

Jeannine Kreinbrink, President and Senior Archaeologist with K & V Cultural Resources Management, LLC, spoke on “Places of Burial: What We Can Learn from Burial Studies” on Monday evening, November 24. Burial studies can be divided into two areas: above ground and below ground. Above ground research focuses on such topics as burial customs, social patterns, and cultural landscape. Jeannine discussed the cemetery movement in the United States starting with the rural and church cemeteries changing to the large lawn cemeteries, both public and private, after 1865. Some topics that can be gleaned from cemetery topics included demographic studies, disease pandemics, and/or, the ideology and symbolism of the grave markers.

The second half of her presentation focused specifically on “below ground” cemetery studies and Jeannine shared her recent experiences in researching and relocating a small family cemetery in Florence, Kentucky. The cemetery, beginning in the 1870s, had a total of 36 burials comprised of men, women, and children. Due to the lack of markers, very poor conditions of the actual burials, and lack of family information available the archaeologists were only able to positively identify three individuals. The excavation did reveal coffin hardware, buttons, and other artifacts that helped them determine the time period for the burials. Jeannine shared how researching the genealogy of the families, contacting neighbors, and using library and historical resources aid archaeologists in their work. She also spoke about the Kentucky Statutes that govern and protect cemeteries.