



SYMBOLISM E-NEWSLETTER

Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta, Georgia (1850)

The hand on the book is a symbol of God and the open book is the symbol of the person buried there knowing the divine wisdom that he or she will have eternal life. Also, the book refers to the idea the someone has written down on the left side page the good deeds of the person so he or she can indeed have eternal life. The rose is always a symbol of love and is usually seen a young woman's grave but not always. Notice that there is a rose in full blossom and a rose bud which convey two phases of life—birth and maturity. The rose has three leaves on each side which conveys the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Above, the mantle with tassels conveys death.

Issue 21, March 1, 2008



Church Street Cemetery, Mobile (1820)

Notice that the angel is carrying two babies to heaven. This stone marks the grave of John Elliott who died of yellow fever September 18, 1853 at the age of 13. Angels are thought of as guardians, protectors of death and messengers from God. It was very common during that time for children to die young because there were not vaccines and immunizations for yellow fever and other diseases.



Giovanni Arnolfini and his Wife (1434)

Painted by Jan Van Eyck and currently residing at the National Gallery in London. Depicting a married or betrothed couple, symbols abound throughout the painting. Notice the candelabra and the single candle burning on the left which conveys Christ's divine illumination or all seeing eye. The mirror is framed by ten medallions, portraying a scene from Christ's passion which conveys piety as well as feminine purity because the Virgin Mary was compared to a "spotless mirror." The dog, seen at the bottom conveys faithfulness and is probably a lap dog which belongs to the woman of the house and symbolizes wifely fidelity. Notice the orange in the window conveying fertility.

