

Tutorial

City of Nashville purchased land for a public cemetery in 1820. Burials began in 1822. The first Interment Book (1822-1845) was lost during the Civil War. Between the years 1846 – 1979, 20,000 burials took place at City Cemetery and were recorded in the Interment Books. Today at City Cemetery there are only 4,000 tombstones. Some tombstones have the names of a married couple or names for many family members. Some graves never had tombstones. Many graves had wooden markers which are long since gone. Stone markers have suffered damage from pollution, weather and time. In 2002, MTSU Geosciences Department was engaged in a comprehensive survey of the existing tombstones, monuments and mausoleums at the cemetery. Each existing marker or structure was identified by an ID Number. In 2005, Section maps, with Tombstone ID Numbers, were completed. In 2005, Nashville City Cemetery Association launched a project to record the inscriptions on all the existing tombstones. In 2016, the survey work was completed. In 2017, final Tombstone Pages, for those markers with illegible inscriptions, were prepared utilizing research documentation available on the City Cemetery website. Transcript of illegible names or dates are typed **in bold** on the Tombstone Pages.

First step in your research. Find out if your ancestor has a Tombstone today.

Home Page. In the heading, click-on Inscriptions and then Alphabetical Listing and then the first letter of your ancestor's last name. When that page comes up, scroll down the names and see if your ancestor is listed. If listed, click-on that name. His/Her Tombstone Page will be shown with Name, Section, ID Number, Tombstone Inscription, Documentation and Photograph of Tombstone. You can print out the Tombstone Page.

To learn more about the location of your ancestor's tombstone, use the Section Number and Lot Number which appear on the Tombstone Page.

Home Page. In the heading, click-on *Resource Maps* and then *1908 Plat Map*. When the 1908 Plat Map comes up, click-on the *Section* where your ancestor was buried. When the Section map comes up, you can see the Lot Numbers. Look for the *Lot* where your ancestor was buried. Click-on this Lot and then click again to enlarge. In this Lot, you will see your ancestor's name and names of other people buried in the lot. If you just see a line drawn and no name above the line, it means the Surveyor could not decipher the inscription during the 1908 survey. Some misspellings of names and dates do appear on these small handwritten records.

Home Page. In the heading, click-on *1908 Plat Map*. The plat is drawn with the 4th Avenue entrance gates in the triangular space at the top. City Avenue runs from the entrance gates to the circle (today in front of the Keeble Building on-site). Notice the names of the avenues on the sides of the Section where your ancestor was buried. If you want to visit the gravesite in the City Cemetery, then you need to print out the 1908 Plat Map and the Section with Lot and Names. Bring these plat maps with you to the cemetery.

Are there errors on tombstones? There are a few errors of names or dates on tombstones. Perhaps the informant gave the stone carver the wrong information. Perhaps the stone carver made a mistake in the carving of the inscription.

What to do if your ancestor does not have a tombstone today?

Your next step is to determine if your ancestor had a tombstone in 1908.

Home Page. In the heading, click-on *Inscriptions* and then *Alphabetical List*.

The first survey of Sections, Lots and Tombstones was conducted in 1908 by F.R.R. Smith, Engineer. From this study, he developed the Alphabetical List of the Dead. Here he listed the Name, Section & Lot and sometimes the Lot owner. If your ancestor is listed in the Alphabetical List of the Dead, make notes of the Section & Lot Numbers. You can now discover the name which was carved on an existent tombstone and recorded in 1908 and as late as 1971. And you can also discover the Section & Lot where that tombstone was located in 1908.

- **Home Page.** In the heading, click-on *Inscriptions* and then *Smith-Acklen Index*. You will find an alphabetical list of all those who had tombstones with legible inscriptions in 1908. Return to *Inscriptions* and check another source. Click-on *Garrett Index* which is an alphabetical list of tombstones surveyed in 1971.
- **Home Page.** In the heading, click-on *Resource Maps* and then *1908 Plat Map*. Use the Section and Lot information that you learned from the Alphabetical List of the Dead. On the 1908 Plat Map, look for the Section. Click-on that Section. Now you can see the numbers on the Lots. Click-on your family lot. Click again to enlarge. You will be able to see the names which were recorded from the tombstones in 1908.

What if your ancestor was not listed in 1909 Alphabetical List of the Dead?

Many people were buried without a tombstone or the tombstone was no longer standing in 1908 or was illegible during the first survey in 1908. Now look at the burial records for your ancestor.

Look at Interments to learn if your ancestor was buried at City Cemetery.

Home Page. In the heading, click-on *Research* and then *Interments*. Scroll down to *CLICK HERE to view the interment records*. When that page comes up, you will see "Find in this dataset." In this search engine, type-in the last name for the person that you are trying to find.

City Cemetery Interment Books (1846-1979) listed the Date of Burial (**not the date of death**), Name, Sex, Race, Age, Residence, Cause of Death, avenue in the cemetery nearest to grave site, Under Remarks, family connections were often mentioned. 50p. or 100p. or 200p. Costs of burial (50 cents, \$1.00 or \$2.00)

If you do not find your ancestor in the Interment Books

Remember in the 19th century, the spelling of names was not as precise as today. In the search engine, try different spellings. On the Interments Page, scroll down to *Alphabetical Listing from Interment Books* to check alternative spellings. If you knew the year and month of the person's death, then look at the *Chronological Listings from Interment Books*.

Obituaries on City Cemetery website

Home Page. In the heading, click-on *Obituary Index (1822-1876)*. Click-on the *Year of Death* of your ancestor. Scroll down to see if there is a death notice on the City Cemetery website. Only a few people had obituaries in the local 19th century newspapers. To look for additional obituaries, you could try newspapers websites on-line.

Special Features on City Cemetery website

[City Cemetery Deed Index, Alphabetical](#)

[African Americans Buried at City Cemetery](#)

[Civil War Interments](#)

[Removal Information](#)

[Cumberland Lodge No. 8. \(Masons\)](#)

[Veterans Buried at City Cemetery](#)

[Specific Terms Definitions ~ Abbreviations in Interments](#)

[Explanations for Entries in Interment Books](#)

[Glossary of Ancient Diseases](#)

[Graveyard Symbolism](#)

Prepared by Fletch Coke. 9-14-2017