

Cemetery Tombstones, Symbols and Iconography

Lakes Region Genealogy Interest Group

August 27, 2020



- This is the headstone for Deacon Thomas Parker, my 7th great grandfather.
- He is buried in Wakefield, Massachusetts. He was one of the original 7 settlers of South Reading, Massachusetts (now Wakefield).
- Maybe someone will have some insight on the markings on his headstone.
- **Fugit hora.** The hour flies. (Latin) See next slide for Memento Mori
- On a side note, his 2nd great grandson was Captain John Parker, the commander of the Lexington Militia at the Battle of Lexington in 1775.
- Another of his 2nd great grandsons, Jonas Parker, was the first American killed in the Revolutionary War (at the Battle of Lexington).
- Source: Alan Francis



What does “Memento Mori” Mean? (Remember death/Latin)

Memento mori is an artistic or symbolic reminder of the inevitability of death. The expression 'memento mori' developed with the growth of Christianity, which emphasized Heaven, Hell, and salvation of the soul in the afterlife.

The Hermits of St. Paul of France—a religious order in the 1620s and sometimes called the Brothers of the Dead—notably included the phrase **memento mori** on their seal and were said to use it as a greeting among brothers. The hermits also kept skulls around the monastery and in their cells. (Wikipedia)

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- **This is my 8th great grandmother.**
 - **She was the daughter of Francis Cooke, a Mayflower passenger and inhabitant of Plymouth Colony. She was their last born and only child born in Plymouth.**
 - **Source: Alan Francis**



- This is the headstone of my great grandparents.
- Note the carving. A crown and a cross.
- The **Cross** and **Crown** (a **cross** passing through a **crown**) is a Christian **symbol** used by various Christian denominations. ... The emblem is often interpreted as symbolizing the reward in heaven (the **crown**) coming after the trials in this life (the **cross**) (James 1:12)
- They were both Catholics from Newfoundland.
- Source: Alan Francis



Photo added by Deb C

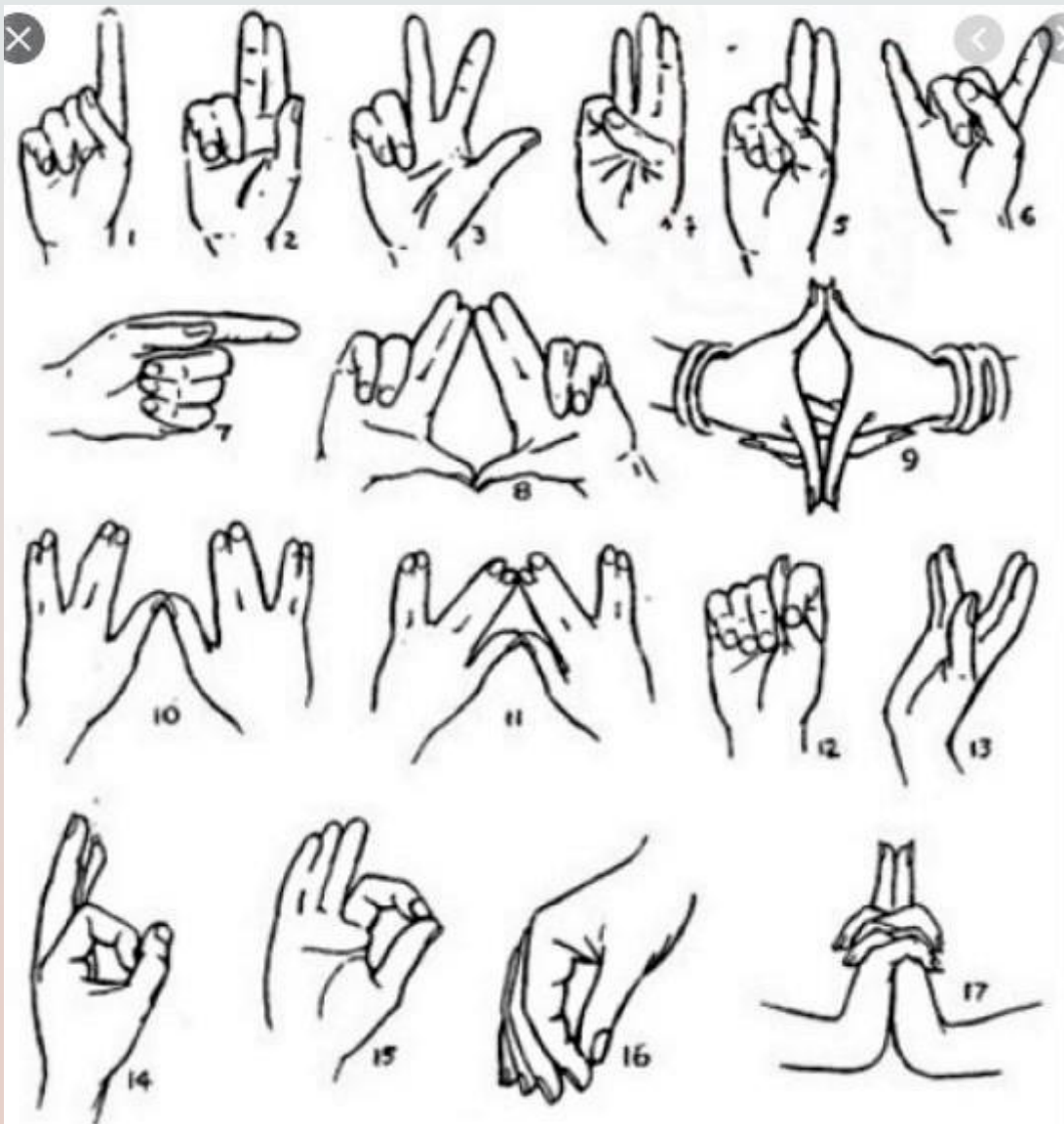
William Morey (Slide 1)

