

Oakland Cemetery Field Trip Guide for Grades K-5

Dear Educators,

Welcome to Historic Oakland Cemetery! We are honored to introduce you and your students to Oakland Cemetery, one of Atlanta's oldest cultural and historic sites. Oakland Cemetery is the final resting place for more than 70,000 souls, including many Atlanta founders and noted citizens of Georgia. Every visit to this garden cemetery provides opportunities to learn about the historic past, be inspired by an outdoor gallery of Victorian art and architecture, and enjoy the picturesque views of Atlanta's oldest city park.

During your field trip, an experienced docent will lead you and your students through the cemetery's original six acres, the African American Grounds, Jewish sections, Confederate Memorial Grounds, and other burial areas. The rich and fascinating history of Atlanta will be revealed as tour groups progress through the cemetery. Students will discover that the celebrated and humble rest together at Oakland. Tycoon and pauper, black and white, powerful and meek, soldier and civilian—they are all here.

In the following pages, you will find an introduction to Oakland Cemetery, guidelines regarding your visit, and pre and post-visit activities designed to extend the learning experience. These activities and reflection questions will encourage creativity, engage critical thinking skills, and create opportunities for dialogue. The educational activities correspond to Georgia Performance Standards and Common Core State Standards. By participating in educational activities and exploring the historic landscape of Oakland Cemetery, students will be encouraged to forge connections between the past and the present.

We look forward to your visit!

The Historic Oakland Foundation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Field Trip Guidelines | 1 |
| About Historic Oakland Cemetery | 2 |
| Reflection Questions | 3 |
| Post-Visit Activities | 4 |
| Appendix | 7 |

FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES

Reservations: All field trip requests must be made in advance through Marcy Breffle, Historic Oakland Foundation Education Coordinator.

Tour Payment: A \$30.00 deposit is required for group tours. Please mail a check within two weeks of making the reservation. The tour is confirmed when the deposit is received. The deposit is refundable if cancelled one week (five business days) before the tour date.

Tour Prices
Students: \$6.00
Adults: \$12.00

Final payment is due at the start of the tour and based on the total number of attendees. Please advise if the total number attending will differ substantially from the number reserved. Payment with one check or by credit card is preferred. For payment in cash, we request the group leader collect the correct amount from all participants at the start of the tour. There is a \$50.00 minimum fee for a group tour. *Tour proceeds support the mission of the Historic Oakland Foundation.*

Parking: Parking is available inside the cemetery or in the parking lot outside of the front gates.

- ❖ School buses and other oversized vehicles are not permitted inside the cemetery gates. Please unload and reload passengers outside the gates and park on Oakland Avenue, MLK, or in the lot across from the front gates.
- ❖ Parking inside the cemetery gates is extremely limited. Carpooling is encouraged.
- ❖ Inside the cemetery, please park on the asphalt and to the side to allow other cars to pass. No parking is allowed on brick walkways or grass.

Tour Basics

- ❖ Tours are approximately 90 minutes in length. Please let the Education Coordinator know if you wish to change the tour length or focus on a particular subject.
- ❖ Please arrive at least ten minutes prior to the start time of your tour.
- ❖ Stick to the walkways and roads. Many of the retaining walls are over 100 years old, and were constructed with heavy stones.
- ❖ Stone rubbings are prohibited due to the fragile nature and age of the markers.
- ❖ This is an outdoor walking tour. Please plan accordingly for weather conditions and wear comfortable shoes.
- ❖ Damage to any aspect of the historic site becomes the liability of the individual (s) responsible. Should they be minors, the liability rests with the parent or guardian.

