

Gravemarkers vs. Burial Records: Grieving Families vs. Sleeping Clerksⁱ

In spite of being at the periphery of genealogical searches, most of us who have conducted cemetery and gravemarker research for any length of time have established friendly and mutually respectful contact with local genealogists. While our two types of research differ vastly on focus, we researchers eventually converge at cemeteries.ⁱⁱ

Several prominent genealogists have recognized this convergence.ⁱⁱⁱ In his popular introduction to genealogical research, How To Find Your Family Roots, for example, William Latham refers to cemeteries as “genealogies written in stone” (79). Emily Groom’s detailed reference, The Genealogist’s Companion and Sourcebook, includes a one-page mention of cemeteries as one of many “local sources” (83-84). More to the point, Val Greenwood actually combines cemeteries and burial records into a 10-page discussion entitled “Cemetery and Burial Records” in The Researchers Guide to American Genealogy, 3rd Edition (611-21). Finally, Arlene Eakle and John Cerny’s mammoth publication, The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy, places cemetery research high in the priority of sources. In chapter 2, “Vital Records and Cemetery Research,” Eakle even warns of the pitfalls in both burial records and markers:

Entries in the burial registers are chronological as the funerals occurred. If the register notes which plot the person was buried in, you can sometimes deduce relationship, a valuable clue since tombstones may have been destroyed or never placed on the grave, women’s maiden names are often not recorded, and children may not have been mentioned in previous records (61).

In her remarkably concise introduction to genealogical research, Dorothy Sargent, does not mention cemeteries, but she does introduce the major documentation sources available to researchers: birth (including stillbirth, delayed, and established birth) records, marriage records (including certificates, applications, and licenses), divorce records, death records, obituaries, tax lists, school censuses, land (jurors, and voters) lists, military discharge certificates, local veterans information, living wills, powers of attorney, professional licenses, farmers’ brands, criminal and civil court records, probate packets, and burial (including burial transmittal)records (chapter 2).

Among these documents, the latter (the burial records) provide the major documental tie between genealogists and other gravemarker researchers. In this essay I compare data found on select markers^{iv} with their corresponding burial records.^v The comparison should help both of genealogists and gravemarker researchers understand our shared archive, the cemetery. Specifically, I will compare select markers in the Dignowity Cemetery, part of the city cemetery complex near downtown San Antonio, with each marker's corresponding burial record.

Dignowity Cemetery has about 200 markers. I chose 39 markers for this study—the 39 that could be read with unambiguous clarity. By “unambiguous clarity” I mean that letters such as “C” and “G” are clearly distinguishable, as well as numbers such as “3” and “8.” These 39 markers memorialize 49 people, although (as we will discuss below) one person is memorialized with two different markers. My intent is to use the markers as the reference point and the burial records as complementary (or secondary) data sources.

Dignowity Cemetery, San Antonio, Texas

Directly east of downtown San Antonio, within sight of the skyline, is a cluster of 33 cemeteries, owned and maintained by the city. One of the two oldest cemeteries is Dignowity. In an undated city document, *Condensed Report The Eastside Cemetery District: Where San Antonio History Lives*, a brief history of Dignowity reads in part:

Dignowity is a small portion of a tract of land purchased by Dr. Anthony Michael Dignowity (1810-1875) from the City of San Antonio in 1855 and known as Dignowity Hill. The earliest observed grave marker dates to 1871 and was for a member of the Dignowity family; therefore, it appears that the cemetery was established c. 1871 by the Dignowity family. Anthony Michael Dignowity was a prominent physician in early San Antonio and is said to have been the first Czech to come to the city. He developed the neighborhood known as Dignowity Hill, immediately north of the cemetery. His wife, Amanda McCann Dignowity, was an early pioneer of San Antonio who contributed much to its social and artistic life. On March 17, 1947, the

cemetery was designated to the City of San Antonio and the city became responsible for its maintenance (39).^{vi}

In 2000, the Junior League of San Antonio initiated a volunteer project to restore the burial records for the City Cemeteries. All existing burial records, including those from Dignowity, have been stored in the San Jose Burial Park, under the supervision of the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department. All readable records were copied by hand on 3”x5” cards (see Figure 1), and the copies then deposited in the Texana/Genealogy section of the

NAME:		PAGE
AGE:		
DATE OF DEATH		
CEMETERY		
GRAVE:	LOT:	SECTION:
REMARKS:		
COLOR		M S D W
NATIVITY		
FUNERAL DIRECTOR		

Figure 1: Format of Junior League Project burial records

San Antonio Central Library. At present the staff of the Texana/Genealogy section are keying the data onto computers.^{vii}

Most burial records contain only names, date of death, Dignowity Cemetery, grave/lot/section^{viii}, and the presence or absence of a marker. If a marker does exist, the word PAGE in the upper right corner will be crossed out and the word MARKER hand written above it. If no marker exists, the word PAGE will have nothing written by it. (At times, a page number is written, but neither the library staff nor I know what the page numbers refer to.) After the word REMARKS, the name of the owner of the lot and/or the place of birth will be written. Only a few of the burial records will include the names of funeral directors; even fewer will include marital status or “nativity” or skin color (and then only if “white”).