Feb. 10, 1872

AE. 58

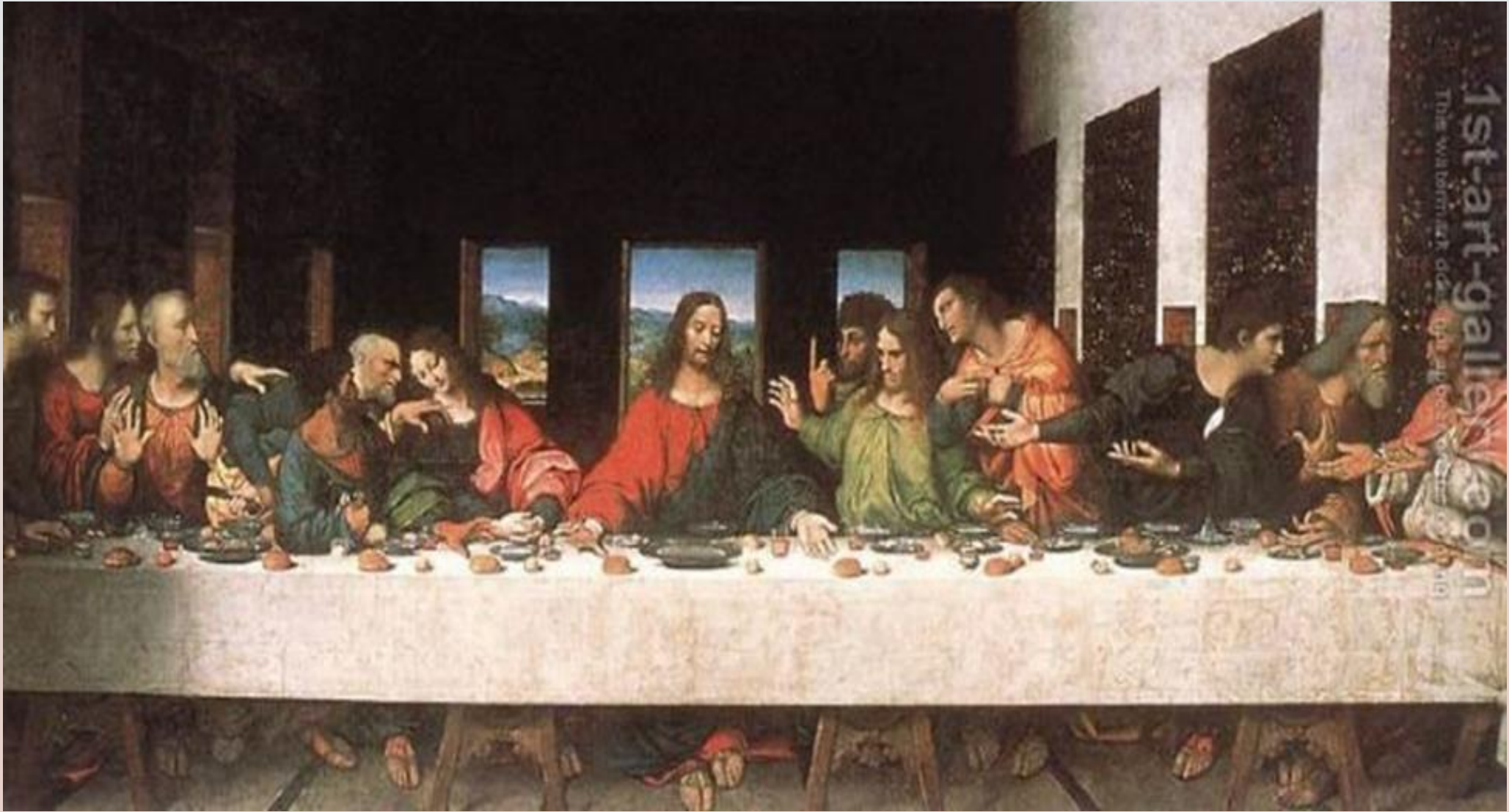
Pine Hill Cemetery, Wilmot Flat, N.H.

