



## NUTANA PIONEER CEMETERY TOUR Looking Back

### OVERVIEW:

A cemetery tour can be a very successful class field trip. The Nutana Pioneer Cemetery is the oldest cemetery in Saskatoon and as such contains a wealth of information about Saskatoon's original settlers.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will become familiar with a local cemetery.
2. Students will learn appropriate etiquette for cemetery visits.
3. Students will be able to identify and interpret common symbols used on headstones.
4. Students will appreciate contributions made by Saskatoon's past leaders and how they shaped our community's growth and development.
5. Students will be able to use gravestone / headstone rubbings as a documentary tool.

### RESOURCES / MATERIALS:

- A digital projector (optional) hooked up to the internet for accessing the Saskatchewan 100 site at:  
<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/saskatchewan100/index.html>
- Access to the online movie: [History Carved in Stone](#) (32MB-12 min – Credit: [Meewasin Valley Authority](#)): A fully automated and narrated (.exe file) presentation that looks at the graves in the Nutana Cemetery. This presentation discusses the hardships that the pioneers faced and illustrates how difficult and short their lives often were.
- A digital or film camera to document some of the most interesting parts of their tour. (optional)

### PROCEDURE:

1. Brainstorm with your class reasons that a cemetery makes an excellent place to conduct research.
2. Prepare students by showing a brief history of the cemetery, (view the online movie [History Carved in Stone](#) or invite a local community historian to the class to share that information.
3. There are three good [Nutana cemetery maps](#) online highlighting burial places of important people in Saskatoon's past. Make copies one or all of the maps for each student or student team. You could highlight some gravestones that you want your students to notice. Background information about gravestone symbols might also be distributed ahead of time and discussed. Two excellent sites for information and examples of tombstone art and symbols are:

[Tombstone Art and Symbols](#) and [The Old Cemeteries Society of Victoria](#)

4. When dealing with a large group, it is often desirable to divide students into smaller groups and create several routes and alternate starting points through the cemetery that will prevent all students from being at the same place at the same time. The City of Saskatoon, who owns and maintains the Nutana Cemetery, asks that students touring be given this information prior to any class visitation.





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*Preserve the dignity of the pioneers who are buried there by moving about the headstones carefully and respectfully (i.e. no running, or horseplay). Do not leave any litter in the area and as this is the oldest cemetery in Saskatoon, many of the headstones are fragile and in deteriorating condition. Avoid touching the headstones, especially the taller ones. Rubbings may be done on the shorter headstones or those at ground level.*

**Any questions? City of Saskatoon Contact:  
Graham Figg, Supervisor, Woodlawn Cemetery  
Ph. 306-975-3359, [Graham.Figg@City.Saskatoon.Sk.CA](mailto:Graham.Figg@City.Saskatoon.Sk.CA)**

5. During the tour of the cemetery, students will work in groups of two. They will select a headstone that they would like to research or that demonstrates some of aspect of community history, decorative symbols or other locally significant information. The teacher and one student should demonstrate placing the sheet of newsprint over the headstone. One partner holds the paper in place while the other takes a large crayon (minus the paper covering) and rubs the side of it carefully, but fairly vigorously, over the headstone until the impression of the stone is visible. The rubbings can be displayed in the classroom later.
6. Students may find further information about the pioneer whose headstone they chose by going to the following link on the internet:
7. At the end of the cemetery tour, students come away with an appreciation for the local cemetery as an important source of historical information, and something about those who have made an impact upon the community's history. Students may find further information about the pioneer whose headstone they chose by going to the following link on the internet:

<http://www.city.saskatoon.sk.ca/org/parks/cemetery/nutana/toc.htm>

### **EVALUATION:**

*Completed headstone rubbings, student worksheets and written summaries form the basis for the evaluation of this lesson.*

Special thanks to [Meewasin Valley Authority](#) for the Carved in Stone presentation that goes with this lesson.

