

Find A Grave

<http://www.findagrave.com>

Find A Grave is the worlds largest database of memorials, a virtual cemetery of more than 120 million and growing. A memorial is not limited to known gravesites, but can reference a burial at sea, a cremation with ashes scattered, and even 'burial unknown'. Searches and inquiries on Find A Grave are free to both members and non-members. Registering as a Find A Grave member is free; it is required in order to contribute content (a new memorial or changes to an existing memorial). Virtually all of the content is voluntarily contributed by users.

Find A Grave's terms of use are very open and realtively free. Registered members retain the rights to everything they contribute. Find A Grave does not assume any rights, although they share content with their 'business partners'. The primary restrictions for contributors of content, as with any public medium, are defined by U.S. copyright law. Members should only contribute content for which they hold the copyright OR are in the public domain. This pertains primarily to photos and newspaper obituaries. For an excellent discussion and explanation of copyright restrictions on Find A Grave, see Judy Russell's blog:

<http://legalgenealogist.com/blog/2014/08/20/find-a-grave-terms-2014-style/>

Pros and Cons of Find A Grave

Pros

- Easy to search, browse, and understand
- Searches offer several different criteria options: any combination of first, middle, last (names), date-of-birth, date-of-death, country, state, county, or cemetery
- No GEDCOM upload required
- Source information is sometimes included in the bio sketch.
- Individual memorials can be 'family linked', creating a very expansive famly tree.
- Easy connections can be made to distant cousins
- Virtual Cemeteries are personal collections of memorials, by family name or geographic regions or other characterisitic.
- Users may request that an ancestor's memorial be transferred to them (if you ask politely, it usually will be transferred)
- Hidden feature: HTML can be used to format the bio, providing a finished appearance and potential hyperlinks.

Cons

- As with any user-based content, there are occasional errors. Both factual errors and syntactical errors.
- No GEDCOM download available
- Family links must be requested individually; sometimes a fairly slow process
- No support for soundex values in search criteria
- Some members are very slow to respond to either public messages or private e-mails