- **This photo was not taken by me, but when I came across this monument, I was very curious about the hand pointing up. The video we watched said this meant the person was going to heaven.**
- **I showed my photos to a friend who has attained the highest degree in the Masonic order, he said this is hand symbol used by the Freemasons.**
- **There is a lodge in Franklin, N.H.**
- **Source: Leatrice Bane**



32. Hand signs: Fig. 1 is a sign of the creator. 2, Holy Trinity. 3, gesture of Catholic and Episcopal priests in giving benediction. 4, benediction (Jewish). 5, vesica discis. 6, sign of the horns. 7, phallic sign. 8, 10, 11, mystic signs of Jewish rabbis. 9, hands of a Hindu dancer. (Compare with forms on Plate 48.) 12, sign of the fig. 13, yoni sign. 14, same as No. 7. 15, 16, yoni signs. 17, union of male and female.

- This chart shows hand symbols and gestures used by Freemasons.
- I read somewhere that Figure 1 was used by the followers of John the Baptist.
- In Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper Painting one of the Apostles uses this hand symbol.
- Source: Leatrice Bane
- Slide #2



Source: Leatrice Bane - Slide #3



- The Square and a set of Compasses joined is the single most identifiable symbol of Freemasonry.
- Both **the square and compasses** are architect's tools and are used in Masonic ritual as emblems to teach symbolic lessons.
- The “G” in the middle stands for God.
- I snipped this photo from the web.
- Source: Leatrice Bane – Slide #4



📷 This cemetery marker incorporates several Masonic symbols, including the Masonic compass and square, the three unbroken links of the International Order of Odd Fellows, and the emblem of the Knights Templar.

Kimberly Powell

The most common of the Masonic symbols is the compass and square standing for faith and reason.

The square in the Masonic *square and compass* is a builder's square, used by carpenters and stonemasons to measure perfect right angles. In Masonry, this is a symbol of the ability to use the teachings of conscience and morality to measure and verify the rightness of one's actions.

The compass is used by builders to draw circles and lay off measurements along a line. It is used by the Masons as a symbol of self-control, the intention to draw a proper boundary around personal desires and to remain within that boundary line.

The letter G usually found in the center of the *square and compass* is said to represent "geometry" or "God."

- Source: Kimberly Powell
- Provided by: Leatrice Bane
- Slide #5



- This headstone/monument is rather a unique and not too common one. It is metal, made entirely of zinc. The only one here in Alton.
 - I've seen a couple in Farmington* and one other cemetery in Wilmot. I'm sure it was very expensive at the time.
 - It is in Old Riverside Cemetery on Main St. in Row F, Lot 5.
 - Samuel Jones was in Co. "B" 18th NH Vol. Reg. He was a Corporal of the guard at the Old Arsenal in Washington, DC during the trial of Mary Surratt, co-conspirator of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.
 - He also worked to raise the funds for our Civil War Monument and his brother James M Jones was killed during the battle at Chancellorsville, VA on May 3rd, 1863.
 - James is buried on the battlefield in an unmarked grave.
 - Source: Marty Cornelissen - Alton, NH
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- *Pine Grove Cemetery



Capt Thomas Sullivan headstone:

- He founded the YMCA movement in the United States in Boston, MA in 1851.
- He is buried in Woburn, Ma, where my wife's great grandfather is buried. In searching for his headstone, I found Sullivan's nearby.
- Since, from 1956 on (youth, volunteer, part time staff member, full time professional staff and now retired and back to donor and volunteer status), I took this photo as a keepsake.
- **Note the traditional YMCA symbol engraved on the top of his headstone.**
- Source: Philp Dwyer, CT – Summer Resident/Alton Bay



- Hiram Laraway is my Great Uncle – He had bad luck.
- At Age 26 he married a 15-year-old girl with permission of her parents.
- She had four children by Hiram. The last child died at age 1.
- A year later, the wife died.
- He remarried, and then was drafted to fight for the Union Army in the Civil War, leaving his children in the care of his new wife.
- After five months of service, he was captured in Virginia during the Wilderness Campaign, and was sent to the infamous Andersonville Prison as a POW. He is buried in the Prison Cemetery.
- He died of dysentery in three months, His 2nd wife gave birth to their child two days after he died.
- His 2nd wife abandoned his three children.
- What is the significance of the number 4664?
- Source: Philip Dwyer – CT/ Summer Resident/Alton Bay



Lancy Family headstone:

My sister married John Lancy, VII of Marblehead, MA. His family traces their roots back to the Mayflower and Issac Allerton, and has a tradition of naming the first born male, JOHN.

