

Sharing Information



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 # 7 2

SPECIAL SYMBOLS

- Lamb conveys sweetness, forgiveness and meekness
- Symbols portrayed on childrens' graves include doves, tree stumps and baby angels
- Pillow conveys sleep
- Lamb conveys forgiveness, virginity, and heavenly bliss

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DRAWING OF A CEMETERY GATE

Howard Bonington, an artist from Cape Cod, sent me this drawing of the original look of a gate at South Dennis Cemetery. Only a very small part of the gate remains.

Notice the weeping willow which conveys sadness, grief and sorrow. The weeping willow looks like it is crying. Sometimes, the tree has a broken limb which conveys the fact that part of the tree will die but another part will live.

Notice the two lambs which convey sweetness, forgiveness, meekness, docility, weakness, innocence, sacrifice (sometimes unwarranted), temperance, Christ, God's love, frolic, purity, pure thought and the just man.



South Dennis Cemetery, Cape Cod

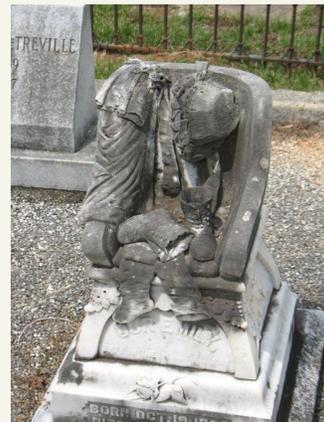
If you have an example of this gate from a cemetery, please send it to me.

LONGING FOR A CHILD

The image of this gravestone is in City Cemetery, Sandersville, GA and was sent to me by Cathy Vogel. The marker is in memory of Emily Elizabeth Evans.

If you are familiar with Victorian childrens graves, you know that normally what is portrayed on them are tree stumps (life cut short), doves (holy spirit) and baby angels (protector

and innocence). What is unusual about this particular gravestone is that it looks like the child has taken off all her clothes, rested them on the chair and has gone to heaven.



OUR DARLING MARK

Cathy Vogel also sent me this image from Bartow, Georgia.

If you look at the mast head of this newsletter, you will see the same image from Oakland Cemetery, but what's particularly interesting about this one is that it is made out of zinc.

In cemeteries, especially Victorian, many grave markers exhibit symbols related to the death of children, a common occurrence from the

1850s to the early 1900s, because immunizations and vaccinations were unavailable for small pox, diphtheria, influenza, and yellow fever. For example, in Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta, GA, the Bloomfield Markers record the death of four sisters, ages two through eight, who died within ten days of one another in January 1863. The sexton or superintendent at the time recorded the death as diphtheria, a highly contagious disease of the upper respiratory system, one of the most common causes of

death among children.

Note here the angel kneels on a pillow, the symbol of sleep, the word cemetery derived from the Greek koimeterion, a sleeping place.

Actually, zinc was used as a gravestone material because it was inexpensive and could be easily reproduced. Also, the purchaser could choose what kind of base he wants.



MARY AND LITTLE FLOCK

Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting and autumn a mosaic of them all."

*Stanley
Horowitz*

This photo by Kim Jacobson is from Oakhill Cemetery, Montgomery, Alabama. The living child conveys the future, innocence, purity, beginning, dawn, spring, unity with nature, conjunction of the conscious and the unconsciousness, and a sign of impending benefit change. A dead child conveys innocence, life cut short, mourning and grief. Notice the child is holding a lily which conveys purity, virginity, the purified soul and heavenly bliss.

Notice here that the child rests on a pillow and bed, symbol of sleep derived from the Greek koimeterion, a sleeping place.

In the back there is a lamb which is a symbol of Christ's atonement for our sins. The lamb also conveys forgiveness, gentleness, humility, patience, purity, renewal, redemption, sweetness, the unblemished, and young innocence.



VERNIE JOHNSON

This particular image was taken by Johan Mathieson and is from Milton Freewater Cemetery in Milton-Freewater, OR. Vernie Johnson (born 1896 and died 1906) is petting a lamb which conveys forgiveness, gentleness, humility, patience, purity, renewal, re-

demption, sweetness, the unblemished, and young innocence.

He sits on a stump which conveys life cut short before he reached his prime. The banner behind him reads, "Vernie and his pet."

