

Most of the time...

the descriptions on gravestones made from limestone, sandstone, marble, siltstone or slate, will be faded or almost indecipherable.

If so, don't use substances such as talcum powder, bleach, shaving cream, chalk or flour on gravestones. Their chemical compositions can damage the stone or cause it to deteriorate at a faster rate. Tombstone rubbings are just as bad. The rubbings place great risk on the tombstones.

There are safer ways to find out what's engraved on tombstones. For example, a person can use the technique "raking light." This technique uses a mirror to reflect the sun's rays on the tombstones writing. The technique uses the shadows created by the sun to help reveal obscured letters.



Cemetery Protocol

PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH:

Cemeteries can be very old and have equally old tombstones. It is worth noting that many gravestones could be covered in vines or shrubbery; if a tombstone seems unstable or cracked, do not touch it. Touching any tombstone, no matter how carefully, damages it.

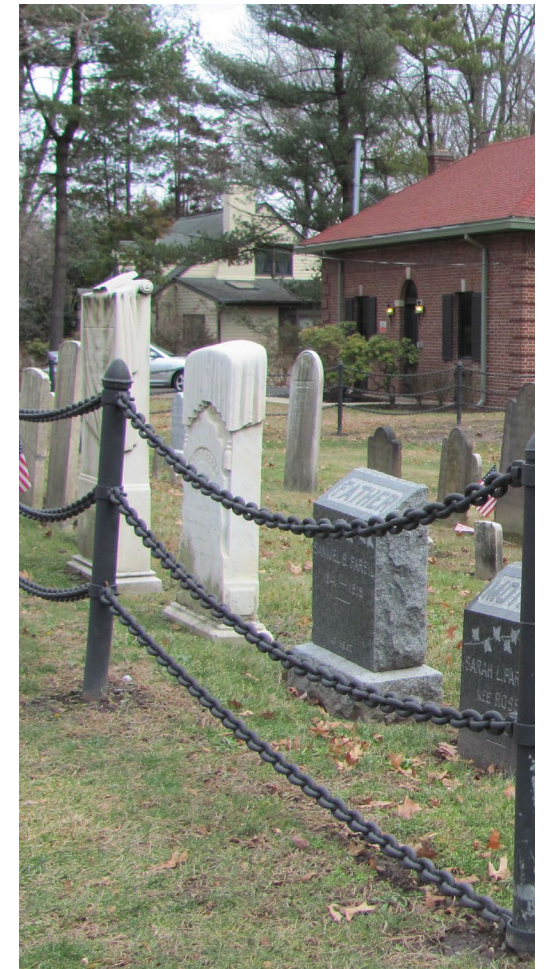
Many gravestones also may have decorations/mementoes: flowers, toys, flags. It is disrespectful to remove them.

Do not litter in a graveyard or sit on any of the gravestones; it is disrespectful.



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Gold Award Project
Completed June 2018

The Parsil Family Cemetery at White Oak Ridge Road





Brief History

The township of Millburn was part of Springfield until the two towns separated in 1857. Original settler names include Ross, Parkhurst, Morehouse, Dean, Meeker, Brant, Thomas, Nichols, Drew, Denman and Parcel.

Two brothers, Thomas and Nicholas Parcel, were among the first settlers. They allegedly built the Parcel Inn as a stop for weary travelers on the way to Elizabethtown and Perth Amboy.

Thomas Parcel built his house, later called the Parcel House, on an unnamed street, that later would be called White Oak Ridge Road, across from the present White Oak Ridge cemetery. The house has the date 1709 carved on it. Thomas Parsil's house was one of the earliest built in the area.

The Parcel name was sometimes spelled Parsil, Parcell, Parsel, Parcil, Parcel and Parsell. Parsil is the modern spelling preferred by present family members.

Brief History (Cont.)

The first permanent church in the area was the White Oak Ridge Church, organized by William Parsil in 1831. Later, the Oak Ridge Union Sunday School Association was formed and the White Oak Ridge Chapel was built.

The White Oak Ridge Chapel closed its doors in 1986 and the building was given to the Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Key People

Capt. Thomas Parcel (1744-1778) served as a captain during the Revolutionary War and was mortally wounded at the Battle of Connecticut Farms. He allegedly died at home under the shade of a large locust tree (which is still there). On his death, the White Oak Ridge cemetery was created.

Lois (Ely) Parcel/Cowperthwaite (1747-1822) was the wife to Capt. Thomas Parcel until his death. She later remarried John Cowperthwaite. She is buried next to Thomas. Both of her daughters died in infancy and are buried in the cemetery next to Thomas.

Key People (Cont.)

Nicholas Parcel (1747-1780) was the younger brother of Capt. Thomas Parcel. He served in the Revolutionary War and died from being wounded in one of the many engagements during the Battle of Springfield. His wife, Esther Baldwin, is buried next to him.

William Parsil (1801-1850) was the founder, leader, main singer and teacher of the White Oak Ridge Church that closed in 1986. His wife was Hetty Reeve, who helped him teach bible classes and Sunday school. She is buried next to William.

William H. Sprigg (1842-1882) fought for the Union in the U.S. Civil War as a private in Company G of the 26th New Jersey Infantry. His wife, Sophia B. Parsil, is buried next to him.

Samuel B. Parsil (1841-1919) fought for the Union in the U.S. Civil War as a private in Company F of the 27th New Jersey Infantry. He has two graves in the cemetery: one for his death and one for his service in the Army. His wife, Sarah L. Parsil, is buried next to his main grave.

Sarah L. (nee Ross) Parsil (1851-1933) was the wife of Samuel B. Parsil and the last person interred in the cemetery.

Elsie Parsil (1889-1890) was the daughter of Samuel B. and Sarah Parsil. She died at 3 months old, and is the youngest known person interred in the cemetery.