In the cemetery itself, most markers duplicate the burial records’ name of the deceased and the date of death. Markers vary considerably, but in addition they may provide new information: birth dates, kinship ties, places of birth and of death, occupations, lodge and religious affiliations, personalized and/or stylized epitaphs, and ethnic languages.^{ix}

Birth Dates

Four gravemarkers, two with single burials and two with double burials, aptly demonstrate the appearance of birth dates.

Mary C. Dignowity's burial record states that she has a marker, located in the Dignowity lot, and that she died April 5, 1858. Her marker agrees, giving the identical death date. In addition, the marker displays the *birth date* with redundant confirmation: *aged 3 years, 5 months, and 25 days*.

MARY C. DIGNOWITY
 BORN
 Oct. 10, 1854
 DIED
 Apr. 5, 1858
 AGED
 3 Yrs. 5Mo'S, & 25 D'S

Anthony and Mary K. Dignowity share a marker. Anthony Francis Dignowity's burial record states that his marker is in the Dignowity lot and that he died August 16, 1921.

Mary Katherine Dignowity has two burial records. One states that her marker is in the Dignowity lot and that she died on October 22nd, 1953. The second record omits her middle name, using only the initial "K"—Mary K. Dignowity. Instead of stating whether or not she has a marker, someone wrote in "page 14." Any document that contains a page 14 has disappeared. The librarians and I assume, however, that the page number refers either to her first burial record or to Anthony's burial record. Porter Loring Funeral Home conducted her funeral. In addition we learn much about Katherine herself: she died at the age of 86, was female, white, a widow, and a native Texan.

The shared marker states that Anthony was born January 4, 1844 and that Katherine was born Sept. 30, 1867 (pinning down the precise date while agreeing with the burial record comment that she died at the age of 86). Neither the burial records nor the marker explain why they share the marker—even though she was born 23 years later than he was and died 32 years later than he did.

DIGNOWITY	
ANTHONY FRANCIS	MARY KATHERINE
BORN	BORN
Jan. 4, 1844	Sept 30, 1867
DIED	DIED
Aug. 16, 1921	Oct. 22, 1953

Two infants, Myrtle Bell and J.B. Hudson also share a marker. The marker agrees with the death dates given on both burial records and agrees that he (we assume “he”) was referred to as J.B. and that she was “Myrtle.” The marker also tells us that her middle name was “Bell” and that both Myrtle and J.B. died in the same years that they were born, she in 1879 and he two years later, in 1881. Both burial records indicate that Myrtle and J.B. have markers, but do not give the lot name.

Myrtle Bell Hudson
BORN
1879.
DIED
1879
* * *
J.B. Hudson
BORN
1881
DIED
1881

Both Ned and Nina McIlhenney have interesting burial records. Ned’s data refer to a missing “page 20” in response to the presence or absence of a marker; give his death date as April 4, 1955, his age at death as 92; and tell us that he was a white, male, Texan.

Nina J. Botts’ data refer to a missing “page 282” in regard to the marker; give her death date as May 19, 1949; her age at death as 85; that the funeral director was “McCullen”; and that she was a married, white, female from Missouri.

Ned and Nina J. (the “Botts” information is missing) share a marker that agrees with the burial records and on the years of death age at death. (Ned was roughly 92; Nina roughly 86.)

McILHENNY	
NED	NINA J.
1862—1955	1863—1949

Kinship

On each of the three shared gravemarkers above the family relationship between the people being memorialized is not explicit. Anthony and Mary Dignowity were born 23 years

apart and buried 31 years apart. Most of us have inferred that they are father and daughter. We have also inferred that Myrtle and J.B Hudson are siblings and that Ned and Nina McIlhenny are husband and wife.

Many markers, fortunately, inscribe family relationships, removing the need for inference. Five of the Dignowity Cemetery markers illustrate these kinship references. Note that all nine people memorialized on these five markers also have their birth dates inscribed.

Bertha L. Sanders' burial record states only that she died May 15, 1918. Her marker agrees with that death date, but adds her birth date and the kinship inscription "Mother." The record does not state whether or not she has a marker.

MOTHER
BERTHA L. SANDERS
APRIL 22, 1854 MAY 15, 1918

Immediately to the right of Bertha's marker, George W. Sanders' marker agrees with his burial record on name and death date—an that he has a marker. In addition, his marker adds his birth date and the kinship inscription "Father."