- **Thus, my nephew is John Lancy, VIII and his son, JOHN Lancy, IX has kept the tradition going.**
- **John H. Lancy, VIII, born in 1943 is still alive at age 77, but like some, he had his name and birth date engraved, so the family only need to add the death date.**
- **JOHN Lancy, III died on the USS Constitution and was buried at sea and JOHN Lancy, IV, was buried at sea, with 11 other Marblehead vessels and 65 sailors, being lost while fishing off the Grand Banks in 1846.**
- **Source: Philip Dwyer, CT – Summer Resident/Alton Bay**



"In After Time We Will Meet Her"

- Ida May (Balsor) Varney
- She was born Ida May Balsor in 1866 in Havelock, Digby County, Nova Scotia. She was one of 8 children born to Andrew and Joanna Balsor.
- She married Frank Varney October 8, 1888 in Massachusetts. They had 4 children: 2 girls and 2 boys. It appears that the boys died at birth or soon after as no names are recorded for them.
- She died September 9, 1905 at 43 years of age in Windham ME of peritonitis.
- The clasped hands, one male and one female are shown by the cuffs on the sleeve, signifies marriage.
- The leaves on the stone most closely match palms, a Christian symbol of the believers' triumph over death.
- There is a symbol containing a picture of a wheelbarrow and wheat stocks, P. of H. (See the next slide)
- Her husband, Frank H Varney, remarried in 1908 and raised their children. (NEHGS database)
- She is buried in Stevens Cemetery, Windham Center, Maine
- FAG Memorial #77364144 (see next slides)
- Source: Jill Boyle



The Grange, officially named **The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry**, is a fraternal organization in the United States that encourages families to band together to promote the economic and political well-being of the community and [agriculture](#). The Grange, founded after the [Civil War](#) in 1867, is the oldest American agricultural [advocacy group](#) with a national scope. The Grange actively lobbied state legislatures and Congress for political goals, such as the [Granger Laws](#) to lower rates charged by railroads, and [rural free mail delivery by the Post Office](#). In 2005, the Grange had a membership of 160,000, with organizations in 2,100 communities in 36 states. It is headquartered in Washington, D.C., in a building built by the organization in 1960. Many rural communities in the United States still have a Grange Hall and local Granges still serve as a center of rural life for many farming communities. Source: Wikipedia



Ida May (Balsor) Varney

- The back of the stone has a rose, partially open with a broken stem indicating that she died at a fairly young age. The broken stem meaning a life cut short.
- The partially open rose means that the life was not in "full flower."
- (Jill Boyle)



The Davenports:

- James D – US Navy in WWII
- Lived long after he returned from war
- Louise C – She waited for her sailor to come home from the war, they married*, loved to dance, and died within days of each other.
- *June 14, 1945 – Married
- Note the beautiful dancers
- Source: Carolyn Purcell



What do you see in this photograph?

Comments – Ideas?

Source: Carolyn Purcell



Charles Samuel Paris – Corp Co C 1st N.H.H.A.

