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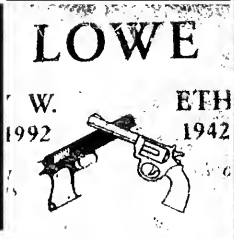

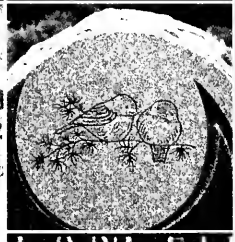

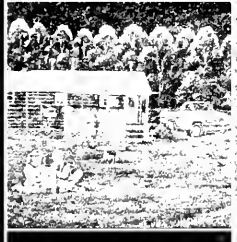

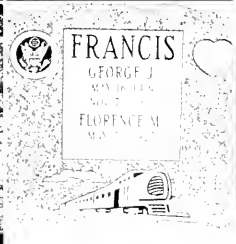

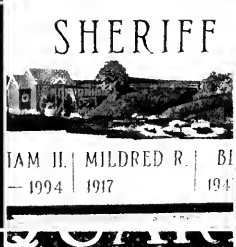

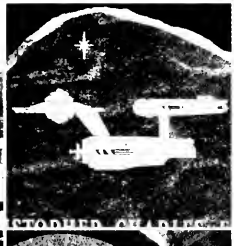

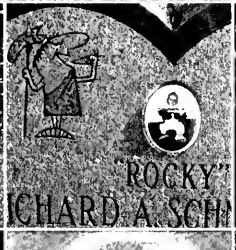

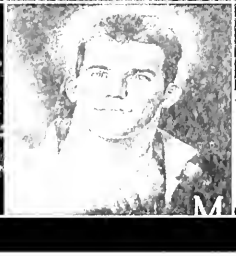

Markers XXIII

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Cover Illustration: photographs by Gary Collison.

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MARKERS: ANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVESTONE STUDIES

This year's issue reflects the wide variety of our members' backgrounds and research interests. Two articles discuss aspects of the gravestone business. Albert N. Hamscher examines the rise of modern pictorial gravemarkers in an expanded version of the presentation he made at last year's AGS conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Drawing on many sources but particularly trade publications and interviews with monument makers, he traces the role of the monument industry, technology, and consumer culture in creating and promoting the expressions of identity popular on today's gravemarkers. Using a more traditional carver-study approach, William Lowenthal looks at the development of the 19th-century monument industry by following the career of stonecarver Moses Davis of Nashua (Nashville), New Hampshire. Davis began as a small-scale craftsman in the middle of the

nineteenth century but by the end of the century had become a monument "manufacturer and dealer" and diversified death-industry businessman.

Two other contributions deal with the role that even the simplest of gravemarkers play in our individual and collective imaginations. Richard Francaviglia offers wide-ranging and suggestive speculations about the meaning of a lone 1907 Nevada gravemarker that has been lovingly visited and cared for by a variety of persons. Keagan LeJeune examines the gravestone of "Leather Britches" Smith, a notorious outlaw figure in early twentieth-century western Louisiana at the time of the labor troubles at local timber mills. He finds that Smith's gravestone functions as "a visible reminder of the town's historical notoriety" and "a tangible narrative device that sparks the retelling of the legend, facilitates the expression of belief, and redirects potentially divisive comments about family involvement in the union strife."

Finally, James Freeman's article on Singapore's "multicultural" cemetery and its dominant Chinese section describes the exotic gravemarkers and traditions that reflect Singapore's successful experiment in forming a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. As Jim's analysis reveals, the cemetery tells a hopeful story of unity in diversity in a time when too much of the world is torn by ethnic and religious strife.

Once again I thank the members of the board of editors and several anonymous scholars for their generous and conscientious assistance in evaluating manuscripts. For invaluable support both tangible and intangible, I am grateful to Dr. Diane Disney, Dean of the former Commonwealth College (now University College) of the Pennsylvania State University; Dr. Sandy Gleason, Associate Dean; Dr. Robert Caserio, Head, Department of English, the College of Liberal Arts; and Drs. Joel Rodney, Chancellor, and Joseph P. McCormick III, Director of Academic Affairs, of Penn State York. For assistance of various kinds, I am indebted to Andrea Carlin, Joe Edgette, Marie Ferré, Janet Heywood, Jim O'Hara, Brenda Malloy, Carole Wagner, and Gray Williams. I thank the members of the late Barbara Rotundo's family for supplying the wonderful frontispiece portrait and family photographs.

Markers is indexed in *America: History and Life*, the *Bibliography of the History of Art*, *Historical Abstracts*, and the *MLA International Bibliography*.

G.C.

Barbara Rotundo (1921-2004)

Obituary: Barbara Rotundo (1921-2004)

Richard E. Meyer

Where would gravestone studies be today without Barbara Rotundo? It is difficult to imagine any individual who has exerted such a powerful influence, in so many diverse and significant ways, on this field of study. Scholar, leader, mentor, friend — these are but some of the roles she assumed with her unsurpassed dedication and enthusiasm over a period of more than thirty years. Her passing on December 24, 2004, at the age of 83, has left a vast gap that can never be properly filled; but, more importantly, the memory of her beloved personality and her many achievements remains as an inspiration to all of us.

Those of us who love old (and sometimes even newer) burial places and gravemarkers, who write about them, photograph them, talk about them, work to restore and preserve them, and come together periodically in groups to share our collective wisdom and enthusiasm, often make the unwitting but quite understandable erroneous assumption that such matters constitute our only significant interest (I have often thought that the *very* first question one should ask of any new acquaintance in this field is, "What do you do in your other life?") In Barbara's case, how many of us knew that she was an economics major in college (Mt. Holyoke), held graduate degrees in English and American literature from Cornell University (M.A.) and Syracuse University (Ph.D.), founded one of the first university writing workshops in the country (SUNY/Albany), wrote a textbook on grammar, was a dedicated member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) for more than fifty years, and throughout her life devoted herself to volunteer activities with a variety of organizations, most especially the Girl Scouts of America? Had she never stepped foot into an old cemetery, or looked upon a gravestone, her life would still have been one filled with diverse and remarkable accomplishments.

But of course she did set forth into those old cemeteries, so many of them, and did gaze upon thousands of old gravemarkers, and from these experiences created a body of achievements which, for us at any rate, constitutes a legacy of immense value and importance. As a gravestone scholar, Barbara, in a pattern consistent with most everything else in her life, demonstrated a truly remarkable range of interests. Not only that, the various articles she published over the years—in particular her works on Mount Auburn Cemetery, the rural cemetery movement in America, white bronze gravemarkers, and ethnic folk gravestone fabrication—often stand as seminal works in the field (see the select bibliography at the conclusion of this

obituary). When added to these one considers the numerous contributions to the *AGS Quarterly* and the dozens of papers presented before the annual meetings of such bodies as the Association for Gravestone Studies, the American Culture Association (Cemeteries and Gravemarkers Section), and the Pioneer America Society, the record of her scholarly activity is most impressive indeed. The effect has been evident even posthumously: her last published effort, an elegantly written entry on "Cemeteries," appeared in *The Encyclopedia of New England*, released in September of 2005.

The impact of Barbara Rotundo's leadership roles within the field of gravestone studies is enormous. With regard to the Association for Gravestone Studies alone, she served as the organization's president and on several occasions as a member of its board of trustees, as a long-standing member of the editorial board of *Markers*, as a contributing editor for the *AGS Quarterly*, as the coordinating force behind the group's 25th Anniversary Fund, and in a variety of functions associated with its annual meetings, including those of program chair, registrar, participation-session facilitator, and cemetery tour leader. For these as well as her scholarly achievements, she was recognized by AGS as the 1994 recipient of the Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award, its highest honor, awarded for outstanding and significant contributions to the field.

AGS Quarterly editorial board meeting in 1994: **(from lower left) Rosalee Oakley, Barbara, Fred Oakley, Miranda Levin, and Jessie Farber.**

Barbara discoursing on a "white bronze" (galvanized zinc) monument to a group of rapt AGS conferees in 1991.

Perhaps above all else, however, Barbara should be remembered for the friendship and mentoring she graciously offered over the years to emerging gravestone and cemetery scholars and, for that matter, to anyone with a genuine and sincere interest in such matters. Yes, she could be a bit formidable at times: she had small patience for sloppy, careless work, and even less for academic pretentiousness. But in terms of a willingness to share her time and resources freely, to give kindly and thoughtful counsel, and, above all, to show sincere appreciation of and respect for the views and research interests of others, I can think of no other person who has done more over the years to encourage and bring new people into the field and to help in advancing their contributions. One need only pay heed to the many tributes and acknowledgments to this remarkable woman found in scholarly books and articles to gain a sense of the positive impact she has exerted upon others.

I, too, am most acutely aware of this impact. I shall never forget how and where I first met Barbara Rotundo, and the permanent effect this meeting had on my scholarly career. In the summer of 1982, when I was a folklorist specializing mainly in the analysis of ballad and legend texts, I found myself part of a small interdisciplinary group of scholars participating in a

Barbara enjoying time with three of her grandchildren (infant Ann Danforth, namesake Barbara Rotundo, and Nicholas Danforth, pirate) in 1989.

National Endowment for the Humanities seminar on the subject of "Tomb Sculpture," directed by Ruth Butler, Rodin scholar and professor of art history at the University of Massachusetts/Boston. It was great fun! We read Erwin Panofsky from cover to cover, viewed countless slides of funerary sculptures by Bernini, di Camaino and others, and engaged in lively discussions of the mortuary architecture displayed throughout the great cathedrals and basilicas of Europe. And then one day Ruth had a guest, an acquaintance of hers, come to visit with us during one of our semi-weekly sessions. "You know," Barbara said, "you really don't have to go all the way to Europe to see this stuff. We have our own versions right here in America – all you have to do is walk around Boston, look at the Granary and King's Chapel Burying Ground, or, better still, cross the river to Cambridge and have a stroll through Mount Auburn." We took her up on that, some of us, and for me it marked the beginning of the most exciting and personally rewarding segment of my scholarly life. As she did for so many others both before and after, she opened my eyes that day to a world of new possibilities. I'll always be grateful to Barbara for that, and for how so often over the years she listened to my thoughts, encouraged me in my work, and in countless ways helped me to be a better scholar. I suspect I am far from unique in this regard; many of us, I am certain, have stories we could tell of the ways in which she influenced us for the better. We as individuals, and the field of gravestone studies as a whole, could not have had a better friend than Barbara Rotundo. We shall miss her greatly.

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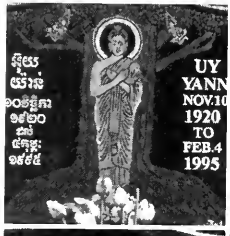
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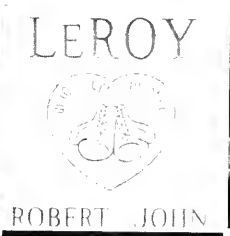
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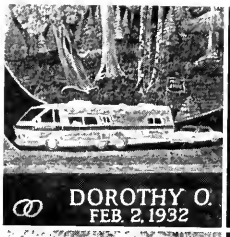
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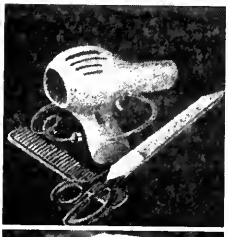


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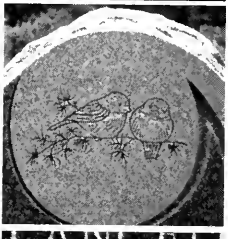

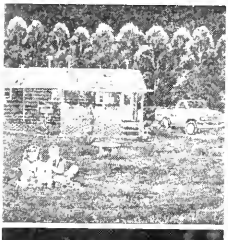

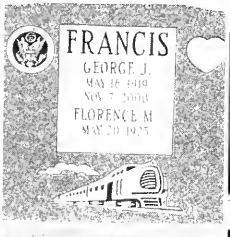
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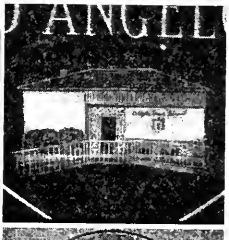
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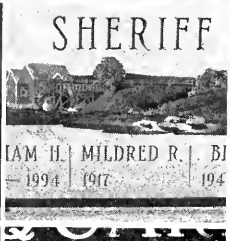
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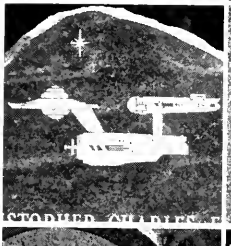

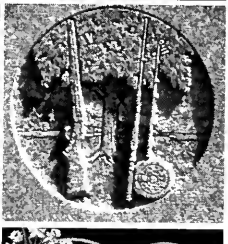


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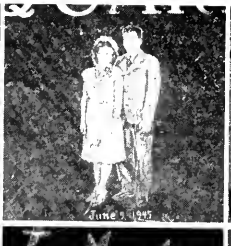

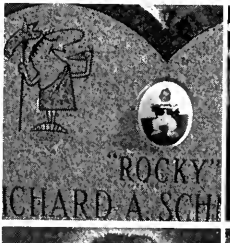
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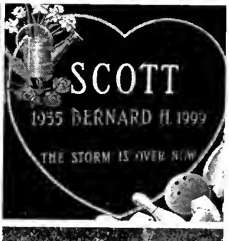
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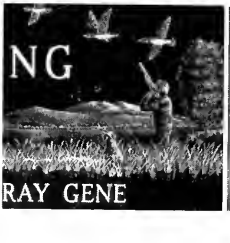
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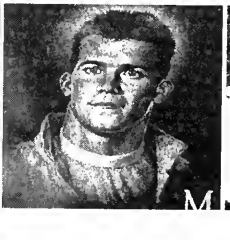

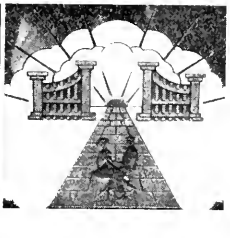

Pictorial Headstones: Business, Culture, and the Expression of Individuality in the Contemporary Cemetery

Albert N. Hamscher

For the historian, cemeteries are a valuable source for investigating a broad range of subjects concerning the collective values and attitudes of generations past. Innovation in cemetery design, or noticeable changes in the images and epitaphs displayed on headstones, are of special interest because they invite a search to identify the forces responsible for a departure from conventional norms of behavior. Because the cemetery is an outdoor museum, an archive fashioned in stone and bronze, a growing historical literature has charted the major changes in American cemeteries across four centuries and has placed these changes within the larger context of cultural structures during specific periods of study.[1] Nevertheless, the cemetery's status as a venue for retrospection has had an unintended consequence: a paucity of scholarly attention to important contemporary developments —those associated with the very recent past and those whose evolution remains under way. If the cemetery is surely a window on the past, it is equally a mirror of the present, a mirror that reflects significant patterns and trends of modern culture.

As a case in point, since the 1970s personalized headstones with pictorial images have become increasingly prevalent in the contemporary cemetery. On many recent gravemarkers, one or more images record a notable aspect of the deceased person's life and interests. Some stones convey an appreciation for the natural beauty of the immediate geographical location—a prairie sunset in the Midwest, a mountain or desert vista in the West. Others recall a person's occupation, a notable example being the different logging motifs popular in the Northwest that have been investigated by Richard Meyer. In all regions of the country, one can observe references to hobbies, sports, and other leisure activities: automobiles, motorcycles, trains, and recreational vehicles; teddy bears, horses, musical instruments, knitting needles and yarn; baseballs, footballs, golf clubs, and objects related to track and field. A portrait of the deceased person, either an etching or a photograph encased in a cameo, is also common. In brief, "Ken's Gone' Fishin'," and these days his stone is likely to depict a body of water, a boat, tackle and gear, a leaping fish or two, perhaps even Ken's smiling face.[2]

How are we to explain this impulse to express an intense sense of individuality in a setting that for nearly a half century prior to the 1970s was dominated by mass-produced stock headstones whose principal features were, to draw on the vocabulary of monument makers, "band-aids and

cabbages"—a simple notation of vital statistics in rectangular format on a stone's center complemented by a few rosettes carved in the upper corners? An answer to this question must take into account both sides of the producer-consumer relationship. The former requires attention not only to the "internal" forces within the monument business that prompted an interest in novelty, but also to the technological developments that permitted the tangible expression of this interest. But what monument makers have to offer must strike a responsive chord in the consuming public. The relationship between producer and consumer is a reciprocal one, with each responding to the other in a mutually beneficial and satisfying way. Understanding the appeal of personalized stones takes us outside the cemetery and the monument shop into the larger arena of American culture and the "external" forces that have created an environment, and a market, in which personalization and individuality could flourish.

Two preliminary observations are necessary. First, the current public interest in personalized headstones with a pictorial format is not as novel as it might appear at first glance. One need only recall the rich variety of imagery on the Puritan stones of the colonial era, the different symbols related to family lineage (and solidarity) on nineteenth-century stones, and a long tradition of occupational imagery as well as military, fraternal, and benefit society emblems to be reminded that historically many Americans have wished to make an artistic statement on their markers about what they valued in life. Vivid expressions of individuality in the contemporary cemetery seem to be out of place because they stand in sharp contrast to the uniform, plain stones that characterized cemetery landscapes from the 1930s to the 1960s. But when today's personalized stones are viewed in the broad sweep of American history, they signal a revival of a tradition rather than an abrupt appearance of an unprecedented sentiment.

With this said, contemporary designs do mark a break even with the more distant past in several fundamental ways. If every period of American history offers examples of highly artistic and elaborately carved stones, the pictorial images on many modern markers exhibit an attention to detail that few earlier stones can match. One might argue, of course, that this sophistication of portrayal simply reflects enhanced technological possibilities, and this is certainly true. But technology is woven into the fabric of culture and merits attention in its own right. More importantly, the images on modern stones are in many cases frankly secular and private in their messages. Modern stones exhibit in striking fashion a preoccupation with the "here and now" rather than with the "hereafter." Automobiles and baseball gloves displace the cross and the Star of David. In addition, the images focus on the self, on one's own particular interests, on one's own "lifestyle." The aim is not to draw the observer into a public arena of commonly shared values about, for instance, religion and the family. Instead, the observer is simply

informed that the deceased enjoyed engaging in certain activities. Larger community concerns give way to a snapshot of individual biography. "I" displaces "We." This is not to say that the deceased and their relatives who purchased personalized stones lacked religious or other deeply-held convictions, or that their personal lives were characterized by an unbridled hedonism and an absence of introspection. To make such a judgment would be a careless presumption. Nor is it to imply that headstones in the past uniformly proclaimed adherence to religious, family, or community concerns. One can discover a variety of expression even in sections of cemeteries that have stones dating to a limited time period. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the pictorial representation of the self defined in secular terms is largely, if not exclusively, a modern phenomenon that sets the present age apart from previous ones.

A second observation concerns the prevalence of the new style. One should not expect to find it in every contemporary cemetery, and when found it is not necessarily predominant. The personal preferences of purchasers are not the only consideration that figure in the selection of a marker. Cost is a factor, and cemetery regulations concerning the size, shape, and color of stones—and the visual images on them—can inhibit the introduction of new forms of expression. Even when the consumer's imagination is given free rein, religious beliefs, philosophical convictions, and community or ethnic traditions can hinder the adoption of novelty. Cemeteries are inherently conservative places, and many consumers are content with replicating what they see around them. Moreover, as Richard Meyer has noted, the presence of personalized headstones with pictorial images often depends on the efforts of one or several monument makers in the vicinity who actively promote this form of memorialization. There can be no question, however, that personalized headstones have proliferated since the 1970s and that few contemporary cemeteries do not have examples of them. By the mid-1980s at the latest, this style of personalization had become a major topic of discussion in the trade journals of the monument-making craft. And there is no sign that the trend is abating. In any case, the significance of a cultural artifact does not depend exclusively on its numerical representation. What matters most is what the artifact reveals about the collective values and attitudes that favored its introduction and encouraged its adoption.

*

The growing popularity of highly personalized headstones among monument makers in recent years is well chronicled in the craft's major trade journals—*American Art in Stone*, *Monument Builder News*, *Monumental News-Review*, and its successor, *Stone in America*.[3] To be sure, no trade or professional publication speaks for all its subscribers. But in order to retain readership, editors must report on and respond to major developments in

the field. In the decades immediately following the Second World War, numerous articles in these publications reviewed the principal business challenges confronting monument makers. One was the increasing geographical mobility of the American population, which reduced the demand for spacious family plots that could accommodate large headstones and other kinds of monuments.[4] Another was the constraints that cemetery regulations placed on the artistic creativity of monument makers and the range of products they could offer.[5] In the view of most commentators, the memorial parks that multiplied during the 1950s and 1960s posed the greatest threat to the monument maker's viability in the marketplace. As a design concept, the open lawns of the memorial parks, with their small granite or bronze markers flush to the ground, repudiated longstanding traditions of memorialization—including upright headstones and large family monuments—and rendered the services of monument makers and dealers all but unnecessary.[6]

Responses to these challenges varied. Surely, some listeners nodded in agreement when a speaker at the annual meeting of the West Virginia Cemetery Association in 1956 claimed in the heated rhetoric of the McCarthy era that "the current trend away from sentiment in this country . . . has been fostered for years by a motley assortment of atheists, communists, pseudo-intellectuals, and materialists of various breeds."[7] In more measured tones, the large majority of commentators sought concrete, practical solutions. Articles urged monument makers to adopt more aggressive marketing techniques, such as the "pre-need" sales that the memorial parks had used so effectively to gain customers.[8] Trade journals regularly reported on court decisions that prohibited cemeteries with non-profit charters from selling markers for profit.[9] Subscribers were encouraged to finance and to participate in local public-relations campaigns that aimed, in the words of one proposal advanced by the National Cemetery Association in 1953, "to promote more active use of cemeteries for memorialization activities" and "to erase from the public mind the morbidity that now surrounds the subject of cemeteries."[10] In 1959, Capitol Records released a recording by Jerry Reed entitled "Stone Eternal," which *The Memorial Builder* hoped "will make the public monument conscious [and] help to combat the no-monument cemeteries."[11]

In the opinion of many monument professionals, however, the product itself had grown stale and unappealing. "Our cemeteries are becoming uninteresting and monotonous," wrote monument designer William Patten in 1954, a view reiterated by the retailer and industry activist W. E. Luck in the following year, when he deplored "our nearly meaningless standardized stock monuments, in monotonous row on row that is simply unacceptable to modern tastes."[12] In 1958, he spoke with equal frankness about "the *public rejection* of monotonous and meaningless stone-yard cemetery sections that

made possible the rapid spread of the Park idea."[13] The root of the problem, according to monument designer Conrad Kennerson, writing in 1960, was "the 'terrible thirties,' the dark years when what may be called the economic phase of monument design came into being, . . . [when] labor saving machinery . . . [produced] plain slabs . . . [that] failed to convey a real message of sentiment."[14] In 1971, monument designers Aldo and Rose Marie Pitassi regretted the possibility that when future generations examined "the spirit of 20th-century America" as reflected in its cemeteries, "they might even surmise that we were the victims of an automated culture; four-sided, standardized people without imagination, without color, without soul." Two years later they warned that "our monuments still speak the language of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century—or what is worse, they say nothing at all. Small wonder that many of our potential buyers decide to have their anonymity elsewhere."[15]

But by the early 1970s, the Pitassis were preaching to the converted. In the 1950s, there was already a growing consensus among monument makers that "personalization" provided a way to revitalize the craft and to combat the memorial parks. Of course, the personal touch could take many forms, including carefully crafted epitaphs and a knowledgeable selection of appropriate, if traditional, symbols that conveyed the essence of the deceased's core values.[16] Objects dear to the deceased were also considered to be appropriate in monument design, but as yet vivid pictorial images had few adherents. Between 1950 and 1954, *Monumental News-Review* published a series of "Case Histories in Personalizing Memorials" with illustrations by the designer Ernest Leland. The message of the articles was that personalization could be captured in a headstone's shape, contour, and line. "True, an automobile design [for a deceased automobile dealer] in itself would make a bizarre memorial; but why not capture the feeling of streamlining in the flow of the line?" The headstone of a florist might "develop a contour, which in the flow of line, recalls this subtle and unrivalled beauty of contour in Nature."[17] Indeed, as if anticipating future developments, one commentator cautioned against any "vulgar display of human vanity."[18]

Stones with pictorial images were erected in the 1950s, but they were normally confined to local celebrities—the muscular torso of the high-wire circus performer, the "stratosphere man," Arzeno Selden; a trumpet on the headstone of the jazz musician W. C. Handy.[19] These were modest beginnings, but during the following decade trade publications promoted the wider adoption of this form of memorialization. In 1960, *Monument Builder News* sponsored its first annual memorial design competition, reserving one category for "pictorial monuments." Winners included stones with the image of a lighthouse, of a farm scene with cattle, and of a man astride his horse.[20] In the same year, Kale Mathias, president of the Monument Builders of America, put aside reservations about vulgar displays of vanity and re-

minded readers "that the human being is basically selfish. He was created that way. We must make him want monuments for his own purposes, and we must make him feel the acute inadequacy of any other type of memorial plan."[21] A 1965 survey of over 1,300 retail monument dealers across the country—sponsored by the Elberton Granite Association in conjunction with the Area Redevelopment Administration—did not explicitly address the subject of pictorial images on headstones. However, it did report that 62 percent of the dealers surveyed "felt that their customers would prefer to choose from a variety of types and sizes of monuments," a phrase that the Pitassis interpreted to mean that the purchasing public "still regard[s] the selection of a memorial as a personal matter in which they desire to express their individual tastes, emotions, and religious belief. . . . Personal identity is the need of this generation."[22]

Despite calls for innovation, the cemetery landscape of the 1960s remained for the most part rooted in the tradition of stock designs, of "band-aids and cabbages," of rosettes and the standard symbols of the cross, the Star of David, praying hands, and linked wedding rings. There were certainly more stones of colors other than gray—impala black, apache red, and premier rose granites, for instance—and stones with other than rectangular shape—hearts, triangles, and slanted monument faces. But detailed pictorial images remained exceptional.[23] As one peruses trade publications from the 1960s, one senses an impatience with the status quo, a desire to enter the "Space Age," as Kale Matthias put the matter; or to engage, in the words of the Pitassis, "the spirit of the age, the quick, restless, curious, moving, questioning spirit of modern man."[24]

The obstacles to further change were considerable, however. Some of these were technical in nature: traditional sandblasting techniques allow for only so much detail, and the hand labor necessary to prepare pictorial images increased the expense of a headstone and no doubt deterred some cost-conscious consumers. Equally important, consumers on their own initiative were unlikely to entertain creative alternatives unless they were encouraged to do so by monument makers and retailers themselves. The rhetorical question posed by a monument maker in 1984 was implicit in numerous journal articles in the 1960s: "What makes a personalized scene sell? We offer it. A lot of dealers don't."[25] On this score, most monument makers in the 1960s were reluctant to depart from ordinary ways of doing business. "Design duplication is perhaps one of the worst faults of the average dealer," wrote monument designer J. B. Hill in 1961.[26] According to an executive of the Rock of Ages Corporation, A. B. Yeager, writing in 1969, "The press of competition between the wholesale granite centers on the national level, and the hardnosed in-fighting often encountered on the local level have a tendency to remove elements of personalization design from the sale and to rely on so-called 'stock design' to provide a generalized appeal and not require too

much sales effort." He believed that a "considerable portion of the public still resists the concentrated efforts of Memorial Park sales counselors to sell [the no-monument] concept." But he also warned that "this market will gradually diminish . . . unless we keep it alive by devoting our best efforts to the promotion and sale of *meaningful* monuments."[27]

Only in the 1970s, and even more so in the 1980s, did headstones with a pictorial format become well represented in the contemporary cemetery and a topic of discussion in nearly every issue of the major trade journals. In 1974, *Monumental News-Review* reported that "complete outdoor scenes, depicting hunting, fishing or nature hobbies are becoming increasingly popular," and the list could be expanded to include musical instruments, horseshoes, automobiles, pets, and numerous other representations of the deceased person's interests.[28] In a lengthy article on the history of memorialization written in 1976, Eileen Mueller, associate editor of *Monument Builder News*, reviewed recent developments and concluded that "while individualism has not yet captured the mass market, we believe we are presently experiencing an important turnaround in attitudes toward both design and the very concept of memorialization that will be significant to the future."[29] In 1978, the Monument Industry Information Bureau published a widely-disseminated pamphlet—"an important tool for monument dealers"—that urged consumers to consider "artistic personalization" when purchasing a marker, by choosing "additional artwork [as well as an inscription] which has particular family meaning."[30] By the late 1980s pictorial headstones had become sufficiently widespread that differences in design by geographical region were evident: "In New England," noted monument designer Peter Quinlan, "we have lots of scenes depicting hunting or fishing activities, with deer, fish, and boats incorporated into the artwork," while on the West Coast vineyards, mountains, rolling valleys, and seascapes sold well.[31] In 1987, monument designer N. W. Thomas summarized the trend succinctly: "I remember when we put a little rose on the top corner and that was it. Now, people want horses and teams, mountains, rivers, streams, deer, elk and just about every other kind of hobby or something special on their monument." A year earlier, a monument dealer in Columbus, Ohio, was more to the point: "There's virtually nothing we can't put on a monument."[32]

Technological developments were an important ingredient in the successful promotion of pictorial memorials. As a point of departure, since the 1930s sandblasting has been the standard method for carving design elements on headstones. The traditional procedure begins with the application of a temporary adhesive on the polished surface of a granite stone. The monument maker then affixes to the stone a sheet of rubber. Next, a carbon pattern is transferred to the rubber sheet with a gentle rubbing motion. Using a sharp carving knife, the monument maker then cuts and removes the lettering and other carving impressions. The stencil is then subjected to

Fig. 1. Operator using a sandblasting machine to etch a stencil design onto a gravestone.

a stream of sand or other abrasive material applied with strong force (Fig.1). In the places where portions of the stencil have been cut out, the abrasive erodes the stone to the desired depth. Where the stone remains protected, the surface is untouched. With this process completed, the monument maker can then use a narrow stream of abrasive or pneumatic tools to carve flowers and other ornamentation.[33] To the present day, monument makers utilize the basic elements of sandblasting—designs cut from a rubber stencil and the application of abrasives to erode the stone's surface—in order to carve design elements on most of the headstones they produce. Over time, however, the process has become increasingly sophisticated owing to technological advances. Three in particular are noteworthy.

