

Preparation Suggestions for Cemetery Stories Program

Grade 2

- If you have sufficient chaperones, divide the students into smaller groups and assign an adult to work with each one. We suggest one chaperone for every six students.
- **Do** prepare the class. Discuss possible fears or anxieties. Be aware of any recent deaths in students' families.
- **Do** set clear guidelines for appropriate behavior: no running, no wandering off without an adult, no leaning on or pushing stones, fences or monuments. Remind students that the cemetery is a place of respect for the dead.
- **Don't** allow students to sit or lean against monuments. Many are unstable and extremely dangerous if toppled!
- **Do** remind students to dress appropriately. In cold weather, wear layered clothing, long pants, socks or tights, sturdy shoes, etc. Sneakers or boots are best, as grass, moisture and uneven ground may make walking difficult in the cemetery.
- **Do** leave the cemetery in a better condition than you found it.
- **If the weather is dry enough** we will do some gravestone rubbings in groups. We will **not** have time for students to do individual rubbings.
- Please review "Gravestone Rubbing for Beginners" (available on the School Programs page of the Geneva Historical Society's website, www.genevahistoricalsociety.com). You may wish to have the students practice on some items in the classroom or school, such as leaves, coins, brick walls, signs, etc.
- The Historical Society will supply all materials for rubbings at the cemetery.
- If the weather is too poor to take your class to the cemetery, please call the Society at 315-789-5151 and we will try to reschedule.

Pre Visit Activities

Activity 1: What is a Cemetery?

Before visiting the cemetery, it is a good idea to discuss with the children what a cemetery is and why you are visiting it. Some questions to discuss are:

- What is a cemetery?
- What does a cemetery make you think of?
- Has anyone ever been to a cemetery? What for?
- Can anyone name a cemetery that they have visited or heard of before?
- What do cemeteries look like?

Activity 2: What is a Symbol?

Discuss what a symbol is. The American Flag is a good starting point. You may wish to review "Symbolism in The Carvings on Old Gravestones," which lists the symbols found in American cemeteries in the 1700s and 1800s, and discuss what some look like, so that students will have an easier time recognizing them on the trip. Symbols common to 19th-century cemeteries are the weeping willow, crosses, angels, birds, lambs, broken branches or columns, garlands, drapery, and the anchor.