Susan Amanda Cook – his wife

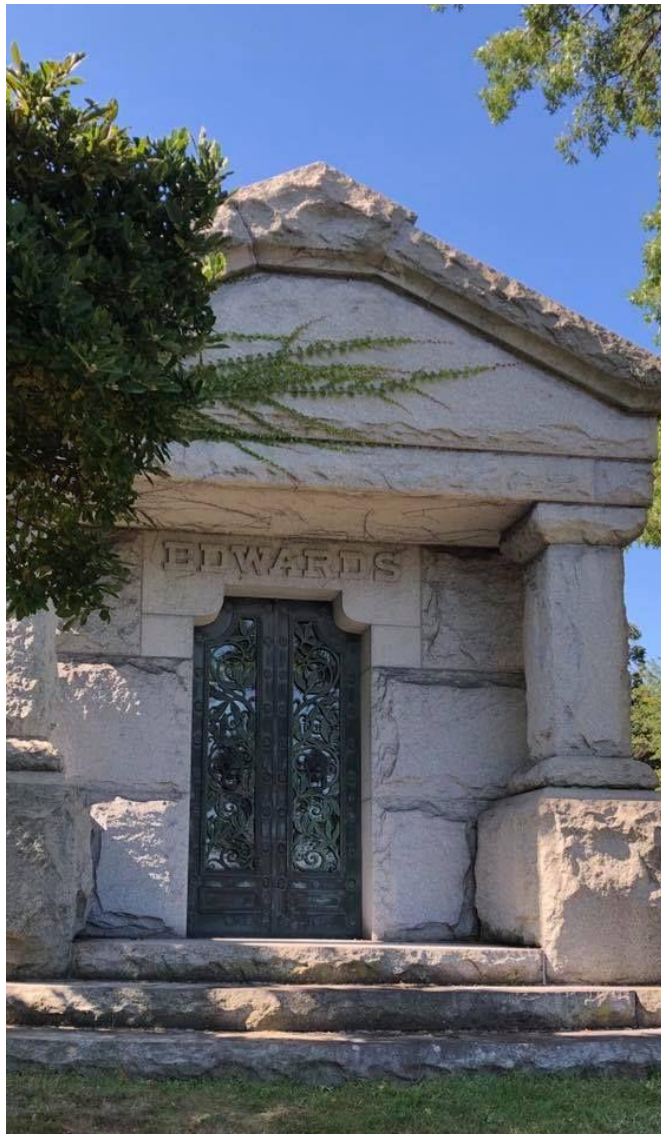
Photo submitted by: Carolyn Purcell

What is the symbol at the top of the headstone?

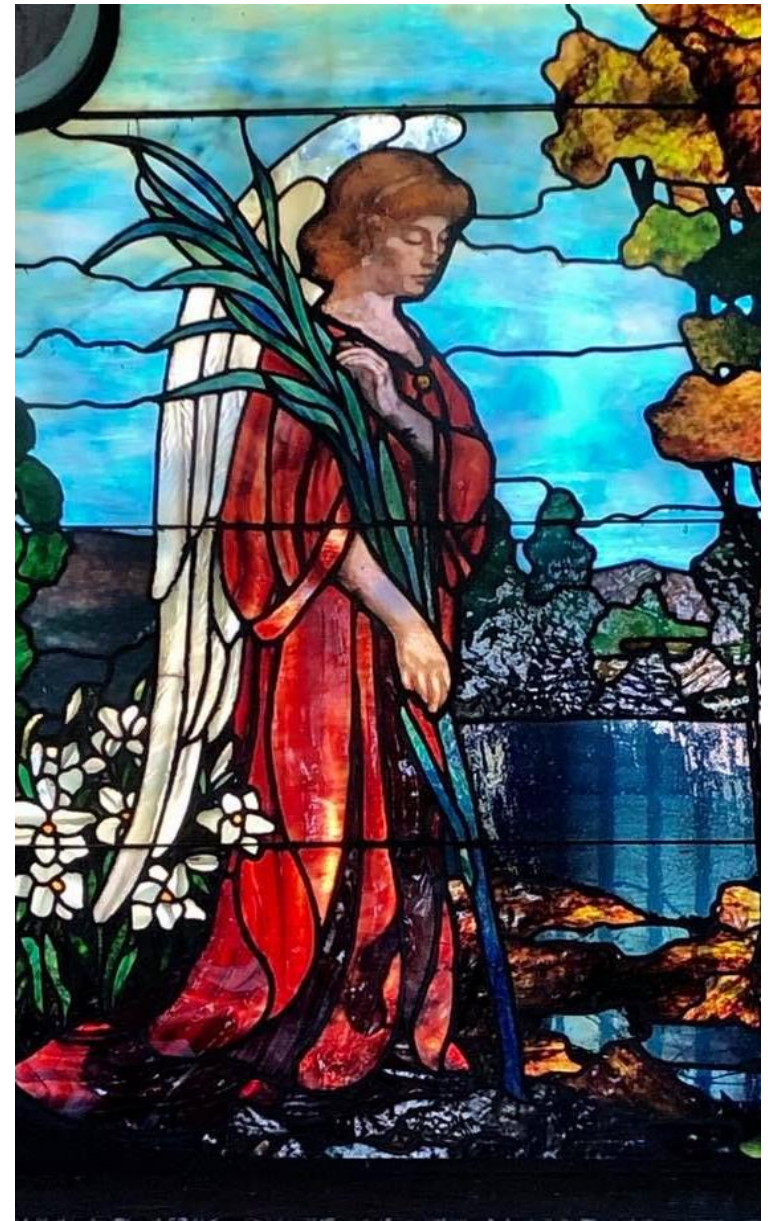
What else do we see in this photograph?