First, during the 1970s, the invention of several photo-engraving techniques enabled monument makers to transfer portraits and other images taken directly from photographs to the blast stencil. Early examples tended to be either grainy in appearance or little more than rough outlines of an object with only a modest degree of shading and highlights. By the late 1980s, refinements of the process permitted the reproduction of photographs on a marker with great clarity and detail. A picture is re-photographed and its negative, which can be either enlarged or reduced in size, is attached to a photo-sensitive stencil. The negative and the stencil are then subjected to an intense light that "burns" the negative image onto the stencil. After a chemi-

cal solution enhances the image, the stencil is affixed to the stone and blasted with fine grit.[34] The procedure yields the best results on dark stones, notably "black granite" (actually, charnockite) that exhibits all shades of contrast in sharp detail. Dark granites have been available in the United States since the 1950s. But in the early 1980s, international market conditions—a strong dollar, relatively low wage rates abroad, subsidies by foreign governments to their profitable industries, and so on—resulted in a sharp increase in imports of granite, including black granite from South Africa and India. A fortuitous business climate for consumers, in this case monument makers, thus offered a raw material at reduced cost that could accommodate technological progress.[35]

Second, beginning in the mid-1970s, monument makers began to use a device called a "lucygraph" that previously had been widely used in the advertising industry to reproduce display graphics. The machine, which looks much like a microfilm reader, projects enlarged or reduced images of photographs, portraits, printed material, and even three-dimensional objects. The projected image can then be traced and transposed to a stencil for sandblasting. According to one enthusiast, this "personalization tool" solved "the historic problem of altering the size of a design to fit just about any size memorial." By 1984, over 200 monument retailers had purchased the device.[36] The "lucygraph revolution" was short lived, however, because the photocopying machine, whose reproduction capabilities also expanded in this period, could often accomplish the same task at less cost. More importantly, by the mid-1980s the third important development had begun: monument making entered the computer age.

In the mid-1980s, several companies developed a "computer assisted design" (CAD) system for monument makers. The system has two basic components: the standard computer-monitor-mouse apparatus and a "plotter" to cut sandblast stencils (Fig. 2). Using commercially produced software, the monument maker can call to the monitor screen a broad range of text fonts and graphics, retaining or modifying them at will. With the use of a scanner, camera-ready artwork can also be entered into the system. One can even begin with a blank screen and use the mouse to draw design elements on the monitor. In all operations, the user can reduce or enlarge images, rotate them in all directions, and either fill in or erase sections of the artwork. Designs, in brief, can be "modified with an almost infinite number of lettering styles and carving selections," a feature that is well suited for producing pictorial headstones. Saving images on disk enabled the monument maker to build a graphics library for future use. As monument designer Tony Caldwell observed, the CAD system "gives you a drafting board, a pallet, to work on." Once the digitized image is completed, it is sent electronically to the plotter for cutting on a perforated stencil roll. As the computer expanded the artistic horizons of monument makers—horizons that progressively widened

as computer memory increased over time—so the plotter reduced manufacturing costs and performed more accurate and uniform cutting than the traditional hand method. By 1989, several hundred monument makers had purchased a CAD system, and it remains an important technology in the monument industry.[37]

Technological advances were not limited to the refinement of sandblasting techniques. In the late 1970s, and especially during the 1980s, monument makers began to etch pictorials directly on headstones much as a painter works on canvas without the mediation of another procedure (in the case of monument makers, sandblasting). Hand etching entails placing a series of one-sixteenth inch cuts on the stone's polished surface (Fig. 3). When etching is performed by a skilled practitioner—and the procedure does require both practice and artistic talent—the result is a pictorial image of stunning detail and, by any reasonable aesthetic standard, beauty. As *Stone in America* reported in 1985, "the use of etchings . . . has been a breath of fresh air in the monument industry. . . . The kind of detail available through etchings has never existed before." As with the other techniques considered above, monument makers used to their own advantage developments in other fields. Similar to the case with photo-engraving procedures, etching is best accomplished on dark, especially black, granite. Dark stones show the contrasting white "scratches" to the best advantage, and permit a three-dimensional

Fig. 2. CAD system used to produce rubber stencils for sandblasting the final design onto a gravestone (plotter in the background).

Fig. 3. Hand-etching with a diamond-tipped engraving tool.

effect. As noted earlier, black granite became widely available at reduced cost in this same time period. Moreover, hand etching requires the use of a hand-held diamond-tipped engraver, an implement that was prohibitive in cost prior to the invention of artificial diamonds in 1954 (and their commercial application, first in the metalworking industry, in the late 1960s). When Peter Quinlan noted in 1988 that "the man-made diamond is the single biggest development in the last 50 years for the memorial industry," he was referring primarily to quarry machines (saws, boring machines, polishers, and so on) and to the industrial operations used to shape and give texture to the headstones sold to monument makers. But his observation applies equally well to hand etching as a method of completing the final product for consumers.[38]

In recent years, laser technology has offered an additional way to etch images directly on a marker. In this process, the computer converts a photograph or other graphic into a code. As the laser nozzle sweeps over the surface of the stone, the code turns the thin laser beam on and off in order to burn away the polish. Because the beam can sweep the same section of the stone several times, the resultant image exhibits a high degree of detail and contrast.[39]

However important technological advances were in the production of pictorial headstones, one must return full circle to monument makers themselves in two respects. First, echoing the observation that "We offer it. A lot of dealers don't," designer Ken Huffaker observed in 1984 that "I think retailers are pulling the string. If you're enthused about it [the pictorial memorial], your customers will be too."[40] Throughout the 1980s, the trade journals attempted to generate enthusiasm for pictorials not only by reporting on the latest technological advances that enhanced their detail and quality, but also by publishing articles that featured firms across the country that had enjoyed retail success in promoting pictorial memorials to the public. With such titles as "Picture Perfect," "Personalized Pictorials," and "Adapting to New Trends," these articles spoke with optimism about the "wave of the future" and "a new trend becoming increasingly popular" that was destined to enjoy a "healthy future."[41] There was also an effort to reassure monument makers that pictorials were not an eccentric departure from the past but the continuation of an American tradition. "Back in the 1800s," noted monument designer Chuck Guest in 1984, "the old slate and marble stones had a whole paragraph written about the person who was buried there. All we're really doing is putting a picture there instead. Isn't a picture worth a thousand words?"[42] At the same time, the journals included articles about the activities of the younger "baby boomer" generation of monument makers who came of entrepreneurial age in the 1970s and 1980s and who "are striving for change and are excited by new contemporary designs."[43] In this

way, the trade journals updated the appeal of tradition—an appeal that came naturally to practitioners in a conservative industry—by giving it the imprimatur of youthful exuberance.

Efforts to promote pictorial headstones no doubt gained momentum in the 1980s because a new business challenge emerged: cremation—"the bogey man of the future" and "a trend that can no longer be ignored."[44] The practice of cremation in the United States was rare in the 1950s and 1960s—3 to 4 percent of all deaths—but rose progressively thereafter—6.6 percent of deaths in 1975, 9.2 percent in 1980, 13.9 percent in 1985, 17.1 percent in 1990, and 27.8 percent in 2002.[45] Monument makers viewed cremation, as they had earlier the memorial parks, as a threat to their retail business. They correctly assumed that many people who chose cremation preferred the scattering of ashes to traditional forms of memorialization, including permanent markers. As Karl Swenson, president of the Rock of Ages Corporation, told a convention of memorialists in 1987, "The major concern with respect to the cremation rate (estimated to be more than 25 percent of the national death rate by the year 2000) as it relates to our business is the fact that a substantial portion of cremations (an estimated 80 percent) are now not memorialized."[46] Monument makers could take some comfort from two national surveys concerning the death care industry conducted by the Wirthlin Group in 1990 and 1995 that were less pessimistic. They found that 47 percent (1990), then 50 percent (1995), of respondents who were likely to choose cremation for themselves or for loved ones also planned to purchase a monument or marker.[47] Personalized headstones were viewed as a way to attract this potential clientele. As monument designer David Quiring had already observed in 1985, "A lot of people in our industry feel the way to lead people away from the scattering idea is to give them more value in the cemetery. . . [by giving] customers more options."[48] That technological advances permitted the placement of crisp images on the small, flat markers found in the memorial parks and in many cemeteries in the western United States no doubt added to the appeal of pictorial headstones among monument makers.[49] It is also possible, although difficult to establish with certainty, that the business consolidation that occurred in the monument industry beginning in the 1960s—with many small "mom and pop" operators giving way to fewer, larger enterprises—also contributed to the emergence of a critical mass of monument makers who were interested in pictorial markers. The large enterprises served wider market areas than in the past, and they had the financial resources to purchase the latest equipment and to offer consumers a greater range of monument styles.[50]

A second comment about the role of monument makers and dealers in relation to the trend toward pictorial markers concerns the creative energy of individual monument makers. Well before such technical advances as

photo-engraving, the lucygraph, and the computer became common instruments of design, many monument makers had made great strides in the artistic quality and detail of pictorial markers, using techniques associated with traditional sandblast methods. The growing sophistication of their work becomes apparent as one peruses the trade journals over the course of the 1970s and 1980s. The procedures described by monument designers Chuck and Beth Guest in 1984 suggest the range of possibilities that traditional techniques permitted without the latest technical advances: "polish, which leaves the darkest color; blueing over polish, which is a little lighter and which entails using granite dust to take the shine off the polish; blueing over steeled, which entails blowing the polish off with steel shot and then blueing it; and frosting, or steeled, which produces the lightest color and which requires blowing the polish off with steel shot and leaving it that way."[51] In brief, technology reinforced an artistic trend but did not initiate it.[52]

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In 1982, Mike Johns, president of the American Institute of Commemorative Art, observed that in the American cemetery pictorial markers "are the only thing to come along in the past 25 to 30 years that has established itself as reflective of our times."[53] His reference to "our times" reminds us that all the efforts of monument makers and their trade journals to promote the new style, and the technological advances that permitted an increasingly sophisticated expression of this style, would have counted for very little if pictorial markers with secular themes offended the sensibilities of the general public. Quite to the contrary, this form of memorialization was compatible with several broad currents of American culture in the post-war era. Four in particular merit attention: the resurgence of individualism, especially since the 1960s; the evolution of consumer tastes; changes in religious perceptions; and attitudes toward death, always an important consideration when examining funerary art. These are wide-ranging subjects that can be treated only briefly here.[54] Moreover, future scholars may wish to amend or add to this list. Nevertheless, even a cursory overview of these subjects, whose importance has been recognized by scholars as well as by monument makers themselves, offers a fresh approach to the larger task of placing the contemporary cemetery within its cultural context.

When, as noted above, W. E. Luck spoke in 1955 about the row upon row of meaningless stock monuments that dominated the landscape of the modern American cemetery, his remark presaged to a remarkable degree the architectural critic Lewis Mumford's broader indictment in 1961 of suburbia with its "multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads."[55] Mumford in turn echoed a large group of academics, social commentators, philosophers, and novel-

ists who deplored the spirit of conformity that infused American society in the late 1940s and 1950s. To be sure, one must resist the temptation to find what historian William Chafe called "the tyranny of mindless conformity" in all aspects of American life.[56] Even Levittown, the archetype of suburban complacency and conventionality, exhibited a diversity of lifestyles, political views, and social interaction. But there can be no doubt that the impulse to conformity could be observed in many ways: the common experience of television that, in Chafe's words, "reinforced the conservative, celebratory values of the dominant culture"; the "organization man" who relinquished self-assertion in the corporate arena; the social criticism of existentialist philosophers who viewed the individual as powerless, enmeshed in a network of systems beyond his control; and so on. There was also a general sense that conformity bred anonymity in modern life, that "people are only numbers." The social movements of the 1960s—feminism, civil rights, protests against the Vietnam War—and the emergence of a youth culture centered on "baby boomers," many of whom challenged the conventional values of their parents, did much to sharpen the critique of conformity and to offer in its place a cultural ethos of individualism and self-expression, of "doing one's own thing." There was a "hypertrophy of personhood in each one of the sixties movements," according to historian Loren Baritz, who added that "in no other time and place has the cult of personality been so pervasive."[57] A "desire for personal fulfillment and self-realization" remained a "core value" in the following decades.[58] The ethic of individual gratification developed to such an extent that some scholars have argued that since the 1960s, American culture has entered a "postmodern" phase characterized by a complete break with the past and reduced ties to traditional social institutions. According to sociologist Abby Collier, "The personalizing trend among the gravestones lends empirical support to the theory that postmodern American culture is becoming more individualistic and present-oriented."[59]

The connection between change in memorial art and what monument designer Bert Gast called a "public looking for identification in a computerized society" became a recurrent theme in the trade journals from the 1960s onward.[60] In 1969, for example, the Pitassis reminded readers of *American Art in Stone* that "man is fast losing identification in every area of his life. . . . A personal memorial contains a unique balm for the spirit impaled on the impersonality of 'progress'—a balm that only we can give."[61] A decade later, Gast, who founded the Memorial Art Correspondence School in 1973, spoke in terms reminiscent of Mumford's and arrived at the same conclusion: "Architecture and memorial art have always been closely linked," he observed, "so we see the repetitious 'ticky-tacky' row upon row of sameness in many housing developments, which to me is the same as the row upon row of three-foot and three-foot, six-inch polished two or polished three dies [surfaces above the base] that we are setting in our cemeteries." He

predicted with confidence that the "public of the eighties will seek personal identity, and permanent value because of the increasing anonymity of our society. Believe me, the public is tired of just being a number."[62] In 1988, John Diannis, executive vice president of the Monument Builders of North America, concisely summarized the convergence of public mood and innovation in monument design in terms that linked social observation to its business implications:

> The Vietnam War brought a social upheaval to the United States, but one of the positive results has been a strong desire on the part of the young to be individuals. This has been accelerated by the technology of our time which tends to reduce everyone to a set of numbers: social security numbers, bank account numbers, charge card numbers, zip codes, the numbers go on and on. There is a de-personalizing effect in all of this. *Almost as if on cue*, people began to respond to the memorial designers' suggestions to "personalize" their monuments, to develop designs and use symbols that tell something about them as the individuals they really are.[63]

What Baritz called the "hypertrophy of personhood" had found its expression in the contemporary cemetery.

The trend toward expression of individuality in the cemetery took place in the larger framework of developments in consumer culture. To be sure, in post-war America there have been a number of constants in the relationship between producers and consumers: the ubiquitous presence and relentless pace of advertising aimed at enticing the public to purchase an ever-expanding array of goods; the process of what might be called "creative destruction" in capitalism that entails both the (often planned) obsolescence of current products and the introduction of new ones; the emergence of "niche" marketing that offers specialized products to well-defined segments of the population (by age, sex, race, income, and other variables); the growth of overall family income and the availability of credit that permitted the acquisition of all manner of goods, and so on.[64] If forces such as these promote innovation in the marketplace, however, they do not determine the direction of innovation. And it is this direction that enables us to link consumer attitudes to pictorial markers.

In a study of consumer behavior, Virginia Postrel offers several insights of interpretive value to scholars of the cemetery, even if she does not explicitly address trends in funerary art. Postrel has detected in recent decades a widening of the aesthetic horizons of the general public, a broad and growing interest in the "look and feel" of things, in "decoration and adornment," that has taken many forms—from airports decorated like Starbucks,

and hair dye for men, and cosmetic dentistry to an expanding variety in the texture, color, and style of clothing, jewelry, and even household fixtures. For much of the twentieth century, she notes, "the broad public enjoyed the expanding benefits of standardization, convenience, and mass distribution, with much less emphasis on look and feel than on other sources of value." In the past few decades, however, "sensory appeals are everywhere, they are incredibly personalized, and they are intensifying." The proliferation of computers and sophisticated software has sustained this trend because "aesthetic-friendly tools have simultaneously raised expectations and encouraged stylistic plenitude," an observation that recalls monument designer David Quiring's observation in 1991 that "average consumers are becoming more graphically sophisticated. In the past ten years, they have been exposed to more and more graphics through publications like *USA Today* and through advertising." For Postrel, "the computer-driven democratization of design has made more people sensitive to graphic quality . . . and once people get used to a certain level of conscientious aesthetics, they don't want to go back." Without mentioning cemeteries, one of Postrel's observations is especially compelling because it encapsulates the entire phenomenon of pictorial markers: "Even when the general form of something has rendered an enduring ideal—the layout of book pages, the composition of men's suits, the structure of automobiles, the shapes of knives, forks, and spoons—we crave variation within that classic type." Viewed in the light of Postrel's findings, the evolution of consumer tastes towards an enhanced appreciation of aesthetics provides yet another context for understanding the artistic landscape of the contemporary cemetery.[65]

Among monument makers, as among most producers of consumer goods, there has been a special interest in the tastes and buying habits of the "baby boom" generation born between 1946 and 1964 (77 million births in the United States alone). In 1985, when the interest in pictorial headstones was gaining momentum, "boomers" accounted for roughly one-third of the American population. As is the case with any population cohort, boomers exhibit a diversity of interests, lifestyles, religious and political views, levels of education and income, and so on. But most observers would agree that, as a group, boomers are willing to challenge tradition, to promote the expression of individualism, and to take an interest in what Postrel called "decoration and adornment." Full participants in a "culture of choice," boomers experienced the transition to what demographer Cheryl Russell has called the "personalized economy." Unlike the industrial economy that prevailed during much of the twentieth century—an economy "based on the production of mass-produced products"— the personalized economy "is based on the production of customized products for individualistic consumers" that reflects a larger "demand for personal control." [66] Since childhood, boomers have also been in the thrall of what social critic Landon Jones has called "the

dictatorship of the new": "new products, new toys, new commercials, new fads . . . [are] integral to the baby-boom experience." Moreover, by the sheer weight of their numbers, boomers exerted a strong influence on the collective attitudes of the generations that came immediately before and after their own, a phenomenon that Jones has referred to frankly as a "generational tyranny."[67] As sociologist Wade Clark Roof has noted, "values, lifestyles, and moral sensitivities that were once more specific to particular generations are now more widely spread throughout American culture."[68] Even if one grants that generational differences in consumer tastes persist, the fact remains that in the monument-making industry, boomer preferences progressively gained prominence as the generation matured. The youngsters who during the 1950s and 1960s were the target audience for the marketing of breakfast cereals and toys had become by the 1980s and 1990s adults who confronted purchasing decisions in all sectors of the death care industry.

Trade journals understandably urged their readers to cultivate the boomers' interest in novelty, personal control, and customization. Reviewing market trends in 1985, journalist Lawrence Santana concluded that "while the parents themselves may have shunned more personalized, symbolic monuments, some younger people insist on them." Anticipating Postrel's thesis by two decades, he continued that "new thoughts about art, design, fashion, and leisure are influencing the younger monument buyers of today." Based on her practical experience as a retailer, monument maker Carol Adams reported that boomers "are willing to consider new things on memorials. The far reaching use of etchings—from fishermen to knitting needles—is typical of this trend." For Adams, etchings "are the epitaphs of today."[69] Fifteen years later, articles continued to express confidence that, as grief therapist Darci Sims remarked in 1999, "personalization will be the key to everything." Added Lisa Carlson, executive director of Funeral and Memorial Societies of America, "the generation that wrote its own wedding vows will want nontraditional memorialization."[70] That boomers were generally more affluent than previous generations also did not go unnoticed. "The Boomer group isn't afraid to spend money," noted industry consultant Gail Beckman in 1992. "[Boomers] know what they want and are willing to pay for it."[71]

A consideration of consumer behavior must also take into account the importance of leisure activities in contemporary American life, especially because many pictorial headstones record the interest that deceased persons had in hobbies, sports, and other recreational activities. "Perhaps because of the growing necessity to work," noted Cheryl Russell, "Americans now regard leisure time as more meaningful than their time on the job." According to a 1992 Roper Poll, for example, 68 percent of American workers viewed their leisure time as more enjoyable than their time at work; 30 percent stated that work was more important than leisure, but 38 percent expressed the opposite view.[72] Between 1970 and 1994, personal consump-

tion expenditures for "commercial participant amusements"—an important category of recreational spending that includes activities ranging from bowling, swimming, golf, and horseback riding to guided sightseeing tours and casino gambling—rose sharply, from 7.7 billion dollars annually to 32.9 billion in "real" (inflation-adjusted) terms (1992 dollars), an increase of 327 percent. In the same period, the proportion of total individual consumption expenditure devoted to leisure activities rose steadily from 4.3 to 8.3 percent.[73] Parallel to this interest in "participatory" recreational activities has been an equally significant enthusiasm (one might say mania) for spectator sports, notably team sports such as baseball, football, and basketball. "The twentieth century in the United States was the sports century," Michael Mandelbaum has written recently, and this public interest encompasses all levels of athletic competition from high school to the professional ranks.[74] The images of recreational activities and equipment adorning many modern headstones are but one expression of what Russell has called "a preference for leisure" among Americans.

The popularity of secular themes on pictorial markers has its obverse: the displacement of religious symbols. To be sure, one can still find headstones that have these symbols as well as markers that are transitional in the sense that a religious message—usually an epitaph—accompanies the secular image. Nevertheless, as early as 1976, the associate editor of *Monument Builder News* told her subscribers what many of them already had learned from practical experience in the marketplace, that contemporary memorialization "tends to lack religious impact. Little heed is paid to the passage of the soul to eternity." A decade later, Peter Quinlan put the matter in more concrete terms: "There isn't much interest in religious symbols today. The idea of putting posies on a macho man's monument doesn't fit. The guy wants a pickup truck or something that represents his lifelong interests."[75] Of course, the varieties of religious belief and practice in recent decades have occupied a wide spectrum ranging from adherence to traditional denominations and doctrines, through an animated revival of "born again" evangelicalism, to what sociologist Robert Wuthnow has called "a freewheeling and eclectic range of spirituality."[76]

One possible explanation for the proliferation of secular images on contemporary gravemarkers can be found in the strong resemblance to gravestones in ancient Greece. If many stones today exhibit a sporting motif, a hobby, or an attachment to a cherished object of life experience, gravestones erected in fifth- and sixth-century (BCE) Greece also show, as classicist Cecil Bowra has observed, "a constant attempt to catch the essential nature of a dead man as he was when alive"—a young warrior holding his spear, an old man feeding a cicada to a dog, a young girl nursing pigeons, and so on. Because the Greeks had only a "vague and uncertain" belief in an afterlife, their collective view was that "if a man survives at all, his after-

world is but shadowy and bears little resemblance to the solid earth which he left."[77] Lacking a firm conviction that existence continued after death, the Greeks measured the value of a life by how it was lived for its own sake. The striking similarities in gravestone design today make it tempting to see the same causal relationship at work in our time. But this interpretation is not completely satisfactory because numerous public opinion polls conducted during the past fifty years have consistently shown that Americans believe in God, in an afterlife that offers either punishment or reward, and in the importance of religion in their daily lives.[78]

But if religious sentiments in general, and a belief in the immortality of the soul in particular, remain widespread among Americans, it can be argued that two aspects of contemporary religious experience have reduced the necessity to exhibit these attitudes on headstones. The first has been the emergence of the view that God, in the words of Robert Wuthnow, "is a friend who could be trusted to help, rather than a judge interested in counseling people about their sins." In the 1950s, "congregations became comfortable, familiar, domestic, offering an image of God that was basically congruent with the domestic tranquility of the ideal home." Belief in an afterlife remained firm in post-war America, "but getting there was now easier."[79] In the following decades, spiritual alternatives multiplied, Americans became less convinced of the literal truth of the Bible, and knowledge about religious doctrines waned.[80] But the image of a benign, non-threatening Creator persisted. Confronting stiff competition for the allegiance of believers, many traditional churches have often responded by "peddl[ing] good feelings and easy-to-digest spirituality."[81] In this religious environment, it may be suggested, the appearance of secular themes on headstones reflects not a declining interest in religion, let alone a disenchantment with the search for spiritual fulfillment, but a mood of self-assurance about one's favorable standing in the hereafter.[82] If all is right with the Lord, so to speak, there is little need to advertise this confidence—or to propitiate a stern, divine taskmaster—with traditional religious symbols that for many people have no doubt lost some of their emotional appeal. Surely, an understanding and friendly divinity will countenance a modest expression of playfulness on a headstone in place of images whose extensive use over many years has rendered them banal and devoid of vitality.[83]

A second aspect of contemporary religious experience that can be related to secular themes on markers—and one that returns us to the theme of individualism in American life—has been a search for spiritual fulfillment that is less reliant than in the past on traditional religious organizations and their formalized sets of rules. Increasingly, religion has become yet another vehicle for self-exploration and what Wade Roof has called a "capacious individualism." As Robert Wuthnow has observed, "Ultimately, the freedom that triumphed in the 1960s was freedom to feel one's own feelings and

to experience one's own sensibilities. . . . The grand narrative of religious and philosophical traditions was replaced by personalized narratives of exploration and expression." Even within traditional congregations, "self-reliance and personalized views of truth are widely in evidence." For many Americans, "ordinary work and play were sufficiently sacred to remind the enlightened of God's kingdom," a view that likely favored the introduction of secular themes on headstones. To be sure, during the 1970s, and continuing to the present time, religious treatises and authority figures have called for greater spiritual and moral discipline in order to curb the perceived excesses of the 1960s. But "the way in which Americans came to understand spiritual discipline . . . scarcely detained them from many of the secular pursuits in which they were so actively engaged. . . . Making money, providing good educations for one's children, and participating fully in the recreational pleasures of an advanced industrial society are all compatible with spiritual discipline."[84] As Wade Roof has noted, the "proliferation of popular cultural forms" in post-war America eroded old symbolic frameworks and "new ones catering to individual choice emerged."[85] If nontraditional images on markers reflect the secularism that pervades modern American culture, they are equally in harmony with recent trends in religious expression.

Because the cemetery is a site of death, headstones, like all objects of funerary art, offer insights about prevailing views of death. These views provide another context for understanding the growing popularity of pictorial headstones. Writing in 1974 and reflecting on attitudes toward death in twentieth-century western culture, the French historian Philippe Ariès detected "a brutal revolution in traditional ideas and feelings, a revolution so brutal that social observers have not failed to be struck by it. Death, so omnipresent in the past that it was familiar, would be effaced, would disappear."[86]

In his various writings and lectures, Ariès hoped to capture the essence of this development in a memorable phrase—"forbidden death," "death denied," death as a "taboo," even "the reversal of death." The interdict did not apply to violent death—one need only recall the images of bloodletting that appear regularly on television news and entertainment shows. Perhaps more insidious, the curtain of denial descended on natural death, the death that most of us will experience. The sense of anxiety that Americans have exhibited toward natural death has revealed itself in many ways: a vocabulary rich in euphemisms on the subject of death; the diminished importance of funeral rites; uncertainty in the public at large about what constitutes proper ritual behavior; the use of medical resources to postpone the moment of death at great cost, even in cases of illness recognized to be irreversible; and the shielding of children from such reminders of natural death as visiting a dying person *in extremis*, viewing a corpse, or witnessing an interment. The memorial park cemeteries, the bane of monument makers, well illustrate the

public's withdrawal from natural death. The least intrusive element in the open, verdant lawns of the memorial parks with their markers flush to the ground is the dead themselves.

In recent years, signs of a more positive approach to death and dying have appeared. If the unease surrounding death is still very much with us, some of its more depressing manifestations are beginning to recede. The hospice movement allows people to die at home rather than in an impersonal hospital setting. Physicians now speak more frankly with their seriously ill patients and devote more attention to managing pain. The fear and shame once associated with cancer have diminished, while the popularity of "living wills" and debates about the "right to die" have brought the subjects of death and dying to a national audience. The publication of advice for "coping" with grief and mourning has become a cottage industry. The very phrase "death with dignity" presumes that dying in modern times has been distinctly undignified.[87]

Personalized headstones, including those with a pictorial format, are compatible with both developments. They exemplify "forbidden death" as well as the public's gradual withdrawal from it, which likely accounts for why the style, once it gained momentum, has persisted. On the one hand, pleasant images of a life well lived remove some of the sting of death, or as monument maker Jim Casaccia put the matter in 1978, "By showing some of the things which that person will be remembered for, it doesn't make death seem so drastic."[88] A visual reminder of life, not a statement about death and its aftermath, becomes a central feature of the cemetery. The existence of the deceased is extended backwards in time, not projected to the future. Death cannot be entirely banished, but its presence can be muted and made subordinate to themes that privilege living over dying. On the other hand, by giving center stage to an individual's life and interests, a pictorial headstone represents an effort by ordinary people to extract their dead from the barren anonymity of the memorial parks and, in traditional cemeteries, from the dreary sameness of stock monuments. In this sense, the current interest in personalization, which at root is the reappearance of a deeply ingrained American tradition, contests the current vogue of death avoidance. Familiar images of worldly pursuits enable the living to reconnect with the world of the dead, thus providing another example of how the business interests and creative energy of monument makers, technological advances, and the direction of modern consumer culture have converged to add diversity to the landscape of the contemporary cemetery and to make it a more inviting and interesting place to visit.

NOTES

[1] I thank James Bell of Bell Memorials in Beloit, KS, for allowing me to borrow and consult his extensive archive of trade publications and for providing me with some photographs. I also thank him for discussing with me the subject of personalized markers on several occasions and for allowing me to observe production methods first hand. Chris Carter of Individual Mausoleum in Parsons, KS, also offered me useful insights, as did Brad Hopkins of Hopkins Granite Design Co. in Concordia, KS. Tim Robinson of the Elberton Granite Association in Elberton, GA, was equally helpful, and he also gave me photocopies of industry and consumer surveys relating to monument making published in 1965, 1990, and 1995. I thank as well Claire Dehon and Michael Breen, who along with Hopkins read an earlier draft of this article. The anonymous reviewers also made some valuable suggestions.

A complete listing of pertinent works would expand a note into a small volume. Important studies with useful bibliographies are Richard E. Meyer, ed., *Ethnicity in the American Cemetery* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1993); idem, ed., *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989); Blanche Linden-Ward, *Silent City on a Hill: Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1989); and the comprehensive study by David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). Since 1995 (Vol. XII), *Markers* has published an annual bibliography that lists many historical studies.

[2] The best studies of modern personalized stones are Richard E. Meyer, "Images of Logging on Contemporary Pacific Northwest Gravemarkers," in Meyer, ed., *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers*, 61-85; and C. D. Abby Collier, "Tradition, Modernity, and Postmodernity in Symbolism of Death," *The Sociological Quarterly* 44 (2003): 727-749 (a study of Stone Mountain Cemetery in Stone Mountain, GA). The subject also appears in J. Joseph Edgette, "'Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep . . .': Symbols and Their Meaning on Children's Gravemarkers," *The Children's Folklore Review* 22 (1999): 7-24; Melissa Haveman, "A Sociohistorical Analysis of Children's Gravestones," *Illness, Crisis and Loss* 7 (1999): 266-286; and Rollo K. Newson, "Motorcycles and Majorettes: Grave Markers for Youth in Central Texas," in Francis Edward Abernathy, ed., *Corners of Texas* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 1993), 246-266. None of these works offers a broad overview of the subject that includes both business practices and large cultural structures.

