

Waterhouse Symbolism e-Newsletter #9
March 1, 2007

Editor's Note:

I appreciate many of you continuing to send me wonderful symbolic grave markers. The one below, Little Girl with Bear Head, is one of those submittals.

Did you guess last month's question – what is on John Philip Sousa's grave – a Sousaphone? See below.

If you are going to be in Atlanta this spring, summer, and fall, please come to one of my Oakland Cemetery twilight tours on the following Saturdays starting at 6:30 pm: April 7, May 5, June 16, July 7, August 4, September 1 and on October 20. For non Historic Oakland Foundation members, it is only \$10 per person and all proceeds go to the historic preservation of Oakland.

Please let me know if you have any symbolism questions.

Take care,

Richard Waterhouse

This month's symbolic grave markers:

- Little Girl with Bear Head
- John Philips Sousa Grave
- The Real Rose

Little Girl with Bear Head (Green Mount Cemetery, Baltimore, MD)



This sculpture marks a young person's grave. It looks like the little girl is asleep and the idea is that she is a sleep in Jesus and will have eternal life. She is holding a shepherd's crook which, once again, goes back to the idea that she is part of Jesus' flock and will have eternal life. Usually a cloak, which she is wearing, is a symbol of mourning or grief. The head is that of a bear and symbolizes reforming and regenerating because the idea is that the bear's mother will take a shapeless form and mold into a beautiful bear cub with lots of personality. It looks that in her right hand, she is holding a pine cone which is a symbol of mortality and incorruptibility. Is she resting on a stump? If she

is, it is a symbol of the person's life being cut short before reaching her prime.

Sousa grave with Lyre (Congressional Cemetery, Washington, DC)



The lyre is a symbol and instrument of cosmic harmony. In Christian iconography it conjures up active participation in the beautiful union.

This particular lyre marks the grave of John Phillip Sousa who was a great band leader and probably best known for conducting "Stars and Stripes Forever." One of his biography states that he actually died shortly after conducting that famous American classic for the last time.

The Real Rose (Pierre Lachaise Cemetery, Paris, France)



Sometimes, you come across nature symbols added to man made monuments. In this wonderful bronze of a military hero (notice the medals on his right shoulder), someone has placed a real rose in his hand. The rose is always the symbol of love and fertility. The color red symbolizes love, virility, courage, anger, war, divine zeal, creative force, imperial power, love of God, patriotism, sacrifice, revolution, charity, sentiment, sin, primitive wildness, disease, martyrdom, blood, and loyalty.

If you have seen a bronze stature in the elements, it turns green. Green is the symbol of fertility, life, growth, rebirth, immortality, spiritual integrity, victory over the flesh, youth, hope, spring, regeneration of the spirit, freshness innocence and

peace.