The epitaph reads: "Asleep in Jesus blessed sleep/ Which none ever wake to weep".

Note how the boy seems to be comfortable with the lamb as a friend and that he will have eternal life.



CORLISS RANDLE RUCKLE

Another portrait in stone is for Corliss Randle Ruckle and resides in Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis, Indiana. The photo is by Kim Jacobsen. Corliss is writing down his good deeds here an earth so he will have eternal life. Notice the stairs that he is resting on which convey the stairs to heaven and Corliss' eternal life. The steps are next to rocks which mean his life was built on a firm foundation, The fern is present which conveys solitary humility, frankness, sincerity, endurance and

confidence. He is holding a lily which conveys purity, virginity, the purified soul and heavenly bliss.

Notice that the figure is looking at you which reminds you that your time will come.



EMPTY CRIB

Another marker on childrens' gravestones are empty cribs, empty baby shoes with socks and empty chairs are seen throughout Victorian cemeteries. The empty crib conveys that the baby has left his or her life here on earth to have eternal life. There is a certain sadness about seeing an empty crib because it reminds the viewer about the shortness of life. This particular marker is in Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta and marks the grave of the Wing baby. Photo is by Cathy Vogel.

The idea of showing empty cribs, chairs and beds relate to the Victorian idea that even though the furnishing is empty here on earth, they will have eternal life.

What are other empty furnishings have you seen in cemeteries? Have you seen others not showing chairs, cribs, and discarded clothing?



"The summer night is like a perfection of thought".

Wallace Stevens

SHAW MEMORIAL

I just finished curating an exhibition at the Cahoon Museum called "Portraying African Americans with Respect" and I included a couple of casts from Augusta Saint Gaudens "Shaw Memorial" at Boston Commons near the State Ccapital. The movie "Glory" is loosely based on the story of Shaw's African American troops.

Symbolically, what fascinates me about this work is the alle-

gorical figure above the soldiers. It carries an olive branch, a symbol of peace and poppies, symbolic of death, sleep and remembrance.

A wonderful brochure on the Memorial states "hovering over the group, the allegorical figure acts as a mediator between the real and the ideal, between the present and the past, between action and remembrance. "



**What are your ideas
for future newsletters?**



**WATERHOUSE
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**The mission of Waterhouse Symbolism is to
research and document symbols locally, regionally,
nationally and internationally.**



One the things that I love about symbols is that they are all around us and they are just waiting to be discovered. A couple of wonderful examples this month is the pony and dog gravestone that Janet Seapker sent me and the Shaw Memorial which is part of my current exhibition at the Cahoon called "Portraying African Americans with Respect". Keep those wonderful symbols coming so I can include them in this newsletter.

Take care,

Richard Waterhouse

CONTINUATION FROM LAST MONTH

Janet Seapker sent me this great photo to the right from Oakdale Cemetery, Wilmington, NC.

It marks the gravesite of "Robbie" who was born April 8, 1860 and died March 13, 1869. The epitaph reads "Our last born, Our little pet".

I just finished doing an article on Victorian childrens' graves and this would have been a great one to add. Notice the dog and the pony by themselves.

The dog conveys flattery, contempt, impurity, depravity, envy, fury, the devil, heresy, prowling enemies, scavenger, paganism, war, greed, voracity, irritability, bragging, egotism, folly, faithfulness, the priest, companion of the dead, fidelity, obedience, science, the will, flattery, bootlicking, fertility, cunning, watchfulness, courage, protection, a man 60 to 80 years old, dawn,

healing, orthodoxy, and married fidelity (especially when shown in a woman's lap or at her feet).

The pony has the same symbolism as the horse which is lust, fertility, selfishness, fidelity, vanity, stubbornness, stupidity, the unconscious, the self, war, the sun, the blind forces of primeval chaos, the instincts, the baser forces in man, a funeral animal and the ascension of Christ.

The idea of the rider less horse or pony goes back many generations and conveys death, mourning, and longing. One is reminded of the funeral of John F. Kennedy and how there was a riderless horse moving the casket through the streets of Washington, DC.

Both the pony and the dog seem to be longing for the boy.

Also notice the wonderful iron fence around the gravestone.

