CEMETERY
RESTORATION PROJECT

Dr Jan Sigvartsen PhD

tarragindi.org



Berrien Springs Partnership Syllabus

CLASS TITLE:	Cemetery Restoration Project (ages 10-20)
TOTAL REQUIRED HRS:	16
ADDITIONAL TIME POSSIBLE:	Yes
TOTAL SEMESTER HOURS:	32
LOCATION:	Long Lake Cemetery (next to 11087 Old US 31, Berrien Springs, MI 49103)
PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR:	Dr Jan A. Sigvartsen PhD **(goes by Dr Jan)**
SECONDARY INSTRUCTOR:	Ms Leanne M. Sigvartsen **(goes by Ms Leanne)**
CONTACT INFORMATION:	269-363-3968, Jan@tarragindi.org, Leanne@tarragindi.org, tarragindi.org
INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS:	Dr Jan Sigvartsen - BA, MA, PhD Ms Leanne Sigvartsen – BA Psych, PGD Psych, MCouns

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce students to the stories of some of the earliest settlers in Berrien Springs – the people who lived in and built this town - who are largely buried in the Long Lake Cemetery, Berrien Springs.
2. In learning about these real people and their (often difficult) lives, undertake a much-needed community service restoration project to save this 190-year-old cemetery.
3. To teach students (and their parents) how to undertake stone restoration, cleaning, and preservation techniques, used by archaeologists and preservation experts. This is so they, in partnership with their communities, can care for stone statues, brick buildings, and monuments in our community in the future.

CLASS TIMES:
*You only attend **one** 2-hour Cemetery Restoration Project class a week FOR 8 WEEKS ONLY Class is from January 11-17, then we take a break and then from April 5 – May 12 when the weather is warmer. You can make up missed classes by attending the other time slot if needed.*

- Monday 4.30 – 6.30pm
- Wednesday 1pm – 3pm

All our classes are half semester (8 week) programs due to weather constraints.

We can't really restore graves in the winter! So, half of our classes are taught in the first half of the semester, and the other half in the last half when the weather warms up.

Want to do more than one of our classes? Register for one of our programs in the first half of the semester - then register for a second one in the second half and still only be committed to one class each week throughout the semester! **Our class list and when they are offered is on the next page.**

Our Spring 2026 Classes

First Half of the Semester

- **Arrowhead and Ancient Tool Making** - learn to make stone arrowheads, identify and date them, and make ancient stone and wood tools used by ancient people. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Board Gaming, Civilization Building** – learn to build strong communities by building small ones in an in-person, interactive, screen-free class. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Genealogy 101** – trace your family tree as far back as you can go (Warning: HIGHLY addictive!!). Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Historic Photography** – learn photography by capturing a new local historic site each week and learning its story. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Historic Court Trials** – bring your acting skills and relive real 1800s court trials that were tried in the Berrien Springs Courthouse – Michigan's oldest courthouse. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Historic Storytelling** – learn the ancient art of telling stories and keeping our history alive. Syllabus at tarragindi.org

Second Half of the Semester (two classes required in January)

- **Archaeology Dig – Tarragindi** - Excavate one of the Berrien County's oldest settler farms, that is nearly 200 years old, with archaeologist Dr Jan Sigvartsen PhD. We find antique bottles, coins, and so much more! Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Cemetery Restoration Project** - Help save one of Berrien County's oldest cemeteries and learn the life stories of our earliest European settlers who are buried there. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Garden Recreation Project - 1000 Years Ago** - Recreate a real Woodland Native American garden based on Michigan's very own archaeology record. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Gardening Project, 1830s Early Settlers Garden** - Recreate a real Berrien County early settler garden based on historical records.
- **Historic Writing** – hone your writing skills by capturing local historical stories and getting them published. Syllabus at tarragindi.org

SYLLABUS/OUTLINE: Weekly approximate breakdown of activities:

Class 1: (2 hours) January 11 or 13
Long Lake Cemetery, next to 11087 Old US 31, Berrien Springs, MI 49103
We will be showing you the Cemetery, identifying some of Berrien County's earliest and most notorious settlers and hearing their stories. We will also look at symbology on gravestones and what you can tell about a person from their grave stone.

Class 2: (2 hours) January 16, 2.30-4.30pm OR January 17, 2.30-4.30pm (attend 1 only)
1860 County Poor Farm Tour (Love Creek County Park, 9292 Huckleberry Rd, Berrien Center)

Did you know most early settlers couldn't tame the land into a workable farm? Many didn't even have the money to go home. That is why Berrien County set up the County Poor Farm that became a thriving community of its own and an example of what can be achieved when we work together.

