

## Appendix C. Document Verification & Reliability of Evidence<sup>1</sup>

The Hugo Graves Team (HGT), Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (HuNAHS or *Hugo Neighborhood*), believes that inventories for graves must be systematically and comprehensively documented for verification and reliability of evidence. This approach will foster credibility and lead to public trust and acceptance, and just as important it will result in more accurate inventories.

For the HGT, verifiability means other researchers and the public reading its educational brochures or other inventory documents can check where the information comes from and make their own determination if the references or sources are reliable. The HGT's goal is not to try impose "the truth" on its readers, and does not ask that they trust something just because they read it in an HGT document. It does not ask for their trust. Its goal is to empower other researchers and the public through educational materials that can be checked in order for them to find their own truth.

HGT's articles are intended as intelligent summaries and reflections of current published information, as well as an overview and analysis of the relevant literature. Verifiability is related to another core content concept, neutral point of view, which holds that the HGT include all significant views on a subject. Citing reliable sources for any material challenged or likely to be challenged gives readers the chance to check for themselves that the most appropriate sources have been used, and used as well as the applicable evidence available.

That HGT has rules for the inclusion of material does not mean HGT has no respect for truth and accuracy, just as a court's reliance on rules of evidence does not mean the court does not respect truth. HGT values accuracy, but it *requires* verifiability.

Toward those transparent inventory goals, the HGT combines ideas from HuNAHS's and Oregon-California Trails Association's (OCTA's) missions; the Mapping Emigrant Trails (MET) Manual (i.e, general principles governing trail location and verification, and ranking the reliability of evidence used to verify trail location); OCTA Mapping, Marking, and Monitoring (MMM) program; and its own ideas about adequate graves information.

The HGT believes transparent inventories has to do with disclosure, discussion and documentation (DDD). At the first level transparency is providing information about an issue, event, project, policy, program, etc. and then providing a way for other researchers and the public to find and review that information.

At the second level the definition of transparency is defined as DDD in the sense of credibility and accountability. After all, these issues, projects, and programs all have to do with the public's interest, and potentially using public money or perhaps others' private money. For example, all grave inventories usually lead to some type of a grave classification category and a recommended management regime that costs money. For example, see the following.

- Oregon Commission On Historic Cemeteries (OCHS) Historic Cemetery Survey Form
- Listed Historic Cemeteries In Oregon
- Certificates Of Historic Cemetery Registered with OCHC
- OCHC Decision Records
- Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Archeological Sites (Archaeological site forms) With Assigned Smithsonian Trinomials

The OCHC's, SHPO's, and the HGT's, classification categories for graves are designed to assess the condition of graves at the time of mapping and establish a basis on which to recommend levels of preservation and use for graves. The HGT encourages private landowners to consider the recommended levels of preservation and use for graves, both private and public.

The HGT believes inventory information becomes more valuable as it is shared, and less valuable as it is hoarded. Adequate information is a goal the HGT strives for all its published materials. It believes that any inventory opinion for purposes other than therapeutic subjective venting, should meet standards of adequacy to have any credibility. Any opinion purported to be based on analysis must meet standards of adequacy for an inventory decision to be credible. Any significant controversial inventory issue must meet stringent standards of adequacy for the final inventory decision to be credible and, therefore, its best opportunity to be accepted and supported by other researchers and the public.

An adequate graves inventory analysis has several elements, along with published documentation.<sup>1</sup>

- Information Is Understood Or Not
- Supporting Arguments Are Made Or Not
- Standard(s) of Review Have Been Identified Or Not
- Applicable Evidence/Facts Are Available Or Not
- References and Sources of Information Were Identified Or Not
- Compliance With Adequacy Information Analysis Elements Or Not

In summary, the HGT believes that meeting document verification and reliability of evidence guidelines is critical to its mission.

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Footnote 1. Hugo Graves Team. 2014. *Appendix C. Document Verification & Reliability of Evidence*. Appendix to the draft Neely & Trimble Historic Cemeteries Plan outline and the HuNAHS's Cemeteries and Graves Program Plan outline (web published). Hugo, OR.