[3] In the notes that follow, respectively *American Art in Stone* (*AAS*), *Monument Builder News* (*MBN*), *Monumental-News Review* (*MNR*), and *Stone in America* (*SIA*). For this article, I consulted more than 500 issues of these publications covering the period 1950-1999. Four other trade journals—*Barre Life* (*BL*), *The Elberton Graniteer* (*EG*), *The Memorial Builder* (*MB*), and *Network* (*N*)—contain an occasional article pertinent to this study. In order to increase the number of references for interested scholars within the confines of a single article, I have limited citations to the volume and issue numbers, their month and year, and page numbers; the titles of articles and their authors can be easily retrieved in this fashion.

[4] For example: *AAS* 59.9 (Sept. 1959): 14-17; 60.3 (Mar. 1960): 23-28.

[5] For example: *MBN* 15.4 (Aug. 1958): 30-36; 18.1 (Jan. 1961): 9-23; 26.3 (Mar. 1969):

4-20. The theme of cemetery regulations is a perennial one in the trade journals. In the late 1980s, for example, *SIA* ran a series of articles on cemetery "restrictions" in several states. See, for example, 101.9 (Sept. 1988): 48-54 (NY); 101.10 (Oct. 1988): 52-58 (VA); 101.11 (Nov. 1988): 48-52 (UT); 101.12 (Dec. 1988): 43-47 (MO); 102:10 (Oct. 1989): 45-48 (MA). A comprehensive piece on the subject appeared in 99.1 (Jan. 1986): 16-21.

[6] The subject of "no-monument" cemeteries appears repeatedly in trade publications from the 1950s through the 1970s. Examples include *AAS* 58.10 (Nov. 1958): 15-17; *MBN* 17.7 (July 1960): 24-32; 30.9 (Sept. 1973): 37-40. Memorial parks are portrayed not simply as a threat to monument making as a business, but also as an assault on the appropriate demonstration of sentiment in the face of death. A recent study of the spread and cultural meaning of this type of cemetery is Albert N. Hamscher, "'Scant Excuse for the Headstone': The Memorial-Park Cemetery in Kansas," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 25 (Summer 2002): 124-143, a study of broader scope than the title implies. The essay is reprinted in Hamscher, ed., *Kansas Cemeteries in History* (Manhattan, KS: KS Publishing, 2005), 81-115.

[7] *AAS* 56.4 (Apr. 1956): 11-12.

[8] For example, *MBN* 18.4 (Apr. 1961): 16-28.

[9] An example concerning the Supreme Court of New Jersey: *ibid.*, 16.14 (Apr. 1959): 50-53.

[10] *Ibid.*, 10.8 (Aug. 1953): 16-17.

[11] *MB* (Spring 1959), no pagination.

[12] *AAS* 54.3 (Mar. 1954): 30; 55.8 (Aug. 1955): 13-14.

[13] *Ibid.*, 58.10 (Nov. 1958): 15-16 (Luck's italics).

[14] *Ibid.*, 60.3 (Mar. 1960): 23-28. Noted Howard Clark, the secretary-treasurer of the American Cemetery Association: "Today, the usual practice is to carve the surname on a memorial in letters six to eight inches high and then add simply John Brown, 1886-1956. Such an inscription means absolutely nothing to anyone outside the family, either in this generation or succeeding generations." *MBN* 15.4 (Apr. 1958): 30-36.

[15] *MBN* 28.3 (Mar. 1971): 6-12; 30.3 (Mar. 1973): 36-41. Throughout the 1960s, the Pitassis encouraged in an articulate and vigorous way innovation in monument style, for example *AAS* 62.4 (Apr. 1962): 19-20; 69.4 (Oct. 1969): 6-13.

[16] For examples of articles on these subjects: *MNR* 62.6 (June 1950): 23-65; *MBN* 10.8 (Aug. 1953): 12-16; *AAS* 54.3 (Mar. 1954): 30-31.

[17] *MNR* 62. 8 (Aug. 1950): 22-23; 62.10 (Oct. 1950): 28-29. Some other interesting articles in the series: 62.12 (Dec. 1950): 24-25; 65.9 (Sept. 1953): 32-33; 63.4 (Apr. 1954): 29. An article on "post-war memorial design" published in 1950 spoke of pictorial memorials as a design approach with promise, but it limited the discussion to "symbolic ornament and epigraphical inscriptions." *Ibid.*, 62.6 (June 1950): 23-65.

[18] *MBN* 11.12 (Dec. 1954): 48-53.

[19] *AAS* 59.1 (Jan. 1959): 43; 59.6 (June 1959): 30.

[20] *MBN* 17.5 (May 1960): 22-31.

[21] *Ibid.*, 17.7 (July 1960): 24-32.

[22] Jerry L. Lewis and Joe N. Harris, "A Program of Research and Technical Assistance for the Granite Industry in Elbert County Georgia," Final Report, Engineering Experiment Station, Georgia Institute of Technology, 1965, p. 32. This manuscript report was evidently published in 1967; a summary by the Pitassis of some of its findings is in *AAS* 69.4 (Oct. 1969): 6-13.

[23] This generalization is based on close examination of photographs and paid advertisements by granite manufacturers in the trade journals as well as personal visits to many cemeteries over the years. An interesting article on headstones of different colors is in *MBN* 21.10 (Oct. 1964): 4-13.

[24] Above, nn. 21, 22.

[25] *SIA* 97.1 (Jan. 1984): 20-22.

[26] *MBN* 18.1 (Jan. 1961): 9-23.

[27] *Ibid.*, 26.3 (Mar. 1969): 4-20 (Yeager's italics).

[28] *MNR* 88.5 (May 1974), no pagination. See also photographs from the early and mid-1970s in *MBN* 30.11 (Nov. 1973): 37, and 31.2 (Feb. 1974): 24; *EG* 18.2 (Summer 1974): 19-20, and 21.3 (Fall 1977): 22-23.

[29] *MBN* 33.7 (July 1976). The entire issue is devoted to "two hundred years of memorialization."

[30] "Personal Monuments: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, Evermore," Chicago, IL, n.d., but published in March 1978: notices in *SIA* (Mar. 1978): 36; *EG* 22.1 (Spring 1978): 15.

[31] *SIA* 92.5 (May 1978): 17-19.

[32] *Ibid.*, 99.4 (May 1986): 19-23; 100.1 (Jan. 1987): 12-18.

[33] *EG* 3.3 (Summer 1959): 3-9, gives a clear summary of all the major steps of monument production—from the quarry to the showroom floor—during the early years.

[34] To observe the progression of technique over time: *MNR* 86.8 (Aug. 1972): 75; *SIA* 92.4 (Apr. 1978): 35-36; *MBN* 41.8 (Aug. 1984): 34; *EG* 33.1 (Spring 1989): 32.

[35] *SIA* 96.12 (Dec. 1983): 24-29; also 98.7 (July 1985): 25-35, for an article on the growing popularity of stones of colors other than the traditional gray.

[36] *Ibid.*, 95.1 (Jan. 1982): 18-19; 98.1 (Jan. 1985): 20-22.

[37] *Ibid.*, 98.11 (Nov. 1985), and *MBN* 44.5 (May 1985) for commercial advertisements (no pagination) with photographs of the system. For articles on its operation and design potential, see *EG* 33.1 (Spring 1989): 33, and especially *SIA* 102.11 (Nov. 1989): 8-13; 105.8 (Aug. 1992): 42-49; 112.1 (Jan.-Feb. 1999): 26-29.

[38] On etching: *SIA* 93.11 (Nov. 1980): 22-30; 98.11 (Nov. 1985): 38-43; 99.10 (Oct. 1986): 28-36; and *MBN* 56.6 (June 1999): 32-34. On artificial diamonds: *MNR* 91.5 (May 1977): 10-13; *SIA* 101.3 (Mar. 1988): 39-45. One article pointed out that "Most retailers who have had success with etchings believe it is the most cost-effective way to convey a life on stone, since it is less expensive and less time consuming than sculpture." *SIA* 99.9 (Sept. 1986): 26-33. Although it is beyond the scope of this article, note that the 1970s also ushered in an era of rapid technological change in the quarrying of granite and the initial preparation of markers sold to retailers. See, for example, *MNR* 91.5 (May 1977): 26-27; *EG* 21.3 (Fall 1977): 7, 25.3 (Fall 1981): 3, and 43.3 (Fall 1999): 30-37; *MBN* 36.5 (May 1979): 22-26 and 40.2 (Feb. 1983): 45-47; *SIA* 93.10 (Oct. 1980): 19-22, 99.2 (Feb. 1986): 44-46, and 112.2 (Mar. 1999): 27-30. The final decades of the twentieth century thus witnessed technological advances in all sectors of the monument-making industry. See the comprehensive article, "Take Advantage of Today's Technology," in *SIA* 101.3 (Mar. 1988): 39-45.

[39] I thank Brad Hopkins for describing to me how the laser process works. For an early reference to laser technology and markers, see *SIA* 98.11 (Nov. 1985): 38-43. At first, lasers were used to cut sandblast stencils, not to etch directly on a stone (see *MBN* 44.9 [Sept. 1987]: 29). Currently, laser machinery is too expensive for most monument makers to purchase; they generally subcontract this work to a large enterprise. As best as I can determine, hand etching and laser etching are roughly comparable in cost for the consumer.

[40] *SIA* 99.5 (May 1986): 18-23. When in 2003 I asked Jim Bell of Bell Memorials in Beloit, KS, for his view of what was responsible for the success of pictorial images on headstones, he paused, thought long and hard, and responded "I am." His response is an incentive to the scholar not to ignore the business dimension of a cultural artifact.

[41] In *SIA* alone, see 92.10 (Oct. 1979): 22-23, 40-43; 95.7 (July 1982): 14-15; 97.1 (Jan. 1984): 20-22; 97.5 (May 1984): 25-27; 98.7 (July 1985): 16-19; 99.5 (May 1986): 18-23; 101.1 (Jan. 1987): 28-33; 104.4 (Apr. 1987): 47-53; 101.7 (July 1988): 42-47; and 111.1 (Jan.-Feb. 1999): 26-29.

[42] *MBN* 41.9 (Sept. 1984): 34-36.

[43] For example, *SIA* 93.11 (Nov. 1980): 33-29; 101.1 (Jan. 1988): 24-29.

[44] Quotations from *SIA* 101.5 (May 1988): 12-15; *MBN* 45.7 (July 1988): 11-13.

[45] Cremation Association of North America, www.cremationassociation.org ("statistics," then "historical statistics"). For background: Stephen Prothero, *Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

[46] *BL* (Spring 1987): 9-12. See also *SIA* 101.5 (May 1988): 12-15, and *MBN* 90.4 (July 1988): 54-56.

[47] "American Attitudes and Values Affected by Death Care Services," copyright 1990 by the Allied Industries Joint Committee, pie chart (unpaginated); "1995 Study of American Attitudes Toward Ritualization and Memorialization," copyright 1995 by the Wirthlin Group, pp. 19-21 and appendix B, fig. 28. The surveys were released in 1991 and 1995 by the Funeral and Memorial Information Council (FAMIC); some of the findings in the 1990 survey are summarized in *SIA* 105.8 (Aug. 1992): 34-38.

[48] *SIA* 98.1 (Jan. 1985): 20-25.

[49] *Ibid.*, 98.1 (Jan. 1985): 20-25; 99.5 (May 1986): 18-23; 100.4 (Apr. 1987): 47-53; 101.7 (July 1988): 42-47.

[50] *MBN* 45.4 (Apr. 1988): 19-22, reported that the number of monument retailers declined from ca. 6,000 in 1960 to ca. 4,300 in 1988 (a decrease of 28 percent). On this subject, see also *SIA* 96.2 (Feb. 1983): 15-21; and especially 99.12 (Dec. 1986): 52-55.

[51] *SIA* 97.1 (Jan. 1984): 20-22; also reported in *MBN* 41.9 (Sept. 1984): 34-36.

[52] Although I generally agree with Collier, "Tradition," 743, that "The choice of what to have made [for a headstone] is predominantly up to the individuals making the purchase," I trust that the foregoing pages have shown this to be an exaggeration lacking foundation in the pertinent sources."

[53] *SIA* 95.2 (Feb. 1982): 30-32.

[54] A list of pertinent works on all these topics would require a lengthy bibliography. In the notes that follow, I will cite a few studies that I found to be indispensable. The notes and bibliographies in these works will lead the interested reader to additional relevant scholarship.

[55] Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961), 509.

[56] William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II* (3rd edition; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 121.

[57] Loren Baritz, *The Good Life: The Meaning of Success for the American Middle Class* (New York NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 294, 313.

[58] These phrases are from Michael Nevin Willard, "Cutback: Skate and Punk at the Far End of the American Century," in Beth Bailey and David Farber, eds., *America in the 70s* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 182. Willard speaks of the 1970s in particular, but his observation applies equally well to subsequent decades.

[59] Collier, "Tradition," 745.

[60] *SIA* 93.9 (Sept. 1980): 17-19.

[61] *AAS* 69.4 (Oct. 1969): 6-13.

[62] *MBN* 37.4 (Apr. 1980): 34-36, a sentiment echoed by Mueller in 1976 (above, n. 29).

[63] *Ibid.*, 45.7 (July 1988): 11-13 (my italics).

[64] For a recent and general overview of consumer culture, see Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

[65] Virginia Postrel, *The Substance of Style: How the Rise of Aesthetic Value Is Remaking Commerce, Culture, and Consciousness* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), quotations from pp. 5, 36, 54, 55, 80. For Quiring, *SIA* 104.3 (Mar. 1991): 34-36.

[66] Cheryl Russell, *The Master Trend: How the Baby Boom Generation Is Remaking America* (New York, NY: Pleneum Press, 1993), 56, 58. For Russell, individualism is the "trend behind the trends . . . the master trend of modern times" (p. 22).

[67] Landon Y. Jones, *Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom Generation* (New York, NY: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1980), 1, 45.

[68] Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 50.

[69] *SIA* 98.11 (Nov. 1985): 46-49; the views of Adams are summarized by Santana. Noted retailer Tom Rex in the same article: "Baby-boomers are more familiar with design and art and good taste and they are applying these things to memorials."

[70] *Ibid.*, 112.2 (Mar. 1999): 17-19.

[71] *Ibid.*, 105.7 (July 1992): 28-33.

[72] Russell, *The Master Trend*, 63, and chap. 12 *passim*.

[73] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1996*, 252 (table 401): "Personal Consumption Expenditures for Recreation in Real (1992) Dollars: 1970 to 1994." For a similar table (adjusted with 1987 dollars), see the *Statistical Abstract: 1995*, 253 (table 403), which covers the period 1970-1993. The trend continues: the *Statistical Abstract: 2002*, 749 (table 1213) reports a figure of 69.2 billion dollars in 2000; adjusted with 1992 dollars (www.bls.gov, "inflation calculator"), real expenditure was 56.4 billion, a 71 percent increase since 1994. Note also that over time the ranking of this category of spending has moved from seventh to fourth place in the fifteen categories of recreation expenditure listed in the tables.

[74] Michael Mandelbaum, *The Meaning of Sports: Why Americans Watch Baseball, Football, and Basketball and What They See When They Do* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2004), 272.

[75] Above, n. 29 (Mueller); *SIA* 98.11 (Nov. 1985): 38-43 (Quinlan).

[76] Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in American Since the 1950s* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 53.

[77] C. M. Bowra, *The Greek Experience* (New York, NY: New American Library, 1985), 51-52.

[78] George Gallup Jr. and D. Michael Lindsay, *Surveying the Religious Landscape: Trends in U.S. Beliefs* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), especially 1-5, 9-11, 23-32.

[79] Wuthnow, *After Heaven*, 29, 33.

[80] These trends are amply documented in Gallup and Lindsay, *Surveying the Religious Landscape*; see especially 1-5, 34-36, 45, 49.

[81] Robert Wuthnow, *The Crisis in the Churches: Spiritual Malaise, Financial Woe* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 240.

[82] In this connection, for example, it is noteworthy that in a Gallup public opinion poll conducted in 1997, 72% of respondents expressed a belief in heaven, but only

56% in hell; 83% surmised that existence in the afterlife is a "positive experience." In an earlier Gallup poll conducted in 1994, 77% of respondents thought that their chances of going to heaven were excellent or good, only 20%fair or poor. Gallup and Lindsay, *Surveying the Religious Landscape*, 27-30.

[83] The question arises, of course, whether there is a correlation between the depth of religious conviction on the one hand, and the interest in secular themes on the other. Is it possible, for example, that secular themes are more appealing to "unbelievers" than they are to "believers"? The question is difficult to explore not only because these terms must be defined carefully, but also because religious convictions are personal matters that are not easy to determine with assurance. One can only hope that in the future a proper methodology will emerge to investigate the religious convictions of purchasers of different kinds of markers. As a preliminary observation, conversations with monument makers have convinced me that a customer's choice of a pictorial marker with a secular image does not in and of itself indicate that the purchaser lacks strong religious beliefs.

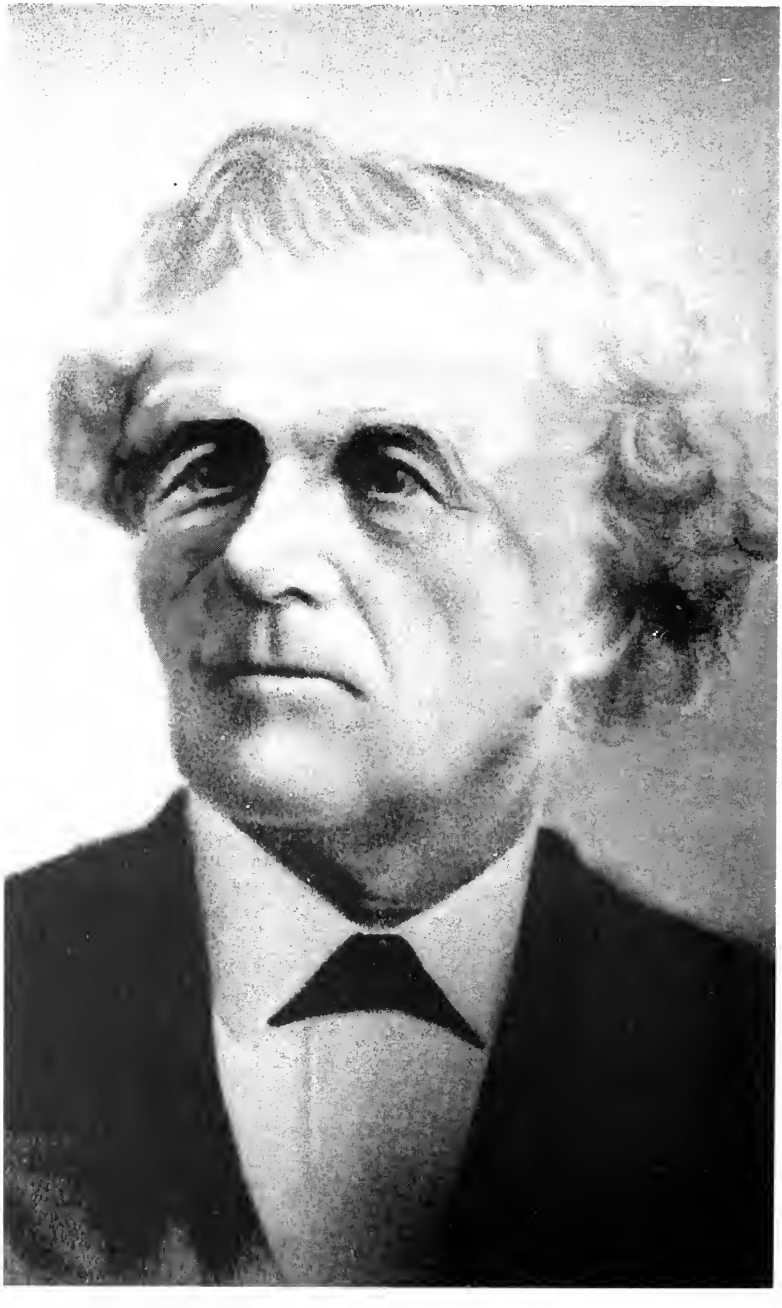
[84] Quotations from Wuthnow, *After Heaven*, 78, 83, 110, 152. The developments alluded to in this paragraph also figure prominently in Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace*, chap. 2.

[85] *Roof, Spiritual Marketplace*, 49-50. Speaking of the 1960s and its legacy, Roof notes that "Generally during this period a new cultural context for religion was emerging, one in which faith was increasingly psychologized and viewed as a matter of one's own choice and in keeping with one's own experience" (p. 65).

[86] Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death and Dying from the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia Ranum (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 85; see also his *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf). For a list of the major works that have confirmed Ariès's observation, and in some cases anticipated it, see Hamscher, "'Scant Excuse for the Headstone,'" 137, n. 29. Although she does not cite Ariès, Eileen Mueller echoed his views in the July 1976 issue of *Monument Builder News*: "As death became less familiar in this century, so it became less accepted, to the point where it is now virtually denied both in our funeral practices and in our youth-oriented society." Baby boomers in particular, observed retailer Lee Wright in 1985, are "less educated about death and memorialization" (*SIA* 98.11 [Nov. 1985]: 47-49).

[87] For an introduction to recent developments, see James Haley, ed., *Death and Dying: Opposing Viewpoints* (San Diego, CA: Thomson/Gale, 2003), which has a useful bibliography.

[88] *SIA* 92.5 (May 1978): 17-19.



Frontispiece: Contemporary portrait of Moses Davis, date unknown.

"Suitable Grave Stones": The Workshop of Moses Davis of Nashua (Nashville), New Hampshire

William Lowenthal

On a lonely knoll in Hollis, New Hampshire, sits Pine Hill Cemetery. It is a peaceful and lovely spot, with few visible grave plots relative to its size.[1] Visiting there in 1992, I noticed a distinctive gravemarker made of hard purple slate, commemorating David French, who died in 1849 (Fig. 1). It lacked any motif or decoration, atypical for a slate stone from this era. Despite its simplicity, the stone struck me because of the signature, "M. Davis, Nashville," at the base.[2] Further exploration of Pine Hill Cemetery soon revealed other gravestones signed "M. Davis" exhibiting many different forms and styles. Finding more examples in other cemeteries in Hollis and surrounding towns made it evident that I was dealing with a local carver, and "Nashville" had nothing to do with Tennessee. Historical documents revealed the stones' maker to be Moses Davis, a 19th-century stonecarver and tradesman centered in Nashua, New Hampshire.[3] The quest for his gravestones eventually took me to 435 cemeteries in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. I have catalogued 381 *signed* examples of his work plus four unsigned examples gleaned from probate research, located in 74 cemeteries in the two states. This large number of signed works, though remarkable in itself, is possibly augmented by at least as many unsigned. Sometimes these are adjacent to signed works, making them much easier to attribute, but often attribution must be made cautiously.

Taken together, the gravestones of Moses Davis exemplify the life work of a prolific and proud artisan of the highest order, whose monuments span the stylistic transition from the end of the neoclassical, Federalist period in the 1840s to the height of the Victorian age in the 1880s. He appears to be the first carver to have a workshop in Nashua. The trail of this carver leads right up to the present day: he lends his name to the oldest continuously-operating business in Nashua, the Davis Funeral Home. Indeed, Davis may be the only nineteenth-century gravestone carver whose name and reputation have been cited in television advertisements!

Moses Davis's story demonstrates several trends of the gravestone craft throughout the country during this important period. From a stylistic perspective, it begins at the sunset of the Federalist period, with an independent carver comfortable with not only the declining but still popular neoclassical slate medium and urn-and-willow motif, but also with the ascending popularity of white marble used both for simple, unadorned tablets as well as for ostentatious obelisks and other sculptural forms typical of the Victorian period. From a commercial perspective, the evolution runs from solitary

Fig. 1. David French, 1849, Hollis, NH.

craftsman to shop owner and manager utilizing hired labor for gravestone production. He then branches out by expanding into the masonry and funeral businesses. While Davis continued to produce gravestones throughout his forty-year career, the number of stones either signed or attributable to Moses Davis declined markedly in later decades. This most likely reflects a decline in the signing of stones, but it also reflects the fact that Davis had adopted an increasingly standardized style of markers and carving that is virtually indistinguishable from competitors' works.

Moses Davis's Early Years

Born September 20, 1816, on his family's farm in Nottingham West (now part of Hudson), New Hampshire, Moses was the youngest son of nine children of Samuel Davis and Dorothy Ann (called Anna) Morse. The Davis family into which he was born had its colonial roots in Essex County, Massachusetts, in a 17th-century patriarch named James Davis (1583?-1679). Moses's grandfather, also named Samuel, moved to Pelham, New Hampshire in the 1770s. Moses's youth was spent in farming, but at age 20 he found employment as an attendant at an insane asylum in Somerville, Massachusetts. After three years at the asylum, he went to Manchester, Vermont, to "learn the marble cutter's trade."[4] It is not known to whom he apprenticed himself, but he progressed sufficiently so that just two years later, in 1841, he returned to New Hampshire to set up his own shop in Nashua, across the Merrimack River from his boyhood hometown of Hudson.[5] He was then around 25.

Open for Business—The Shop's First Decade

Sited at the confluence of the Nashua and the Merrimack rivers, Nashua in 1841 was in the midst of a population boom, having increased two-and-a-half fold to 6054 in just a decade.[6] This was no doubt due to the influence of the textile mills that had been built in the area beginning in the 1820s. It was just the place for an energetic young man to start a business. But why did he settle in Nashua and not in another town? One reason may have been close relatives living there.[7] Another reason may have been his perception that Nashua was growing rapidly but apparently lacked a stonecarver. His stonecarving business is the first to be documented in Nashua, and he appears to have dominated the Nashua market for several decades after he arrived there.[8]

The next year, 1842, was the first full calendar year of Moses Davis's business career and the year he married Bethana W. Allen, daughter of Samuel Allen of Northfield, Vermont.[9] In the same year he joined in a simmering town controversy over which side of the Nashua River a new town hall should be built on. Davis's name appears among the 476 names on a petition to the New Hampshire General Court to solve the dispute by parti-

tioning the town. The petition was soon granted, and the community south of the Nashua River retained the name "Nashua," while the portion north of the river became chartered as "Nashville." Davis, a resident of the north side, became a citizen of Nashville, and was so until the towns reunited under the original Nashua name in 1853.[10] He appears in the two different town directories for 1843.[11] One lists Moses Davis as a "Gravestone Maker" and refers the reader to a display advertisement (Fig. 2).

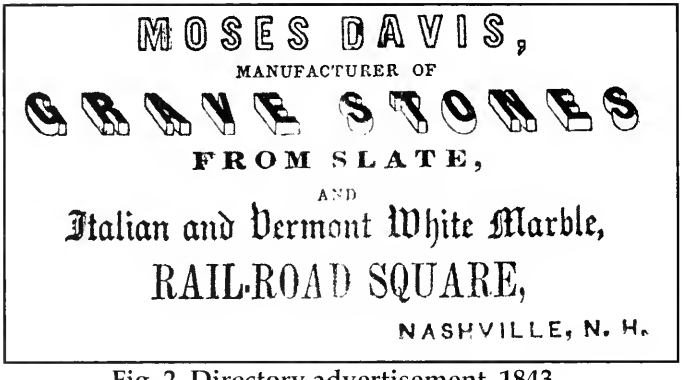


Fig. 2. Directory advertisement, 1843.

Davis must have learned well as an apprentice, as even his earliest gravestones show the artistic sense and mastery of skills that would see him through his long career. Almost immediately, Davis's slate and marble gravestones began appearing in a wide area around Nashua, some as far away as Jaffrey and Hillsborough (Fig. 3 and Appendix I). Whether this evidence of immediate success is due to the rapid achievement of a good reputation, advertising, or just plain hustle cannot be ascertained; it probably was a combination of all these. Of the 189 confirmed stones from this initial decade, roughly half are slate (92) and the other half marble (97). The slate stones represent the flower of his artisanship. The slate Davis used for gravestones is of high quality and most frequently colored light gray with substantial greenish-brown bands, and all are of the tablet variety in two shapes: flat topped (Fig. 4), or with a half-circle central tympanum with square shoulders (Fig. 5). He produced about an equal number of each type during this decade.

Although neither stylistically unique nor groundbreaking, Davis's slate works with their elegant designs and crisp lettering are still very pleasing to the modern eye. The most significant recurring decorative element in Davis's slate work is the urn and willow, which is found on all but the David French stone. His use of the urn and willow reflects the widespread adoption of this motif beginning very late in the eighteenth century. The urn

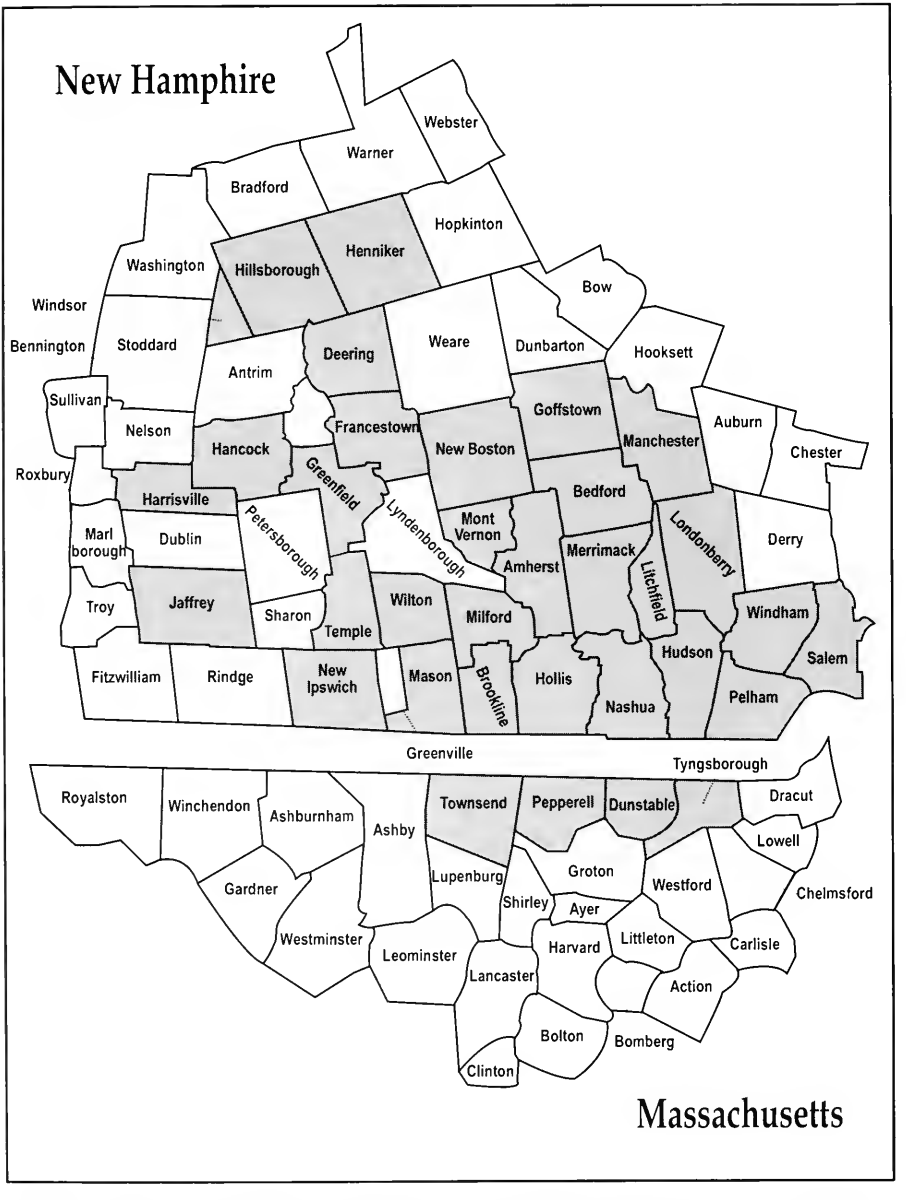


Fig. 3. Map showing the distribution of Davis gravestones in southern New Hampshire and adjacent counties in Massachusetts.

