

# LOVE & PRESIDENTS



W A T E R H O U S E   S Y M B O L I S M   N E W S L E T T E R   #   5   6

## SPECIAL SYMBOLS

- Roses convey love, compassion, peace, friendship and romance.
- Arrows convey spiritual weapons, fertility and rain.
- Flag conveys victory, self-assertion and thought or ideal.
- Harp conveys an instrument of constant harmony.

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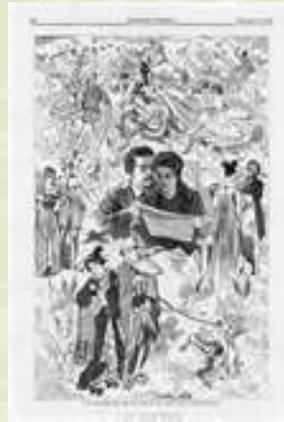
## VALENTINE'S DAY

I enjoy spotlighting Valentine's Day at this time of year because the holiday is filled with many symbols. What are some of your favorite Valentine symbols?

Some symbols connected to the day include Cupid, Roses, Hearts, Love Birds and Doves, and Love Knots.

Cupid is known as the mischievous angel who shoots arrows into everyone so that the intended arrow target will have true love. Cupid conveys love, passion and wilderness. The origin of Cupid can be traced back to Eros of Greek mythology.

The florists want you to believe that the perfect Valentine's Day gift for your



Originally published February 14, 1868 in Harper's Weekly and created by Winslow Homer

sweetheart is twelve long-stem roses. They convey love, compassion, peace, friendship, and romance. Of course, colors of roses convey different meanings: red is passion, yel-

low is friendship and white is love and devotion.

Hearts (see below) convey life and if you give your heart to someone, you are handing over one's experience.

Love Birds and Doves have always conveyed purity, humbleness, and purity as wholeness. If you have wandered Victorian cemeteries, you have probably seen many doves. In the Christian faith, they convey the Holy Spirit.

Love knots, which is traced back to an Arab tradition for Young Muslim women, expresses their love through the medium of knots portrayed in carpet. They convey love, unity and togetherness.

## HEART

One of my favorite hearts I photographed is in San Michele Cemetery, Venice.

In cemetery symbolism, a pierced heart like the one seen to the right, conveys repentance and devotion. A flaming heart conveys religious fervor.

Other hearts seen in cemeteries include: two clasped hands with two hearts above.

This conveys love, willpower, romantic love, love as the center of illumination and happiness, and understanding. The clasped hands convey unity and matrimony. Normally one hand is feminine and one is masculine, but there have been cases where both hands are masculine or feminine.



## Origin of Cupid

In the language of symbols, there has always been a mischievous character that has tried to submit love on top of us.

In Greek mythology, he was known as Eros, the son of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. To the Roman's he was Cupid, the son of Venus.

What are some symbols related to Cupid?

The arrow conveys a spiritual weapon, fertility, rain, lightning, war, famine, disease, the sun's rays, the hunter, the light of divine power, the plague, remorse, and persecution. In regards to Cupid, we usually see a heart pierced with two arrows. The number two conveys the duality of all things, positive and negative, and day and night.

Bow conveys war, power,

death, hunting, exhausting strain, the will, the tension between physical and spiritual forces, worldly power, weapon of the hunter, in this case Cupid, and the common soldier.

Heart conveys love, will power, romantic love, the love as the center of illumination and happiness, love of God, the seat of true intelligence, and understanding (as opposed to reasoning).



Caravaggio's Eros

"Write on your heart that every day is the best day in the year."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

If you have wandered Victorian cemeteries, you have seen many roses carved into the gravestones.

Roses, as mentioned before, convey completion, perfection, the heart, God, beloved, paradise, messianic hope, Christ, beauty, the Virgin Mary, integration of the of the personality, associated with Taurus, and attribute of Ve-

## roses

nus. In flower imagery, different color roses has different meanings. Red Roses convey love and passion (twelve conveys universal order, perfection, and completeness). White roses convey virginity and purity. Yellow roses convey jealousy and infidelity. In Catholicism, red roses are a symbol of the Virgin Mary. What rose color is your favorite?



Village Burying Ground, Bar Harbor, Maine

## Fallow Way of winter

Judy Collins wrote a song called Fallow Way, which looks at that point in winter where everything is still. It is the moment between the closeness of fall and the beginning of spring. Nature is in a deep sleep or resting. Some lyrics from that song are: "The crystal time the

silent times, I'll learn to love their quietness, While deep below their glistening snow, The black earth dreams of violets, I'll learn to love the Fallow Way". If you want to see the full lyrics of this wonderful song, go to [http://judycollins.com/lyrics/Fallow\\_Way.php](http://judycollins.com/lyrics/Fallow_Way.php). Symbols of

winter according to the book *Symbols and Allegories in Art* by Matilde Battistini are: night, phlegmatic temperament, old age, death and hours. Battistini explains "it is closely associated with subterranean principles of darkness and dampness".