The marker has the symbol for G.A.R. (1861-1865)

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was a fraternal organization of honorably discharged Union Civil War veterans. Some of their rituals were based on Freemasonry. The GAR was founded in 1866 by Benjamin Franklin Stephenson in Decatur, Illinois. By 1890 they had 409,000 members. The GAR was involved in charity and politics, and they lobbied for soldiers' homes and pensions. They also began the tradition of Decoration Day on May 30th, now called Memorial Day. Five presidents were members of the GAR: Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield, Benjamin Harrison and William McKinley. The last GAR member, Albert Woolson, died in 1956 at age 109 (although census research indicates he may have been 106 or 108). He was also the last undisputed surviving Civil War veteran on either side. Source: Wikipedia



The Edwards Mausoleum is located at Woodlawn Cemetery in Bronx, NY. My G-Grandparents and GG Grandparents and an additional four other relatives are buried there.



The stained glass window is by Tiffany and the the front doors are bronze.

Submitted by Mary Louise Eaton

The following slides were submitted by Virginia Hansen!

Emma R. Dearburn, buried at Hillside Cemetery, Laconia

- Emma R. Hicks was born Dec. 31, 1849 in St. Johnsbury, VT, the daughter of George W. and Harriet C. (Farr) Hicks. Her father served in the Civil War from 1862 – 1865 with Co. G 12th NH Volunteers. Emma married 1st John H. Chick, Feb. 12, 1867 at Gilford, NH and they had 5 children (divorced 1887; cause adultery). She married 2nd Charles Ferow, Sep. 7 1899 at Boston, MA. She married 3rd Richard Dearburn, Aug. 14, 1912 at Haverhill, NH (oddly, the NH marriage record shows this as her 2nd marriage and her name was Emma R. Chick). She died Feb. 1, 1914 in Woodsville, NH and was brought to Laconia for burial with her parents at Hillside Cemetery, Laconia.
- Gravestone inscription and symbols:
 - “Emma R. wife of Richard Dearburn 1849-1914
 - Crown symbolizes glory of life after death
 - Fern symbolizes humility and sincerity





Evalyn Sanders, buried at Hillside Cemetery, Laconia

- Daughter of Alfred W. & Sarah J. (Vincent) Sanders; Alfred was a tailor in Laconia.
- Inscription: Evalyn “On earth six years, In heaven forever” (no dates)
- What does the Symbol mean?
- Drooping rose bud symbolizes the death of a child.



Sarah E. Smith and Aaron L. Smith buried at Hillside Cemetery, Laconia

- Sarah E. Smith died Oct. 27, 1856 Age 39 and Aaron L. Smith died Nov. 12, 1864 age 38.
- Upward pointing finger symbolizes ascent to heaven
- Notice the hands are feminine and masculine – i.e. different for Sarah vs Aaron.

Jennie P. Tucker, buried at Hillside Cemetery, Laconia

- Jennie P. Tucker was born Apr. 21, 1870 at Lakeport, daughter of Arthur and Anna M. (Sanborn) Tucker. She died May 18, 1909 at Laconia. She was a teacher and never married.
- Inscription: Jennie P. dau. of A. & A. M. Tucker, Apr. 21, 1870 – May 18, 1909.
- Point down star with pentagon is the symbol for the Order of the Eastern Star – the female counterpart to the Freemasons.





Mary Janette (Sherman) McMURPHY, buried at Hillside Cemetery, Laconia

- Mary Janette Sherman was born Feb. 12, 1839 in Lisbon, NH. She died Jan. 3, 1927 in Laconia. She married Henry McMURPHY and they had at least 2 children
- Janette was the daughter of Reuben Sherman and Ruth Smith. Reuben served in the Revolutionary War, being placed on the NH pension roll, 1832, for 20 months actual service as a Private in the Rhode Island Line.
- See the plaque attached to this headstone?
- Janette is a **“Real Daughter” of the DAR** – A Real Daughter was distinguished because she was a DAR member as well as the actual daughter of a soldier or patriot.



Mary E. and Emma J. Perkins, buried McCoy Cemetery, Gilford

- Mary and Emma were born April 1855, the twin daughters of Andrew H. and Susan (Mathes) Perkins. Mary died at Gilford, NH Sep. 16, 1870, age 15 yrs 5 months. Emma died Feb. 20, 1871, age 15 yrs 10 months.
- In 1870, Mary lived at home with her parents and Emma lived in a Boarding House and worked in a Hosiery Mill.
- The Symbol is of:
- Clasped hands, both with feminine cuffs – symbol of farewell or goodbye, The person who died first holds the other's hand, guiding them to heaven – in this case, Mary holding her sister, Emma's, hand, guiding her to heaven.



