

Graffiti...A growing scourge upon our cemeteries

Cemetery vandalism has risen dramatically over the past several years, and a large portion of that vandalism has consisted of graffiti. Removing any type of paint from a given material is difficult, and historic stone presents its own sets of challenges to accomplish this successfully.

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The CCUS is currently researching and vetting the many different techniques and products used for removing the many paint types from stone grave markers. It is a long list that includes many invasive procedures that often include strong chemicals and methods that may do damage to the original stone. As we examine all of these products and procedures, we will do our best to address it in an even manner that takes all factors into account. This will be a long journey to get close to anything we can call “do no harm” methodology for removing graffiti. This is usually the point where we say, “seek the advice of a professional conservator”, and then possibly list a trusted conservator to contact. The problem is finding any real true consensus of thought or opinion on this problem. At the moment the field of cemetery professionals is quite fractured and divided, and seems to be in an experimental stage. Making this an inconclusive subject for now. We are not even comfortable with telling you to simply use extreme caution.



One of the only things we have found that we are comfortable with putting on this website is the following link. This link is to an article by the National Park System that does a very good job as an overview to the graffiti issue. But, it was written in 1995 and we are sure many things have changed in almost 25 years. None the less, it is a place to start and get a better understanding of the problem at hand.

1995 NPS article link. You will also find a PDF version in our ARCHIVES section under PDF's https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/38-remove-graffiti.htm?fbclid=IwAR0ygWsfCclnI4Uw1ho3VCBa78BO_6N4BR5d2mxL9Rq04cgmJsmFwx9xtg

In no way does The Cemetery Conservators For United Standards, recommend or advocate using any of the information from this 1995 article to resolve a situation concerning graffiti at this time. Graffiti removal is a very difficult situation at best and will involve a great deal of care, research, and help. At such time, after the professionals that reside in the field of historic stone and masonry have made a better determination. The CCUS will not be held accountable for things you may do in accordance with any of the information found in the article. As frustrating or heartbreaking as this may seem, we advise you to leave the situation alone for now.