

Written In Stone

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Symbolism in Cemeteries

Significant headstones, marble testimonies to our loved one's life spent here on earth with us, are of various design and medium. Exploring the ones here in Conecuh, I have come across the Masonic, the Woodmen of the World, the military, and a multitude of others showing respect and celebration of the life each led. I thought it would be helpful to some of you while exploring the cemeteries to know what some of these headstones meant.

There are several well-documented websites to help explain the meanings of symbols, phrases, etc on the stones found in several of our cemeteries here in the South. An excellent one I've used time and time again is the following site: <http://cemeteries.wordpress.com/category/> and thought you might be interested in seeing what it has to say. Another website that is an excellent resource tool would be this one: <http://www.graveaddiction.com/symbol.html> as it has several that are highly recognizable here in our area. For example, lambs are almost always a symbol of innocence and can be found on the tombstones of children. A wreath is a symbol of saintliness and glory; an overlarge crown sometimes to symbolize that person's life lived in cleanliness, godliness; where the lamp is a symbol of knowledge and immortality of the Spirit. Another site that shows different meanings for the Christian, or Society burials can be found here at: <http://www.buffaloah.com/a/forestL/symbols/>

I've read that possible family links to Native American ancestry can sometimes be discovered by visiting the graveyards of our dead, simply by looking for oyster shells, conch shells and seashells of certain variety. If this is true, then, we have several here in the south with Native American ancestry, as a quick tour of many of our cemeteries come up with shells of various stages of deterioration will show. If you'd like to learn more about how to 'read' the stones in a cemetery, contact me at canebrakesociety@yahoo.com or call me at 251.578.2670.