

Tutorial

Between 1846-1979, 20,000 burials took place at City Cemetery and were recorded in the Interment Books. Burials began in 1822 but the first Interment Book (1822-1845) was lost during the Civil War. Today at City Cemetery there are only 3,500 tombstones. 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. Even if your ancestor does not have a tombstone today, it is possible to find out if he was buried at City Cemetery and where his grave was located.

In 2002, MTSU Geosciences Department was engaged to develop a comprehensive survey of the existing tombstones at the cemetery. Each tombstone was identified by an ID number. In 2005, Section maps, with Tombstone ID numbers, were completed. In 2014, Metro IT developed the search engine system for the Interment Book records.

Beginning in 2005, Nashville City Cemetery Association has been recording the inscriptions on the existing tombstones. The first step in your research is to find out if your ancestor has a tombstone today.

[Click here for Inscriptions.](#) You will see an Alphabetical Index, click-on the first letter of your ancestor's last name. Now you will see the General Index. Scroll down the names and see if your ancestor is listed. If listed, click-on the name. You will be taken to his/her Tombstone Page with Name, Section number, ID number, tombstone inscription, research resources and photographs of the tombstone. You can print out the Tombstone Page. Look at the Documentation, make a note of the Section number and Lot number as listed on the 1908 Plat map and/or in the 1909 Alphabetical List of the Dead. Now you can look at the 1908 Map to find the location of this tombstone.

Note: On occasion there was an error in the spelling of the name or the dates on a tombstone. Perhaps the informant gave incorrect information to the stone carver. Perhaps the stone carver made a mistake in the carving of the inscription.

Note: When you read "in the 57th Year of His Age" it meant the age that person would have been on his next birthday.

[Click here for 1908 Map.](#) Click to enlarge. Click-on the Section which you want to study. Look for the Lot number. Click-on on the Lot and look for your ancestor's name. Click-on the lot to enlarge.. Now return to the 1908 Plat to determine where this Section is located in the cemetery. Nearby "avenues" are identified. The 1908 Map is drawn with the City Cemetery 4th Avenue entrance gates, between Section 1 and Section 2, at the triangular top.

[Click here for 1908 Inscriptions](#) Engineer Smith surveyed the Sections, Lots and Tombstones in 1908. He also added a few inscriptions in 1911. [Click here for 1911 Supplement.](#) With such an extraordinary endeavor, there were some omissions and some misspellings.

[Click here for Interments](#) (1846-1979) Scroll down to "CLICK HERE to view the Interment Records." To find a name > Go to the search feature in the upper right hand of the screen where you see the magnifying glass. Type-in the last name of your ancestor. ENTER. Everyone with that name in the burial records will come up. Print or copy the entry. Usually burials took place within 3 days of death. If you only want to see one person's record, type-in the last name and the year of death in the search engine box. Only this name, associated with this date, will come up.

Note: Burial date is listed > not the date of death > in Interment Books.

If you do not find your ancestor in the Interment Books, it may be that the last name had a different spelling in the original records. If you know the death date then the burial date will usually be within three days, look at the chronological date index. Also look for your ancestor's name, with a slightly different spelling, in the last name index.

[Click here for chronological data index](#)

or

[Click here for index by last name](#)

[Click here for Lot Cards](#) In the 1970's, the last Sexton at City Cemetery prepared Lot Cards in an attempt to find the name of every person on every lot. Type-in a last name in the search engine box. ENTER. Scroll down and locate the Lot you need to see. Click on that Lot. The Lot Cards can be helpful in determining family members and others on the same lot. The purchase date of the lot and owner is also given. Not every person at City Cemetery has a Lot Card.

[Click here for Obituaries](#) (1822-1876) Click on the Year of Death of your ancestor. Scroll down to see if your ancestor has an obituary and click-on the name if listed. Remember that very few people had death notices in the local 19th century newspapers. Do not be surprised if there is no obituary for your ancestor.

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

This person might have had a tombstone in 1908.

[Click here for the Alphabetical List of the Dead from 1909](#) Use the alphabetical index to see if your ancestor was listed. Click-on, in the range, where the name would be listed. When that page comes up, click-on to enlarge. This list provides the names of all those who had tombstones during the first survey of City Cemetery in 1908. This list will identify the Name, the Section number and the Lot number of those people with tombstones in 1908. If you find the name, write down the Section number and Lot number.

[Click here for 1908 Map](#) If your ancestor was listed in the 1909 Alphabetical List, then look at the 1908 Map to find out the location of his gravesite. Using the Section number from the 1909 Alphabetical list, look at the 1908 Map. Click that Section. Click the Lot number you need. Click to enlarge. You will see the names of all those, in this lot, with legible tombstones in 1908.

[Click here for 1908 Inscriptions](#) If you found your ancestor in the 1909 List, then look at 1908 inscriptions for all the legible tombstones in 1908. Look for your ancestor's name and the inscription. Print or copy the entry.

[Interment Records](#) (1846-1979) Follow the directions given above to access the burial records.

[See above > [Click here for Interments](#) and follow these directions.]

[Click here for Obituaries](#) (1822-1876) Click on the Year of Death of your ancestor. Scroll down to find his/her name. Click-on the name. Remember that few people had death notices in local 19th century newspapers.

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

This meant that no legible tombstone was found for your ancestor during the 1908 Survey. Your ancestor might have been buried at City Cemetery and a tombstone was never placed or was lost over the years. Your best hope will be the Interment Books which listed

everyone buried in City Cemetery from 1846-1979. Remember there are no burial records from 1822 until 1846.

[See above > [Click here for Interments](#) and follow those directions.]

Special Features on City Cemetery website

[Click here for African Americans Buried at City Cemetery](#)

[Click here for Removal Information](#)

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

[Click here for Veterans Buried at City Cemetery](#)

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

[Click here for Explanations for Entries in Interment Books](#)

[Click here for Glossary of Ancient Diseases](#)

[Click here for Graveyard Symbolism](#)

Civil War Burials at City Cemetery

Federal Soldiers. During the Civil War, 3,031 Federal soldiers were buried in the City Cemetery. These soldiers were buried by W.R. Cornelius, local undertaker, who was under contract with the Federal Army. During the war the Federal Army purchased additional acres nearby for U.S. Burial Grounds Due West and U.S. Burial Grounds Southwest where almost 8, 000 soldiers were buried. On the military service record for Death and Burial of Federal soldiers, all three of these cemeteries were called "City Cemetery" and grave numbers were given. After the war, the Federal Government made every effort to rebury Federal Soldiers from private graveyards, church yards, farms, battlefield sites into the new National cemeteries. Between October 1867 and January 1868, the Federal Government disinterred and reburied the soldiers from the City Cemetery and the two U.S. Burial Grounds to Nashville National Cemetery. Today there are only a few Federal soldiers buried in private lots in the City Cemetery. Visit the Nashville National Cemetery website. Also visit TSLA website for Federal Civil War Burial Sheets of those reinterred at the Nashville National Cemetery.

Confederate Soldiers. During the Civil War, it has been estimated that there were 800 CSA soldiers buried at City Cemetery. In 1870, these soldiers were disinterred and reburied in the Confederate Circle at Mt. Olivet Cemetery. The reburial records have been lost.

Prepared by Fletch Coke. August 8, 2015