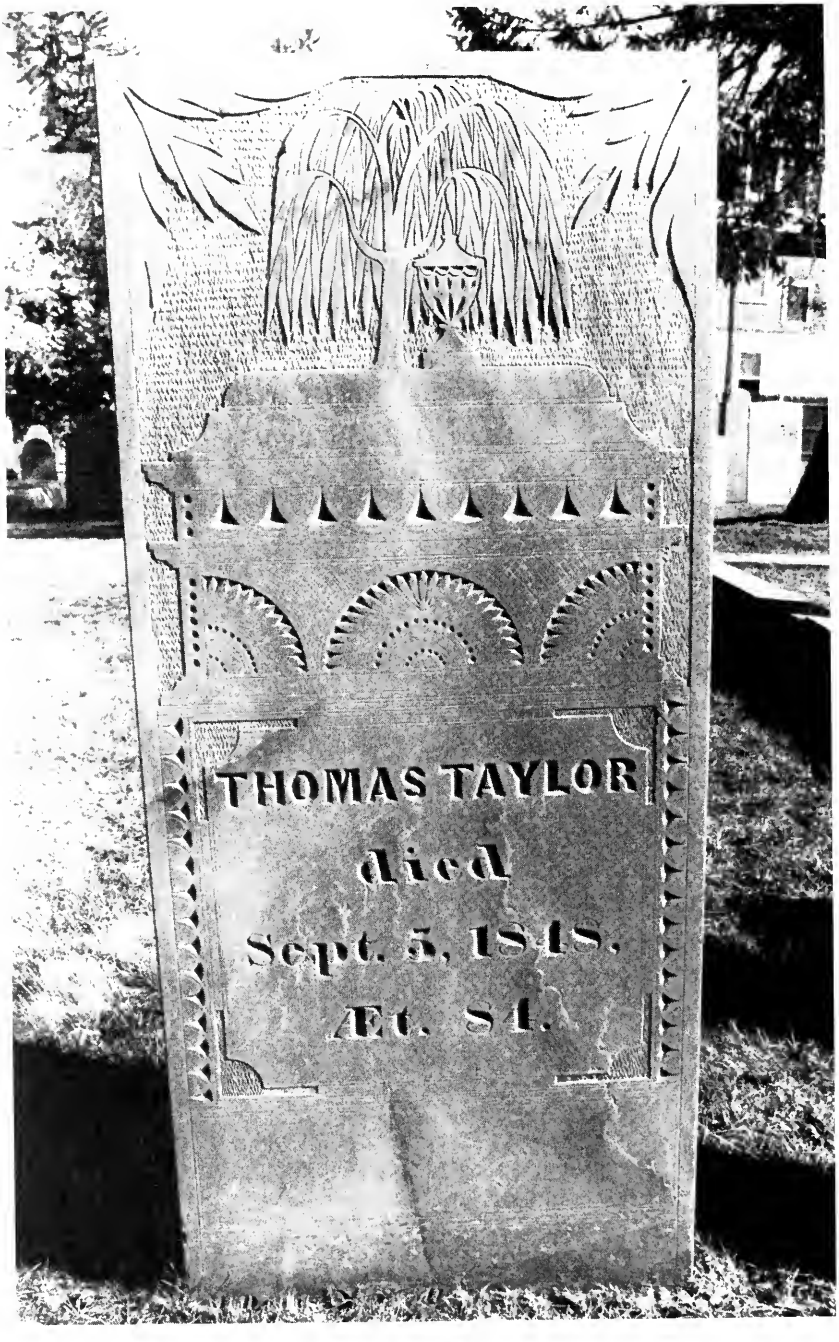


Fig. 4. Thomas Taylor, 1848, Milford, NH, rectangular style with willow on a raised platform.

Fig. 5. Sarah Blanchard, 1837, Milford, NH, with rounded tympanum and square shoulders (note Greek columns).

and willow, collectively and individually, have been said to mark a symbolic and iconographic shift away from concern over the deceased's soul (represented by winged skulls and cherubs) to a concern with memory and survivors' grief. Not only are the urn and willow not explicitly religious in nature; some scholars argue they symbolize a general trend toward either secularization or intellectualism at the end of the 18th century. The motifs themselves, particularly the urn, are said to be an outgrowth of the adoption of neoclassicism (the Federalist Style in America) as a design paradigm in art, architecture, furnishings, and fashion. The paired motifs are also found in samplers and mourning art created as girls' pastimes.

By the time Moses Davis began to carve urns and willows on his gravestones, circa 1840, they had been the dominant design element of New England gravestones for fifty years, particularly so in rural areas. It has been fairly common for gravestone scholars to dismiss the urn and willow as derivative, undistinctive, and overly commonplace. For example, Ernest Caulfield rather coldly described urn-and-willow markers as "the most uninteresting gravestones ever carved."[12] Yet their very popularity proves that they spoke to the people of the time. Moreover, when examined in detail and considered in relation to accompanying design elements, the subtleties and variations among contemporary carvers are apparent. In *Early New England Gravestone Rubbings*, Edmond Vincent Gillon, Jr., includes more than 70 illustrations of urn-and-willow gravestones that show much originality and imagination. Gillon traces the motif to as early as the first half of the eighteenth century and states, "[t]he last important development in the three centuries of early gravestone design was the influence of the architectural motifs of the Federal and Greek Revival Periods. . . . [these appeared as] delicate classical urns, medallions, and graceful swags, subjects which adorned fences and mantels of the region's more elaborate buildings." This influence led stonecutters to depict "the willow and urn on full entablatures supported by Doric, Corinthian, Ionic, or Tuscan pilasters."[13] Though ubiquitous in New England or the Northeast in general, urn-and-willow gravestones are found in a much wider area.

Davis always used the urn and willow together, although in a few examples the urn appears to have morphed into a pedestal-like object. Typically his willow has at least four branches and is usually slightly leaning to the right and straight-trunked, though it sometimes can be curved, and fairly symmetrical. His urn is typically a little more than half the height of the tree and is decorated with varying quantities of small incised darts. Negative space throughout is accentuated with a lizard-skin-like scaling, which adds a pleasing texture for contrast. On the tympanum-type stone, the willow and urn occupy the center of the tympanum alone. Both willow and urn rest on a stepped platform, sometimes detailed, the top of which is usually level with the shoulders of the stone. This platform rests on another decorative panel

forming a plane, which often has flanking objects like bedknobs, cannonballs, spires, or even other urns. Below that is a panel frequently decorated with fans or leaves. The varying combinations of secondary design elements make Davis's slate stones delightful to the eye. Though the urn and willow are well-known symbols, secondary elements like these have not had much discussion in gravestone literature.[14]

Davis's biographical inscription panel is often flanked by Greek columns that appear to support the panels above them, or else rows of darts as a decorative edge. The darts are formed by hollowing out the intersections of compass-incised concentric half-circles. The lettering panel is factual and undecorated, though it may sometimes be encased in an oval of darts. The most common lettering is carved in evenly spaced, deep V form, in the style printers call "thick and thin," as in Figure 1.[15] The lettering for names and dates is almost always straight, but other words such as "died" or "wife of" may be italicized. Typically, the only decorative element below the lettering panel is a continuation of the concentric half circles found on the upper edges, without their intersections being cut out. Below that a space for an epitaph panel usually appears, although more commonly this panel is blank. All signed Davis slate stones have a slanted, serif-style signature below the epitaph panel. There will be another style associated solely with marble stones in later periods. Despite technically being a resident of Nashville, Davis followed his signature with either "Nashua" or "Nashville" during this period. Though he signed the petition to divide the towns, he apparently did not completely abandon his identification with better-known Nashua. About a third of his signed stones have no town specified.

Davis's flat-topped stones share many of the same details as the tympanum stones, but there are interesting differences. Davis frequently filled the square shoulders with fronds (Fig. 4), fans, spider-web-like details, or smooth semi-circles (Fig. 6). The "bedknob" objects (cannonballs, obelisks, other urns, etc.) referred to earlier are here almost always on the same plane as the urn and willow, and usually there is no raised platform supporting the urn and willow. Sometimes an arched border of darts mimicking the outline of a tympanum surrounds the urn and willow (Fig. 7), and in a number of examples, the urn and willow are outlined by a complete circle.

Identifying unsigned work by Moses Davis is challenging. Davis's slate stones closely resemble those from the same general time period carved by John Park (1787-1848), son of the well-known carver John Park Jr., from Groton, Massachusetts.[16] Park did not sign many stones, but there are a few in cemeteries with Davis stones. Other Park gravestones have been identified in probate records while I was searching for unsigned Davis slates. At first glance, Moses Davis's and John Park's stones appear to be almost identical. However, careful study aided by probate verification makes it possible to identify subtle differences. Park's stones tend to have the willow fork closer

Fig. 6. Betsy Colburn, 1840, Hollis, NH, with added flanking urns.

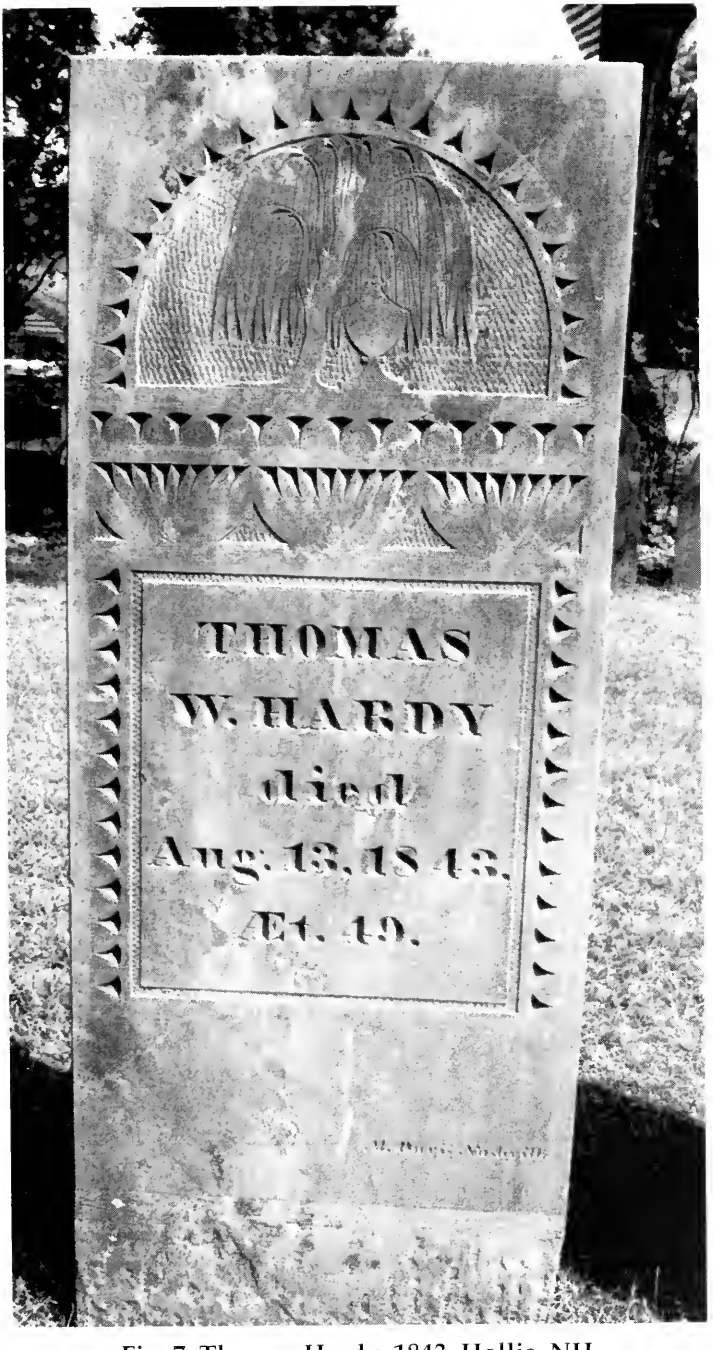


Fig. 7. Thomas Hardy, 1843, Hollis, NH.

to the base, often with a peculiar short pointed object in the center of the first bifurcation, as if the main trunk were broken and branches sprouted from there, as seen on the 1843 gravestone for Capt. Nathaniel Jewett (Fig. 8), probated to Park. Davis's willows almost always have a distinct main stem that rises relatively higher before tapering into the small branches. Another difference is the color of the slate, Park's typically being darker and lacking the green-brown hues of Davis stones.[17] But to complicate matters, at least one Davis-signed stone has a willow like Park's (Abel Ball, 1843). In the absence of a signature, I might have tentatively assigned this stone to Park. Park was clearly a substantial competitor of Davis both in quantity and style of work, but it is not known who copied whom. They certainly must have been aware of each other, and may have utilized each other's styles without consciously compromising their individuality.

Compared to the slates, the marble stones of Moses Davis seem plain, even austere, in their lack of carved decoration, despite their being produced during the Victorian era with its well-known love of ornamentation. However, while slate only took tablet form, Davis's marble monuments have a much broader range of forms. Many marble stones, particularly the large obelisks, are anything but modest, and probate records show the costs of these behemoths took a huge percentage of some estates. Interestingly, slate and marble coexisted for many years. It was a time of transition.

There are 97 confirmed Davis marble stones from the 1840s, the majority being tablets. Overall, their size matches their slate counterparts, except that some small marble stones marking children's graves are narrower than any slate stone. Marble tablets have two main types of tops: flat or shallow pointed. Though flat-topped tablets outnumber shallow-pointed ones in the 1840s, there is a relative increase in the latter toward the end of the decade. Frequently the only decoration is an insignificant arrowed flourish after the name panel. So not only was there a stylistic transition from one medium to another, there also was a simultaneous rejection of a popular symbol and its accompanying rich decoration to favor virtually no ornamentation. However, a handful (five stones) feature the willow and urn carved in bas-relief inside a circle (Fig. 9). The urn and willow are alone, though, with none of the other visually pleasing touches found on nearly every slate stone. Because of their rarity in Davis's work, the urn and willow on marble may be a stylistic anomaly with no significance other than individual or familial preference (three adjacent examples bear the Wheeler surname). Lettering on Davis's marbles varies both in style and placement on the stone. While the names of the deceased are almost always carved in bas-relief within one or more panels, the panels may be arched or straight. Most other lettering for kinship, biographical data, or epitaph, is in incised, unpaneled letters, although sometimes the word "died" is set into a panel.

Fig. 8. Capt. Nathaniel Jewett, 1843, Hollis, NH (probated to John Park).

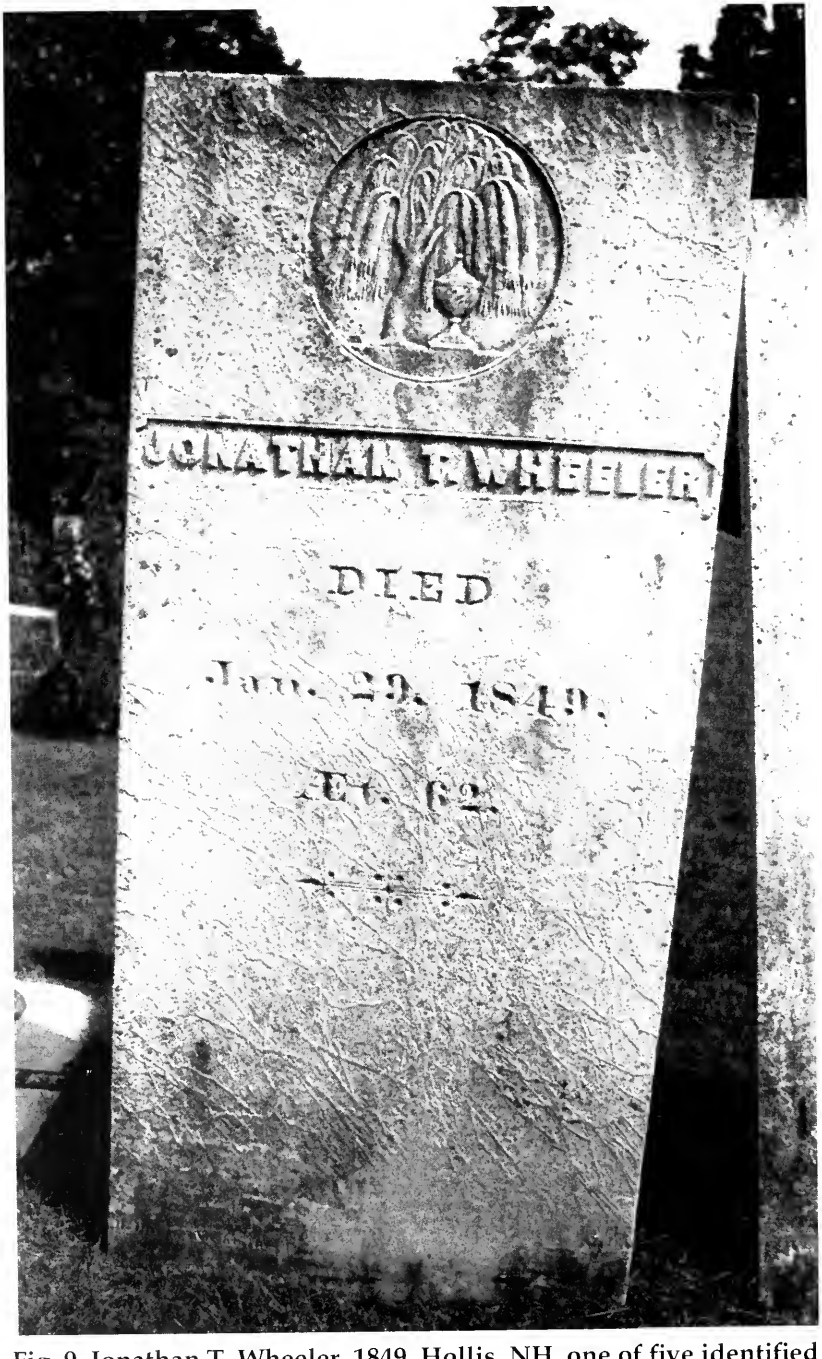


Fig. 9. Jonathan T. Wheeler, 1849, Hollis, NH, one of five identified Davis urn-and-willow marble stones.

Overall, were it not for the signature, Davis's marble tablets could not be assigned to him with confidence. They are virtually indistinguishable from those of other area carvers, or from work found throughout much of the United States in the same period. While quality is readily apparent, the lack of uniqueness makes them much less interesting from an artistic perspective. They may instead be seen to illustrate the changing tastes of a general public who, for whatever reasons, did not care for much decoration on gravestones. The 1853 John Smith gravestone with shallow-pointed top (Fig. 10) shows one of Davis's typically drab marble stones. However, we should remember that we are viewing this gravestone only after time and the elements have taken their toll. When freshly carved and polished, it may have been considered elegant and refined.

There are ten obelisks with primary (i.e. the first person listed) dates of deaths in the 1840s. Some of these are quite massive. Obelisks usually have a base, and the lettering appears either on the base or the spire. It is interesting that the urn pictured on slate stones lingers as a stylistic element in marble as a three-dimensional finial crowning many obelisks, as on the Clark family monument from the 1860s (Fig. 11). Besides obelisks, there are a few other shapes which, while they share some characteristics of tablets, are tapered or arched. They mostly appear late in the 1840s and were to take on more importance in later periods.

Branching Out – The Shop in the 1850s

An intriguing item appears in the Nashville Selectmen's Report for the year 1849-1850. Moses Davis is listed as being paid "$1.00 for coffin of child (county paupers)." This points to a new venture, one which will take on much greater significance in the years to follow. At some time in that decade he began to turn his attention to different, but closely related, trades.

Nashua and Nashville had continued to grow during the 1840s; by 1850 their combined population was nearly 9000, and the business of a resourceful Moses Davis had grown as well. In *Kimball & Dodge's Nashua and Nashville Directory* for the year 1850, Davis's occupation is listed first as "grave stone cutter" and then as "dealer in coffins."[18] His advertisement in this issue explains his range of services more fully (Fig. 12). This directory provides evidence that Davis had taken on a number of employees by 1850, as the names of "J. E. Davis, stone cutter (home on Temple Street)," "James H. Davis, stone cutter (home 4 Cross Street)," and "William R. Davis, stone cutter (home 'near Lock Street')" are listed. They undoubtedly are relatives, perhaps cousins of Moses; in fact, James is listed as residing at what was Moses's former residence.

By 1851, a page from *The Farmers' Guide – A Description of the Businesses of Nashua and Nashville*, headed "Coffins, Monuments, Grave Stones, & C.," shows that Davis had further diversified his business:

Fig. 10. Capt. John Smith, 1853, Goffstown, NH, an example of Davis's shallow-pointed top.

Fig. 11. Clark family urn-topped obelisk for Hiram P. Clark (d 1905), Susan Jane Clark (1861), and Orissa A. Clark (1866), Francestown, NH.

MOSES DAVIS,

GRAVE STONE & MONUMENT

MANUFACTURER,

And Dealer in Ready Made Coffins,

THAYER'S BUILDING,

NASHVILLE, N. H.

Mr. DAVIS, in connection with his extensive means for furnishing Grave Stones and Monuments of every description, has also made arrangements with Mr. Charles Kendall for the manufacture of COFFINS, which will be sold as cheap as can be purchased elsewhere. Application may be made to Mr. Kendall in Nashua, or to myself, as most convenient.

Fig. 12. Directory advertisement, 1850.

MOSES DAVIS,
Thayer's Building, Near N[ashua]. & L[owell]. Depot, Main Street

The Grave Stone Manufactory of Mr. Davis is widely known as an extensive and prosperous concern. But it may not be so generally known that he has a very large assortment of Ready Made Coffins, in a large Ware Room exclusively devoted to this branch; and a very important and increasingly extensive branch of business has it become. It is more extensive than any other in the vicinity.

The variety of Coffins, in size and material, is unusually large. Black Walnut, Mahogany, Chestnut, Imitation Black Walnut, and Stained Pine, are the principal varieties. Ready Made Grave Clothes are always kept on hand, and Coffin Plates of various kinds, one of which is a new pattern, neat and elegant. Mr. Davis has always been able to meet every demand at once, and fill all orders promptly.—Purchasers will be dealt fairly and favorably with at this establishment, where they will find a larger variety than is often kept in the country.

He has for a long time manufactured Monuments and Grave Stones, and it is only necessary to say that he still furnishes all kinds, of Italial [sic] Marble, American Marble, and Slate Stone; and that he employs workmen of skill and experience

> in polishing and lettering. The level of patronage he has for a long time enjoyed is sufficient evidence of the excellence of his work.

Several things should be noted in the description of Davis's gravestone business. First, marble and slate are given equal mention. Second, his workmen clearly have a substantial role in shaping, polishing, and lettering gravestones. Although it cannot be confirmed, I think Davis worked in both materials at the beginning, and as he added craftsmen, they took on the bulk of the marble production ("polishing and lettering" is all there is to most Davis marble stones).

While Davis's slate stones from the 1850s are identical to those of the 1840s, their quantity begins to decline sharply. In the 1840s there are at least a half-dozen slate stones dated each year. For the 1850s, there are only 16 confirmed Davis slates, and these are mostly clustered in the early years of the decade. By contrast, there are 118 confirmed marble stones from this decade, including 79 tablets. The shallow-pointed tablet is now more common than the flat-topped version; its popularity continues to rise until by the end of the decade there are only a few flat-topped stones being produced. Like the marble tablets of the 1840s, those of the 1850s are almost devoid of ornamentation. However, a few feature hands with upward-pointing fingers, or roses (stems broken or otherwise), motifs that by the 1850s were becoming widespread throughout the United States. In addition to tablet stones, there are 16 obelisks dated to this period. The obelisk itself takes many forms (columnar, needle-like, large base, small base). New gravestone forms also appear in the 1850s, including some resembling tablets, but arched or capped. All are much thicker at the base than conventional tablets. The arched stones are Gothic in form, though there is one example from this period of a rounded arch. Relief-carved ornamentation appears on many arched stones, usually botanical (leaves or flowers).

The majority of Davis's marble stones from the 1850s (and all slates) are signed with the serif-style signature. However, the signature is much less likely than in the prior period to be followed by the name of a town. It is possible that his business had grown to the point where he no longer needed to identify where the shop was located. When a town name is used, Nashua and Nashville are named interchangeably as before, but only until the two towns reunified in 1853. After the reunification, he no longer signed with "Nashville." A few of the gravestones from the 1850s have a new Roman capital signature instead of the old upper-lower case script signature.

Attesting to the quality and reputation of his shop's work, two of Nashua's most esteemed citizens were honored with substantial Davis-signed obelisks upon their deaths (both in 1853). One is Daniel Abbot, called the "Father of Nashua" because of his role in the founding of the Nashua

Manufacturing Company. The other is Charles Gordon Atherton, a prominent politician who served a term in the United States Senate and helped nominate Franklin Pierce for the Presidency. Atherton's probate records show an expense of $3.00 to Moses Davis as "sexton" incurred two days after Atherton's death.[19] This is the first probate evidence for Davis performing such services. Subsequent Selectmen's Reports for the reunited towns of Nashville and Nashua (now chartered as the City of Nashua) show small payments to Davis for "sexton's services" for county paupers.

By 1856, a city directory lists Davis under four trade headings: Coffin Ware House, Stone Cutters, Marble Workers, and interestingly, Coroner. The directory for 1857-1858 lists Davis as one of two "City Sextons" and one of three "Undertakers" in the city. He also appears as a "Private Manufacturer" with this description:

Monument and Grave Stone Manufactory
Moses Davis, Proprietor
Manufacturer Marble Monuments
and Grave Stones of all descriptions.
Railroad Square. Employ 6 hands.

The city directory listings and advertisements show that by the close of the 1850s Moses Davis had fully expanded into the funeral trade. Gravestone making was still a very important function, though now it had become an enterprise with a half-dozen or more employees. It had grown from a craft into a business. Davis had virtually abandoned slate gravestones, and his marble gravestones and monuments had grown increasingly substantial, diverse in shape, and, at the same time, standardized.

Where Are The Gravestones? – The Shop in the 1860s and 1870s

Although Nashua continued to grow in the next two decades, the number of confirmed Davis stones decreases. There are only 41 confirmed gravestones for the 1860s, less than a third of the number confirmed in the 1850s. For the 1870s, only 13 confirmed stones have been found. Two years of this latter decade, 1877 and 1879, have no representation at all. It is as if Davis had turned away from the monument business. Possibly Davis had scaled back the production of stones, favoring other, more lucrative, enterprises. He had frequently been the recipient of small sums from the city for his work handling pauper burials, but now he was earning a substantial part of his income as a supplier of construction stone material and services. For example, the city's 13th Report (1864-5) shows $10.50 paid to Davis for burial services for paupers; in the same report he was paid $1,582.47 for stonework for city buildings and lots.[20] It is likely that private construction also added

considerably to his income. This work may have meant he had less time and inclination for the monument side of his business.

Another possible explanation for the apparent decline in Davis's gravestone production may be that he kept a steady flow of stones in production, on a par with previous decades, but simply stopped signing them. This is hard to prove, given the growing standardization of gravestone styles and the paucity of probate records that might establish payment. The available historical records suggest that gravestone making was still important. For example, a directory advertisement from 1866 mentions "granite work" (Fig. 13). Though by itself it is ambiguous whether this refers to monument or construction work, an advertisement from an 1872 directory, which lists him as "Importer and Dealer of the Famous Scotch Granites," contains a specific reference to granite as a monument material, on an equal footing with marble (Fig. 14).[21] However, I have been unable to locate any confirmed granite gravestones or monuments made by Davis either through careful search for signed stones or probate sampling.

Of the relatively few confirmed stones in the 1860s and 1870s, some interesting facts can be noted. First, only one is slate.[22] The marble stones

Fig. 13. Directory advertisement, 1866.

Fig. 14. Directory advertisement, 1872.

show an increasing diversity of shapes. As time went on, the tablet declined, with the flat-topped version fading first. Arched stones, both rounded and "Gothic," began to assume greater popularity (Fig. 15). Additionally, some gravestones resemble shields, and others look much like cross-sections of fire hydrants. There is one example of a new style, a pierced cross (Fig. 16). As before, there is not a lot of ornamentation on most marble stones. What there is consists of botanical forms and the occasional hand with upward-pointing forefinger. There is also a unique example of military motifs on a stone for a young Hollis man who perished in the Civil War (Fig. 17). Davis's block capitals signatures now become dominant. It is as if Moses Davis's direct involvement in stone creation has greatly diminished, and his personalized "signature" has been replaced by a shop mark.

The twenty-year period of the 1860s and 1870s proved to be a time of prosperity for Davis, with several related lines of business operating simultaneously. Compared to other citizens of Nashua, statistics show that Davis, now in his middle age, though not wealthy, was at least comfortable. An article in *The Telegraph* on the incomes of notable city people in 1868 reported his income as $1,867, nowhere near that of the wealthiest men but still high enough to make the list.[23]

Fig. 15. Mary R. Duncklee, 1867, Francestown, NH, with botanical image and relief lettering.

