial grounds will be displayed in a chart alongside the map. It will also act as a legend, as there are a variety of colours to match each type of burial ground. Along with the discussion of different cemeteries comes the issue of ownership and consequently funding and upkeep. This will include the issue of laws, regulations and other challenges faced by the preservation of cemeteries. I have been in contact with the local Burial Grounds Care Society, and will include this as part of my display in order to raise awareness of the current efforts at preserving cemeteries, as it is rare to find such a society in Nova Scotia. Ideally, I would like to interest the public in providing the society with volunteers for their time-consuming projects. I will do this by providing brochures and business cards of the Burial Grounds Care Society. I will also draw attention to burial ground vandalism, and how much such careless actions can affect a community by displaying newspaper articles describing personal incidents of gravestone and cemetery vandalism.

The last, and most interactive part of my display is a brochure that I am creating with Sam and David. This will allow me to draw a map showing specific graves within the old Wolfville burial ground, putting a visual aspect to one of my plotted sites. Within the brochure we are focusing on certain stones that have a great deal of significance to the community, telling their history and giving a description of the stones changing over time. This will act as an interactive self-guided tour for anyone interested in learning more about the history of Wolfville and consequently the university.

## Location, Support, and Evaluation

Within the library foyer, my display does not need a great deal of support other than a way to hang/stand my map and chart. This may be difficult as it is mounted on a heavy board. Aside from hanging the map, all I will need is a nearby surface to place the brochures and tour booklets. To promote our exhibit to students, we will rely on word of mouth and perhaps posters and e-mails. It is to our advantage that the location is such a central point of the university. We should take advantage of this, and make the exhibit look as appealing as possible to students and faculty passing by, in order to pull them in to see the display. We should hang posters in local businesses to provoke the interest of the locals. To evaluate the effectiveness of the project, I will be able to monitor the amount of brochures being taken. Whenever I can, I will pay attention to how many people are looking at the exhibit or walking through the Wolfville cemetery at any given time. I will ask people their thoughts on the exhibit, and if we can help them to further their understanding of the topic. A small voluntary survey at the end of the visit may be helpful to determine visitors' thoughts of the exhibit.

## Conclusion

By researching and analyzing the location, condition, and origin of the more than 100 burial grounds within King's County, I will create awareness of the cultural background and the importance of preserving history. The region has a rich genealogical background that needs to be celebrated, and by preserving cemeteries and burial grounds of the people who created this history, we can understand and preserve the importance of the diversity of the area.