Break until April 5

Class 3: (2 hours) April 5 or 7
Long Lake Cemetery, next to 11087 Old US 31, Berrien Springs, MI 49103
We will start our project and restore some of the oldest graves of people who came west 200 years ago on covered wagons – at 20 miles a day – and built our town. We will also talk about stone monument restoration techniques and products. We will start our restoration project.

Class 4: (2 hours) April 12 or 14
Long Lake Cemetery, next to 11087 Old US 31, Berrien Springs, MI 49013
We will continue our restoration project, and learn more about the people whose memorials we are respectfully restoring from newspaper articles, early settler records, and genealogy resources.

Class 5: (2 hours) April 19 or 21
Long Lake Cemetery, next to 11087 Old US 31, Berrien Springs, MI 49013
We will continue our restoration project, and learn more about the people whose memorials we are respectfully restoring from newspaper articles, early settler records, and genealogy resources.

Class 6: (2 hours) April 26 or 28
Long Lake Cemetery, next to 11087 Old US 31, Berrien Springs, MI 49013
We will continue our restoration project, and learn more about the people whose memorials we are respectfully restoring from newspaper articles, early settler records, and genealogy resources.

Class 7: (2 hours) May 3 or 5
Long Lake Cemetery, next to 11087 Old US 31, Berrien Springs, MI 49013
We will continue our restoration project, and learn more about the people whose memorials we are respectfully restoring from newspaper articles, early settler records, and genealogy resources.

Class 8: (2 hours) May 10 or 12
Long Lake Cemetery, next to 11087 Old US 31, Berrien Springs, MI 49013
We will continue our restoration project, and learn more about the people whose memorials we are respectfully restoring from newspaper articles, early settler records, and genealogy resources.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT - In addition to the 2 items below, what will be used to evaluate student progress and/or end of semester pass/fail status?

1) Students agree to attend at least 80% of class sessions/lessons offered. Attendance is kept online and tracked by Partnership staff. Unexcused absences resulting in failure to meet 80% threshold may result in program discontinuation.

2) The Partnership Student Assessment is filled out by the teacher and turned in to Partnership staff. The rubric is found on the teacher's online attendance sheet. Failing marks for lack of participation, behavior issues, excessive absences, etc. may result in program discontinuation.

3) Other class-specific assessment: Engagement in the program, follow through with instruction, and participation in project.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: (online, books, video, etc.):

www.tarragindi.org/resources - page on our website giving links to local history resources.

CLASS-SPECIFIC POLICIES:

Attendance: Students are to attend each week. If they cannot make it one week, we are happy to reschedule or have them attend one of our other archaeology classes that has some crossover content.

Behavior: To be careful, listen to instructions, wear your safety gear, identify everything you like about others (not what you don't like about them – ancient and settler communities succeeded through team work), zero tolerance of bullying, report bullying, have fun!

Weather: It is rare that we cancel due to rain as we have small pavilions for our programs. The class will be canceled the night before if the rain will be severe and all students emailed. If you don't hear from us, class is on. Dr Sigvartsen will still go down to the site to ensure everyone got his email message.

Other: Do not undertake restoration work at the cemetery on your own time, or when Dr Sigvartsen is not there. He has special permission from Berrien Township to supervise this restoration, due to his professional qualifications. Be kind to the neighbors by parking in the designated areas, being courteous, and keeping the noise down.

ZERO BULLYING – we have a zero bullying policy. We want to be a space were people build one another up, not tear each other down. Please report bullying to Ms Leanne immediately. Do not attempt to deal with it yourself or have your parent deal with it.

ZERO Sexual harassment, profanity, sexually explicit, or crude behavior or speech – we are a space that makes people feel welcome and accepted, not uncomfortable. Please report these behaviors to Ms Leanne immediately.

Withdrawal from the class: If you wish to withdraw from the class, you must do so following Class 1 (January 11-13) and prior to Class 2 (January 16-17). Otherwise, very significant investment will be made in you/your child and their participation in the class that you may be financially responsible for. Your class starts on January 11 or 13 – not when you start the restoration in April. You must attend your two January classes as they are the foundation of the program – let us know if this is a problem as we will schedule a catch-up class for you. Parent Partnership staff have been advised of our deadlines. If your schedule changes after the Tarragini withdrawal deadline, please talk to Ms Leanne, as she may be able to work something out for you or schedule another class time for you.