Miss Polly Blaisdell, buried McCoy Cemetery, Gilford

- Polly was born Nov. 11, 1800, daughter of Samuel and Abigail (Osgood) Blaisdell. She died Aug. 8, 1837, age 36.
- Symbol – urn with flame at top, draped in cloth, tablets at each side, an olive branch arched on top.
- The urn is a popular symbol of mourning, representing the body as a vessel of the soul. The tablets probably represent the Ten Commandments. The olive branch represents peace. All of the members of her family, buried in McCoy Cemetery have the same or similar symbols on their slate gravestones.



Sarah S. Thurston, buried Bunker Hill Cemetery, Hill, NH

- Sarah S. Huntoon was born about 1802, daughter of Samuel and Martha (Tucker) Huntoon. She died Jun. 4, 1839, age 37 years. She married Ebenezer Thurston Nov. 23, 1836 at Salisbury, NH.
- The Willow Tree Symbol:
- Willow tree symbolizes the sadness family members felt at the time of a loved one's death.



Abigail (Hedges) Hand, buried in Sagg Cemetery, Sagaponack, NY (Sag Harbor, Long Island).

- Abigail (Hedges) Hand was my 5th great-grandmother.
- Abigail Hedges was born Nov. 13, 1762 in Easthampton, NY, daughter of Daniel and Sarah (Baker) Hedges. She died Dec. 2, 1781 (soon after childbirth) in Easthampton, NY. She married John Hand and they had one daughter, Abigail Hand, born Nov. 1, 1781.
- **According to 18th century gravestone art experts, the face represents a soul effigy and may even be a likeness of crude portrait of Abigail.**



- **Charles William Hunt, MD** was born Dec. 8, 1862 in Gilford, NH, son of Thomas J. and Julia A. (Blaisdell) Hunt. He died from typhoid fever Aug. 24, 1863 at Point Lookout, MD.
- He was an assistant surgeon with the 12th Regiment, NH Volunteers during the Civil War.
- He was brought back to Gilford, to be buried with his parents in McCoy Cemetery.
- The Symbol is:
- This flag and sword were used to recognize military service, primarily in the Civil War.



Jacob Webber & his 2 wives:

- They are buried in Arch Hill Cemetery, Northfield, NH.
- First time I saw it, I thought hmmm, he's going to heaven but his wives are going to the other place?
- But no, the finger pointing up indicates ascension to heaven & the fingers pointing down mean asking God to reach down & take his wives to heaven.
- This is one of my favorites! Their memorials are on FindaGrave.



"In memory of **Deacon Josiah Haynes** who died in Freedom's cause ye 19th day of April 1775, in the 79th year of his Age. Come listen all unto this call, Which God doth make today, For You must die as well as I, And pass from hence away".

- Deacon Josiah Haynes, patriot, of Sudbury MA, who at age 78 on April 19, 1775 rode his horse in Freedom's cause to Concord . He was killed in the Battle Road Fight as the British were retreating to Lexington.
- He is buried in the Revolutionary Cemetery at the town center with other men who served in the Revolution.
- The stone has a winged death's head. But instead of a skull as used earlier, there is a face with hair on the head, so that it more depicts a person rising up.
- A rubbing of his gravestone is in the lobby of the Josiah Haynes Elementary School with some text. The text next to the rubbing states that "at age 78 he rode his horse in Freedom's cause to Concord etc."
- Jack Kay's 2 children attended this school.
- His original house and barn are still standing near the school and is privately occupied.
- He also was a Captain in the French and Indian War. He lived, fought and died for our liberty.
- Submitted by Jack Kay – photograph from BillionGraves



- An alternative to the traditional burial plot is a Columbarium –a repository for a loved one’s cremains.
- Location of the “niche” may be important – and surroundings can include benches, trees and plantings which enhance the visitor’s experience.
- Symbols in this example are:
 - Fire Fighter
 - Dept of the Army
 - Education/Teacher
- Submitted by Jane Keniston



- Known as “America’s Quaker Poet” his impact on America through his writings and anti-slavery efforts is still evident today.
- He received little formal education as a young boy growing up near Haverhill, Massachusetts but was an avid reader and as a teen, after being introduced to the works of Robert Burns, developed a great desire to write.
- In 1826, his first poems were published in the “Newburyport Free Press” which was owned by the abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison. His lifelong friendship with Garrison would help him form his strong anti-slavery views.
- The young poet’s first two published books “Legends of New England” (1831) and “Moll Pitcher” (1832) won acclaim for their description of life in rural America. He became more public in his abolitionist views when in 1833 he published the pamphlet “Justice and Expediency.” He held a seat in the Massachusetts state legislature. In 1842 he ran for Congress on the Liberty ticket and is credited with being one of the founders of the Republican Party.
- After the Civil War he rededicated his time to writing poetry. His most famous poem, “Snow-Bound” was written in 1866. He wrote many famous ballads, including “The Barefoot Boy” and “Skipper Ireson’s Ride” and over one hundred hymns, the most famous being “Dear Lord and Father of Mankind.”



