

Eugene Masonic Cemetery



The Dying Art of Gravestone Carving

Gravestone Walking Tour



Gravestone Tour



1. **Castleman:** The architectural symbolism found here is represented by columns supporting a por-

tal or shrine suggesting a passageway or door into the unknown which the deceased must traverse.

2. **Packard:** A flat marker, with flowers that, in general, signify love, reward and the frailty of life.

continued inside



Eugene Masonic Cemetery
ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 5934 • Eugene, OR 97405
eugenemasoniccemetery.org
541-684-0949

No one knows when stone carving first began. Early examples of carvings dealing with the dead are grave goods (figures of animals and humans found in graves), pictographs (pictures made by carving and scraping on stone cliffs), and carved tusks (ivory). From the arctic to the tropics, sculpted memorials and gifts to their dead are a common theme among all peoples.

In America the golden period of gravestone sculpture was from the mid-eighteenth century through the 1920s. The *rural garden cemetery movement* with its winding carriage drives and fenced family plots filled with ornate sculptures, obelisks and mausoleums replaced the village churchyard burial grounds, and “gravestone carver” became a respected and profitable profession. Many carvers were true artists whose work could be identified by their style, and some even signed their work. Full-time work in shops could be found where carvers might specialize in one part of the gravestone such as the motif or the inscription.

During the two world wars and the depression, the hand-sculpted grave marker gradually waned as there was a shortage of men for the profession and people could not afford the cost. Although there are still a few stone carvers, the handmade craft has been replaced by new technologies such as computer robotics to incise the stones. The large obelisks and massive markers have given way to small markers. Flat markers are often now required in lawn cemeteries for easier mowing and needing fewer groundskeepers.

Hand-carved grave markers may soon be a thing of the past but people will continue to honor their loved ones with evolving technologies of lasting iconography.

Gravestone Tour, continued

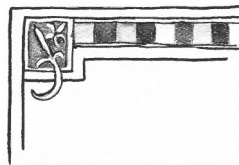
3. **Noah:** Drapery evokes mourning, death and sorrow. The closing of life, sometimes early. It may also refer to the veil between heaven and earth.



4. **Rhea:** The open drapery may evoke mourning but also symbolizes the entry to heaven or the promised land (see also #9).



5. **Reed:** A new stone etched with a checkerboard at the top, which is a new personal design. It is bracketed by a flower on either side, which is using an older symbol (see #2).



6. **Snodgrass:** Masonic emblem. The most commonly recognized emblem for the Masons is the letter G placed within the compass and square. The G may refer to God or geometry. The square and compass are extensions from the craft guild stone masons working tools which in later years were associated with moral and spiritual values of a Mason's life. Another common Masonic symbol is the All-Seeing eye with rays of light, an ancient symbol for God. (The Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten attempted to introduce the sun god Aten as the sole god in 1353 B.C. The symbol for Aten was a circle with rays of light descending to earth.)



7. **Anderson:** The hand pointing up shows the pathway to God. The lily of the valley flowers mean the reawaking, purity and humility. The cross within a crown represents the



Sovereignty of the Lord, triumph over death, the Christian faith. The crown alone can mean righteousness, resurrection, strong faith and is often seen on stones for women.

8. **Smith:** A draped urn is a traditional symbol of sorrow, mourning.



9. **McClanahan:** Festoon or garland draped between two points symbolizes victory in death and originated from Greek and Roman motifs.



The dove symbolizes the soul, purity, peace, devotion. In Christian symbolism it often represents the Holy Ghost. The dove with an olive branch refers to the dove Noah sent out to find land.



A flower bud signifies the renewal of life, but with a broken branch is often used for children as life cut short. A chain with a missing or broken link indicates the family circle has been broken by death.

10. **Chapman:** The book, when open, most frequently represents the bible, faith, or the book of life. A closed book represents the end of life. A stack of books might refer to a scholastic life or a learned person. The cross is an emblem of faith for Christians. It means resurrection for some.

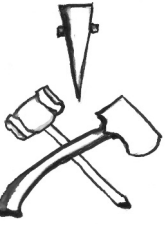


11. **Edwards:** This footstone with a lamb portrays the innocence of a child, a lamb of God.



12. **Ash:** These modern dancers are included in this walk just for fun, and to show a new technique for incising into stones.

13. **WOW:** Woodmen of the World, an insurance based organization. The photo on the cover is of our WOW tombstone. During the 1920s one of the benefits of membership was a tombstone upon death. Thus one frequently finds the WOW symbols in older cemeteries. The symbols include the tree trunk or stump representing equality and commonwealth; a dove with an olive branch for peace and a ax, beetle (mallet) and wedge for workmanship.



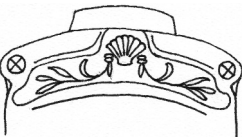
14. **McMurtry:** The tree of life has had symbolic significance since at least Sumerian times and has been continuously used by many cultures to symbolize spiritual values. The tree represents life and mortality. For many, it symbolizes strength, honor, and virtue. In Christian symbolism it represents enduring faith. The tree is also represented by a fern (see #17) or twining leaves.



15. **Pickard:** This heart shaped stone symbolizes life, love and the triumph of soul over death.



16. **Wilmot:** The seashell can represent resurrection and life everlasting. Another interpretation is for a journey, particularly a pilgrim's journey. It can also represent Christian faith. This stone also shows the tree of life.



17. **Condon:** The lilies symbolize purity, innocence, love and marriage. They can also represent resurrection as in the case of the Easter lily.