Winter by Hendrick Avercamp, early 17th Century

## P r e s i d e n t ' s D a y



The two president that we associate with President's Day is Lincoln and Washington

Are you familiar with the movie DAVE with Kevin Kline and Sigourney Weaver? It's basically about a presidential impersonator who takes over, secretly, as president because the real president suffers a major stroke and cannot govern. The point of the movie is that no matter who we are, we should live our dreams and try to make a difference in other people's lives even it is very small.

Some symbols related to President's Day are the flag which conveys victory,

self-assertion, thought or ideal, identification, and nationalism; fireworks which convey fertility, warding off of evil spirits (scare them to death with the noise), purification, and celebration; and the star which conveys the spirit, the forces of the struggle against the forces of evil, destiny, supremacy in a particular area, disintegration, immortality of the soul, guidance (especially spiritual), hope, purity, constancy and vigilance.

## L i n c o l n ' s B i r t h d a y

If you are a follower of the history of Abraham Lincoln, you know his life had a profound affect on parts of Kentucky, Illinois, and Washington, D.C. where he was assassinated.

One of the places that you can feel his presence is the Lincoln Birthplace and Museum, in his hometown of Springfield, Illinois. Probably the most well-known symbol connected to

him is slavery which conveys subject to lower nature.

Since I am a huge fan of Victorian things, I googled whether Queen Victoria and Abraham Lincoln communicated. The answer is yes about the marriage of one of Queen Victoria's daughters. President Lincoln wrote a letter and the Queen sent a response thanking him.



Most famous photograph of Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

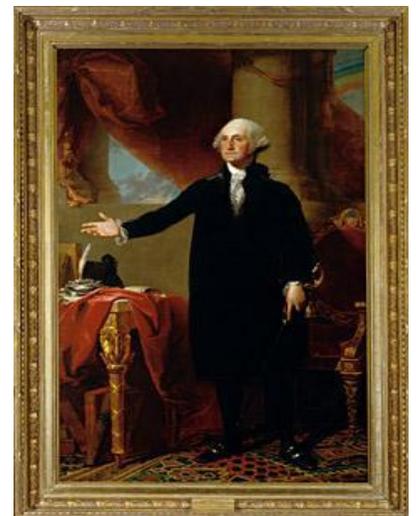
A museum should be a place where we lose our head—to be enlightened, dazzled and transformed by the epiphany of art.  
Anonymous

## W a s h i n g t o n ' s B i r t h d a y

One of the fun things about George Washington is that there are many myths connected to him including cutting down a tree.

One of my favorite portraits of George Washington is the one to the right by Gilbert Stuart and completed in 1796. Some symbols related to this painting include: Books convey Wash-

ington's work in the world of politics and ideas; rainbow hope; the medallion on the back of the chair conveys peace. Notice the medallion has thirteen stars and stripes and conveys the original 13 states. As a general, Washington was a force in defeating the British even though it was a tough battle.



**Do you have ideas for  
future newsletters?**



**W A T E R H O U S E  
S Y M B O L I S M  
N E W S L E T T E R # 5 6**

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The mission of Waterhouse Symbolism is to research and document gravestone symbols nationally and internationally.



**NOTES FROM THE EDITOR**

The month of February is so full of celebratory days— Valentine's Day (kiss your sweetie for me), President's Day, Lincoln's Birthday and Washington's Birthday. I hope in this newsletter I have showed the richness of those holidays and how the history of our country is a vital part of the those celebratory days.

Take care,

Richard Waterhouse

**M o r a n S y m b o l**

Ren Davis and his wife Helen sent me the image to the right that they found in Oakland Cemetery wondering what the symbol is and the history of it.

Thanks to Laura Gabel and Cori Ander, I believe we have deciphered it. Of course, if you have other interpretations to add, please let me know and I will add them to the my blog.

Laura felt that it was probably based on the Moran family Crest which I support. The only major difference between the two is that the stars on the crest is five pointed and these are six pointed.

Of course, there are four sets of symbols on this marker: 6 pointed star

which conveys the creation or divine wisdom. The two harps or lyres convey an instrument of cosmic harmony. In Christian iconography, it conjures up active participation in the beautiful union.

The shield between the two harps conveys strength and power and the three stars in the shield convey the trinity (Father, Son and Holy Ghost). Probably the Moran were Irish Catholic so it was important for them to have Christian symbols.

Another symbol that you see connected to the Irish or Celtic is the Irish love knot which conveys unity and resurrection. It is seen on Celtic crosses.



Moran marker in Oakland Cemetery  
Photo by Ren Davis