FATHER
GEO. W. SANDERS
NOV. 27, 1851 JUNE 24, 1921

Papa and Mama Seffel have unique data in that neither the burial records nor the Seffels' shared marker include any given names: the kinship terms, in effect, serve as given names. Both Papa's and Mama's burial records indicate that each has a marker located in the "Edward Seffel Lot"—the records do not indicate that they share one marker. We can only conjecture whether or not "Papa" and "Edward" are the same person. The death dates on the marker and on the burial records agree. The burial records have no birth dates; the marker has birth dates for both Papa and Mama.

SEFFEL
PAPA MAMA
1869—1941 1871—1960

The Uhl marker memorializes three family members: Father, Mother, and Baby.

Father, Earl W., has two burial records. One of Earl W.'s burial records indicates that his marker can be found the "B. Breeding Lot." The second, considerably more complete, burial

record adds a middle name, William, instead of only the initial “W.” That second record also gives a precise death date, Nov. 11, 195 (not just 1956) and tells us that Earl was 69 years old when he died, an age that agrees with the 1887 birth date given on the marker. In addition that second burial record indicates that Earl was white, married, a native Texan.

Mother, Rubey, has one burial record, but an attached note reads “Buried on the Breeding Lot of which 1/3 belongs to the Uhl Family.” Rubey does, according to the burial record, have a marker. The marker and the burial record give conflicting spellings of her name, however. On the marker her name is written “Rubey M.”; on the burial record her name is written “Ruby M.” The burial record also indicates that Ruby has a marker in the B Breeding Lot and gives a burial date, 1973, that agrees with the data on the marker. The burial record has no age nor birth date.

Baby, Patton Allan, has a death date inscribed on the marker that agrees with the date on his burial record. On the burial record, however, his second name is spelled with an “e”, Allen, not with an “a,” Allan, as is on the marker. His burial record indicates that Allen/Allan has a marker in the B. Breeding Lot; it does not indicate that marker is shared with his father and mother. The burial record does not indicate birth date or age at death.

	UHL	
FATHER	BABY	MOTHER
1887—1956	1922—1923	1894—1973

Gustav B. Seffel and Anna J. Seffel, identified as Our Son and Our Daughter, respectively, share a marker. Both of the burial records indicate that each has a marker (no indication that it is shared) located in the Anton Seffel Lot (not the Edward Seffel Lot used by “Papa” and “Mama,” discussed above.) Gustav’s death date on the burial record and on the marker agree; Anna’s burial record has no death date. The marker gives birth dates for both Gustav and Anna; the burial records have no birth dates nor ages at time of death.

Our Son
 GUSTAV B.
 SEFFEL
 BORN
 Jan. 3, 1876
 DIED
 May 9, 1876
 * * *
 Our Daughter
 ANNA J.
 SEFFEL
 BORN
 Apr. 9, 1877
 DIED
 Jan. 14, 1890

Birth Place

In addition to date of birth, four of the markers indicate the places of birth. Burial records confirm one of those places.

The marker of Anthony Michael Dignowity—the man who started the cemetery—was born in Küttenberg, Bohemia. He died April 22, 1875 at the age of 65 years, 3 months, and 6 days. Quite interestingly, Anthony has no burial record.

ANTHONY MICHAEL
 DIGNOWITY
 BORN
In Küttenberg Bohemia
 Jan. 16, 1810
 DIED
 Apr. 22, 1875
 AGED
 65 Yr's. 3 Mo's & 6 D's
 DIGNOWITY

Walter Jordan has two burial records. The first one indicates that he has a marker in the E.F. Jordan Lot and that he died March 18, 1912. The second record gives a page number, 295, for information regarding a marker but indicates that L.T. Walters was that funeral director and that Walter was buried in the Dignowity Cemetery; after the name Dignowity, however, a variant spelling, *Dingueta*, is placed in parenthesis. Walter's death date is give as March 20, 1912, not March 18, as indicated in the first burial record. The second record identifies Walter as a married white male born in England 58 years before his death.

Walter's marker agrees with his burial records in regard to the spelling of his name. His death date agrees with the March 18, 1912, date—not the March 20 date. The marker inscription

tells us that he was born in Birmingham, England, on Sept. 2, 1859. That information agrees with the second burial record, that his birthplace was in England. If, however, Walter was born on Sept. 2, 1859 he would be 53 on his death date of March 18 (or 20), 1912—not 58.

Walter Jordan shares a marker with Sophia Jordan, born February 20, 1862 and died March 12, 1938. Sophia's burial records indicate that her marker is also in the E.F. Jordan Lot, but does not indicate that it is a shared marker. Her burial record death date agrees with the death date on the marker. The record has no indication of birth date or age at death. Nor do we know her place of birth.

Since neither the burial records nor the marker indicate the relationship between Jordan and Sophia, we infer the default relationship as husband and wife.

