

NEWSLETTER (ADULT ANGELS)



APRIL 1, 2008

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Gabriel Archangel is a Throne
- Thurman Angel by James Novelli is based on French's Kinsley Memorial
- Elliott grave marker is based on Thorvaldsen's *Night*
- Thorvaldsen sculpted Lion of Lucerne

ADULT ANGELS AND SYMBOLISM

Adult angels and symbols have been connected to one another for thousands of years probably beginning in Egypt. They have always been around to protect, guide and take care of humans.

A Christian prayer says: "Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous and all for your love's sake."

Probably, the best known adult angel in 20th Century American film history is Clarence Oddbody (Henry Travers) who comes down from heaven to keep George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart) from killing himself in

the movie *It's A Wonderful Life*. If Clarence succeeds, he gets his wings and becomes a first class angel.

There are three types of angels:

First Hierarchy, Seraphim, surround the throne of the Virgin Mary and in red to the right.

Second Hierarchy, Cherubim, the ones who know and worship seen in blue to the right.

Third Hierarchy, Thrones, wearing judges' robes below the Seraphim and support her seat and represent divine justice.

Some attributes of angels include trumpets, harps, swords, censers, scepters or swords.



Assumption of the Virgin
Masolino (ca.1489-1429)
Capodimonte, Naples

GABRIEL (1894) OAKLAND CEMETERY, ATLANTA, GA

As many you have heard, Oakland's beloved Gabriel, to your right, was damaged during the tornado that touched down in Atlanta the evening of March 14, 2008. Archangel Gabriel gazed skyward celebrating victory over death or eternal life. Notice that Gabriel was holding a horn and was looking up to Heaven. At an exact moment, he would have put the horn to his lips

and announced the second coming so all the souls could go to heaven. He falls into the third category of Angels—Thrones.

If you are interested, I am sure Oakland will be happy to accept donations in an effort to restore Gabriel. Send a check to Historic Oakland Foundation, 248 Oakland Avenue SE, Atlanta, GA 30312.



ANGEL STONE (C. 1855), CHURCH STREET CEMETERY, MOBILE

Because of other information I learned since the last newsletter, I am re-visiting the gravestone the we looked at last month (far right).

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. The stone was probably completed and installed approximately 1855.

Beth Roark, who wrote the article *Embodying Immortality In America's Rural Garden Cemeteries, 1850-1950* for the Association for Grave-

stone Studies' Markers XXIV and is associate professor of Art History at Chattam College in Pittsburgh, PA, informed me that this piece is based on a relief by Denmark artist Bertel Thorvaldsen (c., 1770-1844) entitled *Night* created in 1815 (see below). This was designed as a pendant to go with another creation called *Day*. Both works reside at the Thorvaldsen Museum.



BERTEL THORVALDSEN (1770-1844)

He was born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1770 and spent much of his adult life in Rome, and like Novelli, spotlighted on page 3, he attended the Royale Academy in Rome. Even though he is better known in Europe, he does have a connection to Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta.

If you are familiar with the Lion monument in the Confederate section, it is based on

the Lion of Lucerne, seen below which was done by Thorvaldsen in 1819. Supposedly, it was done to commemorate 11 Swiss Army soldiers who tried to protect Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI during the French Revolution and didn't succeed.

Thorvaldsen's strength was his lines and

rhythms in his works. Also, he designed his works so that they can be seen from



every angle as seen by the two pieces above and right.



ANOTHER ANGEL AND CHILD GRAVE MARKER (C. 1855)

Kim Jacobsen who has the website Magnolias and Peaches (<http://magnolia.cyriv.com/>), which deals with cemeteries and symbolism, sent me the image to the right.

You will see the Thorvaldsen image of *Night* one more time even more prevalent than the one at the top of this page

because of the placement of the head. The major difference is the wings and the Thorvaldsen image has a dove to the right side.

This stone is in the Bigbee Cemetery (AKA Pleasant Grove), White, Greene County, Alabama. It is the grave of John Calhoun, son of John F. and Eliza DeGraffen-

ried and was born the 2nd of July 1852 and departed this life the 26th of April 1854.

Kim and I were supposed to meet and do a symbolism tour of Oakland Cemetery the day after the tornado struck (March 15, 2008) and to say the least, we didn't do that tour.