School Groups

- ❖ One adult must accompany every 10 children (no exceptions). Chaperones should be instructed to spread out throughout the group and be responsible for each student's compliance with the rules and instructions given by the tour guide. Please inform all chaperones of the guidelines prior to arriving at Oakland.
- ❖ **Ask questions, be inspired, and have fun!**

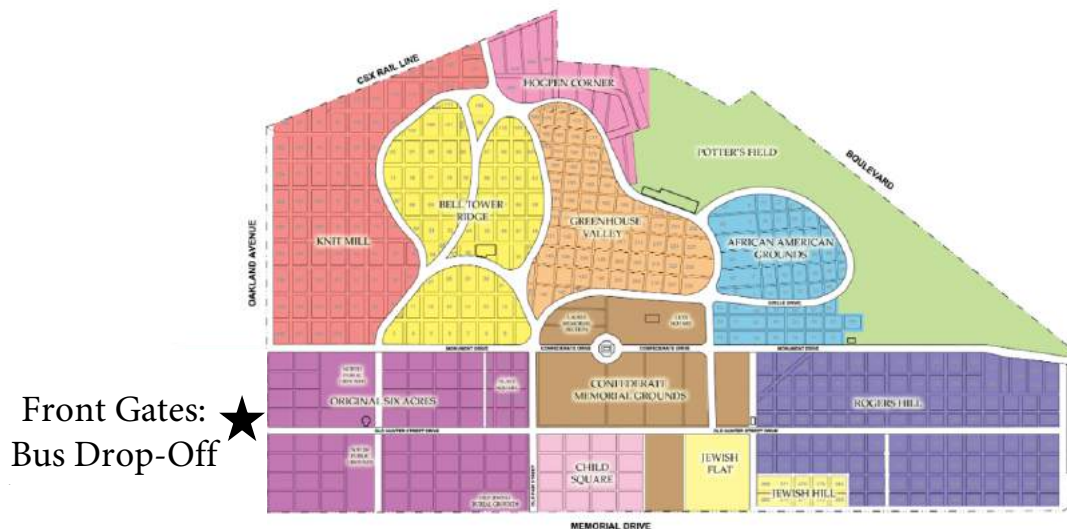
ABOUT HISTORIC OAKLAND CEMETERY

Founded in 1850 by the City of Atlanta, Historic Oakland Cemetery was established when a small downtown graveyard proved to be insufficient for the city's growing population. Originally known as "Atlanta Cemetery," the six-acre green space eventually grew to approximately 48 acres. The cemetery reflects the diverse historical development of Atlanta; noted Georgians are buried next to ordinary citizens, former slaves have been laid to rest across from Confederate soldiers, and men and women transcend the social barriers of life to coexist in death.

Oakland may be the city's oldest public park and a local historic site, but it is also nationally significant as a garden cemetery. Made popular in the nineteenth century, the garden cemetery developed to meet the demands for both urban recreation areas and burial space. With naturalistic views and a landscape full of Victorian art and architecture, Oakland Cemetery is a unique cultural resource.

Oakland Cemetery is divided into several distinct character areas. Each character area provides insight into the social customs of past cultures and the daily distinctions of life that have been maintained in death. These character areas include the cemetery's original six acres, the Confederate Memorial Grounds, the African American Grounds, Potter's Field, the Jewish Flat and Hill sections, and other burial areas.

Once considered to be a rural outpost, Oakland Cemetery is now located in the heart of Atlanta. The City maintains the cemetery through a partnership with the Historic Oakland Foundation, a non-profit "friends of Oakland" organization founded in 1976. The Historic Oakland Foundation works to preserve, restore, enhance, and share the cemetery with Atlantans and visitors alike. Thousands of visitors come to Oakland Cemetery every year for recreation, research, and to learn more about Atlanta's rich history. Both a vibrant public park and a treasured historic resource, Oakland Cemetery is a unique site where visitors can honor Atlanta's past and celebrate its future.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Pre-Visit Discussion Questions

- ❖ What is the role of a cemetery?
- ❖ What can Oakland Cemetery tell us about the growth of Atlanta?
- ❖ How do different cultures honor the dead? Provide examples.