Fig. 16. Hattie Minor, 1873, Pepperell, MA, an unusual pierced-cross form, with morning glory, geranium, and lily decorations.

Fig. 17. Charles H. Farley, 1864, Hollis, NH, with military motifs (muskets, cannon, saber). Farley participated in the assault on Fort Wagner, SC, famously led by the African American Massachusetts 54th Infantry.

The End of an Era — The Shop in the 1880s and Beyond

By the 1880s, Moses Davis's funeral business apparently exceeded his monument trade, at least as evidenced by advertisments. In a directory advertisement from 1883, he has adopted the more modern and perhaps tasteful title of "Funeral Director," and he identifies himself as both "manufacturer" and "dealer" in monuments (Fig. 18). The latter may suggest that by this date, at least some of his monuments were being purchased wholesale from suppliers. Underscoring this apparent shift in relative importance of his trades, there are only six confirmed Davis stones from the 1880s. Of these, only the three that date before 1888 could be his work alone, for in that year Moses Davis's long career came to a close when he died rather suddenly of a liver ailment on January 3rd. His obituaries (see Appendix II) show that he was "highly esteemed" in his community and provide much insight into his business relations. One obituary includes is the intriguing comment that his gravestones had been "sent to all parts of the United States." This is in contrast to the evidence from confirmed stones (see Appendix I) that shows a rather tight distribution pattern around Nashua.

Fig. 18. Directory advertisement, 1883.

Davis was honored with a statuesque High Victorian-style granite monument in Nashua's Edgewood Cemetery (Fig. 19). A mourning woman sags against a cross, while below her, terse biographies of Moses and later family members adorn all four sides. It is unsigned. The probate records for Davis's estate do not tell us when the monument was placed or by whom, though it is of course highly likely that it was his own shop which produced the work. Moses's first-born son, Albert A. Davis (1845-1911), carried on his father's business and in turn passed it to his son Harland (1874-1928). The succession of family ownership of the Davis Funeral Home continued until 1971, when the business was sold. At some point the business moved to a stately old home at One Lock Street in Nashua's North End, where it flourishes to this day, justly proud of its historical roots and long-standing service to the community. The wonderful contemporary portrait of Moses Davis (frontispiece) is proudly displayed in the parlor. The present owner, Norman E. Hall, printed a pamphlet in 1992 commemorating the 150th continuous year of the business. It states that the monument trade continued at least through Harland's tenure. The Davis Funeral Home has run television advertisements which bring the reputation of Moses Davis to life in a medium he could not have imagined in his day.

Conclusion – A "Suitable Grave Stone"

This study of the body of work of Moses Davis and its large number of signed stones documents the work of a stonecarver who began by producing both richly decorated and beautiful (if not original) slate tablets and plain marble tablets, then subsequently shifted to diverse, three-dimensional marble forms. And although I have been unable to find examples of a newer medium, granite, Davis presumably later created monuments of this material, undoubtedly with the assistance of power-driven equipment. While marble was already a fairly popular medium by the time Davis first apprenticed as a stonecarver in the 1830s, his career saw the simultaneous demise of the popularity of slate and the urn-and-willow motif. Thus, Davis gravestones are an example of the shift from craft to shop and from handwork to manufacturing, which may describe an overall paradigm for mid-nineteenth-century gravestone production. The story also shows how a carver capitalized on the opportunities related to the gravestone business. Despite the sharp decline in stones confirmed as the work of Davis during his active years, we know that the monument business remained important, and production of monuments may not actually have declined. Because they lack signatures or distinctive designs, Davis's later gravestones are nearly impossible to identify. Popular taste apparently desired uniformity and did not value distinctive handwork.

The will of Nathaniel Proctor, who died in 1846 and is buried in the cemetery on the Hollis Town Common, includes the following passage:

Fig. 19. Moses Davis, 1888, Nashua, NH.

> "...to my son Ira Proctor [I leave] all the rest and residue of my estate, both real and personal, and after paying all my just debts, and the expenses of my last sickness and also that of my wife, and expecting suitable grave stones at my grave and that of my wife, he shall have full possession of all the residue of my worldly property to his sole use and behaff [sic]."

We do not know how much "residue" was left to Ira, or if Ira believed he complied with the intent of his father's last wishes, but we do know that Nathaniel got a plain marble tablet signed "M. Davis, Nashville." Perhaps the restraint shown in this style of stone, as in so many others of its kind, was perfectly suitable to the taste of Nathaniel and those that survived him. In any event, the workmanship is of high quality and the stone has survived the ravages of time, so Nathaniel Proctor still has a visible presence in the modern world. It could be said that selecting a gravestone from Moses Davis and his shop was always a "suitable" choice.

NOTES

[1] The cemetery is thought to contain many unmarked graves of child smallpox victims.

2 Ironically, the David French stone is apparently the only signed M. Davis purple slate, and his only slate without ornamentation or iconography of any kind. This hard slate was occasionally used by other carvers in the region. Recently, vandals scratched names onto its surface.

[3] The only academic reference I have found for Moses Davis is in a footnote to the article "The Colburn Connections: Hollis, New Hampshire Stonecarvers 1780-1820" in Theodore Chase and Laurel K. Gable, *Gravestone Chronicles* (1990). The footnote lists all the previously unknown carvers they encountered while searching New England graveyards for stones of Colburn, Ball, Wheat, and Hubbard. They included "M. Davis, Nashua," and estimated his active years as 1830-1850. The Nashua Public Library's "Hunt Room" collection of local historical resources proved to be the major source of biographical data. Details about Davis's life were largely gleaned from several newspaper obituaries as well as Nashua and Nashville city directories, the annual reports of the two towns, Davis Family genealogies and a WPA-sponsored oral family history. Davis appears in none of the formal town histories, even though he was a widely-known and well-respected citizen, as his obituaries clearly state.

[4] From the obituary in the Nashua *Daily Gazette*, January 3, 1888.

[5] At the time there were active shops in Manchester, VT, belonging to Alfred Briggs. William Chamberlin, Peter Wyman, and Truman Eggleston.

[6] The 1890 census would show Nashua's population to be 19,311, more than triple the population of 1840.

[7] *Gill's Nashua Directory* of 1841 shows the names (but not occupations) of Nancy, Sarah, and Elizabeth Davis, who collectively boarded at 12 Canal Street. As Moses had three siblings bearing these names, there can be little doubt they were his sisters. Subsequent directories show Nancy and Elizabeth as workers at Jackson & Co., a cotton mill on the north bank of the Nashua River, literally across the street from their residence. Perhaps, having left the farm and crossed the river to Nashua to become "mill girls," they influenced their brother's decision to locate there. Moses himself does not appear in the 1841 directory; he probably had not moved to town by the time of its publication.

[8] Only one carver in the Merrimack Valley comes close to, and perhaps exceeds, the number of signed stones Davis produced. That is "B. Day" of Lowell, Massachusetts. Day has stones in most 19th-century cemeteries from north of Manchester, NH, to the mouth of the Merrimack River in Salisbury, MA. Most of his work precedes Davis but their work overlaps during the 1840s and early 1850s, after which there are no more Day stones. Day also made the transition from slate to marble. Davis must surely have been aware of Day. On several gravestones Davis used a style element which Day used constantly (and may have originated): four columns supporting the

platform upon which the urn and willow stand. In cemeteries in both Londonderry and Hudson, NH, Davis stones stand next to Day-signed stones, virtually copying them, undoubtedly to give uniformity to family plots.

As described in *Gravestone Chronicles*, Hollis had a relatively early gravestone carving tradition. By the 1840s, however, this seems to have died out, and there are no more identified Hollis carvers. Amherst had a carver named J. Brown, apparently active in the 1820s and perhaps beyond. Merrimack had a carver around the same time period named McConihe (listed as M. Conihe in *Gravestone Chronicles*). None of these earlier carvers had a style that Davis utilized.

[9] The couple would have three children: Albert A. (1845-1911), Anne E. (1847-1925), and Henry H. (1851-1933).

[10] A Nashville town meeting held in 1843, just one year after separation, proposed reuniting the two towns; Davis was among the 377 "nays" that overwhelmed the 17 "yeas" and thus preserved the separation.

[11] Any directories for 1842, in which he might first have appeared, are not in the Nashua Public Library's collection.

[12] *Markers* 1: 41.

[13] *Early New England Gravestone Rubbings* (NY: Dover, 1966), x.

[14] I presented photographs of a few examples to Bert Denker of the Winterthur Museum Library, who kindly offered to research them for me. He found no substantive relation to other craft forms. He stated: "the fan element does turn up infrequently in furniture, but more often cabinetmakers used shell (scallop) carving and that, like the fans, is used in the eighteenth century, rather than the mid-nineteenth century" (Bert Denker, email correspondence to author, June 8, 2005). Further searching online yielded some examples of the fan element decorating Federalist vases. Some sources say neoclassicsm persisted until the 1850s, which would explain the popularity of the elements in Davis's work (http://lilt.ilstu.edu/jhreid/neoclassicism.htm). Others say the tradition ended earlier, which would make these elements something of an anachronism by the 1840s (http://www.artcyclopedia.com/history/neoclassicism.html).

[15] However, there is an alternate style of uniform thickness, as in Figure 3.

[16] Laurel Gabel kindly provided the dates for the Park family of carvers.

[17] I catalogued all the slate stones that are definitely or potentially the work of either man in the four cemeteries in Hollis that contain slates. Then probate was searched for all these (of course, there were scores of other stones which did not fit the profile of either man; a few were sampled in probate without result). The resulting distribution is:

Signed: Davis (19), Park (1)
Unsigned/probated: Davis (2), Park (2)

Attributed: Davis (26), Park (35).

[18] I could locate no surviving town directories for the years between 1845 and 1850, so it is difficult to determine what was going on in Davis's career other than stone carving, or how large his business was.

[19] A receipt for this, signed by Davis, shows payment in full two months later. Davis was not shown as performing any other funeral services, nor is there any mention of the expense for the monument.

[20] About $16,650 in year 2000 dollars.

[21] While it may seem a classic case of "coals to Newcastle" to import granite into The Granite State, the "Famous" or "Celebrated" "Scotch Granites" had a striking reddish hue not found locally.

[22] The three late Davis slate gravestones are dated 1862, 1886, and 1888, and appear to be reused old slates. The 1886 stone is signed with a reference to Nashville, which had gone out of existence as a separate entity 32 years earlier. All three have their inscriptions enclosed in deeply recessed panels, as if the original inscription had been carved away. Susan Swallow's stone dated 1888 even looks as if an epitaph had been erased. Swallow's stone with a death date of May could not have been finished by Davis himself, who died in early January.

[23] This figure is about $22,000 in year 2000 dollars.

APPENDIX I: DISTRIBUTION OF MOSES DAVIS STONES

Though Moses Davis is strongly identified with Nashua, his stones can be found throughout south-central New Hampshire, and, to a much lesser extent, the northern border of east-central Massachusetts (Fig. 3). In fact, Hollis, New Hampshire, bordering Nashua to the west, has the distinction of holding the greatest number of Davis stones. Though less than one-fourth Nashua's size at the time he set up shop (one-twentieth by the time of his death), Hollis was then, as now, a prosperous community, with undoubtedly more discretionary wealth per capita to spend on gravestones. There are 366 confirmed New Hampshire examples in 68 cemeteries, in these 31 towns:

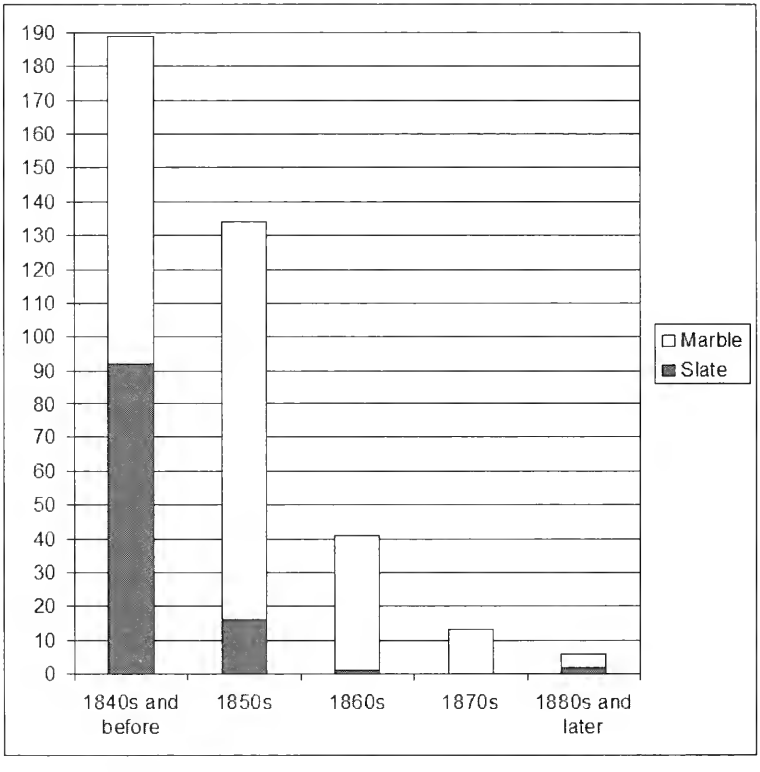
Town	# of Stones	Number of Cemeteries	Town	# of Stones	Number of Cemeteries
Hollis	63	5	Hancock	3	1
Nashua	60	7	Lyndeborough	3	2
Hudson	41	5	Mason	3	2
Merrimack	22	4	Mont Vernon	3	1
Amherst	20	3	Salem	3	1
Londonderry	20	4	Goffstown	2	1
Milford	19	4	Greenfield	2	1
Wilton	17	3	Jaffrey	2	1
Windham	15	1	New Boston	2	1
Bedford	13	3	Temple	2	1
Pelham	12	3	Harrisville	1	1
Brookline	9	2	Henniker	1	1
Litchfield	9	2	Manchester	1	1
Deering	6	2			
Francestown	6	2			
Hillsborough	4	1			

Massachusetts has 19 confirmed examples in 8 cemeteries in 4 towns:

Town	Count of Stones	Number of Cemeteries
Pepperell	11	2
Tyngsborough	4	3
Dunstable	3	2
Townsend	1	1

As to his gravestones being sent to "all parts of the United States" and Davis himself

being "extensively known" in other states for his "business relations," no confirming evidence has been discovered. If any Davis gravestones or monuments exist in other cemeteries close to the area covered in this article, they are unsigned. As for other parts of the United States, it is possible that the distant stones are unsigned. The graph below illustrates the remarkable decline of Davis's slate gravestones relative to marble as well as the overall decline of signed (or probated) stones.



APPENDIX II: OBITUARIES AND FUNERAL NOTICE

Mr. Moses Davis, the well known marble worker and city undertaker, died this noon aged 71 years and 3 months and 14. [sic] . . . He was taken sick a few weeks ago with a liver difficulty, and it was supposed he would recover until a few days ago. He became insensible yesterday and dropped away suddenly at last. Mr. Davis was highly esteemed as a man and a citizen, and was honorable and high-minded in all the relations of life. His business relations were extended over a wide territory, his monuments and marble work being sent to all parts of the United States, and in all this extensive business none will say aught against him. His death will be regretted by a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, not only in this city and State, but in other States where he was extensively known by his business relations. – Nashua *Daily Gazette*, Tuesday, Jan. 3, 1888.

*

During his nearly fifty years residence in Nashua he had been engaged as a manufacturer of the best monuments in granite and marble; he was also an undertaker. Mr. Davis was enterprising and thoroughly reliable in all his business transactions. He gave employment to a large number of men and was ever mindful of their best interest. He was a citizen whom the humblest person could approach; a large hearted man who had a kind word for everybody; who would not willingly wrong his fellowmen. He was an old time Democrat and pretty set, but that he was honest in his convictions no man who knew him doubted. Mr. Davis never desired office and could not be induced to serve his fellow citizens in a political capacity. Neither was he a secret order man. In his death Nashua has lost a good, substantial, kind hearted man who mingled with his fellowmen on an equallry [sic]; who was unselfish and whose word was as good as a note on the Bank of England – *Nashua Daily Telegraph*, Jan. 3, 1888.

*

Under the headline, "Funeral of the late Mr. Moses Davis," *The Nashua Daily Telegraph* published a report on January 7, 1888:

The obsequies of the late Mr. Moses Davis took place at the old home on Cross street on Friday afternoon, when, among the friends and neighbors who filled the house, were a large number of business acquaintances and men who had known and highly regarded the deceased during his long and honorable business career. The floral offerings of love and esteem included a beautiful foliage wreath inscribed "Husband" from the widow; a pillow from the children and grandchildren; wreath from Mrs. Wingate Bixby; bouquets and cut flowers from friends and neighbors and a miniature sheaf of wheat from friends in Lowell. The body was enclosed in an elegant and costly casket and the features of the departed citizen were life like. Rev. J. A. Johnson officiated in the religious services and spoke a feeling tribute in memoriam and words of consolation to the bereaved friends, while the choir of the Baptist church rendered appropriate selections of music. . . The body was placed in the city receiving tomb.

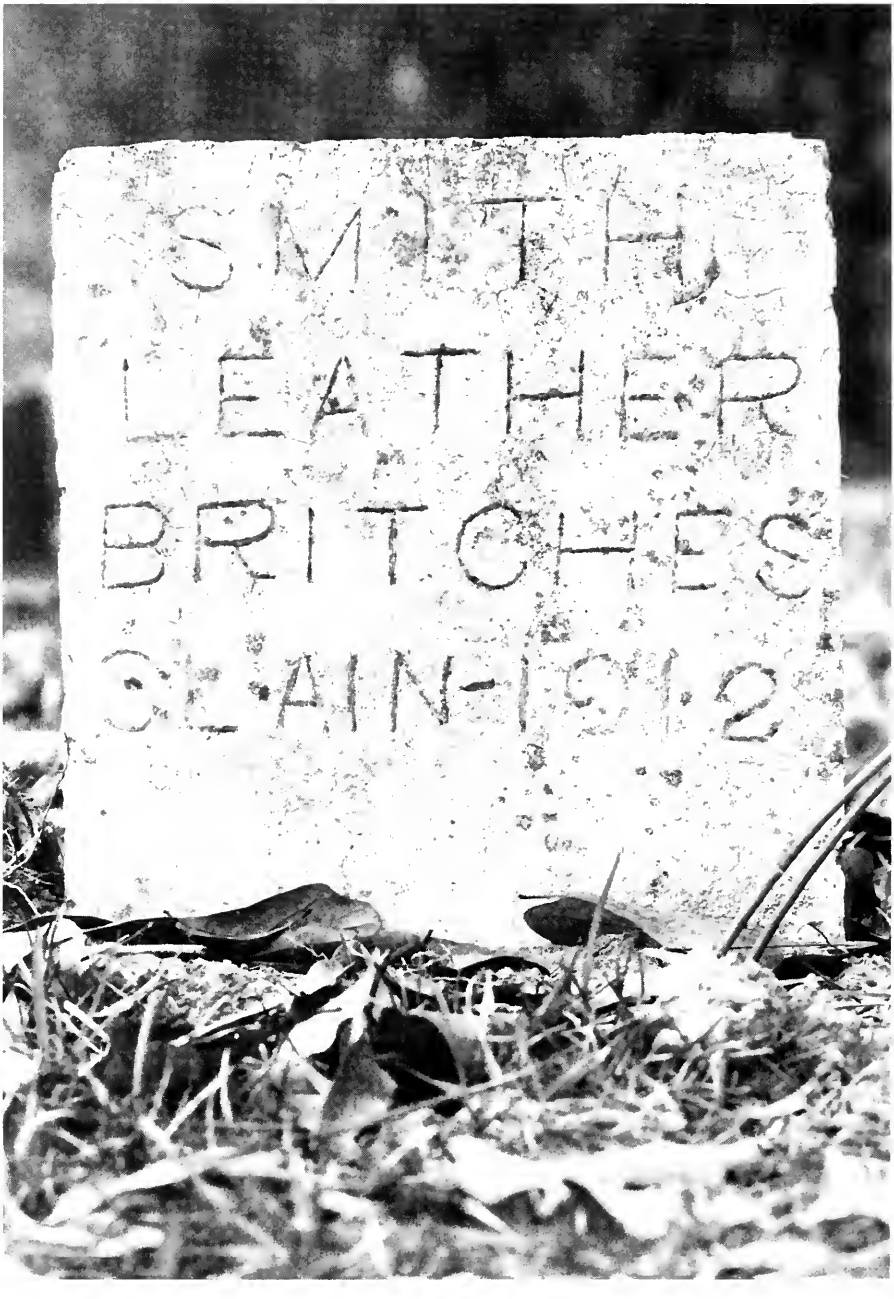


Fig. 1. Gravestone of "Leather Britches" Smith, Merryville Cemetery, Merryville, Louisiana.

"Smith, Leather Britches—Slain": Interpreting an Outlaw Legend Through His Gravestone

Keagan LeJeune

Introduction

For folklorists, especially those interested in material culture, gravestones offer unique opportunities for study because they make a permanent and public statement not only about the person inside the grave, but also about the community and death itself. When searching for information concerning the past, which may be elusive, variable, scant, and/or contradictory, the gravemarker can serve as an important tool. The tombstone not only can offer facts, data, and pronouncements of belief through its form, engravings, or material, but also can provide a focal point for collecting verbal lore. In the case of the legend of Leather Britches Smith, a Louisiana outlaw in the 1910s, an individual marker in a Merryville, Louisiana, cemetery is a crucial element in many variants of the same legend. Moreover, the marker serves as a fieldwork device to initiate conversation with informants and as a narrative device for informants to offer judgments and express beliefs about a sensitive and/or controversial subject.[1] Understanding the Leather Britches Smith legend involves understanding the meaning of the outlaw's grave and gravestone (Fig. 1).[2] An appreciation of the role of Leather Britches Smith's grave and gravestone in his legend may suggest to other folklorists the value of analyzing similar narratives and artifacts.

Folklorists have long been interested in material culture. In "Folkloristic Study of the American Artifact," Henry Glassie maintains that artifacts, situated in time and place, complexly designed, and endowed with "material tenacity," unfold history as well as the enactment of values.[3] Glassie envisions objects "as the tangible record of vanished consciousness" that, when people have control over the processes of making, exist as important cultural communicative tools.[4] Cemeteries and their monuments and markers are such tools. Made in response to uncontrollable life-events filled with emotion and meaning, cemetery artifacts are controlled productions that connect makers and users intimately.

Many scholars have examined the importance of the cemetery as a cultural text that can be "read." In *The Cemetery as a Cultural Manifestation: Louisiana Necrogeography* and "Louisiana Cemeteries: Manifestations of Regional and Denominational Identity," Tadashi Nakagawa shows how the geographic details and components of a cemetery reveal ethnic and regional influences. Nakagawa claims that a systematic analysis of cemetery landscape elements not only allows for an accurate classification of any one cemetery but also provides a record of cultural identity and beliefs.[5] Richard Meyer's "Image

and Identity in Oregon's Pioneer Cemeteries," an examination of Oregon's pioneer cemeteries and their gravemarkers' motifs and epitaphs, also finds that cemeteries and gravemarkers communicate deep values and experiences. Meyer finds that though most of Oregon early cemeteries are reflections of "the Victorian movement in general," they "have their own unique flavor, stemming largely from the pioneer experience" communicated through a "chronicling of the hazards of daily life on the frontier" and documentation of the "perils of certain occupations in a frontier region."[6]

Others have examined cemeteries and gravestones as important material reminders or historical documents that reconnect a community to its history. To emphasize the early American gravestone's potential and purpose as a historical document, Tom and Brenda Malloy, in "Murder in Massachusetts: It's Written in Stone," record and describe twelve gravemarkers that provide information concerning the deaths of the interred.[7] In "Quantrill's Three Graves and Other Reminders of the Lawrence Massacre," Randall M. Thies examines the significance of various markers to the communities around them and their significance to the history of William C. Quantrill and the Lawrence Massacre, during which Confederate raiders killed 200 men and burned Lawrence, Kansas. According to Thies, "gravestones . . . serve as badges of honor for the victims of the raid [and] these gravestones, and various other markers placed throughout the town, serve as chilling reminders of this frightening event."[8] He contends that "the Civil War continues to impact our lives . . . through our encounter with physical reminders of the epic event" and that "the gravestones and 'death markers' of the Lawrence Massacre will provide mute testimony of this extraordinary event in our history, while Quantrill's multiple graves serve as sad evidence of the unique historical importance of the man who led the raid."[9]

The gravestone of Leather Britches Smith serves as the sort of "reminder" discussed by Thies. It serves as a physical connector between teller, history, and legend. Erected in the northwest corner of the Merryville Cemetery, Smith's small, square tombstone bears a simple inscription in crude letters that look as if they were scratched out by a stick or some straight tool before the cement was dry (Fig. 1):

SMITH,
LEATHER
BRITCHES
SLAIN—1912

The gravestone is located near the Newton family section, which contains four large gravestones surrounded by a fence. The graves are immaculately maintained and are decorated with plastic flowers. Leather Britches Smith's small gravestone is less than half the size of even the most modest

gravemarkers. It is a small, plain marker, which suggests that Smith was a common person. The words "Smith, Leather Britches" do not betray the mystery surrounding him. "Slain—1912" obviously merely reports the year and, vaguely, the manner of his death. The marker seems to be meant more to perpetuate the legend of Leather Britches Smith than to pass judgment on his life. Understanding the meaning and function of Leather Britches Smith's burial and simple gravestone entails knowing the legend and the historical and geographical context of the grave and its marker. An analysis of the cemetery facilitates an understanding of the culture that produced and maintains the legend of Leather Britches Smith. It reveals how the culture's beliefs manifest themselves not only in the legend but also in the outlaw's burial and grave. Legends of the outlaw's violent end and burial relate to the local people's Christian beliefs. If we understand the design of the entire cemetery and the position of Leather Britches's grave in relation to that design, we gain a better understanding of the community's view of this man and his place in its cultural system. Moreover, the grave's specific characteristics must be understood in terms of their cultural significance. As a result, the cemetery in general and the grave in particular may contribute, as much as any story might, to the entire legend and may contain important statements concerning the community's beliefs.

The Legend

A primary characteristic of the legend of Leather Britches is that the town is split concerning how to view him. Some view him as an outlaw; others view him as a hero. This kind of contradictory memory is not uncommon in legends of heroic criminals. As is the case in the legends of other heroic criminals, the legend of Leather Britches expresses a source of tension in the community. Jesse James, Billy the Kid, Wild Bill Hickok, and Sam Bass, as well as The Braswell Brothers of Tennessee, Railroad Bill of Alabama, and other more regional outlaws, express the tension between the settled and the frontier, or, as in this case, between the haves and have-nots. In Louisiana's Neutral Strip (also known as The Neutral Zone or No Man's Land) and in other frontier regions, the outlaw—a person who operates on the border of civilization and savagery—embodies the violence of the surrounding environment. Legends about him or her express and, thus, relieve the stress and fear accompanying the rugged frontier life.[10]

The legend of Leather Britches Smith is one of many outlaw legends in Louisiana's "No Man's Land," so named because Spain and the United States could not agree on its ownership after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Both countries removed troops from the region for approximately twenty years until a settlement could be reached. The result was a period of lawlessness caused by an influx of outlaws, wanted men, and opportunists. Although the events involving Leather Britches Smith occurred about

eighty years later, they build on the region's frontier history. Today, the outlaw legend of Leather Britches Smith is an important part of the culture of Merryville, Louisiana. The legend remains firmly embedded in the minds of the community members, a few of whom were children when Smith roamed the area. Other community members only one generation removed from the outlaw's activity heard their grandparents, mothers, fathers, uncles, and aunts relate their knowledge of, and tell of their encounters with, Leather Britches Smith. Significantly, the outlaw Smith is connected to one of the town's most significant and controversial historical events: one of the first and most violent timber-union strikes in the country.

The legend of Leather Britches Smith comes from two main sources: the columns of a Beaumont, Texas, reporter named Ralph Ramos and oral variants of the legend remembered by community members.[11] Generally, community members state that Leather Britches Smith came into the Merryville area around 1910. An outlaw escaping the law of East Texas, he became involved in the struggle between the emerging timber union and local mill owners. Some claim the union employed him to scare away opposition and scare up support. When traveling through the woods and coming upon bands of workers, Leather Britches reportedly offered reassurance and protection. According to several accounts, Smith was never without his two Colt .45s or his Winchester .30-.30. Roughly two years after Smith arrived, the escalating tension between the two factions erupted into the Grabow War, a violent shoot-out between the International Workers of the World and the Grabow Mill defenders. At least one man died, and several were wounded and arrested. Some say Leather Britches Smith was there, and at least one informant believes he fired the first shot. Others disagree. Either way, soon after the Grabow War occurred, Smith was killed in an ambush and reportedly was buried at a local cemetery. Since he had entered the town just as tension between lumber companies and labor escalated to an all-time high and, according to some accounts, had begun to take an important role in the strife, he became a symbol of the town's political and economic division. Just as the community divided its allegiance between the mill owners and the emerging union, it was (and remains) split on whether Smith was a ruthless mercenary outlaw or a vigilant protector of the poor.

While many have written about Leather Britches Smith, the accounts of Ralph Ramos remain some of the most popular written versions. Ramos's legend variant appeared in a series of five *Beaumont Enterprise* articles from August to November in 1972 and in his book, *Rocking Texas' Cradle* (1974). Most Merryville people Ramos interviewed had something to say about Leather Britches Smith and the Grabow War. His articles, therefore, contain the kernel narrative of the legend, since they describe the characteristics of the figure and touch on the major events of the outlaw's life, including the mysterious gravestone for the outlaw that was placed in the Merryville

Cemetery. While Ramos's articles present the figure primarily as an outlaw, emphasizing those traits which make him dangerous and feared, they hint at the heroic side of the figure and at the positive image of him held by some of the community members.

