

Dodolab Windsor - Cemetery Litmus Test

The images in this eBook are of 19th century tombstones from cemeteries in Windsor, Ontario, Canada (Assumption Cemetery on Wyandotte Road and St. John Anglican Church Sandwich). Both cemeteries are located in close proximity to the Ambassador Bridge which connects Windsor to Detroit, Michigan and is a primary transport link between Canada and the United States (and then to Mexico). Traffic over the Ambassador Bridge (which, surprisingly for an international border crossing, is privately owned) is dominated by trucks moving commercial goods. More than 25% of trade between Canada and the United States passes over this bridge which was completed in 1929. The bridge is now in need of repair and there is much debate about its future and if a new bridge should be built further up the Detroit River to take the truck traffic out of and around the cities as the Ambassador Bridge touches down, on both sides of the river, in the centre of established communities with significant environmental impacts. The current owners of the bridge are looking to “twin” it and in preparation for this have bought up many properties in Windsor and Detroit resulting in empty buildings, boarded up houses and vacant lots, much to the consternation of local residents and governments.

The **Cemetery Litmus Test** is one part of Dodolab’s ongoing programming of activity in Windsor/Detroit launched in 2010. The project looks to experiment with the potential of using the more than a century old tombstones in cemeteries close to the bridge as a means of exploring the environmental impact of the bridge. These stones, very similar in material and design to stones found in cemeteries throughout the region, show distinct signs of excessive erosion and decay and the goal is to see if, over the years, these objects have functioned as “litmus” strips, sampling and storing air born pollutants and also showing the impact of air quality. This project will evolve over the coming year along with a number of other creative research interventions in the area including explorations of the vacant properties around the Ambassador Bridge.

Andrew Hunter, May 2010



Dodolab - Andrew Hunter

Cemetery Litmus Test (Book 1)





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One of a series of publications to be produced by Dodolab as part of their ongoing work in Windsor/Detroit in collaboration with Broken City Lab, Green Corridor and the Tug Collective. This publication is the first in a series related to a community research project called Cemetery Litmus Test led by Dodolab Director Andrew Hunter.

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