WALTER JORDAN
Born in Birmingham England
 Sept. 2, 1859
 Died Mar. 18, 1912
 * * *
 SOPHIA JORDAN
 Born Feb. 20, 1862
 Died Mar. 12, 1938
 JORDAN

J. W. Schuwirth's marker has name, death date, birth date, and place of birth. He has no burial record.

J.W.
 SCHUWIRTH
 BORN
 Jan. 9, 1829
 IN BRACHELN GERMANY
 DIED
 July 11, 1902

James McGavock Hamilton has the same basic information as does J.W. Schuwirth: name, death date, birth date, and place of birth. James's burial record indicates that his marker is located in the Hamilton Lot. The burial record has a different spelling for McGavack (with a final "a" instead of an "o"), but it does agree with the death date. The burial record says nothing about age at death, nor about James' birthplace.

JAMES McGAVOCK
 HAMILTON
 BORN
 IN RUTHERFORD CO.
 TENN.
 Dec. 24, 1841
 DIED
 April 8, 1893

Death Place

One other person, Ella Moss DuVal, has her birth place (St. Louis, Missouri) inscribed on her marker. In addition she has her death place (Lafayette Louisiana). Her burial record indicates that her marker is located in the DuVal Lot. Both the burial record and the marker agree on date of death. The burial record does not indicate Ella's age at death; the marker indicates that she was born August 20, 1843.

ELLA MOSS
 DUVAL
 BORN
 AUG. 20, 1843
 IN
 Lafayette La.
 DIED
 JUNE 4, 1911
 St. Louis Mo.

Occupation/Title

Three of the forty-five markers chosen for this comparison of markers and burial records illustrate the occasional reference to the deceased's occupation.

Edward Sullivan has a 10"x10" Los Angeles Fireman's badge etched into his smooth brown granite marker. Inside the badge itself is his identification number: 1941. Edward also has his birth date and death date inscribed on the marker. He has no burial record.

EDWARD DEWITT SULLIVAN
 OCT. 11, [*badge*] APR. 1
 1914 LAFD 1998
 1941

We know that both John Hines and Thomas Chew were doctors, because both have DR. inscribed before their names, on their respective markers. We have no idea, however, what type of doctor: medical, dental, or educational.

John Hines has only his name written on his burial record (no title). The burial record, however, does indicate that he has a marker. The record also gives both his birth date and his death date—which agree with the dates on the marker itself.

DR. JOHN F. HINES
1851—1933

Thomas R. Chew's burial record indicates that his marker is in the Chew Lot and that he died March 31, 1891. The record has no title before his name. Both the name and the death date on the actual agree with the data on the burial record. The marker, however, does include the title before his name. In addition, the marker includes his birth date—as well as his precise age at the time of death.

DR. THOMAS
R. CHEW
BORN
FEB. 22, 1826
DIED
MAR. 31, 1891
AGED 65 YRS.
1 MO. & 9 DAYS

Lodge/Religious Affiliation

Five of the markers have logos or icons indicating lodge or religious affiliations of the persons being memorialized. Wm. Purkiss was a Mason, P.J. Immicke and Russell Hoefling subscribed to the Woodsmen of the World death/burial insurance fraternity, while M.G. and R.G. Nixon were Christians. In all five cases, easily identifiable figures were etched onto the markers.

Wm. Purkiss's marker has the Masonic emblem engraved at the top of his marker. In addition to having his death date, the marker has his birth date—and place of birth; and his occupation is hinted at with the title "Capt." William shares his marker with Mary Jane Batey. We know Mary Jane is his wife because the kinship term is included. The marker also includes her death date as well as birth date—and place of birth.

William's burial record indicates that his marker is in the William Purkiss Lot. The record, unfortunately, has his birth date written down as his death date. No other information is written on the burial record. Mary Batey's burial record uses a different spelling for her middle name, *Jayne* instead of *Jane*. The death date agrees with the date on the marker. Her marker is

located in the William Purkiss Lot. Nothing indicates that it is a shared marker. No other information exists on the burial record.

[Masonic Lodge logo]
 CAPT. WM. PURKISS
 Born in England 1824
 Died May 21, 1891
 * * *

MARY JANYE BATEY
 Wife of Wm. Purkiss
 Born in Setauket L.I.N.Y.
 Mar. 29, 1832
 Died June 28, 1916
 PURKISS

Both P.J. Immicke and Russell Hoefling have burial records that contain their names and their death dates, and indicate that they have markers. Their cemetery markers agree on names and death dates. In addition each marker, carved to look like a huge tree trunk, has the large, easily recognizable Woodsmen of the World logo inscribed at the time. Each marker also indicates dates of birth.

*[Woodsmen of the World
 Memorial logo]*
 P.J. IMMICKE
 SEPT. 29, 1861
 JAN. 18, 1915

*[Woodsmen of the World
 Memorial logo]*
 RUSSELL FRANK
 HOEFLING
 MAY 1, 1896
 MAR. 4, 1917

In like manner both M.G. and R.G. Nixon have identical, yet small, markers lying side by side—each with the Protestant Christian bare cross engraved at the top. Both of their burial records include their death dates and indicate the presence of markers. On the both cemetery markers, birth dates and kinship terms are also engraved. The only discrepancy lies in R.G.'s death date: both agree that he died on December 31st; the marker, however, indicates that the year was 1903, while the burial records indicate 1909.