During your field trip, an experienced docent will lead you and your students through the cemetery's original six acres, the African American Grounds, Jewish sections, Confederate Memorial Grounds, and other burial areas. The following questions might be posed to students during their tour.

- ❖ How do grave markers, burial location, or burial styles reveal the customs or culture of the dead? Provide examples.
- ❖ How did the Victorians convey messages about the dead?
- ❖ What are some of the separate sections of Oakland Cemetery? Why would people be buried in different parts of the cemetery?

Post-Visit Discussion Questions

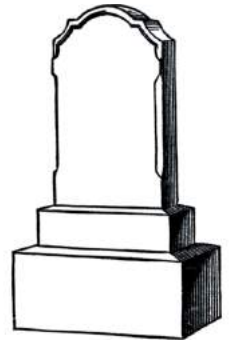
- ❖ What did you learn about the story of Atlanta by visiting Oakland Cemetery?
- ❖ Why is Oakland Cemetery a historic site?
- ❖ What can Oakland Cemetery teach us about the history of Atlanta?
- ❖ What was your favorite part about visiting Oakland Cemetery? What did you learn?

POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Epitaphs: A Dialogue with the Dead

Often inscribed on gravestones or memorial plaques, an epitaph is a short text that honors a deceased person. Epitaphs establish a continuing dialogue between the dead and the living. An epitaph can include biographical information, historical references, warnings, testimonies, words of comfort and hope, or prayers. A good epitaph can capture the essence of a personality. It can give insight into the life of an individual or convey the feelings of those who knew them best. Cryptic epitaphs leave more to the imagination. Several examples of Oakland epitaphs are below:

- ❖ Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr. (1938-2003)
“Mayor of Atlanta, 1990-1994 and 1974-1982
Vice Mayor, 1970-1974
A servant devoted to his family and friends and to the politics of inclusion for all Atlantans.”
- ❖ Dorothy Louise Copeland Connally (1896-1977)
“Her strength flowed from her beauty, intellect, and faith.”
- ❖ Captain A.H. Benning (1840-1904)
“The sailor has returned home, from over life’s sea, and entered his last port, heaven.”



For this activity, students will write their own epitaph. Students should consider how they would want to be remembered a hundred years from now. If a student is uncomfortable with writing their own epitaph, they can choose another historical figure or literary character to memorialize.

Resident Research

Oakland Cemetery is the final resting place for more than 70,000 people, including many Atlanta pioneers, noted Georgians, and city residents. For this activity, students will pick a resident of Oakland to research. Using primary and secondary sources, students will create a project that will tell the story of their resident. Students should draw from a variety of sources and provide citations. A few example projects are listed below.

- ❖ Write a one-page essay about the resident and how they are historically significant.
- ❖ Write a song or rap about the resident.
- ❖ Create a comic book about the resident.
- ❖ Complete the *Resident Review* activity.
 - ❖ Students will choose a resident of Oakland Cemetery to research using primary and secondary sources. Students should formulate questions and identify keywords to guide their research. They should consider the following questions:

- ❖ Who is this person?
- ❖ When/where was this person born and die?
- ❖ Why is this person significant or what were his/her major contributions?
- ❖ What facts did you find interesting about this person?
- ❖ Students will pick a significant moment of their resident’s life to describe. For example, a student who is researching Margaret Mitchell might choose the night of the *Gone with the Wind* premiere in Atlanta. Other examples include Mayor Maynard Jackson at the moment Atlanta was announced as the host of the 1996 Summer Olympics, Joel Hurt building Atlanta’s first skyscraper, or a Civil War soldier going into battle.
- ❖ Students will use the blank body template to draw their interpretation of their resident. They should consider the resident’s physical features and clothing style.
- ❖ Students will imagine that they are the resident character during this moment of significance and complete the following questions:
 - ❖ What am I thinking?
 - ❖ What am I feeling?
 - ❖ Where am I going?
 - ❖ What am I doing?