Appearing August 13, 1972, the first article, "Leather Britches Smith Didn't Fear Nothin', Folks Say," presents the account of 74-year-old Goob Newton, known in the community as a grand storyteller.[12] Newton, who was thirteen when Smith was around, explained that "Leather Britches got his name from the clothing he wore, shiny worn buckskin."[13] He recalled that Smith was a small, "easy going fellow, the sort you wouldn't think would harm anyone in the world," yet something "told you never to cross him. He didn't fear nothing in this world."[14] Newton said Smith was on the run from East Texas law because he had killed his wife there.[15] Newton explained that when he was a boy he was sometimes called to his Uncle Seab Collins's house to read to the outlaw. "He [Leather Britches] never slept in the house at night," Newton remembered. "He'd take his sheepskin, after I finished reading and disappear in the woods. In the morning he'd return but never from the same direction."[16] Newton gave a vivid description of Smith's guns and his intimidating gun-play on the streets of Merryville:

> He'd walk into Merryville with all those guns (two .45 Colt revolvers and a .30-.30 Winchester), and no one bothered him. He'd sit on the front row of the theater with three guns. . . . He'd stop in the middle of the street at Merryville and shoot martins with the six guns from either hand. And, if that wasn't enough to impress everyone he'd then [holster the] six guns and bring down martins with every shot from his .30-.30.[17]

Newton also recalled a legendary example of one of Leather Britches's particularly ornery practices: "He'd walk up to a house, shoot a chicken and pitch it to the housewife telling the lady to cook it and she would."[18] Finally, Newton recounted the story of Smith's ambush and death, and told of how Smith's dead body was displayed for the entire town. He also provided details about Smith's burial and grave.[19]

A second article on September 13, 1972, recounts what Ramos learned from Joe Meadows of Merryville. "Little" Ike Meadows, his father, was there when Leather Britches died, and Joe recounts that Ike Meadows tried to warn Smith of the posse being formed to kill him and offered him a trial instead:

> He [Smith] was seated at the end of the dining table bench [of John Foshee's house], right next to the door, when Meadows called out he was unarmed, wanted to palaver and stepped

> through the door. Leather Britches grabbed up his rifle and . . . was out the door and into the night. Meadows called out to him. . . . He later told his sons, "I told him they would kill him surely if he didn't give himself up. I tried to assure him that on my honor I'd guard him with my life until he could get a fair trial."[20]

Remembering what his father had told him, Joe Meadows also described the ambush plan and claimed that it was Ike Meadows' shot that in fact killed Smith.[21] Ramos's article also described the headstone that marks Smith's grave and stated that beside "that tiny headstone is a pot of artificial flowers." "Who placed the headstone?" and "Who leaves the flowers?" Ramos asked (Fig. 2).[22]

Two weeks later, another article reported information gained from Mrs. Willis T. Grantham about Leather Britches Smith's hand in saving two non-union men from being hanged by the union group leaving the Grabow scene. She also told Ramos that, contrary to Joe Meadows' account, it was Deputy Sheriff Dell Sharland's shot that killed Smith.[23] Ramos adds,

> Mrs. Grantham, who was fifteen at the time of the Greybo [sic] shootout, says "most people were glad to see Leather Britches

Fig. 2. Leather Britches Smith's grave (center), decorated with artificial flowers, next to the fenced Newton family plot on the left.

> dead. He had all the farm people terrified. Those were terrible times. . . . Country folks couldn't do anything but what Leather Britches told them to do."[24]

Two final Ramos articles examined Smith's role throughout the union strife and questioned his function as hero or outlaw, benefactor or murderer.[25] In these articles Ramos attempted to retrace Leather Britches's past, determine his real identity, and explain the mystery of the headstone and flowers. At the culmination of Ramos's work on the outlaw, he reported that Leather Britches was believed to be a man named Ben Myatt, who had killed his wife in Texas and fled to Louisiana for safety. One article included a portrait of Myatt "from a drawing" preserved in the wallet of an old bounty hunter (Fig. 3).[26] According to Ramos, Smith's grave was marked and kept up by descendants of the union men he protected.

Many of the stories I recorded about Leather Britches Smith in Merryville in some way connect to the work of Ralph Ramos. I began hearing narratives about Smith in 1997, spent 1998-2000 conducting formal interviews, and continue to lecture about the figure and hear additions to the legend. In my nearly eight years of interviewing people, I have conducted formal interviews in people's homes or at the library or other public places, and I have had countless informal discussions with older Merryville residents and my students about the outlaw over dinner or coffee, at basketball or softball games, and through email. I have noticed that the stories consist of several important categories of information about Smith: 1) what collectors of the legend have gotten wrong or not included, 2) how a particular family's history connects to the Leather Britches Smith legend, and 3) what past family members contributed to the area's history, specifically how they are involved in the Leather Britches legend.

Perhaps influenced by what Ralph Ramos wrote, the stories I heard share many general features and some specific details with Ramos's articles about Smith. However, informants have also frequently noted Ramos's mistakes. Many of my informants, for example Catherine Stark, known as Granny Cat, and Robert Carmen, a forester and master logger, mentioned what they believe Ramos got wrong.[27] One of the best examples of this readiness to "correct" Ramos came from one of my college students, Shelly Whiddon.[28] She told me that her grandmother rejected Ramos's account of Smith:

> Grandma Lizzie, which was my great-grandmother, loved him [Ramos]. Yeah. She loved his stories. . . . Whatever he said was the truth [She pauses enough for my recognition and then she begins to speak right above a whisper]. Until he was talking about Leather Britches and he wrote the businessperson's side of it, which was [that Smith was] a horrible person who terrorized

Fig. 3. Drawing of Ben Myatt, a.k.a. Leather Britches Smith.

> families. And she would drink coffee with him [Smith] in the morning. She knew him and that was just [she stammers and says under her breath] bullshit. And she never read anything he ever wrote again.[29]

When I first began collecting, I found that even though larger elements of the general story remained unchanged from Ramos's accounts (which now I find is not always the case either), informants often altered specific aspects of the story to demonstrate skill as a storyteller, personal knowledge of history, personal and family social status and history, or connection to the community. Quite often, the people I interviewed complained most about Ramos's one-sidedness and resented that he included only one viewpoint. This complaint I found most interesting because it commented on the aspect of the legend that intrigued me the most: Leather Britches Smith's contradictory role as both criminal and protector, outlaw and hero.

As I considered newspapers, land grants, and other historical sources, researched information on the timber industry and the unions, and conducted interviews, held panel discussions, and listened to quite a few informal gab sessions, an increasingly contradictory portrait of Smith emerged. Many of my informants depicted Smith as a ruthless bully or thug. During a panel discussion at the Beauregard Parish Library, Gussie Townsley,[30] a well known local folk artist, vividly recounted hearing about the notorious chicken-killing episodes:

> I well remember—this is a tale that the old Foshees used to tell me about. They lived close to me. They're all gone now. But they were scared to death of Leather Britches. . . . They said that he'd just shoot the head of a chicken off . . . and ordered them to cook it, and then he'd sit there with that gun across his lap.[31]

Later in the evening, Frank Hennigan told his version of the story, omitting only the "gun across his lap" detail.[32]

However, other informants remembered Smith as a friendly protector or outlaw hero. For example, Robert Carmen remarked, "Now, some people that lived down in there where he rode said that he was friendly to them." Goob Newton's sister Ester Terry, a young child when Leather Britches was in the area, is known as an expert in the area's history and like her brother is a known storyteller. Her family seems to side with Leather Britches Smith and the fledging union. In her interviews, Mrs. Terry made Smith into a hero: "You see, Leather Britches always was for the underdog. Anywhere in the world he was, he was for the underdog. . . . So many people thought he was wonderful because he always took up for the underdog and he al-

ways fought for the little man." She even gave the chicken-killing story a positive spin: "Yes. Many women who cooked for him said that he was kind and considerate." I was challenged to understand why stories might vary to such a degree and how each narrator contributed to the variation, but the contradictory information surrounding details about Leather Britches Smith's life paled in comparison to contradictions in the accounts of his death and burial.

The Death and Burial of Leather Britches Smith

An important component of the outlaw legend of Leather Britches Smith, as well as of most other outlaw legends, is the figure's death and burial.[33] Smith's importance, characteristics, and status, and the community's responsibility, emotional response, and judgment of him are all communicated in the section of the legend connected to the cemetery and the grave itself. As Richard Meyer explains, once the outlaw is killed, the body is observed by the community in some way, or the funeral is heavily attended. Another important element in the outlaw legend, according to Meyer, is that "the outlaw-hero manages to 'live on'" in actuality or in some symbolic or supernatural way.[34] Many legends claim that the "real outlaw was not in fact murdered, executed, or whatever at such and such a time and such and such a place."[35] Instead, the legends claim the real outlaw lives peacefully and in anonymity elsewhere, sometimes as a result of the oppressor's laziness, admitted futility, or simply the outlaw's prowess. The outlaw will be seen in rare instances by people who knew him, or, years later, an old, decrepit man will claim that he is the outlaw. According to Meyer, an outlaw may also "live on" in "supernatural rather than natural fashion" or in the many ballads and folklore items that carry on his name.[36] Leather Britches Smith "lives on" through the controversy surrounding him, and the legends about him make him an important part of many people's lives. People talk about family members who knew him, connect their family history to his legend, claim to be his descendants, and debate the mysteries surrounding his death and burial. Folklorists and local historians also play an undeniable role in this process.

Stories connected with Smith's burial, grave, and gravestone serve the function of helping to immortalize the man and the legend. Smith's headstone plays an important role in extending and perpetuating the performance of Smith's legend. The gravestone's temporal tenacity facilitates discussions of him. At fairs, high school events, dance recitals, or whatever the community event might be when I asked about Smith, I always heard at least something about his unusual death and burial. Many informants used the gravestone as a narrative device or point of reference so that they could begin their version of the legend. Some informants used the grave as proof of Smith's existence, while others dispute the grave's authenticity and sup-

ply directions to the "actual" grave. Nearly everyone used the grave and the figure's burial as a means of offering their judgment of Smith and his relationship to their community.

A common belief among informants is that Smith is buried face down, which, as Jerome S. Handler notes, traditionally has marked a person as one who failed to adhere to cultural expectations.[37] This prone positioning, even if it only exists in imaginative elements of narratives, expresses the teller's judgment of the outlaw and warns the audience of the repercussions of outlaw life. During the panel discussion at the DeRidder Parish Library, the same beliefs were reported again and again. "From the time I've been a little girl," one woman said, "I always heard that he was buried face down with his hands handcuffed behind his back. Is that true?" A few members of the crowd nodded and stated their own similar versions. When asked about the outlaw, one informant said, "Goob [Newton] told me one time that they buried him face down, north-south. In case he scratched out, he'd go to China, but the gravestone is facing east-west." Melanie Carmen also heard the story about Smith being buried face down, but for her, Smith was buried in the prone position "because that's where he was going."[38] One of my students knew nothing about Leather Britches except that he was buried "turned for hell." These sorts of beliefs about his burial not only give a glimpse of the active tradition of these tales but also reveal how Merryville's cultural values are revealed in this outlaw's grave.

Merryville Cemetery and Leather Britches Smith's Grave as Cultural Texts

In addition to a considerations of stories of Leather Britches Smith's burial, the outlaw's grave must be understood in the context of the Merryville Cemetery. First, the legend provides the community with status by identifying it with a celebrity outlaw and also by recalling a time when it was one of the area's prominent lumber towns. Second, it provides community members with an opportunity to talk about a controversial topic in a safe, less-personal manner, making it possible for individuals to express their opinions about unions and the Grabow War without directly criticizing another individual or family. In order to understand Smith's legend and the community that tells it, the design of the cemetery (including the positions of the graves as well as the cemetery's vegetation or layout of the paths) and certain aspects of Smith's grave in particular (its location in the cemetery and its characteristics) must be examined.

Several scholars have offered approaches for study of the cemetery itself. Ricardas Vidutis and Virginia A. P. Lowe read the cemetery as a cultural text and establish syntactic and semantic criteria for interpreting the cemetery. They explain that understanding begins by examining syntactic

meaning, "the cemetery's location in relation to the rest of town," and "its internal structurings--the placement of the stones themselves."[39] The semantic meaning is communicated through the materials used for the graves and the construction of the graves themselves. "The interaction of syntactic and semantic dimensions," they argue, reflects "the cultural system of the community that created the cemetery."[40] Vidutis and Lowe, through their detailed analysis, prove the cemetery to be "an enduring and continually growing statement of the cultural concerns and events of the local community, which itself is influenced by its inclusion in a wider cultural milieu."[41]

Started in 1909 as the graveyard for an early Baptist church, the Merryville Cemetery is one of many cemeteries in or near this small Louisiana town of approximately 1500 people on the Sabine River. Like most cemeteries in the area, the small Merryville Cemetery serves primarily as a repository for the bodies of generations of families, some of them descended from the area's first settlers. From the highway, a small dirt road gently turns off to the right. The cemetery occupies a prominent position near the high school and is clearly marked by a gate announcing "Merryville Cemetery."[42] As it is the only cemetery bearing the name of the town, it inevitably serves as a cultural landmark. The old gully, thick brush, and trees marking the cemetery's north boundary offer a stark contrast to the well-kept cemetery. Trees, mostly longleaf pine that are reminders of the town's long history with the lumber industry, form the back of the cemetery. The cemetery exhibits many of the traits of North Louisiana cemeteries: below-ground burials, head and foot markers, copings, and feet-to-east burial orientation.[43]

One of the most intriguing parts of the Leather Britches Smith legend (and I believe one of the most important since it provides a perpetual discussion topic) is the debate concerning the location of Leather Britches Smith's body and authenticity of his grave. The gravestone inscribed with "Smith, Leather Britches, Slain—1912" is located in an older portion of the cemetery, a section full of family names important to the area and in the area during the Grabow War. Some of these families were even directly involved with Grabow and Leather Britches. Smith's gravemarker was erected much later than 1912 (possibly as late as the 1960s) next to the family of Goob Newton, the man who claimed that as a young boy he read to Leather Britches while the outlaw stayed at his uncle's ranch.

Many people claim that since the gravemarker was erected much later than Smith's 1912 death date, the marker does not mark the outlaw's actual burial site. Robert Carmen hints at this in his comments, and Catherine Stark once told me that "Goob put a little tombstone out by the side for Leather Britches (Fig. 4), but that's not where he is. He's over by that north fence." She added, "They wouldn't put him in it. They just did let him be put in it [the cemetery]. . . . He is just inside the north fence. They put him just as close to the fence as they could get him" because "enough people. . .

Fig. 4. Entrance to the Merryville Cemetery, Merryville, Louisiana.

wanted him buried out there. It all depended on who the people were. . . . A few liked him. But might near the whole population hated him and was glad to see him go." According to Mrs. Stark and those who share her opinion, when the outlaw was buried he was buried at the edge of or outside the cemetery and his grave was oriented in a north-south position, rather than the conventional east-west orientation of Christian burial yards.[44] For Robert Carmen, Catherine Stark, and other residents who believe Smith is buried at the edge of or outside the Merryville cemetery, Leather Britches Smith literally remains an outlaw and outsider even in his grave.

Precise information about Leather Britches Smith's gravestone was impossible to obtain. A number of Merryville residents expressed the belief that Ester Terry along with other members of the Beauregard Historical Society sponsored the tombstone. Terry is active in the community and known for her knowledge of history, yet when I interviewed her, she made no mention of the marker being erected at a later date. No one who might have first-hand information was willing to share any information. Ester Terry did state frequently that the outlaw and the history of the area are something "everyone should know about." Mrs. Terry did admit that until 2003 she maintained the gravestone of Leather Britches and placed flowers on his grave. During the panel discussion, Mrs. Terry explained that she refreshed

the flowers whenever she visited her father's grave and explained her family's attention to his grave:

> *And your family just felt a need to take care of the grave because he had nobody?*
> Because he had nobody else, [Mrs. Terry said].
>
> *Did he have children?*
> Oh yes, he almost killed his daughter one time swinging around and hitting her head against a post.
>
> *Was the family here in Louisiana with him?*
> No. No.
>
> *They stayed in Fort Worth?*
> They were dead. He killed his wife you see.
>
> *But what about the children?*
> They were in Fort Worth.
>
> *They stayed? How many children were there?*
> I only read about two, two girls. I don't know how many more.
>
> *Did he continue to drink in Louisiana?*
> Oh, yes!

If the connection between Ester Terry or her family and the gravemarker of Leather Britches Smith remains a mystery, their motives for adopting the plot seem clear. First, the gravestone marks an event of historical notoriety and importance that gives status to all Merryville residents, but especially to old families like the Newtons. The gravemarker gives the town status or at least reminds many town members of a time when Merryville held considerable sway in the area and was an important center of activity. Second, Ester Terry and the Newton family gain a degree of individual and family status by maintaining the grave. Similarly, other individuals and their families gain status by retelling stories that connect their family to Smith's legend.

Conclusion

The heroic outlaw performs specific functions in frontier regions. He has the ability to navigate the untamed world, but he is not completely uncivilized. It is the outlaw who may reject social standards and cross social boundaries, especially when these transgressions are necessary. Leather Britches Smith and other well-known tough men in the area embody the stereotypical qualities of the frontiersman. Like many frontier areas, Merryville and much of the surrounding region have developed a deeply rooted

identity out of fragments of legends, history, and lore. The heroic outlaw is one of these sources of local identity. In order to completely understand the legend of Leather Britches Smith, one must not only collect the recollections and legends, but must also pay attention to the cultural expressions of belief represented by Smith's gravestone.

Despite its lack of authenticity and provenance, the grave of Leather Britches Smith remains culturally communicative. Because of the gravestone, he remains alive in a tangible, physical way, a way that also stimulates talk about him. If the gravestone engenders discussion of the outlaw, it also reconnects people to this geographic place. Stories of Leather Britches, his death, his grave, and his actions while alive are still told in Merryville. These stories are not static. They involve old family members and historical events, but they also connect the past to the present. Storytellers live where he once roamed or can show where certain events occurred. They might have secret knowledge or corrections to old versions. They know people who knew him, remember his actions in the context of their family's history, and place him in their account of the town's legacy, location, history, and consciousness. Leather Britches Smith's grave is a visible reminder of Merryville's historical notoriety. As a tangible narrative device that sparks the retelling of the legend, it facilitates the expression of beliefs and redirects potentially divisive comments about family involvement in the union strife. Finally, it is symbolic of the outlaw's contradictory function in the town's history. Leather Britches Smith remains both man and legend, outlaw and hero, and his grave echoes these ambiguities.

NOTES

[1] While a graduate student in 1998, I first encountered the legend of Leather Britches Smith when my wife introduced me to Merryville High school's long-standing history teacher, Mr. Hieronymus, at a softball game. When I explained that I was studying folklore, he asked if I knew the legend of Leather Britches Smith. When I said I did not, he proceeded to give me a brief account of the outlaw's reputation and career in Merryville. In 1999 I wrote a seminar paper on Smith for an American folklore course. My research for this paper included interviews with my wife's family and a moderate amount of historical research about Louisiana's No Man's Land. Having some knowledge of the legend and the history of the region, I began interviewing members of the community, usually in their homes. Most of the formal, tape-recorded sessions occurred after some initial meetings. Since the legend touches on tensions in the community, only certain members of the community appeared to have the ability and freedom to discuss all portions of it openly. As a result, I focused most of my attention on these tradition bearers.

[2] The interviews with Catherine Stark (14 Nov. 1998) and Robert Carmen (3 October

1998) were conducted and tape-recorded in their homes in or near Merryville. I conducted and tape-recorded the interview with Shelly Whiddon (13 Dec. 1999) in my office at McNeese State University. Gussie Townsley, Frank Hennigan, and Ester Terry participated in a panel discussion (15 June 2000) at the Beauregard Parish Library, which I moderated and tape-recorded, about the outlaw and other historical events of that area. Roughly thirty people attended. However, I previously interviewed and tape recorded Gussie Townsley (13 October 1998) and Ester Terry (17 Jan. 2000) in their homes.

[3] Henry Glassie, "Folkloristic Study of the American Artifact: Objects and Objectives," in *Handbook of American Folklore*, ed. Richard Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 377.

[4] Glassie, "American Artifact," 378.

[5] Tadashi Nakagawa, "The Cemetery as a Cultural Manifestation: Louisiana Necrogeography" (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1987), and "Louisiana Cemeteries: Manifestations of Regional and Denominational Identity," *Markers XI* (1994), 28-51.

[6] Richard Meyer, "Image and Identity in Oregon's Pioneer Cemeteries," in *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, ed. Barbara Allen and Thomas J. Schlereth (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 94-95.

[7] Tom Malloy and Brenda Malloy, "Murder in Massachusetts: It's Written in Stone," *Markers XVI* (1999): 210-241.

[8] Randall M. Thies, "Quantrill's Three Graves and Other Reminders of the Lawrence Massacre," *Markers XVIII* (2001): 1.

[9] Thies, "Quantrill's Three Graves," 23.

[10] Américo Paredes, "Mexican Legendary and the Rise of the Mestizo: A Survey," in *American Folk Legend: A Symposium*, ed. Wayland D. Hand (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 97-108; Américo Paredes, *"With His Pistol in His Hand": A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958); and Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (New York: Dell, 1969).

[11] In *Rocking Texas' Cradle* (1974), Leather Britches Smith is mentioned only briefly. One chapter, "A Preacher Recalls Violence," gives Dave Burge's memories of the Grabow War, including his belief that Leather Britches Smith supported the union cause. Another informant, Arch Slaydon, "knew him quite well" and "was 18 when Leather Britches was killed in ambush at Merryville. 'The dirty dogs didn't give the man a chance.'" (120).

[12] Newton appeared in Ramos's work as an expert wolf hunter and a person who knew the "old ways." Newton participated in many of the more dramatic events of the town's history.

[13] Ralph Ramos, "Leather Britches Smith Didn't Fear Nothin', Folks Say," *Beaumont Enterprise Journal*, 13 August 1972, 1.

[14] Ramos, "Didn't Fear Nothin'," 1-2.

[15] Even though much of this material appeared in local newspapers, the Beauregard Parish Library in DeRidder has a more comprehensive collection in its vertical files.

[16] Ramos, "Didn't Fear Nothin'," 2.

[17] Ramos, "Didn't Fear Nothin'," 2.

[18] Ramos, "Didn't Fear Nothin'," 3.

[19] Ramos, "Didn't Fear Nothin'," 2-3.

[20] Ralph Ramos, "The Last Violent Days of Leather Britches," *Beaumont Enterprise Journal*, 13 September 1972, 2.

[21] Ramos, "Last Violent Days," 2.

[22] Ramos, "Last Violent Days," 3.

[23] Ralph Ramos, "Leather Britches Rides Again," *Beaumont Enterprise Journal*, 24 September 1972, 1.

[24] Ramos, "Leather Britches Rides Again,"1.

[25] Ralph Ramos, "Leather Britches: Hero and Benefactor? Or Murderer?: Tale of Horror Recalled (Leather Britches: Hero or Killer)," *Beaumont Enterprise Journal*, 8 October 1972, 1-3, and Ralph Ramos, "Legend of Leather Britches Unfolds," *Beaumont Enterprise Journal*, 24 November 1972, 1-3.

[26] This drawing appears in Ramos's "Leather Britches: Hero or Benefactor? Or Murderer?"

[27] Catherine Stark is known to many because her ancestors helped settle the area long ago and because she is related to a great many people. Stark often spoke of the generosity of many local mill owners and the interesting history of the town. Robert Carmen knows descendents of many of the area's original families, especially since many of these families owned mills, have strong ties to the timber industry, or own a great deal of the area's timber. Of the informants, Robert Carmen seems to offer the greatest number of historical references and is quite cautious about any definitive statements about the outlaw. I talked to Robert Carmen on my second interviewing session. During the interview, he said that Ralph Ramos "claimed that his name [Smith's] was Ben Myatt and he was from somewhere near Clarksville, Texas. But there's no proof to that."

[28] Shelly is at the end of a long line of Whiddons in the area. Her grandfather was known as a talented gunsmith, and the Whiddon family has long lived as a tight bunch near the Sabine.

[29] In all of the transcribed portions, the ellipses, unless noted otherwise, indicate where I have consciously left out words in order to condense the material. I have tried not to alter the meaning of the account.

[30] Gussie Townsley's family, too, is an old one in the area. Her father sold produce to the mill workers. She talked about the obstacles lumber workers faced here. One relative, who drove a produce wagon and was not directly involved, was wounded in the Grabow War by a stray bullet. In 1951 she watched as her husband was shot down in cold blood as they walked down the road. She is a relative of the Foshees mentioned in the legend.

[31] Panel discussion (Frank Hennigan, Ester Terry, Gussie Townsley, and author), June 15, 2000, DeRidder, LA, tape recording.

[32] Frank Hennigan is a respected member of the community who seems to know a great deal about a variety of subjects concerning local history. During the panel discussion, members of the community often asked him specific questions not only about Leather Britches Smith but also about a lost silver mine, the region's timber industry, and the historic role of the Sabine River.

[33] See Richard Meyer, "The Outlaw: A Distinctive American Folktype," *Journal of Folklore Research* 17 (1980): 94-124. In the article, Meyer outlines the common elements (he identifies twelve) of American outlaw legends. Most heroic outlaws have been pushed from a common man's life into a life of crime, depend on ordinary folk for support, avoid authorities until a betrayal, and then meet their end in some memorable way.

[34] Meyer, "The Outlaw," 110.

[35] Meyer, "The Outlaw," 110.

[36] Meyer, "The Outlaw," 110-111.

[37] See, for example, Jerome S. Handler, "A Prone Burial from a Plantation Slave Cemetery in Barbados West Indies: Possible Evidence for an African-type Witch or Other Negatively Viewed Person," *Historical Archaeology* 30 (1996): 76-86. In his analysis of burial mounds, Handler combines a variety of mortuary evidence, including solitary burial, lack of goods and coffin, and, especially, prone positioning. A woman who apparently suffered from extreme lead poisoning, who must have exhibited visible signs of pain which her community would mark as bizarre, was buried in the prone position. Handler views this as evidence that she was "negatively viewed" by her community. Handler also cites Edwin Ardener's "Coastal Bantu of the Cameroons," *Ethnographic Survey of Africa*, Part 4 (London: International African Institute, London, 1996), which describes the "Kpe and other coastal Bantu people in

the western Cameroons" (82) who practiced "a special form of witchcraft" (90) and were "buried face downward so that if they attempt to come out of their graves they will move in the wrong direction" (105).

[38] Melanie Carmen (LeJeune) is my wife and not only introduced me to the legend but also accompanied me during many interviewing sessions. Robert Carmen is her father.

[39] Ricardas Vidutis and Virginia A. P. Lowe, "The Cemetery as a Cultural Context," *Kentucky Folklore Record: A Regional Journal of Folklore and Folklife 26.3-4* (1980): 104-105.

[40] Vidutis and Lowe, "The Cemetery as a Cultural Context," 111.

[41] Vidutis and Lowe, "The Cemetery as a Cultural Context," 112

[42] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). Tuan argues that the city, "a center of meaning, par excellence" with "many highly visible symbols" is "itself a symbol," one that traditionally symbolizes "transcendental and man-made order as against the chaotic forces of terrestrial and infernal nature" (172).

[43] Tadashi Nakagawa's "The Cemetery as a Cultural Manifestation: Louisiana Necrogeography," 251-267, outlines specific elements which classify Louisiana cemeteries under certain population groups—e.g., Protestant, Catholic, White, Black, rural, urban, etc. According to Nakagawa, Merryville Cemetery can be classified as North Louisiana, Protestant, and urban. All of the graves have a feet-to-east burial orientation, which indicates that the Merryville Cemetery is Protestant. Further evidence is the lack of a central cross and crucifix.

[44] In "The Cemetery as a Cultural Context," Vidutis and Lowe approach certain cultural details of Fulda, a German Catholic cultural area of southern Indiana, through the arrangement of its cemetery. In this cemetery, certain sections seem designed for certain groupings; for instance, children are located in one area. One particular section that "lies outside the cemetery-proper" seems designed to hold bodies of "social or moral outcast[s]" and people who died an "unnatural death" (106).

Frontispiece: Hou Tu (or Tu Ti Gong or Hou Tu Niang Niang), "Earth Guardian."

Singapore's Multicultural Cemetery and Its Chinese Section

James A. Freeman

> *Utopus, the founder, heard that people had been continually squabbling before his arrival... So he ordered that all citizens should be free to follow their own religion.*
> Thomas More, *Utopia* 2

The political philosophy of "separate but equal" arouses suspicion in most Americans because it can connote an unjust system that emphasizes apartness, not equality. One nation, however, has managed to maintain the uniqueness of its different ethnic groups while insuring fair treatment for everyone. A temporary display in Singapore's ultra-modern Farrer Park rapid-transit station symbolizes how this tiny island republic has united disparate peoples. On the wall a serious warning about occasional police inspections peeps out from behind artfully placed *sakura* cherry branches strewn with red lanterns and decorated at the base with good luck dolls and Winnie the Pooh, all emblems wishing everyone a happy lunar new year in 2005. The admonition, written in the four major languages of English, Chinese, Malay, and Tamil, reminds citizens in this peaceable realm that they also live in a larger world boiling with ethnic and religious conflict. The combination of legalism and festivity signifies the successful balance of state uniformity and ethnic separateness that has propelled the multicultural nation of Singapore into prosperity. The communal Choa Chu Kang Cemetery illustrates on a microcosmic level the same equilibrium. It conforms to bureaucratic rules while clearly preserving and even cultivating distinctive identities of the Chinese majority, plus Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Jewish, and other minorities.

Like the United States, the city-state of Singapore has attracted countless immigrants seeking a fuller life, but inclusiveness has brought problems. In 1819, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles seized the sparsely inhabited site (barely 11,000 residents) as a desirable location between India and China for British East India Company interests. Ever since then, officials have taken note of disparate populations that might collide. By 1822 Lieutenant Philip Jackson had drawn up a rectilinear grid for the projected city, one that housed government offices north of the river, businesses on the south bank, and ethnic groups in their own sectors, with all connected to "Europe Town" by

a central highway.[1] The population boomed from 97,000 in 1871 to 228,000 in 1900. Most of the increase came from immigration. Interactive displays at the Chinese Heritage Centre, eerily similar to displays at Ellis Island, explain how Chinese flocked to this city at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula to escape poverty, repression, or war. Despite their common hope for a new life, "the early migrants tended to group together on the basis of lineage, clan, dialect spoken, home village, district, prefecture, province and occupation."[2]

Singapore remained a British colony until 1959. The occupiers saw the inhabitants as "oriental," that is, simultaneously exotic, attractive, irrational, useful, dangerous, and amusing. During that century and a half, occidental interest in and respect for Asians who excelled in western activities were sadly undercut by condescension. Anecdotal evidence found on postcards from the early 1900s illustrates the disdain for non-Europeans. On one 1902 picture of a "Chinese Fruit Stall," "RBG" penned, "But not very tempting"; another 1900 card that shows the Sultan of Perak has the handwritten question, "[H]ow would you like to be face to face with these people [?]"; a third photo from c. 1906 featuring eight Chinese women and captioned "BEAUTIES OF THE EAST. SINGAPORE," prompted the sneering put-down, "If these are beauties Lord help the ugly ones."[3]

Popular culture in the West reinforced these images of a striking but potentially turbulent populace. Travel and fiction writers from Somerset Maugham, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Joseph Conrad in late Victorian times to Paul Theroux in the 1970s, radio programs, films, and folk songs have echoed clichés about the region's potential for chaos.[4] The real-life city certainly did go through many political upheavals. Violently occupied by the Japanese during World War II, it was self-governed from 1959-1963; allied to Malaysia as a semi-autonomous member from 1963-1965; and finally independent from 9 August 1965. This transition from colony to self-rule took place as riots and guerrilla warfare wracked the Malay Peninsula. The forceful vision of Lee Kuan Yew and his socialist People's Action Party controlled unrest in the city so that "there has been no racial violence in Singapore since 1969."[5] In 2005 its more than four million inhabitants enjoy prosperity and security, although neighboring countries still seethe with unrest stemming from identity politics.

