



Girl Scouts of South Jersey Pines

Exploring Old Cemeteries

Purpose: To promote a favorable attitude toward caring for graveyards and the history contained in them.

A note to leaders and parents: Graveyards are a valuable resource for learning about environments of the past. Early graveyards may be explored to give girls a sense of the richness of the past; modern cemeteries may be used for comparison purposes, and as an indicator of a source of history for the future.

Many old cemeteries dot the landscape in overgrown and forgotten locations. New Jersey offers many outstanding examples of graveyards with historical significance, and many local graveyards will pre-date the Revolutionary War. By checking with the local historical society you can determine where in your area the oldest graveyards exist.

This patch was designed for Junior Girl Scouts (ages 9-12). Brownie Girl Scouts may earn this patch if their leader feels that they are capable of meeting the starred(*) requirements.

Junior Girl Scouts must choose at least six (6) requirements in addition to the starred (*) requirements.

*1. Gravestones are one of the few remaining objects which people who lived 100 or more years ago would recognize if they were able to revisit the communities in which they once lived. With your troop visit an old graveyard in your community, make gravestone rubbings, or take photographs to record inscriptions and decorative designs etched in stone. (this can be accomplished by the use of a crayon or dark pencil and brown wrapping paper or cut up paper bags. Aluminum foil can also be used to get an imprint of the writing on the stone.)

*2. During a troop meeting discuss the educational value of visiting graveyards and the importance of headstones in our history.

3. Use with familiarity the following terms: graveyard, memorial, headstone, plot, engraving, inscription, epitaph, marker

4. Treat with respect memorials that record life and death. Gain permission to have a clean-up campaign in a local graveyard. Clean up refuse, rake up leaves and branches.
5. Graveyards honor the dead and teach the living. Hold an UNEXPECTED TREASURE HUNT, with your patrol or team locate the following in a local graveyard. The site of the oldest headstone, the latest death, the shortest life, the longest life for a man, woman, metal markers, and veterans. Compare your findings with members of your troop.
6. During a troop meeting design a map of a local graveyard highlighting the spots listed in requirements #5.
7. Design a memorial which you would like on your own grave. Draw it and explain at the bottom of the drawing the meaning of the symbols you used.
8. With your troop design a collage using the stone rubbings you have collected.
9. Discover locally prominent and recurring family names in two different cemeteries and record the data found by note-taking or rubbings.
10. Keep a list of occupations you have discovered people had from either their names or epitaph.
11. Compare early quarrying and stone shaping methods to modern methods by inviting a local retailer who deals in markers and monuments to your troop meeting or visit their place of work with your troop. Discover what early stones were made of, where they were made, and by whom. Compare this to today's method.
12. Write a report on genealogy and the importance of family history and record keeping.

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