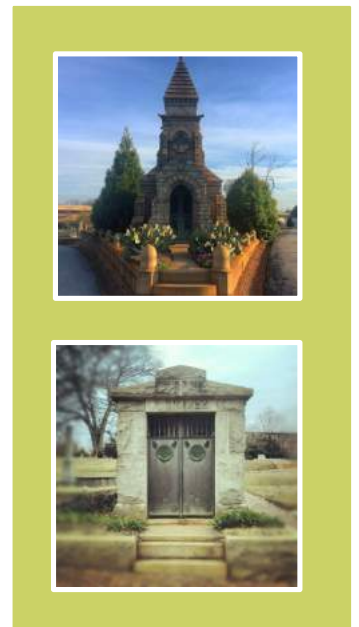
*The *Resident Review* template can be found in the **Appendix**.

Design-A-Mausoleum

With fifty-five mausoleums located on its grounds, Oakland Cemetery is considered an outdoor gallery of Victorian architecture. A mausoleum is a free-standing building constructed as a tomb or burial chamber. The tradition of mausoleums dates back to ancient times. Mausoleums often serve as monuments and can reflect the social status, wealth, or power of the departed. These above-ground buildings can be simple or covered in decoration. Many mausoleums illustrate the trends of American architecture, including Classical Revival, Gothic Revival, Eclectic, and Romanesque Revival styles.

In this activity, students will become Oakland architects and design a mausoleum. The mausoleum can be for the student, a family member, a celebrity, a historical figure, or a literary character.

* The *Design-A-Mausoleum* template can be found in the **Appendix**.



The Power of Flowers

Oakland Cemetery is often viewed as a green oasis located in the heart of downtown Atlanta. Timeless gardens, flowering shrubs, and dozens of different tree species occupy the historic landscape of this rural garden cemetery. Many of the plants found on the grounds are based on historic records and plants inventories from centuries past.

In memorializing their dead, the Victorians would often decorate gravestones with images and symbols to convey their feelings about the recently departed. This use of symbolism extended to plants and flowers. Rosemary would be planted for remembrance, cedar trees to represent a long life, weeping willows for sorrow, and ivy to indicate eternal friendship.

While visiting Oakland Cemetery, ask students to take note of the different plants, flowers, and trees they find. Students can then research the plants and create a brochure to highlight Oakland Cemetery's botanical life. The brochure should include drawn images, facts, and information about the symbolism of the identified plants.



APPENDIX

Georgia Performance Standards

While participating in a school tour of Oakland Cemetery, students will gain a sense of the development of Atlanta, the state, and the American South. The following performance standards will be addressed:

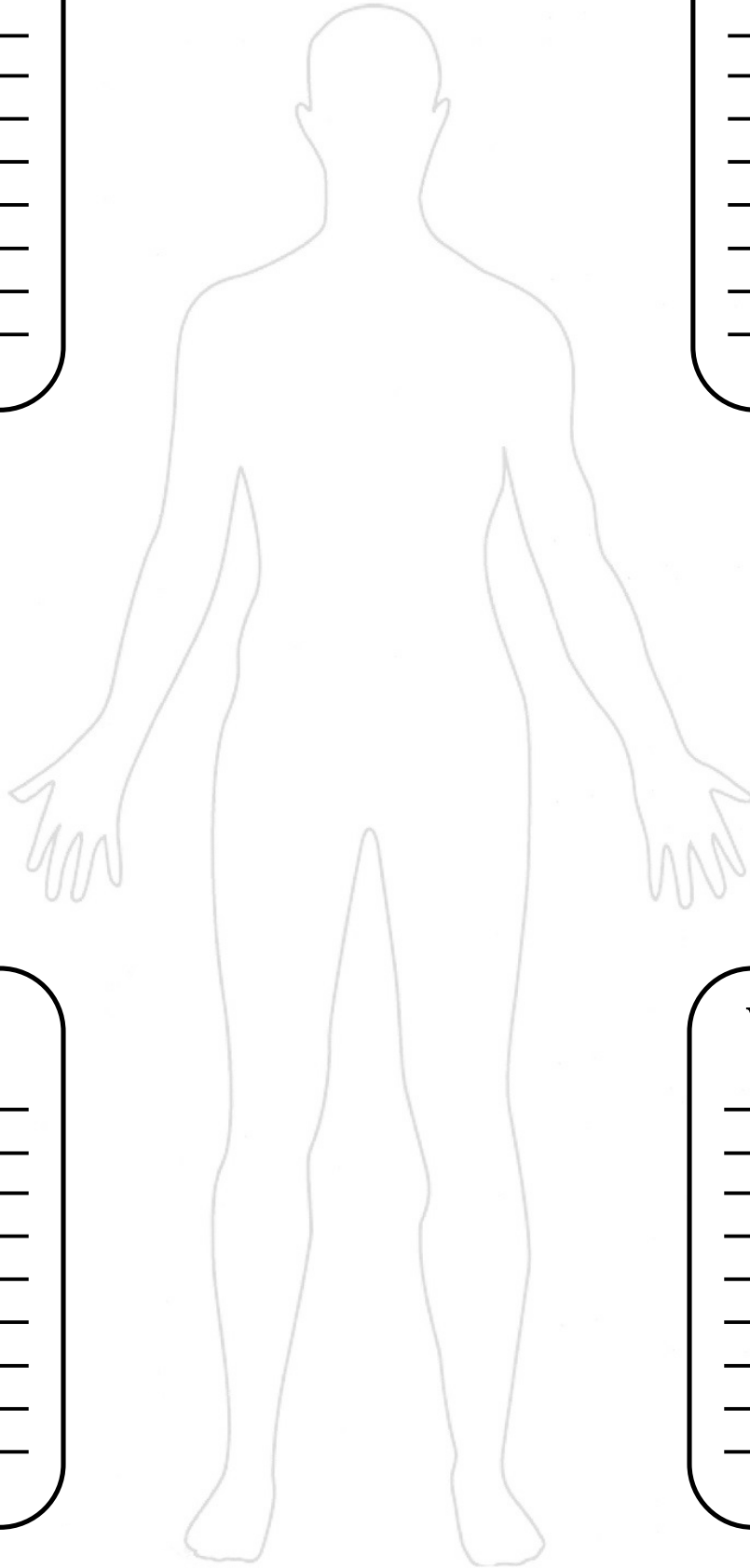
- ❖ K-5 EU: The student will understand that where people live matters.
- ❖ K-5 EU: The student will understand that because people cannot have everything they want, they have to make choices.
- ❖ K-5 EU: The student will understand that some things will change over time while other things will stay the same.
- ❖ SS5H1: The student will explain the causes, major events, and consequences of the Civil War.
- ❖ SS5H2: The student will analyze the effects of Reconstruction on American life.
- ❖ SS5G2: The student will explain the reasons for the spatial patterns of economic activities.

Post-Visit Activities and Corresponding Common Core Standards

- ❖ ELACC5W1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
- ❖ ELACC5W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas
- ❖ ELACC5W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- ❖ ELACC5W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in Standards 1–3 above.)
- ❖ ELACC5W7: Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- ❖ ELACC5W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- ❖ ELACC5SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- ❖ ELACC5SL2: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- ❖ ELACC5SL3: Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.
- ❖ ELACC5SL4: Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

What am I thinking?

How am I feeling?