MARY GLOVER THURMAN ANGEL (C. 1916), OAKLAND CEMETERY, ATLANTA, GA

A longtime resident of Oakland Cemetery is the Thurman Angel. This particular one was named after Mary Glover Thurman. She and her husband, a wealthy dentist, owned a very large antebellum house where the Biltmore Hotel is today. She and her husband had no children so her nephew decided to have the sculpture made in memory of her. The story is that her nephew saw her

several times take flowers from her beautiful gardens to terminally ill patients in hospitals throughout the city. The nephew was touched by this act of love and dubbed her "the angel". This particular monument is based on Daniel Chester French's Kinsley Monument. Oakland's Thurman Angel is sculpted by James Novelli (see his information below).



DANIEL CHESTER FRENCH'S KINSLEY MEMORIAL (1911)

To the right is Daniel Chester French's Kinsley Memorial in Woodlawn Cemetery, NY, NY. It is made out of Tennessee marble. Notice to the left of the women's hand is an hour glass (passage of time).

Other works known by Daniel Chester French include the Lincoln Memorial, the Concord Minute Man, and the Marshal Field Memorial. In 1912, author Harry Bliss

wrote about the Kinsley Memorial, "While it is ancient in its suggestion, it is modern in treatment; especially in the character of the figure which sits gazing into the distance with an expression of expectancy that suggests hope and Resurrection." It is interesting how the angel is looking away from the viewer, but in the Thurman Angel, above, she is looking directly at the viewer.



JAMES SALVATORE JOHN NOVELLI (1885-1940)

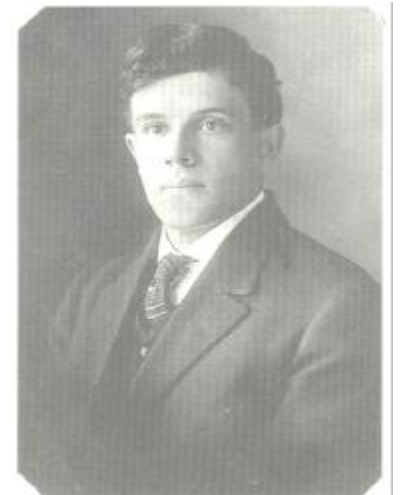
James Salvatore John Novelli was born October 15, 1885 in Sulmona, Italy (Central Italy).

When he was five, his family migrated to the United States and settled in New York. His interest in art was fueled by his studies at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Rome when he was 18. After

he returned to the states, he worked with a marble cutter. He began to receive many commissions including *America Triumphant*, in Pershing Field, Jersey City, New Jersey, commemorating the 147 neighborhood soldiers who died in World War I. He also did a couple of cemetery memorial commissions in

Durham, North Carolina including *Motherhood Group* and *Rock of Ages*.

He continued to receive commissions and accolades until the mid 1930's. On May 31, 1940, Novelli committed suicide apparently despondent over the lack of commissions and the impending war in Europe.



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SYMBOLS THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES

IRISH IMMIGRANT ANGEL (1884)

It is fitting that we end this newsletter spotlighting the Oakland Cemetery Irish Immigrant Angel who was not severely damaged in the March 14, 2008 tornado that ripped through downtown Atlanta even though a major tree collapsed around her.

The angel acts as a guardian, messenger and protector of the dead and communicates between God and mankind. The angel's wings portray divine mission.

Notice how the angel looks down at a scroll. At one

point, the angel probably had an outstretched finger pointing to heaven with a writing utensil held in the same hand. On the scroll, the angel writes down the person's good deeds so in the case of Annie McNamara, she can have eternal life. The pointing finger leads the soul towards heaven and confirms life after death.

Other symbols related to the MacNamara Angel include the five-pointed star on her head conveying heavenly wisdom. The Greeks and Romans believed that stars

were divinities. Christians would adopt a six-pointed star, representing the creation of heaven and earth, which took six days according to the Bible.

The Latin cross bears IHS in relief, the first three letters of Jesus in Greek. The Greeks used it as symbol of Dionysus (original meaning unknown) and the Christians borrowed it to stand for Jesus.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The purpose of the symbolism newsletter is to continue to document and explore symbols throughout the centuries. If you have symbols you want explored in the future, please contact me. If you have interesting symbols you want shared with others, please send them to me.

As many of you know, I do a symbolism tour of Oakland Cemetery the first Saturday evening from 6:30 to 7:30 pm during the Twilight Tours Season April to October. The next one is May 3. The cost is only \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children and senior citizens. All proceeds go to Oakland for their preservation efforts.

Richard Waterhouse