[bare cross]
 M.G. NIXON
 APR. 2, 1834
 APR. 15, 1895
 MOTHER

[bare cross]
 R.G. NIXON
 DEC. 25, 1833
 DEC. 31, 1909
 FATHER

Personalized Epitaphs

Another marker has the Woodsmen of the World logo engraved on it, but I have chosen to place its discussion in a separate category because the marker contains the only personalized epitaph among the 39 chosen for this study.^x Her burial record indicates that she died on August 28, 1919 and that she has a marker. The cemetery marker agrees with the death date, but also indicates her birth date.

HOGAN
*[in memoriam
 woodsmen circle
 logo]*
 RUTH M. HOGAN
 AUG. 15, 1893
 AUG. 28, 1918
*A smile, which passed, which filled our home
 with light. A soul whose beauty made that
 smile so bright.*

Stylized Epitaphs

Six markers have stylized epitaphs—epitaphs that can be found listed in marker catalogues. Three markers have secular epitaphs; and three have religious epitaphs.

“In Loving Memory” is engraved at the top of the shared Teele marker and at the bottom of the shared Hitchcock marker.

The burial records of both Edward and Ellen Teele give their names, death dates, and indicate that each has a marker. The marker itself agrees with the spelling of both Edward and Ellen and agrees with their death dates. In addition, the marker indicates both birth dates, Edward’s and Ellen’s.

In Loving Memory of
 EDWARD L. TEELE
 Born July 20, 1828
 Died March 17, 1901
 * * *
 ELLEN C. TEELE
 Born May 8, 1833
 Died Aug. 30, 1916
 TEELE

The burial records for James and Mary Hitchcock also indicate names, death dates, and the presence of markers (not that it is shared) located in the Hitchcock Lot. The marker itself agrees with the spelling of given names and with the death dates. In addition the marker indicates birth dates, birth places, and kinship terms for both James and Mary.

HITCHCOCK	
FATHER	MOTHER
JAMES	MARY A.
MAR. 20, 1841	APRIL 9, 1845
DEVONSHIRE, ENGLAND	TAUNTON, ENGLAND
MAR. 16, 1910	MAY 14, 1931
IN LOVING MEMORY	

The third stylized epitaph consists of the phrase “His Life Was An Example To All,” located at the bottom of Edmund Bonsal’s marker. The marker also indicates Edmund’s death date and age at death. His burial record agrees with the date and indicates that he has a marker. Edmund’s name in the burial record, however, is given as Edmund C. *Bonsan*—not *Bonsal*.

EDMUND C. BONSALE
DIED
MAR. 4, 1908
AGED 69 YRS.
* * *
HIS LIFE WAS AN EXAMPLE TO ALL.

The first of the four religious epitaphs, “I am the resurrection and the life,” is engraved at the top of Laura Maverick’s marker. In addition the marker contains Laura’s death date, her birth date, and a kinship term. She has no burial record.

I AM THE RESURRECTION.
LAURA B.
WIFE OF
GEORGE V. MAVERICK
1885—1913

The second of the stylized religious epitaphs is inscribed below the surname on the Durand marker, shared by James and Dolores. In addition the marker indicates death and birth dates of both people. James’s burial record indicates that he has a marker. It also includes both *birth date* and death date. The rare addition of the birth date is offset by the fact that Dolores has no burial record.

JAMES D.
 July 3, 1915
 May 20, 1975

DOLORES E.
 Jan. 9, 1917
 Sept. 15, 1988

DURAND
Thy Will Be Done O Lord

The last two stylized religious epitaphs are inscribed on the marker shared by Clarence and Pinkie Jane McNeil. James has a different epitaph, “I know that my redeemer liveth,” than Pinkie Jane’s “Well done, good and faithful servant.” The marker also includes death dates, birth dates, and kinship terms for both people. James’s burial record indicates that he has a marker and both James’ name and death date agree with the marker. Pinkie Jane’s burial record also indicates that she has a marker and gives her name and death date. The death date, however, disagrees with the month of her death—indicating that she died *March 7, 1947* instead of the marker’s inscription that she died *May 7, 1947*.

M^CNEIL

Father
 CLARENCE W.
 Dec. 31, 1868
 July 23, 1909
*I know that my
 Redeemer liveth.*

Mother
 PINKIE JANE
 Sept. 19, 1865
 Mar. 7, 1947
*Well done, good
 and faithful servant*

Language

In a previous publications (Baird 1992, 1997) I presented evidence that Texas markers have data inscribed not only in various recognized languages but also in various mixed-code languages. Dignowity cemetery has three mixed-code German/English markers. The burial records for all three people memorialized on these markers are written in English.