Unlike the United States, Singapore has had to preplan its growth, particularly because its land is finite. The island-state measures only twenty-five miles by fifteen miles, making it some 15,000 times smaller than the United States. (Sixty-two surrounding islets plus the attached recreation island of Sentosa provide little additional space.) Already, housing and roads each occupy 12% of the available land. The Urban Redevelopment Authority, housed in a typically futuresque skyscraper on Maxwell Road, proudly

displays maps and extensive models of the city's five-, ten-, and fifty-year building projects, transportation improvements, and land reclamation.[6]

A second reason for land-use planning is the rich mix of races, languages, and heritages. As of 2003, Chinese comprised 76.2%, Malay 13.8%, Indian 8%, and other 1.7%.[7] With roughly 6,500 inhabitants per square kilometer, this third most densely populated country in the world (after Macau and Monaco) might have continued to experience antagonisms common to overcrowded sites. But Singapore progressed from ethnic separatism to countrywide consensus. Since independence, popular understanding has moved "away from the clan towards the nation-state."[8]

Firm rules analogous to those in the transit station or for directing development discourage any resurgence of prejudice. Conveyed in kindly, even artistic ways, coercion to promote teamwork among the varied inhabitants appears in many forms. Messages written on giant billboards, cooed from train speakers, or flashed onto outdoor TV screens encourage everyone to use proper grammar, eat a healthy diet, and exercise. Postage stamps from Singapore illustrate an admirable balance of conformity that still preserves difference. They urge citizens to practice courtesy ("Greet Neighbours," "Queue at Service Counters," "Help Our Elders," 1988); protect the environment (1997); and glory in the transportation system (1988) and public housing (1997). They honor Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and Armenian churches, temples, and mosques (1978) as well as religious holidays: Chinese New Year, Thaipusam (Hindu), Hari Raya Puasa (Islam), and Christmas (1989, 1998, 2004). Other stamps honor Chinese opera singers, as well as dancers from Malaya, India, and "other" places (probably Europe) (1990).[9]

Statistics and social norms prove the wisdom of orderly expansion. Today Singapore ranks first in the world according to various measurements for its superlative transportation system, airport, health care, urban safety, and civility. It uses more computers per capita than any country. In January 2005, the mainland Chinese government, looking forward to hosting foreign guests for their Olympics and other international events, sent specialists to inspect Singapore's dependably clean rest rooms. Inhabitants of all backgrounds have internalized rules: they almost never litter, spit out gum (which might jam sensors on the subway), possess firearms, tailgate in traffic, or deal drugs (death is the penalty for having miniscule amounts). They live in well-planned, high-rise, mixed ethnicity apartments, 83% of which the government subsidizes. They trust that society will always work well.

Although the state continues to add artificial acres to its area, space taken up by small, scattered, or abandoned graveyards has in the past often impeded necessary development. The final resting place for Malay royalty at Kampong Glam ("village by the *gelam* tree") on Victoria Street luckily had

been abandoned before the Mass Rapid Transit tunnel was dug under it in the 1980s. Thus the establishment of Choa Chu Kang Cemetery for all future burials seemed consistent with the philosophy of rational land usage and ethnic inclusiveness. The National Environment Agency set aside a total of 318 hectares (c. 766 acres) in the city's far western quadrant. The NEA currently grants 166 hectares (c. 350 acres) to different faiths, leaving almost half of the land for expansion. It allotted these areas in Choa Chu Kang Cemetery after calculating the percentage of people professing a certain religion and the death rate for that religion. The method of apportioning space according to ethnicity approximates the way the government sets quotas for people in housing developments.[10] Chinese were allotted 86 hectares (c. 212 acres); Muslim, 47 hectares (c. 116 acres); Christian (17 hectares, c. 42 acres); Hindu, 12 hectares (c. 30 acres). These areas, plus the tiny Jewish, Parsi, Baha'i, and Amadiyya sections (each 1 hectare, or 2.47 acres), should provide room for every denomination's needs during the next century (Fig. 1).

Choa Chu Kang accepted its first burials in 1946. Remains from older burial grounds were exhumed and transported to the new facility. In 1998, however, the government realized that with 16,000 people dying each year, the space would not be sufficient after 2013 and so decided that existing graves would routinely be dug up after fifteen years. Exhumations began on November 1, 2004, to remove more than 17,000 plots in the Chinese and 800 in the Hindu divisions. These disposals have been widely announced by the National Environment Agency via its web site, radio, and newspaper notices. Simple request forms permit relatives to treat remains in any way they choose. Crematories and columbaria have become crucial for those faiths—Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian—that allow cremation; for those that do not allow the practice—Muslim, Jewish, Parsi, and Baha'i—reinterrment in smaller plots will be allowed.

Choa Chu Kang Cemetery achieves the political goal of unity from diversity and offers an esthetic solution to the practical problems that plague other land-poor communities (Venice, for one).[11] Wisely, those who designed Choa Chu Kang allowed different kinship groups to dispose of their loved ones with burial or cremation and memorialize them with culturally distinctive markers. Such millennia-old customs help bind together those who may have lived contentedly in Singapore with people of different origins but never wanted to forget their individual heritage.

The Chinese cemetery occupies more than half of Choa Chu Kang. This, the largest individual division, borders Muslim grounds on the south and a Hindu section to the southwest. The Christian, Jewish, and Parsi sections lie across Jalan Bahar highway, southeast of the others. The variety, exuberance, and placement of the monuments symbolize the city's spatial and social arrangement, singular yet interconnected, like Lieutenant Jackson's plan. In both urban and cemetery districts, religions coexist in discrete but

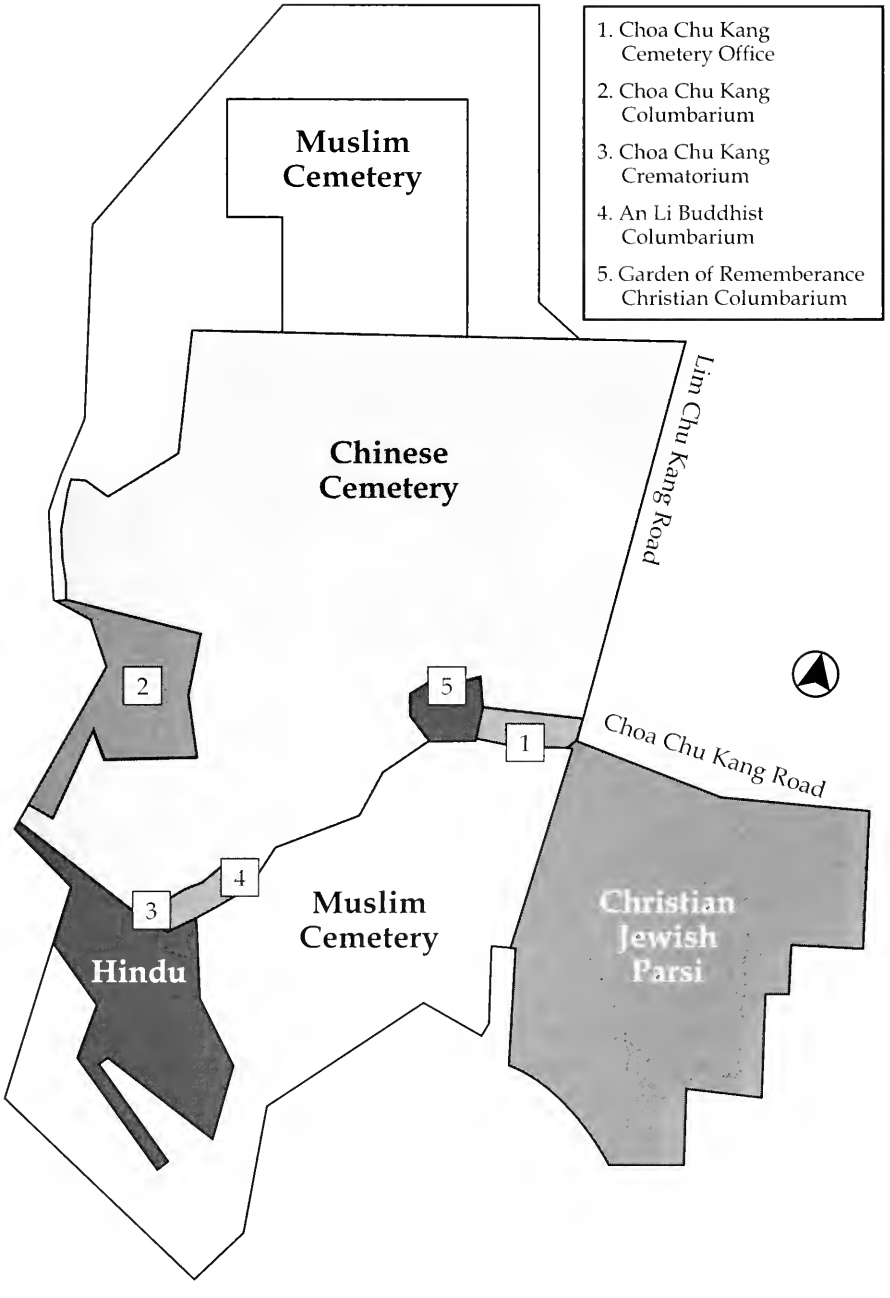


Fig. 1. Map of Choa Chu Kang Cemetery.

contiguous areas. One scholar observes that worshippers frequent either the Guanyin Buddhist temple or the Hindu Sri Krishna temple, just a few yards away on Waterloo Street, but not both.[12] A glance at the contrasting markers of adjacent groups in Choa Chu Kang emphasizes the harmonious juxtaposition of different cultures.

Muslims

Muslim markers originated in the desert of Arabia, but became more elaborate over time and distance. The unused cemetery at Kampong Glam on Victoria Street, the oldest Muslim burying ground in Singapore for both Malay commoners and royalty, shows a simpler architecture than current in Singapore: unadorned stone pillars a foot or so in height mark burial spots. In Choa Chu Kang, attractive rectangular walls that often display an appropriate verse from popular benedictions enclose more recent inhumations. The traditional pillar, which began as one marker at the head, now has geminated into two indicating head and foot. Together they list the usual biographical data of name, birth, and death date. The most distinctive feature, a white cloth neatly tied about each vertical marker, protects the inscriptions from sun and rain. The cloth resembles the headdress allotted to hajis and hajahs, men and women who have made the requisite pilgrimage to Mecca, and is changed at least three times a year: at the death anniversary, at Ramadan, and at the Hajj Festival. Most current Muslims pay c. S$30 (US$20) per month to hire a groundskeeper who does the job. Anticipating Allah's garden, much of the Muslim section features luxuriant plants and trees (Fig. 2).

Muslims follow their ancient practice of burying the deceased as soon as possible after death, preferably on the same day. Members of the same gender wash the body, wrap it in a white cloth (like the *kafan*, or cloak worn by pilgrims in Mecca to show that at death everyone will be equal), and deposit it directly in the ground, at least six feet deep. (Yussuf, one informant at the Sultan Mosque on Muscat Street, with all seriousness, claimed that women must be buried one foot deeper because they might otherwise be tempted to climb upward to this world and gossip.) Lying on its right side, the departed faces Mecca and all the hope that the holy city signifies.[13]

Christians

Christian markers vary from staid to imaginative. The upright headstones, often marble, recall the deceased by means of carved birth and death dates, kind words about the effect of the departed on family and society, and sometimes a photo medallion. Frequently the flat area over the coffin encloses patches of grass, gravel, or seashells that evoke uninhabited nature. Individual decorations like flowers, angel statuettes, pinwheels, or small grottos, vivify the entire area. Portuguese names recall the age of explora-

Fig. 2. Muslim gravemarkers. The cloth coverings echo the headscarver worn by pilgrims who have completed the haji.

tion; tombs built from colorful tiles would appeal to people with an Iberian heritage (Fig. 3). Other markers display Anglo first names and Chinese family names, proof that many have converted to the faith of the colonizers (Fig. 4). Several Chinese informants explained their relatively recent conversion to Christianity as a movement into a new century that leaves behind much "superstition." Their church services do not bother much about complex theological discussions of the Trinity or the various forms of grace. Rather, they emphasize the ideals imputed to the Christian community of first century believers, the *kononia,* that, like traditional Chinese society, emphasized personal belief and mutual kindnesses.

Hindus

The Hindu section similarly houses a variety of markers. The bases of the cement tombs are frequently decorated with colorful ceramic tiles. The vertical marble headstones typically offer a picture of the departed, dates, and commendatory words. As in the Christian section, visitors often place flowers on the deck-like surfaces of the graves or let grass grow naturally on the upper part of the platform (Figs. 5-6). Although Hindus believe in rebirth of individual souls during almost endless cycles, their gravesites offer relatively permanent artifacts for family and friends to recall the form of a beloved during one incarnation.

Fig. 3. Carvalho Christian gravemarker with both Chinese and English inscriptions.

Fig. 4. Lan Christian gravemarker with tradional headstone and grave covering, guarded by many angel figurines.

Parsis

The Parsi and Jewish sections occupy adjacent areas at the end of a long road east of the Christian burial grounds, close to Tengah Airbase. Walls and locked gates isolate both except during preplanned entrances. The tiny Parsi group—only 165 members, including children, in 2005—commemorates relatives with conventional right-angle tombs. A vertical slab usually gives names and birth and death dates, while a horizontal slab remains unadorned (Fig. 7). One marker lists eleven persons, previously interred in other superceded cemeteries, whose remains came to Choa Chu Kang in the 1950s.[14]

Originating in Persia during the third millennium BCE, many Parsis migrated to western India in the eighth century CE to escape persecution. Devotees of this ancient dualist faith arrived in Singapore in the early 1800s. Although they once erected *dakhmas* or "Towers of Silence" (temporary raised platforms on which the corpse was exposed to vultures and the elements so it would disintegrate naturally), concerns for city sanitation and

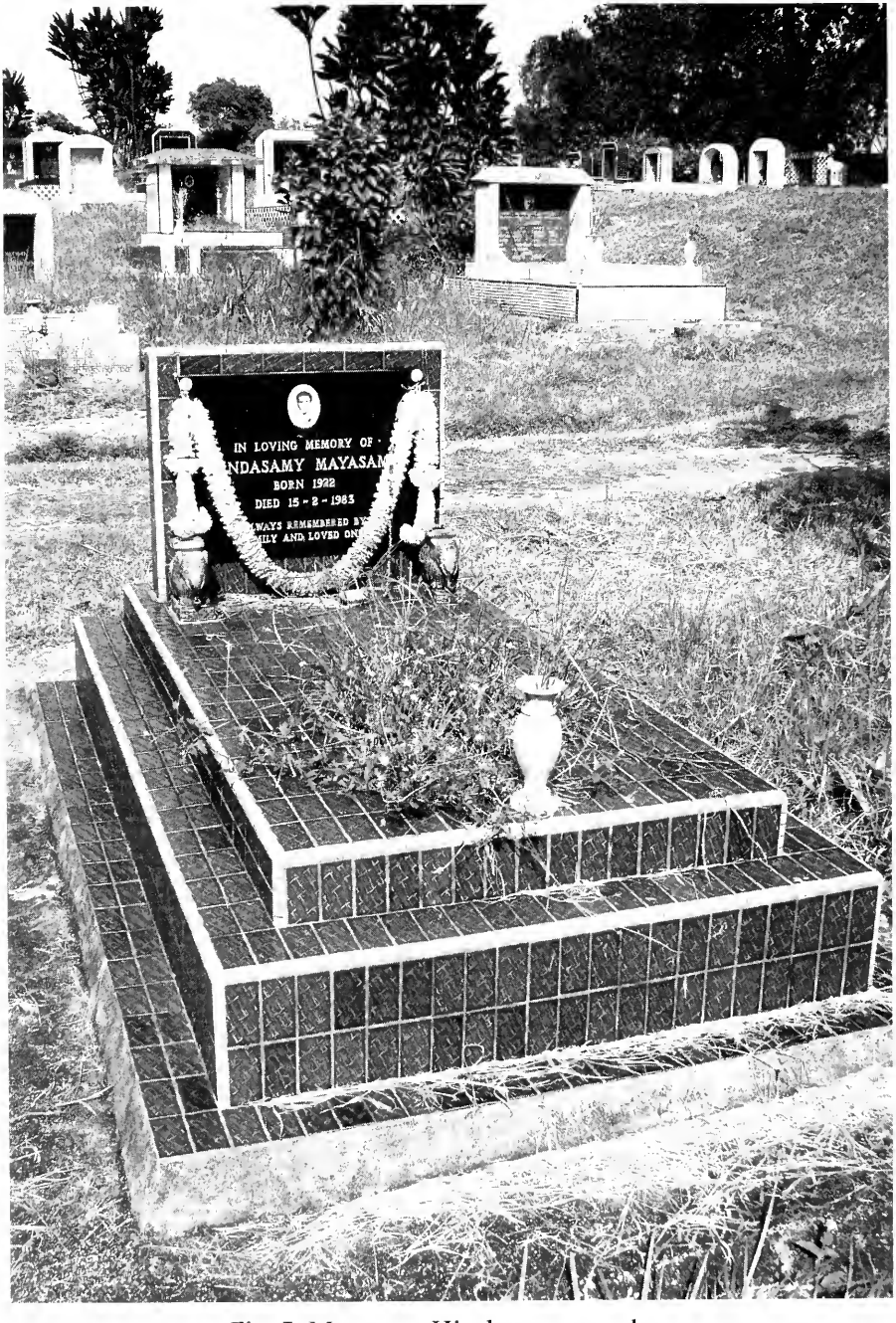


Fig. 5. Mayasam Hindu gravemarker.

Fig. 6. Hindu gravemarkers.

the lack of scavenger birds changed that custom. When a Mr. Muncherjee fell ill in 1829, an Armenian, Aristarcus Sarkies, convinced Chinese Parsis on the mainland to purchase land for a burial ground along Shentong Way, the banking section. In 1948, more land adjacent to the cemetery was acquired so that the Zoroastrian community might build a bungalow for meetings and worship services.

Jews

The main visual feature of this tranquil, tree-shaded site comes from the subtle interplay of light and shadow on angular surfaces (Fig. 8). Geographically close to the plain Parsi section, Jewish tombs reject ornamentation even more than those of the Parsis. Each horizontal deck has an identical Star of David carved at the head. Tombs lie in precise rows with no variation except inscriptions on six small wedge-shaped rectangular tablets at the head. The tablets announce in Hebrew (and sometimes English) the name, age, and death date. The Jewish section of Choa Chu Kang cemetery improves upon the previous Jewish sites. Soon after "nine traders of the Jewish faith" arrived in Singapore during 1830, the small group acquired for ninety-nine years a swampy plot of land for their first burial ground in 1843. By contrast, the first Christian cemetery was granted a better tract on Fort Canning's Government Hill.[15]

This visual encyclopedia of world customs borders the Chinese portion of the Choa Chu Kang Cemetery and highlights the openly traditional architecture encouraged by the state.

Fig. 7. Parsi gravemarkers.

Chinese Funeral Customs

The size of the Chinese section in Choa Chu Kang, nearly two-thirds of the total cemetery, reflects the historical impact of this majority group on Singapore. Although "Chinese" might imply a tightly regimented group, the long history and different backgrounds of Singapore's community have combined customs from diverse belief systems and various locales. Today's ceremonies acknowledge elements of Taoism's spiritualism and animism, as well as Master Kung Fu Tzu's (Confucius') ethical and political precepts, both of which enrich the complex system called by the shorthand word Buddhism. (A Buddhist manual for funerals calls this accommodation "Triism."[16]) Immigrants from separate provinces, especially along mainland China's southeast coast, spoke different dialects but adapted their homeland practices to the demands of a new country. The early settlers, often male laborers and merchants, eventually married Malay women. Their children, the Peranakans (Malay for "half-castes born in this country"), looked back to a mother country with fading immediacy. Ceremonies for marriage and death help the Chinese population assert affinity with a past that the secular modern world often tries to erase. Every day part of someone's heritage disappears. For example, the former Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus

Fig. 8. Jewish gravemarkers.

on Victoria Street, built in 1903, has been refashioned into CHIJmes, a toney bar, restaurant, and shopping plaza ("Discover a century of resplendent living history behind the cloistered walls," the website encourages). Likewise, the neglected Bukit Brown Cemetery at Fort Canning Park, established in 1922 and noted as a model of feng shui, or proper geomantic placement, was partially cleared in the 1970s and, although currently undisturbed, will at some time be transformed for development.[17]

Between death and either inhumation or cremation, Chinese tradition prescribes a series of devotional acts. As one scholar explains, "Death causes a person to become at first an impure, unbounded ghost, which poses considerable danger to the living. Funerary ritual serves to transform that impure, unsettled and dangerous spirit into a pure, settled and benevolent ancestor."[18] In order to understand the complex significances of the Chinese tombs in Choa Chu Kang, we should begin with these funeral customs.

At death, the deceased is washed, clothed, and laid out for public viewing by the eldest son (if the deceased was male) or female relative (for a woman). Previously, seven-day wakes allowed far away mourners to travel and pay respects.[19] Wakes could be repeated once a week for a total of forty-nine days. However, such expensive commemorations conflict now with modern urban life, and anyone who wishes to prolong a wake for more than one week must obtain a government permit. At the wake, family members provide food and drink for both visitors and for the deceased. Sometimes a basin of water stands alongside the table, in which the departed may wash their hands. Flowers, sweet-smelling joss sticks, and oil lamps create an atmosphere of generous remembrance. To determine whether the departed has finished the meal, a relative often tosses "lips of god," two red curved wooden objects about three inches long. If the lips rest in the inauspicious Yang position, both surfaces flat or both curved, then the spirit has not eaten; if they rest with one surface curved and the other flat, the affirmative Yin configuration, then the living may feast. This concern for the loved one's physical needs will replicate itself at the funeral and the gravesite or columbarium.

Next a commercial undertaker puts the body in a handsome solid wood casket, usually dark brown in color. It conveys a somber beauty even though it will soon be lost to sight. Sweeping upward at the head, it dictates the shape of the grave marker that also curves upward. In popular practice, people present miniature coffins as good luck tokens. Bound with a red ribbon (the color of happiness), and inscribed with four antique Chinese characters that predict "promotion in a government job; prosperity," the models further link death to life, loss to gain, the departed to the living (Fig. 9).[20] The undertaker then carries the coffin to one of two locations, the graveyard or the crematorium. A flower-crowded white hearse transports those who choose burial to Choa Chu Kang for immediate inhumation.

Chinese Markers and Ethnic Identity

Like Egyptians and Etruscans, Chinese blur distinctions between the living and the dead. Their inclusive philosophy accepts continuity: "as in life, so in death; as now, so later." Funeral ceremonies and graveyard architecture ease the spirit's anxiety when it crosses the *limen*, or threshold, from our Yang universe to the Yin underworld. Especially in the cemetery, familiar objects from everyday existence are used so that neither the survivors nor the dead feel any undue discontinuity. The necropolis further links all people—past, present, and yet to be.

Concern for the dead in rites and objects results from both fear and respect. If those still alive neglect their forbearers, the departed may change into angry orphan specters, returning to disturb earthly lives until propitiated. One feature of Singapore home and temple architecture suggests that unquiet revenants may attempt to invade even these sacred precincts: a horizontal wooden bar at the bottom of the outer door frame (resembling the barrier of watertight doors on ships) obstructs the uninvited.[21] If survivors honor their relatives, then both groups profit: the deceased will feel

Fig. 9. Model of Chinese Coffin. Inscription in Seal Script of c. 2000 years ago saying, "Promotion [in your job]; Get rich."

rewarded for their kindnesses in life and will enjoy an untroubled afterlife; survivors can take pleasure in right relations with the departed. Both outdoor tombs in the cemetery and indoor niches in columbaria replicate familiar architectural features. The shape of these repositories, the guardian figures near them, the ceremonies, and visual references all link the dead to those left behind.

The Shape of Shrines for Gods in Temples

Chinese temples and houses traditionally have at least two altars, one for the household god and one for ancestors. The shape and decoration of outdoor tombs in Choa Chu Kang replicate in open air these interior decorative practices, thus uniting family piety at temple and at home with public display. The arrangement of Singapore's Taoist and Buddhist temples influences the appearance of outdoor tombs in the cemetery. Statues of gods reside against a wall at the far end of a temple's main chamber. Between them and a worshipper, two platforms, one usually oblong and the other, closest to the communicant, square, separate holy from profane. The deities sit in a *temenos*, a sacred space, often behind glass, thus reminding humans that each being exists in a separate realm and, simultaneously, inviting the faithful to see them. Vyvyane Loh eloquently defines the conventional altar in Singapore: "an arrangement of sacred objects and idols for worship; a platform for ritual, sacrifice, prayer; a place of communion for the family, uniting past generations with the present; where commercial dealings are undertaken with offerings, bribes and bargains struck with the appropriate deities."[22]

The main altar in Thian Hock Keng Temple on Telok Ayer Street demonstrates the typical arrangement. On the far wall, two deities oversee their worshippers. The larger deity is Ma Cho Po, a benevolent sea guardian brought from Fukien in 1822. The smaller deity, Ma Zu, a popular protector of sailors, was reputedly born Lin Mo Niang ("Silent Girl") on Mei Zhou Island in Putian, Fujian Province, during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). She would swim out to drowning people but, sadly, could not save her own father, although she did rescue her brother. Later, at the age of 27 in 987, she ascended a mountain and vanished. She guides storm-tossed mariners with a red lantern. Despite the difference in eras, consecrated figures and secular worshippers meet easily at these multi-level temple platforms.

One expert has tentatively suggested that the three distinct areas might originally have symbolized the three Buddhist realms of Longing, Formlessness, and Enlightenment; he then wisely cautions that such metaphysical subtlety, ultimately unverifiable, probably has little resonance with ordinary worshippers, who merely recognize the tri-partite structures.[23] Whatever the reason for the design, the temple tables display the same food, joss sticks, flowers, and lights that decorate the wake tables at home.

The typical home ancestor shrine must fit into apartments. However, the archetypal pattern appears in the Asian Civilisations Museum, Armenian Street. There the large ancestral shrine from Panglima Prang, which belonged to the wealthy Tan family between the mid-1800s-1982, consists of three structural units, all of black lacquered wood: a vertical ancestral tablet house at back on wall; a narrow rectangular table in front of house; and a square offering table in front of both.

Expensive silver bowls, platters, and jugs contain offerings on the square table and, except for their ornateness, typify the arrangement in less affluent households. At the anniversary of the loved one's death, the family would set out favorite foods. On the right stands an elevated washbasin with one upright lotus, so the ancestor can wash after feasting. The stalk, bud, and flower symbolize the gamut of human existence: from swamp muck to radiant blossom. Also, the descendants would artfully place incense, candles, flowers, and oil lamps so that the experience of dining with the beloved would seem generous and harmonious.

The living would continually reminded themselves that they had reason to recall the deceased. The upright tablet would have the ancestor's name on the front (and perhaps other data on the back). His or her portrait, placed inside the tablet house, would coexist with two wooden plaques containing expressions of sorrow or praise for the departed. Four painted wooden panels, reading from the viewer's left, read:

1. "Remember the wisdom of one's ancestors. Wealth will ensure peace in the family."
2. "To be successful in one's career, one needs the blessings of ancestors."
3. "It is one's duty to worship the ancestors."
4. "If one respects the ancestors, one's future generations will sing praises."

In the center of both the wall and the list of moral precepts is the motto: "Follow in the footsteps of the ancestors."[24] Flanking the shrine, two elephants face each other, perhaps guaranteeing the same good luck that the elephant god Ganesh offers to Hindus. (Such syncretism characterizes Buddhism: a four-handed, elephant-headed statue sits at the right knee of a 15-meter-tall gilded Thai-looking Buddha in the Sakaya Muni Gaya Temple on Race Course Road.) Far from oppressing viewers, such looks backward to the departed and sideways to other people's deities comfort survivors, especially immigrants and their offspring, by reminding them of a continued family and remembered homeland.

The Tombs

In Choa Chu Kang, the rows of similarly shaped, cement-sided Chinese tombs marching resolutely to the horizon give one an initial impression of

sameness. Much like temple and domestic shrines, each tomb features an upright marker for the deceased. This vertical slab faces a recessed, altar-like interior ledge that rises from a slightly elevated outside pavement. Varied images and materials individualize markers. The foot-tall vertical base between the outer ledges may show a pleasant oceanscape, appropriate for island people who long ago came mostly from China's seaside provinces. The Zhang family tomb (Fig. 10) has a rear central upright panel that provides a photo of its patriarch, Yung Tung, and inscriptions that add his birth and death years (1913-1987), his origin (Quemoy Island, Fukien Prefecture), and a conventional saying of respect. The rear upright panel to the viewer's right lists male offspring (five sons, five grandsons). The rear upright panel to the viewer's left lists female offspring (one daughter, four daughters-in-law, one granddaughter). The upright rectangular pillar to the viewer's right prays, "Rest peacefully in this good land." The upright rectangular pillar to the viewer's left wishes good luck forever to the next generation. Between these two black pillars, a motto held by a female on the forward upright panel to the viewer's right reads, "Return to Buddhism." A second motto held by a second female on the forward upright panel to the viewer's left reads, "Accept the West," probably a double reference to death and to the fabled Shining Land of the West in Buddhist cosmology.

Another reminder of the interpenetration of this world and the next appears in front of the Dai Lin Jin family tomb (Fig. 11). Its rear central upright panel tells the patriarch's dates (1904-1988). A rear upright panel to the viewer's right lists male offspring (four sons in the first generation). The rear upright panel to the viewer's left lists female offspring (three generations). The forward pillar to the viewer's right reads, "A high tomb occupies 100 blocks." The forward pillar to a viewer's left reads, "Enjoy long life and collecting good fortune." This tomb shows how cemetery decoration often echoes elements of earthly life. A motto on the forward longitudinal panel reads, "Fu, Lu, Shou," the names of three personified wishes: "Good Fortune, Polite to Emperor (= Money), Long Life." Such abstractions appear in numerous jocular guises on everyday objects, especially on ever-present paper offerings (Fig. 12).

