



THE SILENT CITIES: GRAVEYARD ART AND ITS HISTORY

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Unusual Epitaphs

The only tombstone that purportedly now exists of a Mayflower passenger:

Here Lyeth Buried
Ye Body of Capt.
Richard More Aged 84 Years
Died 1692
A Mayflower Pilgrim

On the monument of Dr. N. Miller, a Revolutionary War veteran:

The Grave is waiting
for your body and Christ is waiting for
your soul:
O may this be your cheerful study,
to be prepared when death doth call.

A reminder of what was once a bitter resentment:

Ransom Beardsley
Died Jan. 24, 1850
Aged 56 Yr. 7 mo. 21 days
A vol. in the war of 1812
No pension

From a Burying Ground dated, 1642, in Woburn, Massachusetts

These deaths are much to be observed:
Such instances are scarce hear off (sic)
Six Weeping Children in Eight Days
Followed Father and Mother to their
Graves

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, D.C. reads:

Here Rests in Honored Glory
An American Soldier Known But to God

From the tombstone of Charles Petty, who died in 1863, at the age of 18 years:

His death occurred in nine hours after being bitten by a shark while bathing near the ship.

From the stone of Captain George Tilton, aged 71 at the time of his death in 1932:

Whaleman who in 1897 walked
3380 miles
Through Alaskan Winter to save the
lives of 2,000 men
On four whale ships caught in
the Arctic ice.

A modern sign, on an Indian burial mound near Cooperstown, New York:

White Man Greetings!
We, near whose bones you stand, Were
Iroquois. The wide land
Which now is yours was ours.
Friendly hands have given back
To us enough for a tomb.

From the Boothill Cemetery in
Tombstone, Arizona

Dan Dowd, Red Sample,
Tex Howard, Bill DeLaney, Dan Kelly
Legally Hanged March 8, 1884

Nearby, another...

George Johnson - Hanged by mistake

A narrow stone at Wellsboro,
Pennsylvania states:

Daniel E. Cole
Born February 2, 1844
Went Away
March 22, 1921
I Wonder Where He Went.

From the gravestone of Edward Cary
who was buried in 1812 in the Claypool
Cemetery, Liberty, Ohio:

Learn then, ye living! by these mouths
be taught
Of all these sepulchers, instructions
true,
That, soon or late, death also is your
lot;
And the next opening grave may yawn
for you

One of the most famous and widely
used epitaphs:

Behold my friends as you pass by
As you are now so once was I
As I am now, so you must be
Prepare for death and follow me

Inscribed on a marble shaft in the
Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Newark,
New Jersey is the following:

Andrew C. Hand - Born March 12, 1842
that Cherry Tree of luscious fruit
beguiled him too high a branch did
break and down he fell and broke his
neck and died July 13, 1862.

A sad love affair is told in the following
inscriptions on stone in the Meeting
House Hill Cemetery in New Boston,
New Hampshire:

Sevilla

Daughter of George and Sarah Jones
Murdered by Henry N. Sargent -
January 13, 1854
Aet. 17 yrs. & 9 mos

Thus fell this lovely blooming daughter,
By the revengeful hand of a malicious
Henry.

When on her way to school he met her
And with a six self cocked pistol shot
her.

Henry, regretting his tragic act, asked
that he might be buried in the same
grave but was denied his request. He
took his own life and is buried in the
same graveyard with these lines:

Henry N. -
Son of Daniel and Charlotte Sargent
Died January 13, 1854 -
Aet. 23 years & 5 mos.
Murderer of Sevilla Jones

A gravestone from Paris, Kentucky
states that:

George W. Watters
Born October 20, 1827
Murdered in Cin. O. June 1st, 1862
Here lies an honest man, but an
imprudent one.

Two stones, side by side in Little
Compton, Rhode Island state

In Memory of Lidia
Wife of Simon Palmer

In Memory of Elizabeth Who Should
have been the wife of Simon Palmer

The epitaph of Benjamin Franklin, similar to one found in an almanac published in 1771:

The Body of Benjamin Franklin
Printer, Like the Cover of an old Book,
Its Contents torn out, And stript of its
Lettering and Gilding Lies Here, Food
for Worms; But the Work shall not be
lost. It will (as he believed) appear once
more. In a new and more beautiful
Edition. Corrected and Amended

By the Author

Dr. Frances Wyche Dunn, a Columbia
University professor is buried in
Sharon, Connecticut, under a stone
inscribed with the following:

She loved flowers, birds and music.
Author of books and many articles.
Member of various honor societies.
She was a great friend and her friends
are legion over the U.S.
After a full and busy life she now rests
in the majesty of her Lord. Amen

The log shaped monument of Emily
Spear who died in 1901 states:

My husband promised me
that my body should be cremated
but other influences prevailed.

