

A BillionGraves on Your Smartphone!

AS MORE AND MORE individuals acquire iPhones, iPads, Android-based phones, tablets, etc., more and more genealogy apps are being created to run on these platforms. One of interest to genealogists is BillionGraves; an app that allows volunteers to quickly collect photos of all of the headstones or grave markers in a cemetery and share them with family historians and genealogy buffs via the web, by uploading them to the BillionGraves.com database. The images collected using smartphone technology include GPS data that maps the precise location of an ancestor's final resting place. Therefore, each image includes specific location data which shows where each grave is located.

Once the photos are published online, fellow family historians and genealogists can help transcribe the information from the headstones, making it easy to search. That easy search puts unique, previously undocumented headstone records mere mouse-clicks away from anyone looking for their ancestors. Because of the GPS data, it's ensured that searchers can see cemetery information, view the actual headstones, and know exactly where those headstones are.

All of the following furthers the the BillionGraves.com effort:

- Collect headstone photos in bulk, with the location of each marker accurately captured.
- Upload location-rich images to the BillionGraves.com database for all to share.
- Add new cemeteries to the BillionGraves.com registry.

Remember that individuals around the world have unique access to the graves in local cemeteries and by using this app, this information can be more readily shared with the world.

Rob Moncur, the head devel-

oper for the website, says that "When volunteers map their local cemeteries and post the photos to BillionGraves, anyone will be able to access complete headstone records and locate potential ancestors, whether they have the means to travel or not."

You can search the posted records for either a person (last name is required and then you can optionally enter first name, birth year and death year or as part of the advanced search feature, provide marriage year or keywords or phrases) or a particular cemetery (indicate what country and then for example, for the US, you can also identify which state and then county). Recognize that the inclusion of cemetery information does not mean that any headstone images have yet been uploaded.

The BillionGraves app is free for download in the Android Market and the Amazon Appstore for Android, as well as on Apple's iTunes App Store.

Registration on BillionGraves.com, which allows volunteers to upload photos, transcribe the photos, or do research is free.

Don't have the gadgets required to collect images for BillionGraves? You can still help build the database by transcribing the images so anyone, anywhere, can find ancestors' graves with just a few clicks of the mouse.

To learn more about the project, visit <http://BillionGraves.com> or the project's blog, <http://BillionGraves.blogspot.com>.

As genealogists, we know the invaluable information that can be found in cemeteries. We also appreciate that for many, a lot of cemeteries were located on a family farm, were

associated with no longer active churches where interment records are no longer extant, etc. So for a number of reasons, we can be greatly challenged in determining who is buried where. The more tombstone records that become readily and freely accessible online increases the likelihood that we'll all be able to determine where our ancestors are buried. And, remember, you can help by either downloading the new BillionGraves app or transcribing the uploaded images.



Scan the QR code at right to get more information on BillionGraves.com or to download the App.

