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# Gravestone Photography And Documentation

## GRAVESTONE PHOTOGRAPHY And Documentation



The illustrated *Home Archivist* series from

PhotoTree.com

Gary W. Clark



## Synopsis

Enrich Your Cemetery Research Gravestone Photography and Documentation reveals the techniques and tricks to taking beautiful photographs of gravestones that will help document the history of your ancestor or loved one. Gravestone condition, time of day, and weather can conspire against the genealogist and historian when trying to capture a legible image. Gravestone Photography and Documentation gives you the tools and knowledge to create great photographs. This book also guides you through documenting the grave site and cemetery using GPS coordinates, maps, and internet-based grave databases. Learn how to upload photos and data to the leading services. Gravestone cleaning recommendations are also covered in detail. Great Tips Include Chapter 1 – Document the Cemetery Chapter 2 – Using Google Earth Chapter 3 – When to Photograph Grave Sites Chapter 4 – Taking the Picture Chapter 5 – In-Ground Markers Chapter 6 – Record the Information Chapter 7 – To Clean or Not to Clean Appendix A – Medallions and Insignia Appendix B – Simple Reflector Card . Using a smart phone, a point and shoot, or sophisticated camera, anyone can make memorable photographs of meaningful, important, and historical grave sites.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Awhile back I decided to do some gravestone photography to "give back" to the genealogical community. For folks who have never done it it sounds kind of creepy. But I actually found it quite peaceful -- not many folks hang out in cemeteries, so even close to a major freeway just north of

downtown Dallas I was almost always the only one there and the few times someone else came it was people taking a shortcut, etc. Especially if you don't have a lot of photography experience, this provides a lot of tips on things you would otherwise learn by doing. Also, the book assumes that most readers will be going to a cemetery to photograph a few gravestones of relatives, not dozens or hundreds. There is one caution I would suggest that he doesn't mention that I learned the hard way: **\*\*\*TRIPLE-CHECK\*\*\* FIND A GRAVE AND BILLION GRAVES FIRST!** Before going to that cemetery I checked FindAGrave. I found TWO entries -- one of which was Abraham Zapruder. And nothing on Billion Graves. I visited about 6 times for 2 hours each and took about 2,000 photos. I also spent several dozen hours organizing and renaming individual images during the week. After doing that I looked up a name on Ancestry to check a middle name and found someone else had photographed 3,500 graves -- including ALL the graves I had photographed except for maybe 10-15 of the most recent. I photographed them with a tablet that didn't have GPS, so Billion Graves won't take them. Find A Grave has strict size limits and if I cropped my images to their size limits they would just be duplicative. I did a lot of "surroundings" shots but I would have to cut all that out. One thing he points out that is particularly important is TIME OF DAY. Photos with the sun in front of you will be pretty much useless. For that reason, in fact overcast days tend to be particularly GOOD as long as they're WHITE overcast not gray bordering-on-rain overcast. Several other things he doesn't mention is BRING SOMETHING WATERPROOF TO KNEEL ON. Even on a bright shiny day there is always the chance that the groundskeepers recently watered the grass or a recent rain left some puddles. Also, BRING SNEAKERS. Areas can sometimes be slippery (especially if grass has recently been watered). Try to wear clothes that cover most of your body, even in summer -- if you spend a couple of hours out in the sun in summer you can get sunburned. Use suntan lotion including on your hands and consider bringing a cap to keep sunlight out of your eyes. Also, bring a fairly large towel (bath size). Moving around from grave to grave, positioning, etc., is a lot more physical than you would think. I'm medium build and do moderate cardio on a regular basis and I was photographing in Dallas in late October and early November (high 50's to mid-60's) in a loose-fitting long-sleeve mock turtleneck cotton workout shirt and sweatpants, but within about a half hour I was sweating enough that the shirt was a bit damp. He also doesn't mention that at least in some cemeteries visitors often put a small stone on the gravestone to memorialize their visit (we're talking small marble size generally). Although few graves have more than 2-3 stones, a few might have 10 or more and they may cover part of the text of an in-ground stone. Although you can rearrange them to show the text, they should be included in any photos. He mentions a common assumption that in the U.S. gravestones generally face East because of a "Judeo-Christian" (his

words) belief that CHRIST will return from the East. Obviously that is not the reason in JEWISH cemeteries. In Judaism there is a tradition of having certain things face TOWARD JERUSALEM. Alternative, they face AWAY FROM Jerusalem so that when someone faces the item the PERSON is facing Jerusalem. For instance, the ark in a synagogue (the cabinet where Torah scrolls are kept) at the back of the pulpit normally faces directly away from Jerusalem, meaning people in the congregation facing the pulpit will be facing Jerusalem.

I found Gravestone Photography and Documentation very helpful. As a family historian my goal is to find my ancestors as well as record all I can about their lives including their final resting place. Clark outlines a clear plan for the cemetery researcher to collect the best information, photographs and then organize and record that info. He also includes tips for a little investigating for the researcher before your cemetery visit. I think this book would be of great advantage to the researcher who is traveling to a distant cemetery allowing the researcher to make the most of a one time visit. I'm sure I will refer back to this book often, in fact before my next cemetery visit. Well worth the price, it's concise and easy to read. You'll finish this in under an hour and learn some useful tips.

Not impressed. It might be okay for the occasional photographer but for someone more serious or who wants to improve their headstone photography or wanting to accurately inventory a cemetery (i.e. create a sexton map) then the book leaves a lot to be desired. Very disappointing.

Very good instructions on locating a cemetery, finding a gravesite, and taking photographs. Very glad I bought this book.

Just got easier after reading Gary's book. I love the idea of the foam core board to use for adjusting the lighting -- what a great idea (and an affordable one). Thanks Gary

Practical, simple and inexpensive tips to get better photos of gravestones. Glad I purchased this book and others same author.

Great tips! Thanks! Can't wait to use the tips especially for the Find a Grave photos! Thank you so much.

great

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