A epitaph that tells the life story of a
grave digger:

This grave was dug and finished in the
year 1833 by Daniel Davenport, when
he had been Sexton in Dorchester 27
years.
Had attended 1135 Funerals and dug
734 graves.
As sexton, with my spade I learned To
delve beneath the sod
Where body to the earth returned
But spirit to its God Years 27 this toil
I bore And midst deaths oft was spared

Seven Hundred graves and thirty-four
I dug, then mine I prepared.
And when at last I too must die.
Someone else the bell will toll
As here my mortal relics lie.
May Heaven receive my soul.
He died December 24, 1860
Aged 87 Years, 6 months, 19 days. He
buried from March 3, 1806 to May 12,
1852 - 1837 persons

Near Holmes Junior College in
Goodman, Mississippi a monument
stands with the following inscribed:

Here lies buried
John W. Shilcutt
An old Bachelor

In Rural Cemetery, located in Phoenix,
New York is the following:

An American by birth
A German Dutchman by descent
A Republican in politics
A Congregationalist in Religion
A Druggist by Profession
A Bachelor by fate.

In the City Cemetery in Ithaca, New
York:

Louisa A. Wife of Barnard Taber
Died September 9, 1871
Aged 49 years 4 m & 29 d
This monument ordered by herself

These lines from Bruton Parish
churchyard, Williamsburg, Virginia, are
for the grave of Mrs. Ann Timson Jones,
"consort of the Rev. Servant Jones."

She was born on September 1, 1787,
married on December 26, 1805,
Baptized March 3, 1822 and died on
June 6, 1849, seventeen years
having followed after her marriage to
the reverend before she was baptized.
If women ever yet did well. If woman
ever did excel

If woman Husband ere adored. If
woman ever loved the Lord: If ever faith
and hope and love
In Human flesh did live and move. If all
the graces ere did meet. In her they
were complete
My Ann, my all, my Angel Wife. My
Dearest one, my love, my life. I cannot
sigh or say farewell
But where thou dwellest
I will dwell

The disconsolate Mr. Jones was soon
married again and a persistent tradition
related that the same coach which
brought the tombstone for Ann from
Richmond, Virginia also carried Mr.
Jones home from his second
honeymoon.

A vehement epitaph from the grave of
Seth Miller who is buried in Burial Hill
Cemetery, Rehoboth, Massachusetts

My wife from me departed
And robbed me like a knave
Which caused me broken hearted
To descend into my grave.
My children took an active part
And to doom me did contrive
Which stuck a dagger to my heart
Which I could not survive.

From Norway, Maine comes the
following:

Asa Barton. Aged 54 Years. His Faults
are buried with him. Beneath this
stone. His virtues (If he had any) are
remembered by his friends. This is his
own epitaph

Memento Mori

Some stone cutters could be good
promotion men like Thomas Smith of
Springdale, Ohio:

Here lies Jane Smith, wife of Thomas
Smith, marble cutter.

This monument was erected by her
husband as a tribute to her
memory and a specimen of his work.
Monuments of the same style - 350
dollars.

*Stories on Stone: A Book of American
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Cemetery Preservation and Restoration

Cemetery Restoration and Preservation: Some Resources and Other

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Publishing, 1976

Discovering, Restoring and Maintaining Old Cemeteries by Theodore Brown,
Maine Old Cemetery Association

Markers: The Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies, Vol 1, 1979-1980

How to Record Graveyards by Jeremy Jones, Council for British Archaeology,
London, 1987

The Association for Gravestone Studies, 278 Main Street, Suite 207, Greenfield, MA
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Web Page: www.gravestonestudies.org

*Individual Membership in this organization is \$50.00 annually and members receive
a newsletter and discounts on sales items.*

Graveyard Rubbing

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