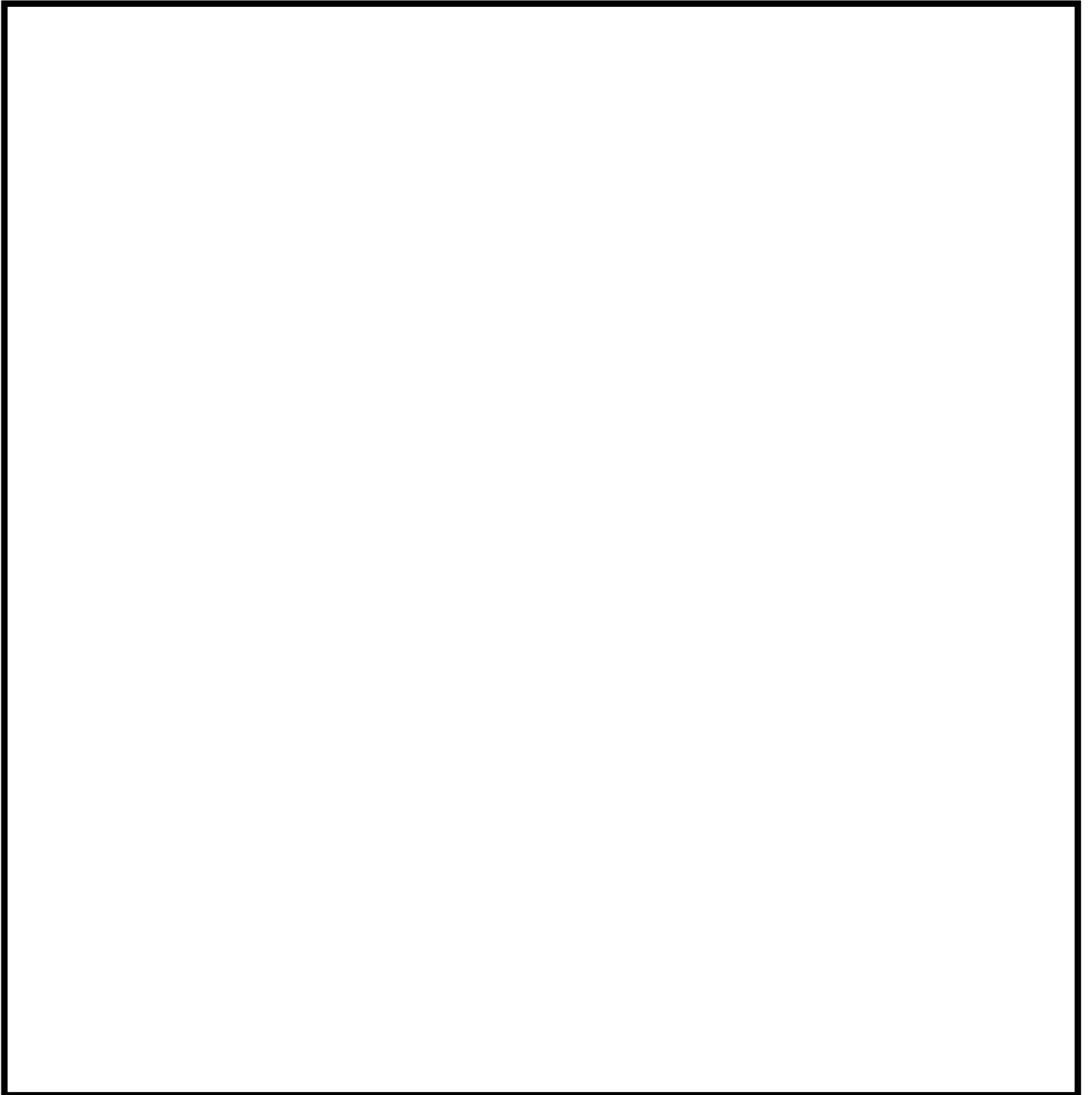
What am I doing?

Where am I going?

Resident Name:
Date of Birth and Death:
Significance:

Design-A-Mausoleum

Become an Oakland Architect and design a mausoleum.
Think about the shape, materials, and style of the building. Be creative!



Oakland Cemetery Field Trip Guides are designed and developed by
Marcy Breffle, Education Coordinator, Historic Oakland Foundation.

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