



# BACK TO THE PAST

**SUBJECTS:** Social Studies, Math, English/Language Arts, Arts and Humanities, Health, Physical Education

**GRADES:** 6-8

**DURATION:** One 3 to 3 1/2 hour time period

**GROUP SIZE:** One classroom of 25-35 students (or less)

**SETTING:** Outdoors

**KEY VOCABULARY:** Community, headstones, footstones, tombstones, epitaph, veteran

**ANTICIPATORY SET:** Today we are going to explore one of the cemeteries located in Mammoth Cave National Park. What information can we collect from a cemetery? Note: This lesson could also take place in a cemetery located in the community where your school is located.

**OBJECTIVES:** The students will be able to: 1) work productively in small groups to survey tombstones; 2) analyze the data collected from the tombstones and draw conclusions about the people who once lived in the community.

**MATERIALS:** Cemetery Survey Activity Sheets, clipboards, pencils/pens.

**BACKGROUND:** Within the park boundaries, there are over 100 cemeteries scattered across the land. Today these cemeteries hold valuable information about the communities and families who lived on the land that is now Mammoth Cave National Park. When we think of a cemetery we usually picture it near a church or in a specific place in a community. But if there are over 100 cemeteries, obviously they could not all be connected to a church or a community. Many of these graveyards are small family cemeteries ranging from as few as two graves to a hundred or more grave sites.

There are three church buildings that still exist within the park boundaries. The three churches are Joppa Missionary Baptist Church established in 1862, Mammoth Cave Baptist Church established in 1827, and Good Spring United Baptist Church established in 1842. These churches were the center of community life until the 1930's when several thousand acres of land was acquired to form Mammoth Cave National Park. Today, these churches are still used on occasion by local citizens for celebrations including weddings, funerals, family reunions, and Decoration Day\*. All three churches are on the National Register of Historic Places and are maintained by the National Park Service and church members. There are still burials in these cemeteries on a regular basis.

*\* Decoration Day is usually on or near the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. On this Sunday relatives of the deceased place flowers on graves to decorate the graves of ancestors, family members, or friends.*



# BACK TO THE PAST

## PROCEDURE:

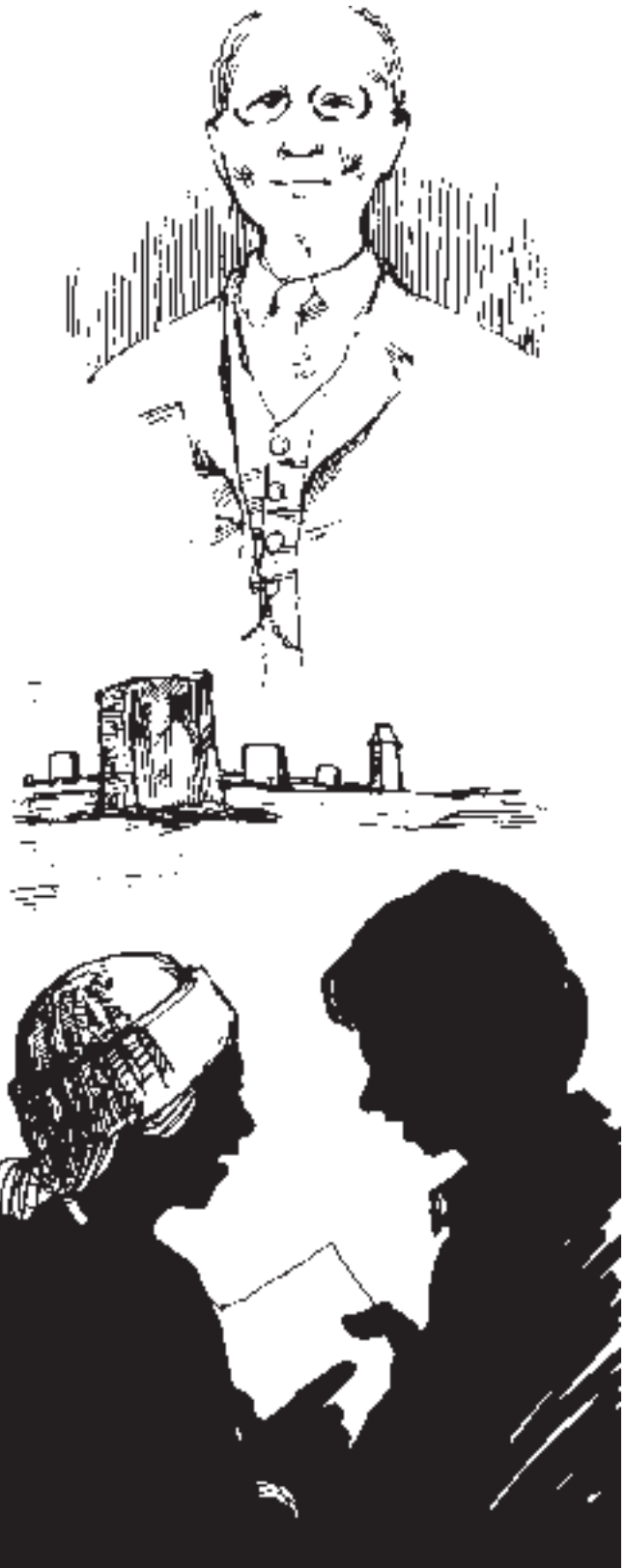
1. The class reviews and discusses proper behavior when entering a cemetery. The teacher reminds the students that they are in a special place. They need to show respect for the people buried and for the families represented in the cemetery.
2. The class travels to one of the cemeteries in the park or to a cemetery located within their school community.
3. The teacher places the students in small groups (2-4 students). Each group is given a Cemetery Survey Activity Sheet.
4. The groups are given five to ten minutes to locate a gravesite that catches their interest.
5. After completing the Cemetery Survey Activity Sheet, the groups gather and discuss their answers.

