

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**SESSION 1993**

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HOUSE BILL 209  
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/26/93  
Senate Judiciary II Committee Substitute Adopted 7/15/94

Short Title: Define "Abandoned Cemetery".

(Public)

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Sponsors:

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Referred to: Appropriations.

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February 19, 1993

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE DIVISION OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY TO  
2 HELP PRESERVE AND TO COMPUTERIZE HISTORICALLY,  
3 GENEALOGICALLY, AND CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION  
4 FOUND IN ABANDONED CEMETERIES THROUGH THE NORTH  
5 CAROLINA CEMETERY SURVEY PROGRAM.  
6

7 Whereas, there are thousands of cemeteries throughout the State of North  
8 Carolina which contain an important record of the historical, genealogical, and cultural  
9 backgrounds of the men and women who played a vital role in the development of this  
10 State; and

11 Whereas, this information is recorded on tombstones and other grave  
12 markers, many of which are in danger of being destroyed through nature, neglect,  
13 vandalism, and other causes; and

14 Whereas, prior to 1913, North Carolina was not required to keep vital  
15 statistics information such as birth and death dates; and

16 Whereas, many gaps exist within the public records of the State because of  
17 natural disasters, theft, and courthouse fires; and

18 Whereas, the 1981 General Assembly established an Advisory Committee on  
19 Abandoned Cemeteries pursuant to G.S. 143B-128 to assist the Department of Cultural  
20 Resources in its efforts to collect information on abandoned cemeteries, pursuant to  
21 G.S. 121-8(g), to fill in those gaps evident; and

1           Whereas, the nature of the cemetery data collected and the format of the  
2 survey forms and maps used to gather and store this information lend themselves to  
3 computerization and eventual publication; and

4           Whereas, the Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and  
5 History, Archives and Records Section, coordinates a statewide volunteer effort at the  
6 county level to locate cemeteries and currently is developing a computerized database  
7 and automated retrieval system for many of the informational, evidential, and historical  
8 documents and records in its custody; and

9           Whereas, there exists throughout the State strong support from the public and  
10 private sectors for a continuation and completion of the cemetery surveys conducted  
11 thus far by the Department; and

12           Whereas, counties and other interested parties have petitioned the General  
13 Assembly for appropriations for the restoration and preservation of cemeteries, most  
14 recently Wilson County (HB 1692, 1989) and the Pine Forest Cemetery Company,  
15 Wilmington (HB 2047, 1987); and

16           Whereas, North Carolina is involved in a significant amount of population  
17 and economic growth and development, especially in the building of roads, and would,  
18 therefore, benefit greatly from knowing the locations of these cemeteries for planning  
19 purposes; and

20           Whereas, other states, most notably New York, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Texas,  
21 Florida, and Massachusetts, already have similar programs set up; Now, therefore,  
22 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

23           Section 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
24 Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, the sum of one hundred fifteen  
25 thousand three hundred ninety-two dollars (\$115,392) for the 1994-95 fiscal year and  
26 the sum of one hundred six thousand three hundred ninety-two dollars (\$106,392) for  
27 the 1995-96 fiscal year to be used (i) to coordinate the North Carolina Cemetery Survey  
28 as an ongoing and permanent program for collecting and recording pertinent  
29 information, such as the location, condition, and the historical, genealogical, and  
30 cultural significance of cemeteries in North Carolina in such a manner as to make said  
31 information permanently available to the public and through computerization within the  
32 Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, and (ii) to  
33 promote among North Carolinians a better understanding of North Carolina statutes  
34 pertaining to cemeteries in order to encourage their protection and preservation. An  
35 appropriation adequate for these purposes shall become a part of the continuation  
36 budget for the Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History.

37           Sec. 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 1994.