Addie Ancker’s marker appears on the surface to be written in English. A close look at the death date and the birth date, however, clearly show that the months and the dates are separated by the German *period* instead of the English *comma*. Her burial record does use the English conventional punctuation for the death date (the birth date not given). The burial record does indicated the presence of a marker. In addition to the name, death date, and birth date, the marker also has a kinship term—incorporated within a stylized epitaph.

In Memory of
 my beloved Wife
 ADDIE ANCKER
 BORN
 OCT. 20.1865
 SEPT.27.1892
 * * *

A Faithful Loving Wife

On the surface, Stephan Dauenhauer's and Elise Daunhauer's markers appear to be written in German—at the opposite extreme of the mixed-code found on Addie Ancker's marker.

In addition to his name, Stephan's marker includes his death date (March 4, 1823), his birth date (June 15, 1904), a kinship term (Father), and a stylized epitaph (Here Rests). People familiar with German conventions, however, will not that both dates are written in the English order, month-day-year, not the German order day-month-year. Stephan's burial record, written in English, agrees with the spelling of his name. It also indicates that he has a marker—and agrees with the death date.

HIER RUHT
 STEPHAN
 DAUENHAUER
 GEB.
 MÄRZ 4, 1823
 GEST.
 JUNI 15. 1904
 VATER

Elise Dauenhauer's marker appears to be written in German, but, like her husband's marker, the dates follow the English month-date-year sequence. The marker has her name, the death date (December 31, 1899), the birth date (March 22, 1824), a kinship reference (Wife of S. Dauenhauer), and the same stylized epitaph (Here Rests). Her burial record indicates that she has a marker and the burial record agrees with the death date. Elise's name on the burial record, however, is spelled *Elsie*. No other information is written on the burial record.

HIER RUHT
 ELISE
 GATTIN VON
 S. DAUENHAUER
 GEB.
 MAR 22, 1824;
 GEST.
 DEZ.31.1899
 MUTTER

Addendum city cemetery #1

I have to turn to the other old cemetery in the City Cemetery complex, City Cemetery #1, to find one more illustration of the types of information one might find on gravemarkers.

Dignowity has examples of names, death dates, birth dates, kinship terms, and personalized epitaphs (the five elements of the universal discourse of grief) as well as birth place, death place, occupation, lodge/religious affiliation, stylized epitaph, and various language codes. Dignowity cemetery, however, does not have an example of an extended personalized epitaph.

In City Cemetery #1, only one block south of Dignowity Cemetery, lie two markers for a contemporary of the Michael Anthony Dignowity—Jack Harris. The conventional marker for Jack has straightforward, universal information, name, death date, birth date, and a kinship reference (amusing though it be).

D. A. (JACK)
HARRIS
BORN 1834
JULY 11, 1882
A SINGLE MAN

Next to the marker, however, is a separate memorial containing the fifth element of the universal discourse of grief—the personalized epitaph. In this case, however, the personalized epitaph has expanded to the extent that it has become a separate memorial. The memorial, moreover, was not erected until a hundred years after Jack's death.

D.A. (JACK) HARRIS
1834-1882

JACK HARRIS WAS BORN IN CONNECTICUT IN 1834 AND RAN AWAY TO SEA AT THE AGE OF 12. IN 1856 HE WAS A MEMBER OF WILLIAM WALKER'S NICARAGUA EXPEDITION WHERE HE WAS CAPTURED AND PUT IN FRONT OF A FIRING SQUAD BEFORE BEING RESCUED BY WALKER. HARRIS ESCAPED TO TEXAS AND IN 1860 HE JOINED THE POLICE FORCE OF SAN ANTONIO. HE SERVED WITH THE CONFEDERACY DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND RETURNED TO SAN ANATONIO AND THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

IN 1868 HE AND POLICE CAPTAIN PENALOZA STARTED A SALOON ON MAARKET STREET. IN 1872 HARRIS OPENED THE JACK HARRIS BAR AND BILLIAR ROOM ON MAIN PLAZA AT SOLEDAD AND COMMERCE STREETS. THE NAME SWAS CHANGED

TO JACK HARRIS VAUDEVILLE THEATRE AND SALOON THREE YEARS LATER.

HARRIS HEADED THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN SAN ANTONIO AND DICTATED WHO RAN FOR OFFICE IN CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT FOR AMNY YEARS. HE ALSO REIGNED SUPREME OVER THE “SPORTING COMMUNITY.”

HARRIS WAS SHOT IN THE VAUDEVILLE THEATRE ON JULY 11, 1882, BY BEN THOMPSON, CITY MARSHALL OF AUSTIN, AS A RESULT OF ARGUMENTS OVER A GAMBLING DEBT TWO YEARS EARLIER. AT JACK HARRIS’ FUNERAL ON JULY 12, 1882, THERE WERE 47 CAARRIAGES IN THE PROCESSION OUT EAST COMMERCE STREET. HE DIED A SINGLE MAN AT THE AGE OF 48.

