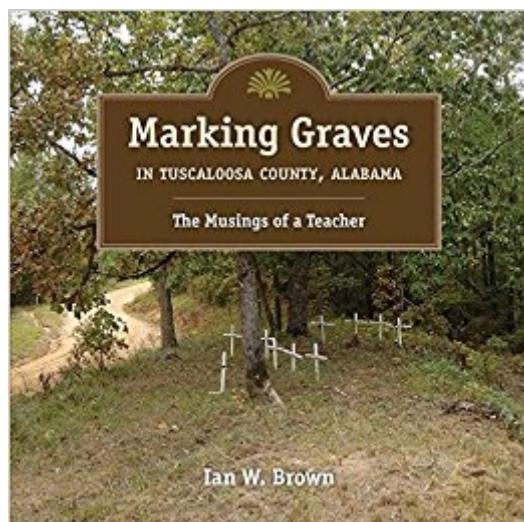


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# Marking Graves In Tuscaloosa County, Alabama: The Musings Of A Teacher



## Synopsis

He sends his students out into the cemeteries "armed with very specific research questions." To whom are they asking these questions? The living? On many occasions I have heard Ian insist that cemeteries are indeed for the living, that those elaborate burial rituals and markings are our meager attempts to hold back the broad, merciless, and unending river of time. We erect headstones and we leave flowers--a universal yet odd desire to impart beauty and life to the cold and inert.

Alongside the flowers we seem increasingly to be leaving such everyday objects as footballs and Bama memorabilia, Christmas boxes, and figurines (mostly angels). What are these mementoes saying? But perhaps Ian wants his students to direct their questions to the dead...by first looking closely at those who came before and then asking the right questions, we ourselves will be changed... By learning about them, we learn from them. We gain insight into the human condition.

--from the Preface by G. Ward Hubbs

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