**CLOSURE:** We have visited a cemetery and collected information about people who once made up a community. This lesson has given us clues to the past. We also have a greater understanding of the hardships that some of our ancestors had to endure to survive the harsh conditions of early settlements in this part of Kentucky.

**EVALUATION:** The teacher is able to evaluate the students during the activity, class discussions, and by reading their activity sheets.

## EXTENSIONS:

1. Have students write a story about the life of the person buried at the site they visited.
2. Invite someone from your local historical society to visit your classroom and talk to the students about the early settlement of your community.
3. Have students investigate their own family tree or visit where their ancestors are buried.



---

# BACK TO THE PAST

---

## CEMETERY SURVEY ACTIVITY

Name of Cemetery: \_\_\_\_\_



### *Headstone Information*

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Born: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Epitaph(s) or Inscription(s) on Headstone:  
If more than one inscription please number each one.

Is there a symbol or etching on the headstone?  
Describe and/or draw the symbol or etching here:

---

# BACK TO THE PAST

---

## CEMETERY SURVEY ACTIVITY (PAGE 2)

Age at death: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this person still alive? Yes  No

Were they a veteran? Yes  No

Can you tell from the tombstone if they were in the military during a war? Yes  No

If so, which war?

Is their military rank evident and if so what was it?

Was this person married? Yes  No

Does the inscription indicate how long the person was married and/or when they were married?

Did they or their spouse die first?

Did they have children? Yes  No  If so, can you distinguish how many?

Did they or their child (children) die first?

Can you tell from the inscription or etching anything about their occupation or hobbies?

Are there other interesting facts? If so, please describe below.

Do their families still visit the grave site? Yes  No  How can you tell?

---

From the information on this headstone, what do you know about this person's life? Tell how you came to the conclusion you did about this person.



---

# BACK TO THE PAST

## CORE CONTENT

---

- MA-M-1.3.3** How operations (addition and subtraction; multiplication and division; squaring and taking the square root of a number) are inversely related.
- MA-M-1.2.2** Compute (e.g., estimate, use pencil and paper, use calculator, round, use mental math) large and small quantities and check for reasonable and appropriate computational results.
- MA-M-1.2.1** Add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers (fractions, decimals, percents, integers) to solve problems.
- PL-M-2.3.2** Rules of behavior and fair play (e.g., accepting authoritative decisions, assessing one's own performance level, accepting skills and abilities of others through verbal and nonverbal actions for spectators and/or participants) during games are necessary.
- SS-M-4.4.3** The natural resources of a place or region impact its political, social, and economic development.
- SS-M-4.3.2** Human populations may change and/or migrate because of factors such as war, famine, disease, economic opportunity, and technology.
- SS-M-4.3.1** Human settlement develops in different ways based on the culture and needs of settlers.
- SS-M-4.2.2** Places and regions change over time as new technologies, resources, and knowledge become available.
- SS-M-4.2.1** Places can be made distinctive by human activities (e.g., building houses, stores, roads, railroads, irrigation) that alter physical features.
- SS-M-4.1.2** Different factors (e.g., rivers, dams, developments) affect where human activities are located and how land is used in urban, rural, and suburban areas.
- SS-M-2.3.1** Various human needs are met through interaction in and among social institutions and groups (e.g., family, schools, teams, clubs, religious groups, governments).
- WR-M-1.4** Transactive writing is informative/persuasive writing that presents ideas and information for authentic audiences to accomplish realistic purposes like those students will encounter in their lives. In transactive writing, students will write in a variety of forms such as the following:
- letters
  - speeches
  - editorials
  - articles in magazines, academic journals, newspapers
  - proposals
  - brochures
  - other kinds of practical/workplace writing.
- Characteristics of transactive writing may include :
- text and language features of the selected form
  - information to engage/orient the reader to clarify and justify purposes
  - ideas which communicate the specific purpose for the intended audience
  - explanation and support to help the reader understand the author's purpose
  - well-organized idea development and support (e.g., facts, examples, reasons, comparisons, anecdotes, descriptive detail, charts, diagrams, photos/pictures) to accomplish a specific purpose
  - effective conclusions.