THE NOTORIETY OF HIS THEATRE, WHICH REACHED THE FRONT PAGE OF THE “THE NEW YORK TIMES,” IS BELIEVED TO HAVE POPULARIZED THE TERM “VAUDEVILL” FOR VARIETY THEATERS IN THE UNITED STATES.

This marker was erected on the centennial of the shooting of Jack Harris, through the efforts of the “Friends of Jack Harris” committee and the contributions of the citizens of San Antonio, July 11, 1982.

Stories

One appeal of either markers or burial records lies in the stories that their data can elicit. One side of the tall obelisk Thomson marker, for example, memorializes Janet Aitchison. Her burial record indicates that she has a marker in the Thompson [note spelling difference] Lot and that she died October 27, 1892. The opposite side of the obelisk memorializes Patrick and Janet (no last name). A single burial record does tell us that “Patrick and Janet” have the Thomson surname; that they have a marker in the Thompson [note spelling] Lot and that they also died in 1892 (the same year as Janet Aitchison). The marker adds more information: Janet was born in 1863 in Scotland and she was the wife of (no first name) Thomson. She has a secular stylized epitaph over her name.

In memory of
My beloved wife
JANET ELIZABETH
AITCHISON
* * *
BORN
NOV. 3, 1863
In Aberdeenshire, Scotland
DIED
OCT. 27, 1892
THOMSON

In addition, the marker data indicate that Patrick and Janet were born and died October 11, 1892.

PATRICK & JANET
BORN and DIED
OCT. 1. 1892

One story that emerges from these data is that Janet Elizabeth Aitchison [Thomson], like her contemporary Mary Jane Batey [Purkiss], discussed above retained their maiden names on both their markers and their burial records long before the feminist movement would have brought attention to such a practice. The practice of these two women maintaining their maiden names adds to the image of frontier women being fiercely independent.

A second possible story is that Janet, who was 29 (almost 30) years at the time died only two weeks after the death (and we presume the birth) date of fraternal twins, one of whom was named after her. One can conjecture that all three deaths were caused by the birth of the twins.

Three different markers indicate another interesting story. You may recall that in the discussion of secular stylized epitaphs, above, that Edmund Bonsal died in 1908 at the age of 69. Two years later, Frank Bonsal Grice died at the age of 23. You may also recall that Edmund's burial record had his surname written as *Bonsan*. Frank's burial record has the same difference in spelling: Frank *Bonsan* Grice. The burial record also indicates the August 25, 1910 death date.

Frank has two markers. One includes his name, death date, a kinship term, and a secular stylized epitaph.

FRANK BONSALE GRICE
IDOLIZED SON & HUSBAND
TO KNOW HIM WAS TO
LOVE HIM
DIED AUG 25, 1910

The second marker also has his name, death date, and kinship term. It does not have an epitaph of any kind, but it does add his age.

FRANK BONSAI GRICE
 DIED
 AUG. 25, 1910
 AGED 23 Yrs.
 * * *
 ONLY SON OF
 FRANK & ISABEL GRICE

Note that the kinship terms differ: on one marker he is an “idolized” son & husband; on the other marker no mention is made of his marital status—he is the “only” son. Note also that Frank’s father is also Frank, not Edmund.

A third marker adds one other bit of intriguing information: Frank may have been the only son, but he had at least one sister—Mildred, *daughter of Frank & Isabel Grice*. Mildred’s

MILDRED
 GRICE WOOD
 DAU OF
 FRANK & ISABEL
 GRICE
 WIFE OF
 MORRIS WOOD

Marker consists, in fact, only of her name and two kinship terms: daughter and wife. It has no death date, nor birth date. Her burial record does give her death date as October 18, 1918—eight years after her brother Frank.

The stories inferred from these three markers vary, of course. For starters, however, we see a familiar story of a family that consists of at one son and at least one daughter, both of whom were married. They were all buried in the same cemetery, indicating a closeness. The son, however, appears to be favorite of the parents. Figuring out why the favorite has two markers, of course, leads to the story: in their grief did a very close family forget to include the entire family in his kinship reference, or did the family have enough discordance that the parents and the wife needed to memorialize his life on two different markers? And why did poor Mildred not have a death date on her marker?

One last marker raises one of those teasingly questions about kinship—unresolved because no kinship terminology exists on the shared marker. My quick guess would make Anna

BARBARA
SEFFEL
BORN
Mar. 13, 1805
DIED
Jan.15.1879
* * *
ANNA
SEFFEL
BORN
Dec.7, 1831
DIED
Oct. 7, 1880

the daughter of Barbara. Their separate burial records indicate contain only their names, death dates, and that each has a marker. The story that emerges, however, emerges from the burial records. Barbara and Anna consist of only two of 36 different Seffel burial records. One can only guess at the number of Seffel's that is buried in Dignowity, when you consider all of the possible number of Seffel women who married and assumed their husband's names.

