

HISTORIC OAKLAND CEMETERY

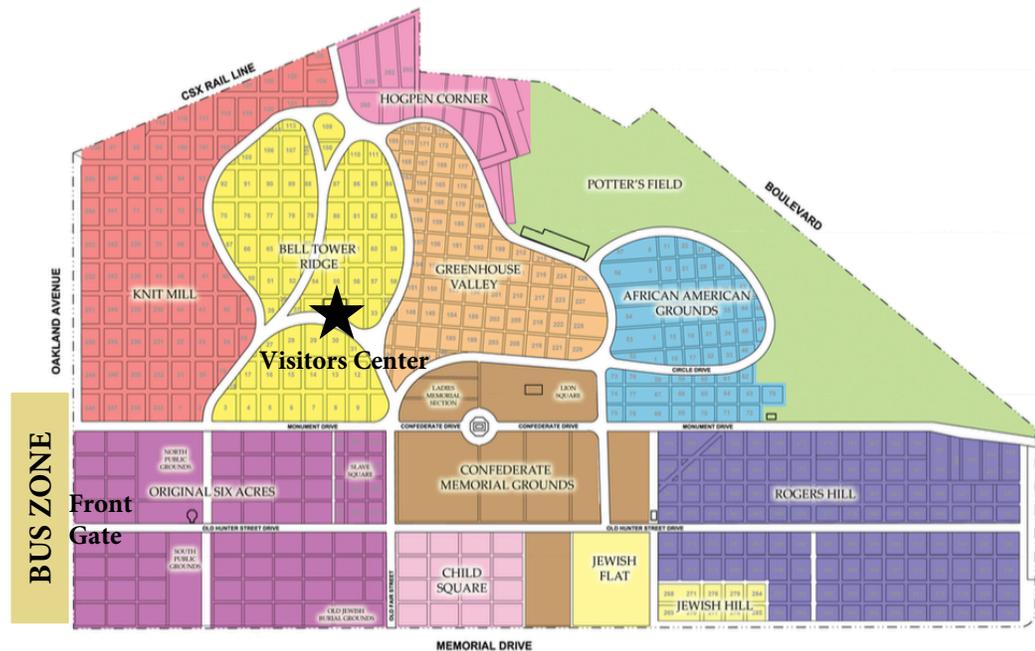
2018-2019 CULTURAL EXPERIENCE PROJECT

STUDY GUIDE

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 and became the final resting place for more than 70,000 people. Oakland 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 Cemetery is divided into several distinct character areas. Each character area provides insight into specific historical events, social and class differences that divided Atlanta society, and burial methods practiced by different cultures. Sections include the cemetery's Original Six Acres, the Confederate Memorial Grounds, the African American Grounds, Potter's Field, Old Jewish Burial Grounds, Jewish Flat and Hill, and other burial areas. Atlanta's history is on display at Oakland Cemetery – the devastating human cost of the Civil War, racial segregation in the South, the impact of Victorian culture, social diversity through immigration and migration, and the growth of Atlanta's African American community.

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. 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.



FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES

The tour will start at Oakland Cemetery's front gate on Oakland Avenue. • The Education Manager will confirm the number of tour guides prior to the tour. The students should be divided into groups before boarding the bus. • Stay with your group as you tour the cemetery, and keep to the paved pathways. • Be respectful of the grave markers and architecture. • Stone rubbings are prohibited. Sketches and photographs are encouraged. • Restrooms are available in the Visitors Center. • This is an outdoor walking tour. Please wear comfortable shoes and be dressed for the weather.

PRE-VISIT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What can a cemetery tell us about the people, growth, and character of a community?
- How do different cultures honor the dead? What are some cultural rituals for coping with death or commemorating life?
- How do grave markers, burial location, or burial styles reveal the customs or culture of the deceased?
- Can grave markers provide clues about wealth, ethnicity, or gender? How?
- Is the preservation of historic sites important? Why or why not?

PRE-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 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. For this activity, students will write their own epitaph. Students should consider how they would want to be remembered a hundred years from now.

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 tells the story of their resident. Example projects are listed below:

- Write an essay about the resident and why they are historically significant.
- Write an obituary for the Oakland resident.
- Imagine that social media existed during the life of the resident. As your resident, complete an *Oakbook* profile page or post on *Oakstagram* (templates are available on [http://www.oaklandcemetery.com/plan-your-visit/education/under *Field Trip Guides*](http://www.oaklandcemetery.com/plan-your-visit/education/under_Field_Trip_Guides)).
 - *Oakbook*: Make sure to include a profile picture, biography, status updates, and posts about what's happening in "your" life.
 - *Oakstagram*: Draw an image and post a caption about a significant event in the "your" life. Have other students write comments on your post.