Who is he? John Greenleaf Whittier – my 3rd cousin 5x removed
– Buried in Union Cemetery, Amesbury MA – Norma Milne

RESOURCE LIST – SUBMITTED BY PARTICIPANTS:

<p><u>NEW PROSPECT CEMETERY</u> How to Clean Veteran Headstones Using D/2 Biological Solution</p>	<p>YouTube – Search by this title to view by “Honor Your DNA” What not to do as well as what and how to carefully clean a headstone</p>	<p>Submitted by Jeffra Burke Kill</p>
<p>Top 5 Cemetery Websites for Finding Your Family’s Tombstones</p>	<p><u>https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/top-cemetery-websites/</u></p>	<p>Membership Required</p>
<p>Hidden Meanings of 20 Gravestone Symbols</p>	<p><u>https://www.familytreemagazine.com/cemeteries/hidden-meanings-20-gravestone-symbols/</u></p>	<p>Membership Required</p>
<p>Maine Old Cemetery Association – Preservation info</p>	<p><u>https://www.facebook.com/groups/moca.me/</u></p>	<p>Submitted by Susan Kane</p>
<p>NH Old Graveyard Assn – Preservation Information</p>	<p><u>http://www.nhoga.com/preservation.htm</u></p>	<p>Submitted by Craig Evans</p>
<p>Tombstone Photography Dos and Don'ts Ancestry</p>	<p>You Tube – search by this title</p>	<p>Submitted by Jeffra Burke Kill</p>
<p>Respectful Glass Memorials / Ashes in Glass</p>	<p><u>www.TerrapinGlass.com</u></p>	<p>Submitted by: Norma Milne</p>

[Old Burial Hill](#)

Old Burial Hill is one of the most picturesque graveyards in New England. It affords a view of Old Marblehead, the harbor, and the sea. Established in 1638 at the site of Marblehead's first meeting house, it's the burial site of an estimated 600 Revolutionary soldiers, although only a few of those graves are marked.

oldburialhill.org

I was looking for explanations of gravestone symbolism for a presentation on one of my wife's ancestor's stones. I found this website on the Old Burial Hill in Marblehead. The photography is excellent and the text is informative. I do not plan to make a presentation on this, but am sending it as a resource. The link is above. The site is at least 30 pages long and most pages are long and print to 2 or 3 pages. You can browse the entire site page by clicking "next". The easiest way to find a particular page is to go to "Site Map", then select Virtual Tour, which will bring you to the bottom where the titles of each page are listed. I have listed some of the pages below which have more generalized information.

MINISTERS' ROW -2 A stone with many symbols with explanations

POND CLUSTER -1 Has a nice explanation of the conversion from the Julian Calendar to the Gregorian Calendar in English speaking countries in 1752. It says that the English New Years day on the old calendar was Lady Day, March 25. It does not tell you that Lady Day was Annunciation Day when Gabriel told Mary that she would bear a son. This was a good day to start the year as it worked for farmers leases to start at that time. - I gave a brief presentation on this a few years ago at one of our meetings. At Wikipedia it says the British tax year still starts on April 6, which is March 25 plus 11 days of calendar correction.

POND CLUSTER 2 Comments on headstones and foot stones.

POND CLUSTER 3 Explanation of the familiar "Winged Death's Head"

REDD'S POND - Story on "Wilmot Redd of Marblehead" who was executed in the Salem Witchcraft Trials

The site has many references to General John Glover of Marblehead. Glover was a ship owner and his ship "Hannah" is considered to be the first ship of the US Navy. He commanded the Marblehead Regiment and they evacuated Washington's army in New York in a daring nighttime operation when they were trapped. His men also ferried Washington's army across the Delaware to attack Trenton. Our son and his family live in Marblehead and our grandchildren went to the Glover School.

Jack Kay

In conclusion, you have taken us to many cemeteries, viewed headstones, monuments or gravestones, learned about various symbols and icons, and how their family members wished to honor them through iconography, text and surroundings. With many of the descendants also living far away, we have brought some of their stories to light.

How has this touched your heart and soul?

Have you thought about how you want to be remembered beyond a written obituary?

Obituaries are important for family members, descendants, friends and for chronicling your life story. Perhaps your family members are great at telling stories now, some hesitate. Encourage these conversations while memories are still clear.

Thank you all for participating in this presentation. Your LRGIG team – Dee, Jeffra, Jane and Norma