So What?

We have now come full circle, back to our original problem: what types of information do markers provide that burial records do not; what types of information do burial records provide that markers do not. The marker inscriptions of fifty-one people buried in the Dignowity cemetery clearly demonstrate that the thirty-six markers provide much more information than do the burial records (Figure 2). That is not to say, however, that the burial records have no use. The burial records, in fact, do provide

*	More birth dates	21/6 (and in agreement)
*	More family relationships	16/3
*	Shared markers	14/0
*	Epitaphs	12/0
*	More Birth (and death) places	12/4 (one shared)
*	Lodge/Religious Affiliations	06/0
*	Occupations/Titles	04/0
*	Non-English language code	03/0
*	Dual markers for one individual	00/1

Figure 2: Information That Dominates Markers

additional information (Figure 3). That information as important and insightful as it is for genealogists, however, provides little insight into the interpretation of the material

*	Names under which burial lots were registered	16/0
*	Color	05/0
*	Funeral Directors	03/0
*	Alternative name for cemetery (Dinguata)	01/0

Figure 3: Information That Dominates Burial Records

anthropological data that cemeteries provide. In addition the two data sources in the Dignowity study complement each other. The markers added month and date to two death dates and to two birth dates; the death records added month and date to six death dates.

Finally, Figure 4 illustrates the comparison of the data found on the two types of sources.

*	46 people memorialized on markers, no death records for 5
*	36 markers, no recognition on 3 death records
*	Agree on spelling of 44 names; disagree on 7
*	Agree on death dates of 43; disagree on 8
*	Agree on 4 ages at death; disagree on 1

Figure 4: Comparing data

These data differ just enough to justify the title of this article. Grieving families overlook details and make mistakes, as do sleeping clerks. The “mistakes” cause no concern to linguists, who study language as it is used, not as it should be used. The mistakes cause our genealogist friends much concern.

NOTES

ⁱ A paper presented at the Cemeteries and Gravemarkers Section of the American Culture Association 24th Annual Conference, March 16, 2002, Toronto, Canada. My thanks go to Joe Edgette, chair of the Cemeteries and Gravemarkers Section; to the members in attendance at the session for their enthusiastic response and; and to my wife who attended the session and contributed to the transliteration from the slide-and-talk presentation to this hardcopy version.

ⁱⁱ I am personally indebted to the members of the Los Bexarenos Genealogical Society of San Antonio, Texas, whose two-volume census of San Fernando Cemetery No. 1 has provided rich material for my own work. (See especially Baird Affirmation – Philadelphia and Census Chicago)

ⁱⁱⁱ I thank Frank Faulkner, Manager of the Texana/Genealogy section of the San Antonio Public Library, for suggesting these four basic genealogy books.

^{iv} I use the term MARKER instead of GRAVE MARKER, following the convention of both the Association for Gravestone Studies and the Permanent Cemeteries and Gravemarkers Section of the American Culture Association.

^v I am grateful to Maria Pfeiffer, official historian for the City Parks and Recreation Department, for bringing the two data sources and their interesting discrepancies to my attention.

^{vi} Victor, Sally S., Larry D. Dodge, Nanas, Volkman, Tere O'Connell, & Carol Jordan. *The Eastside Cemetery District: where San Antonio History Lives*. San Antonio: San Saba Printing

^{vii} I am especially grateful to Manager Frank Faulkner and librarian Debbie Countess for not only making these as yet unprocessed data available for research, but helping me cut to the quick, as it were, to the Dignowity data, hidden among all of the other cemetery data.

^{viii} Two maps of the Dignowity cemetery, one more complete than the other, lie among other City Cemetery maps, in the map files of the San Antonio Central Library's Texana/Genealogy section. The coordinates given on the cards agree with coordinates on these two maps.

^{ix} In previous publications I have argued that five of these bits of information appear in a predictable and universal (across all languages) discourse of grief. Specifically, if a marker has a personalized epitaph, ninety percent of the time it will also have kinship terms, date of birth (or age), date of death, and the name of the deceased. If a marker has a kinship term, but no personalized epitaph, ninety percent of the time it will have date of birth (or age), date of death, and the name. If a marker has no kinship term, but it does have a birthrate, it will have no personalized epitaph, either—but it will have date of birth, date of death, and name. All markers, unless damaged, will have at least the name of the deceased. (See Baird two *Markers* articles.)

^x The marker, you may notice, breaks the sequence discussed in endnote viii. I have argued that in ninety percent of the cases, if a marker has a personalized epitaph it will also have kinship terms. Ruth Hogan's marker belongs to the ten percent: it does not have any kinship term.

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