

Talking Tombstones: Arizona's Past

Grade Levels: Elementary (3rd through 6th)

Historical Era: Territorial Arizona and Early Prescott History

Content Areas: Territorial Arizona History, Civics/Government, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Art

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Materials: digital camera, copied photographs, butcher paper 12x18, crayons or pastel oil crayons, foam board

Resources: Libraries, Internet, Historic Societies General Information on Sharlot Mabridth Hall buried in the Pioneer Cemetery can be found on our web site at: [www; sharlot.org](http://www.sharlot.org). and the Library and Archives link: Sharlot Hall: Arizona's Curator. The Citizens Cemetery book; Gravestones chronically local figures can be purchased at the Sharlot Hall Museum Bashford House gift store. Visit The Sharlot Hall Research/Archives web site to access the Yavapai County Cemetery database and Arizona Gravestones.org where you will find digital images. Early city maps with residency lots and building landmarks can be found in our map collection. Digital images of early Prescott homes are available in our Buildings Collection. You can also visit the Museum library to research documents first hand.

Summary and Objective

Students will read about individuals buried at the local cemeteries before taking a field trip to the Citizens and/or Pioneer Cemeteries. Students will experience a concrete sense of history and time, enhancing the learning process through objects such as gravestones. Students will also learn about early Prescott history and historic key figures utilizing alternative sources and learning methods. Recognizing and using primary and secondary sources.

Rubbings and written findings will complete the exercise.

Lesson Plan

1. Pre activity: Expose students to information about local historic figures using the publication: Gravestones and the various resources listed above.

2. The teacher will have 2 copied photographs of each of the gravestones that students will later visit. Students will match photos to familiarize themselves. Similar to the game concentration, photos can also be mounted on cardboard and played accordingly with names attached.

3. The class will travel to the nearby local graveyard. Students will participate in a scavenger hunt, using the pictures above. Students will match the picture with the gravestone while working in small groups of 2 to 4. Students will read pre prepared texts from the book on the intended figure provided by the teacher. Make sure you have plenty of adult supervision and guidance.

4. Gather as a class and present your find to the larger group as you tour each site. What else can you learn about the individual by reading the stones? Stones can tell the age of an individual, possible cause of death depending on other factors, relationships with other family members, and occupation. Stones can act as clues to life situations promoting further discussions beyond mere facts.

5. Students will do gravestone rubbings with adult supervision, pending permission from the City of Prescott. Contact Nancy Burgess in Historic Preservation.

6. Write an obituary for the individual using the epitaph and information found in the Gravestone book. (3rd graders) Older students will do additional studies into historic figures as well.

7. Students will display rubbings with accompanying written obituary, biography, gravestone photo and for older students, any additional researched photographs featuring activities or home sites attached to the person selected. Display work at school in rows like tombstones or better yet, mount rubbing on foam board with accompanying material

Additional Activity: Grave yard setting- Students can dress up in costumes depicting their historic figure, while telling passing spectators about themselves. This can be presented either in the first person or third person. Activity can also be presented in play format on a stage for the school at large. Try these additional activities in October!

Note* Out of town schools can utilize local cemeteries and Arizona figures to learn more about their local history and territorial development.