The pavement before the ledge of the marker as well as the ledge itself can hold different offerings from visitors. The Na-Na Li tomb features exquisite vases, bowls, globes, and plant holders to honor the beloved mother and please the visitor's esthetic sense (Fig. 13). A rear upright pillar to the viewer's left reads, "Thinking of/longing for." The forward upright pillar to the viewer's right reads, "Full of warm feelings." The forward upright pillar to the viewer's left reads, "Fortitude and diligence brimming over." And the touching motto on the forward longitudinal panel reads, "Helped others with a warm heart in her lifetime."

Fig. 10. Zhang family tomb with female scroll-bearers (painted ceramic tiles).

Fig. 11. Dai Lin Jin family tomb bearing gold-painted inscriptions.

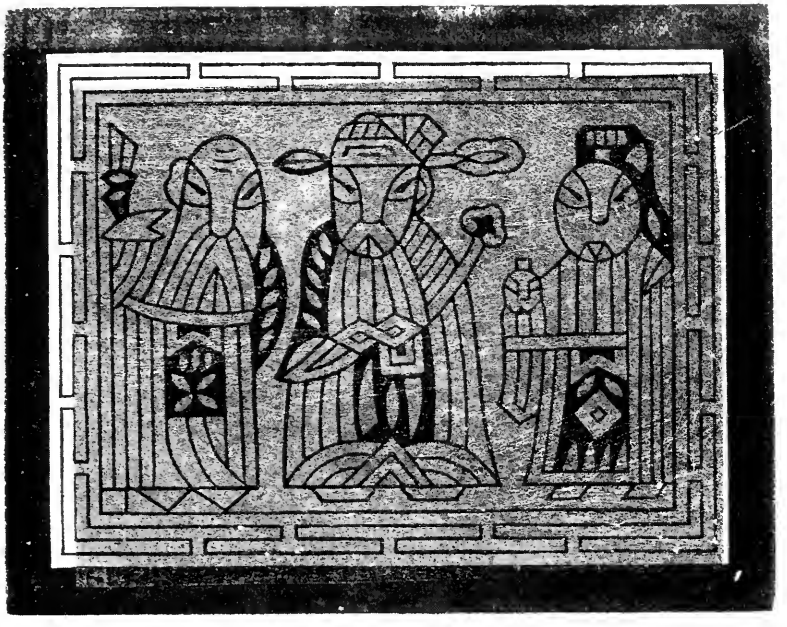


Fig. 12. Images of Fu, Lu, and Shou printed on a paper to be burned as a gift to the dead.

A common feature standing in front of many Chinese tombs is a guardian. Everywhere in Singapore, one sees sentinels on exterior doors protecting temples, homes, and businesses from unpleasant ghosts. Such *menshen*, or entrance wardens, appear in pairs in the form of soldiers or scholars or dragons (Fig. 14).[25] In place of these tough border sentinels, Choa Chu Kang sometimes has five-foot, benign-looking female statues flanking the tomb left and right, here bearing fruits (probably peaches) that signify prosperity (Fig. 15). Their presence obviates the need for fear because no unworthy person will cross over into the tomb's holy space, and the departed will have no cause to return as the ungrateful dead.

Another guardian figure, Hou Tu, protects the earth. Pictured as a sage with long white whiskers, a lump of gold, and a watchman's partisan, he stands on foot-high slabs with curved tops on the viewer's right, parallel to the tomb's long axis, ready to receive offerings (Figs. 16, frontispiece). Visitors first propitiate him by lighting joss sticks or laying down flowers before safely entering the tomb's consecrated territory.

Lion figures, a third familiar kind of warden, appear frequently in the Choa Chu Kang necropolis and again associate it with the work-a-day world. "Singapore" in Sanskrit means "Lion City" and recalls a myth about an early settler who saw some fabulous beast. Statues and amulets of this merlion

Fig. 13. Na-Na Li tomb.

Fig. 14. *Menshen*, or door guardian, in the form of a warrior, at Fuk Tak Chi Museum, Telok Ayer Street.

Fig. 15. Female guardian in Choa Chu Kang Cemetery holding good luck fruit (peach?)

Fig. 16. Hou Tu (or Tu Ti Gong or Hou Tu Niang Niang), "Earth Guardian."

appear throughout town. Sometimes called Fu ("Good Luck") Dogs or Fu Lions, the composite creatures (lion head, fuzzy back, large paws, short canine tail) traditionally bring security and fortune. Found in front of marital beds, private homes, banks, businesses, clan community centers, shopping complexes, and the Singapore Chamber of Commerce, these ancient animals conform to rigid notions of position and emblem. The males stand to the viewer's right with one paw on a globe (or sun, moon, egg, ball, skein of silk, or orange, depending upon your informant); the female to one's left protects a cub. Two "lions" guard many tombs in Choa Chu Kang Cemetery. Only people with good intentions can pass between such vigilant creatures, whether visiting a relative in the cemetery (Fig. 17) or simply shopping at the Ngee Ann complex on Orchard Road (Fig. 18).

Ceremonies

Ceremonies, too, connect homes to tombs. Even before leaving the house to revisit the cemetery, relatives may have burned effigies of prized possessions (TVs, watches, rings, letter openers) or paper money. Such conflagrations are not permitted at the gravesite. One informant told me, with a shake of the head at such "superstition," how a rich man recently spent S$1,000,000 (c. US$600,000) to burn a huge outdoor collection of make-believe valuables (including a model Mercedes). Most people settle for offering attractively printed Hell Money (Fig. 19).[26]

Another ceremony takes place in Choa Chu Kang itself. On the festival of Qing Ming ("Clear Bright," a reminder of 30 months of pleasant weather during the Han Dynasty, 209 BCE-184 CE), held around 5 April (technically, 106 days after the winter solstice in the third lunar month), crowds come to tidy up their family tombs and then dine with the departed one. They first prepare the area by clipping stray grass, scrubbing the surfaces, and sweeping the vicinity, which is, after all, the deceased's residence. As a final housekeeping gesture of this Pu May ("Cultivating the Tomb") ceremony, many visitors put colored papers on the tomb's mound to replicate the retiling of a house roof.

After preparing the tomb, the living set out food, especially favorite dishes of the dead. When a polite time has passed and the ancestor presumably has dined, the visitors eat. Some devotees have foregone hot food the day before to respect the origin of the commemorative day. According to one legend explaining how the rite began, a tyrant in the Chou dynasty (the first half of the first millennium) resented a subject's refusal to serve in the army because the latter wanted to care for his parents. Enraged, the ruler burned a forest in which the pious son resided, killing him and his mother. Their devotion eventually affected the king, so he instituted the memorial day that included a ban on fires, including even cooking fires.[27] Before rela-

Fig. 17. Male fu lion in Choa Chu Kang Cemetery.
In lion's left paw is a, globe (sun, moon, fruit, silk).

Fig. 18. Male fu lion in front of
Ngee Ann shopping complex, Orchard Road.

Fig. 19. Hell Money. The inscription wishes good winds for your sails as you set off for the Western Kingdom (to the right, according to Chinese cartography).

tives leave the tomb, they scatter prawn and cockle shells to invite abundance for descendants.[28]

Cremation

Those who choose cremation rather than burial are placed in a coffin and transported from home in the white hearse to one of Singapore's three crematoriums: two government facilities at Choa Chu Kang and Mandai, and a large private one at the ornate Kong Meng San Phor Kark See ("Bright Hill Monastery of Universal Awakening") Buddhist complex. Efficient and attractive, these crematories allow those left behind to express grief and yet receive comfort from old practices. The spacious building at Bright Hill places five ovens at a far wall and replicates the placement of home and temple altars down to the lamps and bowls of food (Appendix I).

The state runs three columbaria for the Chinese community. One, located on the grounds of Choa Chu Kang in the Chinese sector, from the air resembles an open fan; a second columbarium on woody Mandai Road provides 56,000 niches in two three-story blocks; the last columbarium, Yishun, shaped like a typical Chinese temple, provides a more traditional setting for 16,000 niches (Appendix II). [29]

For members of the religions that allow cremation, other columbaria offer places. A private Christian one and a new Buddhist one coexist within walking distance on the cemetery's grounds. Jews, Muslims, Baha'is, and Parsis, whose beliefs forbid cremation, will be exhumed after their fifteen years and transported to smaller plots.

In all these columbaria, I felt that the rectilinear arrangement of the niches reflects a similar experience in the Yang city. It resembles the cube-like exteriors of Housing Development Board apartments for the living. Similarly, city merchants stack boxes of tea and bins of candy in straight rows. Even the family names appearing on one-foot square panels in the Chinatown Heritage Centre anticipate this spatial layering. Seeing such right-angled replication in columbaria must comfort those who associate it with life, trade, identity, and final rest.

Tablets for Ancestors

In addition to tombs and cinerary containers, plaques honoring the departed appear in both temples and commercial repositories. Handsome memorial tablets, some offering a photograph, identify the person by sight, name, birth and death day. Banks of these foot-high memory aids supply backdrops for public worship and destinations in columbaria (Fig. 20).

Conclusion

Singapore's Choa Chu Kang Cemetery brilliantly restricts land usage while encouraging full honor to the departed of all faiths. It fulfills a thoughtful social contract between government and populace that duplicates the relationships in housing, transportation, education, and civic behavior. Although the city-state's small size and special history may moderate other nations' urge to copy the practice of its cemetery, still, the general combination of efficiency and respect should stimulate planners in all places to understand how such projects can be achieved. The Chinese section in particular testifies to the possibility of uniting disparate peoples in one group. Those whose ancestors had come from different locales and who speak different dialects find in Singapore an accepting society, one that values difference yet urges all citizens to discover common ideals.

I conclude by sharing my mixed responses to the cemetery. My admiration of its peace, practicality, and beauty springs partly from a personal (and, I hope, widespread) fear of intolerant violence. I interviewed police officers at the Killiney Road Station, asking how they had guarded against vandalism in Choa Chu Kang. After all, the Taliban had recently dynamited two ancient statues of the Buddha in Afghanistan. Elsewhere in many places, some close to Singapore, a self-excusing religiosity still commits barbarities as "holy" wars snuff out the lives of uncountable "others." The attentive Singapore police did not know how to answer my question; the idea of desecration had no traction in their world. I thought of Thomas More's 1616 *Utopia* because it imagined that in an ideal kingdom, conduct of the living was always observed by the spirits of ancestors who continued to walk among them. By designing, maintaining, and encouraging participation in its cemetery, Singapore offers an inspiring counter to social pessimism. It also denies the premise that groups of people changing from Community

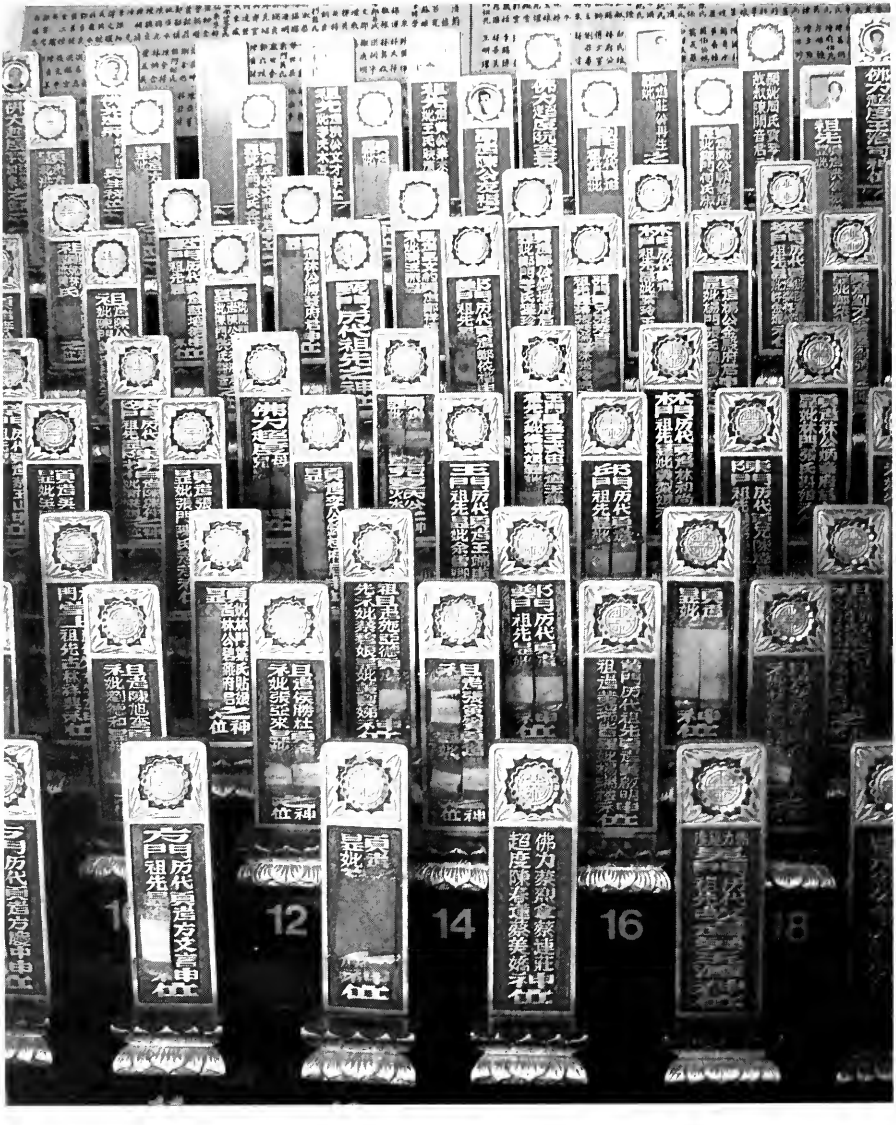


Fig. 20. Ancestor tablets at Thian Hock Keng Temple.

(tradition, cooperation, kinship identity) to Society (change, competition, self creation) must inevitably be torn apart. Ironically, the positive ideals of western religions, the *mishpacha* (biological family) of the Old Testament and the *koinonía* (spiritual family) of the New Testament, find their actual incarnation in this inspiring non-western space.

NOTES

Cemetery researchers never labor alone. We carry with us the accumulated wisdom of our predecessors and coworkers. While in Singapore during January 2005, I profited from an extraordinary group of helpful informants. They justified the city's reputation for friendly efficiency. May I thank them here, with the obvious understanding that any misstatements result from my own limitations. Two admissions: I have not attempted to regularize the different phonetic systems for turning Chinese sounds or family names into English. Likewise, I do not discount the element of make-believe in the Chinese films cited below as illustrations of various funeral and burial customs. (For example, the romantic narrative *The Road Home* takes place in 1958, when Mao allowed millions of peasants in the provinces to starve. The movie, however, idealizes their life in the north as they make different meals each day with no lack of ingredients.) Because cinema pictures rites and objects similar to the ones I observed and because the originals are so far removed geographically from most readers of *Markers*, I recommend viewing these motion pictures.

In addition to those named in the Notes, I gratefully add Szan Tan, Curator, Asian Civilisations Museum/Empress Place, who generously shared her time and expertise in Chinese cultural history. For social support when I arrived in Singapore, I thank my former colleagues at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, now resident in Oxford, Emeritus Professor David and Mrs. Miriam Paroissien. Once returned to Amherst, I appreciated the help of my learned colleague in Asian Languages, Professor Zhongwei Shen, who translated several obscure inscriptions. In San Diego during March 2005, Agnes Chua of the Chinese Heritage Museum kindly informed me of the widespread appearance of fu lions. In South Hadley, Massachusetts, during April 2005, Singapore physician and author Vyvyane Loh shared information about her city during World War II in a seminar discussing her novel, cited below. Of course, I owe much to the three reviewers of this article and to the perceptive editor of *Markers*.

[1] *Shaping Singapore: A Pictorial Journey* (Singapore: Urban Redevelopment Authority, 2004): 242.

[2] Cheng Lim-Keak, *Social Change and the Chinese in Singapore: A Socio-Economic Geography With Special Reference to Bāng Structure* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1985), 28.

[3] *Singapore Historical Postcards From the National Archives Collection* (Singapore: Times Edition, 1995), 9, 70, 71.

[4] Lewis Hill, *A New Checklist of English-Language Fiction Relating to Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei* (Hull, Humberside: Centre for South-East Asia Studies, University of Hull, 1991). For fiction based upon historical data about the competing ethnic groups before World War II, see J. G. Farrell, *The Singapore Grip* (London: Fontana / Collins, 1979). For an in-depth study of the collision of cultures before and during the war, see Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap / Harvard, 2005). For evidence that the British did not recognize the discontent of Chinese speakers after World War II, see Robert E. Gamer, *The Politics of Urban Development in Singapore* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 18-35.

Radio furthered the image of Singapore as a place of raucous sensuality. When Dashiell Hammett's San Francisco detective Sam Spade tries to find a string of pearls on one radio program, he hears that it was smuggled into the country by a woman who once "danced on tables in Singapore" ("The String of Death Caper," *The Adventures of Sam Spade*, February 2, 1951).

Films also exploited the stereotype of a city that encouraged odd behavior. Since the 1920s, some half a hundred movies have used Singapore in their title to connote emotion and danger. Perhaps the best-remembered example, *The Road to Singapore* (1940), had Bob Hope, Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour dilute the formula with humor. Ever since *Across to Singapore* (1928), which has Joan Crawford arouse the love of two men and suffer as the good one is wrongly imprisoned for deserting her brother in the sinister city, imprisoned, and later involved in a mutiny, the place name guaranteed automatic fascination. No combination of odd conflicts seemed out of place. In *Road to Singapore* (1931), the disgraced William Powell falls in love with Doris Kenyon on a steamer to the city and urges her to abandon her physician fiancé in the colony. The musical *Singapore Sue* (1932) has Cary Grant and four sailors captivated in the town by a Chinese girl from Brooklyn. *Out of Singapore* (1932) accepts the utter depravity of Noah Beery, a rascally sailor who plans to scuttle his ship, poison the captain and possess the captain's daughter. *Blonde From Singapore* (1941) has conscienceless Florence Rice try to stay out of a native prince's harem while she bilks two pearl divers out of money with which they plan to buy a plane and join the RAF. *Singapore Woman* (1941) redoes a Bette Davis movie, this time adding an Asian curse on Brenda Marshall that a handsome rubber planter must remove. *Singapore* (1947) has Ava Gardner lose her memory and abandon Fred MacMurray, who duels with Thomas Gomez to gain stolen pearls. *King Rat* (1965) details the Darwinian power struggles among Allied prisoners during World War II in Changi, the infamous Japanese prison camp at the city's eastern edge. *Singapore, Singapore* (1968) stars Michel Sean Flynn (son of Errol) as a CIA agent trying to find why US Marines have been disappearing in the city. *Rogue Trader* (1999) follows the true career of a British banker who arrives in Singapore and, through greedy miscalculations, destroys the oldest private bank in England.

With a similar understanding that the place was synonymous with danger and distance, Pete Seeger, Woodie Guthrie, Lee Hays, and the Almanac Singers protested the start of a draft for World War II in their song "Ballad of October 16": "And though it may mean war / We must defend Singapore" (*Songs for John Doe*, Almanac Records album 102, recorded in New York City, March-April 1941).

[5] Chua Beng Huat, "Singapore: Multiracial Harmony as Public Good." In *Ethnicity in Asia* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 104. The "Further reading" section provides a convenient list of works that discuss Singapore's road to multiracialism. An interesting study of how Chinese in the United States changed old forms of grave stones and language is C. Fred Blake, "The Chinese of Valhalla [Missouri]: Adaptation and Identity in a Midwestern American Cemetery," *Markers X* (1993): 53-90.

[6] *Shaping a City* (Singapore: Urban Redevelopment Authority, nd). An illuminating history with many maps is Wong Tai-Chee and Yap Lian-Ho Adriel, *Four Decades of Land Use in Singapore: 1960-2000* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2004).

[7] *Singapore Year Book 2004* (Singapore: Ministry of Information, 2004): 38.

[8] Brenda S. A. Yeoh and Tan Boon Hui, "The Politics of Space: Changing Discourses on Chinese Burial Grounds in Post-War Singapore," *Journal of Historical Geography* 21 (1995): 186. The article well documents how the government's Master Plan of 1958 convinced Chinese to abandon older ideas about the sacredness of individual cemeteries based upon narrowly defined "ties of dialect, surname or regional affinity" (186) and replace such specific allegiances with loyalty to a larger abstraction, the nation. The same authors update their data in "The 'Remains of the Dead': Spatial Politics of Nation-Building in Post War Singapore," *Human Ecology Review* 9 (2002): 9-13.

[9] *The Singapore Postage Stamps Catalogue 2005* (Singapore: n.p., 2005). The habit of teaching by maxims, here aided by modern technology, recalls Confucian and Maoist pedagogy. The prize-winning film *The Road Home* (*Wo De Fu Qin Mu Qin*. Directed by Zhang Yimou, 1999) shows a dutiful son in 1998 reciting such aphorisms ("One must learn to write; One must learn arithmetic; Keep a journal faithfully; Know the present, know the past; Know respect for your elders") in front of a grade-school class to honor his late father, the school teacher since 1958, who led such exercises.

[10] Vivien Goh, Planning and Contracts Executive, Environmental and Health Department, National Environmental Agency, Singapore. Interviews and e-mails during January 2005.

[11] Its planners apparently never considered one possible way to preserve the vital fiction of homogeneity: identical grave markers. The impressive hillside Kranji War Cemetery opened in 1975. Fourteen miles north of the city, overlooking the Strait of Johore, it honors Commonwealth soldiers from many homelands who died during the brutal Japanese invasion of 1939-1945. 4,000 standardized white gravestones rise up the hill to a large curved stone wall at the crest with 24,313 names engraved on its panels. See, *Introduction to the Singapore Memorial: Historical Notes and Guide to the Regimental Panel Numbers* (Singapore: Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 2004). Additional data and photos of Kranji appear at http://www.petrowilliams.co.uk/kranji.html

[12] Michael Pye, "Rationality, Ritual and Life-Shaping Decisions in Modern Japan," *University of Marburg Centre for Japanese Studies Occasional Papers* 29 (2003): 19.

[13] Alwi Bin Sheikh Alhady briefly describes these rituals in *Malay Customs and Traditions* (Singapore: Donald Moore Press, 1967), 52-58. The importance of the journey to Mecca in Muslim thought is discussed in William R. Roff, "Social Science Approaches to Understanding Religious Practice: The Special Case of the *Hajj*." In *Malaysia: Islam, Society and Politics*, eds. Virginia Hooker and Nokani Othman (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), 37-54.

[14] Russi Ghadali, President, Parsi Zoroastrian Association of Singapore, Singapore. E-mail, February 2005. Shehrnaz Panthaky, informant, Zoroastrian Studies. E-mail, October 2005.

[15] Eze Nathan describes two earlier Jewish cemeteries, one on Orchard Road (1841-1904) and the second on Thomson Road (1905-1973) in *The History of the Jews in Singapore: 1830-1945* (Singapore: HERBILU, 1986), 178-86. The quotation about the first arrivals is on 1-2.

[16] *A Guide to a Proper Buddhist Funeral* (Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia: Kopersai Buddhisme Malaysia Berhad, nd), iii. According to the 2000 census, Chinese identify their religious affiliations as 42.5% Buddhist, 14.9% Muslim, 14.8% No Religion, 14.6% Christian, and 4% Hindu. Choong Chee Pang, "Religious Composition of the Chinese in Singapore: Some Comments on the Census 2000." In *Ethnic Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia: A Dialogue between Tradition and Modernism*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 2002), 325-336. Although not mentioning Choa Chu Kang, the fullest guide to funeral customs is Tong Chee-Kiong, *Chinese Death Rituals in Singapore* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004). Articles on related customs appear in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, eds. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) and JoAnn Meriwether Craig, *Culture Shock! Singapore* (Singapore: Times Books International, 2001).

[17] The CHIJmes website appears at www.chijmes.com. Additional data and photos of Bukit Brown appear at http://www.spi.com.sg/haunted/ghoulish_trial/main/04.htm.

[18] Tong Chee Kiong, "Death Rituals and Ideas of Pollution Among the Chinese in Singapore," *Contributions to Southeast Asia Ethnography* 9 (1990): 110. More data about how rites change the dead from potentially hostile beings into benefactors appears in Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng, *State Society and Religious Engineering: Toward a Reformist Buddhism in Singapore* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003), 39-49. Lee Siew-Peng compares traditional Chinese ideas with contemporary practice in "Managing 'Face,' Hygiene and Convenience at a Chinese Funeral in Singapore," *Mortality* 8 (2003): 48-66.

[19] Fiction illustrates this custom. When a best-selling mystery writer wishes to communicate the isolation of a lisping Malay widow, he has her explain to a Singapore detective why her husband's body rests in a study: "Oh, I should have put him in the living room for a proper wake, if we knew anyone here, but we don't. All our people are dead or emigrated. . . . There wasn't any point in laying him out for wiewing. After all, who is there to wiew him?" Nury Vittachi, "Scarlet in a Study," *The Feng Shui Detective* (Hong Kong: Chameleon Press, 2002), 35.

[20] Joseph Cheng, Assistant Curator, Chinatown Heritage Centre, Singapore. Interview, January 2005. A larger coffin, typical of China's northern plains, is so heavy that it must be carried by 12 men in the film *The Road Home*. Both its top and sides are rounded.

[21] The acclaimed film *Shadow Magic* (*Xi Xang Jing*. Directed by Ann Hu, 1999) shows these barrier sills in front of a photographer's studio, an opera house, and the palace of the Dowager Empress in 1902 Beijing. Also, two guardian fu lions (explained below), approximately five inches long, crawl up the front of an ornate still camera.

[22] *Breaking the Tongue* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2004), 44.

[23] Donald Swearer, Director, Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions. Talk at Amherst College, 1 March 2005.

[24] The award-winning film *Hong Kong 1941* (*Dang Doi Lai Ming*, "Waiting for Daybreak." Directed by Leung Po-Chih, 1984) has the resentful hustler Wong Hak Keung (Alex Mann/Huang King) explain his poverty by pointing to ancestor tablets. On the left, the names of his grandfather and father; on the right, his name. "They lost everything," he wails, "and left me nothing."

[25] *Menshen* were brought from China. *Hong Kong 1941* shows pictures of guardians tacked to doors of a rich rice merchant and the well-off uncle of Yip Kim Fay (Chow Yun Fat) in pre-war Hong Kong.

[26] The specimen of Hell Money pictured here wishes good winds for your boat's sails as you set off to the Western Kingdom. Most temples contain at least one oven in which the giver may contribute to those in the next world, symbolically providing ancestors with money to bribe officials in one of the fabled ten courts of the underworld, territories that rival Dante's most lurid visions of the *Inferno*. Artists depict them with exquisite craftsmanship in wall paintings at the Asian Civilisations Museum/Empress Place and with rollicking kitschiness at the Disney-like Haw Par Villa on Pasir Panjang Road (you enter a dragon's mouth to view them). What real fear such fire-demons-and-pain visions inspire in modern spectators cannot be determined, although the tradition of easing the lot of a vagrant soul by forwarding money still appeals to many people. Temples furnish bundles of notes and ovens of varied shapes so one can easily forward contributions.

Again, fiction describes the practice. To celebrate the funeral of a ninety-seven-year old refugee from Peking, an Asian American named Winnie buys, "a dozen or so bundles of spirit money, money Great Auntie can supposedly use to bribe her way along to Chinese heaven." Amy Tan, *The Kitchen God's Wife* (New York: Ivy Books, 1991), 20.

[27] The prize-winning film from Mainland China *To Live* (*Huozhe*. Directed by Zhang Yimou, 1994) pictures the grief-stricken mother (Gong Li) visiting the earthen burial mound of her young son and leaving a tin of dumplings. "Now you can sleep," she says wistfully.

[28] Lai Kuan Fook, *The Hennessy Book of Chinese Festivals* (Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Asia, 1984). Goh Pei Ki, *Origins of Chinese Festivals* (Singapore: Asiapac, 2003). Lee Slow Mong, *Spectrum of Chinese Culture* (Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia: Pelanduk, 1986). Lim SK and Li Xiaoxiang, *Gateway to Chinese Culture* (Singapore: Asiapac, 2003). Video of Qing Ming at The Museum of Asian Civilisations/Empress Place. A picture of Qing Ming appears at the website of the National Archives of Singapore www.a2o.com.sg. I have been told that the younger generation seems less eager to participate in this thoughtful rite, but the government warnings in pamphlets, websites, and posters about overcrowded highways on Qing Ming suggest an unwarranted pessimism.

One study shows that younger, English educated Chinese in the 1990s seemed less committed to belonging to a particular temple, to devotion to one deity, or to participation in minor religious festivals. However, almost everyone celebrated the lunar New Year, more than 80% visited grave sites/columbaria, and 60% prayed to ancestors at home. Tong Chee Kiong, Ho Kong Chong, Lin Ting Kwong, "Traditional

Chinese Customs in Modern Singapore." In *Asian Traditions and Modernization: Perspectives From Singapore*, ed. Yong Mun Cheong (Singapore: Centre for Advanced Studies, National University of Singapore, 1992), 78-101. Tong Chee Kiong, "The Rationalization of Religion in Singapore." The well-received film *Yi Yi* (*A One and a Two*. Directed by Edward Yang, 1999) shows the ultra-modern apartments of '90s Taipei. The one belonging to the main characters, a computer executive and his wife who feels spiritually empty when her mother suffers a stroke and dies, has no altars. Western furniture and a reproduction of a Renoir to decorate the rooms; the young son has a "Batman & Robin"poster on his wall.

Imagining Singapore, second edition, eds. Ban Kah Choon, Anne Pakir, Tong Chee Kiong (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002), 290-309 uses census figures and anecdotal evidence to argue that even in this most secular and materialistic city, Buddhism has grown, evidence that "many Singaporeans [are] changing their religious affiliations, rather than [submitting to] a process of decline" (298).

Another fête in honor of spirits occurs in the city during the lunar calendar's seventh month (usually August-September). Like Halloween, the Hungry Ghosts Festival (Zhong Yuan Jie) stresses the malevolent possibilities of the ungrateful dead. To placate them, people burn hell money, offer food, and distract them with outdoor operas. An admired film illustrates this perennial belief: When an itinerant street performer called the King of Masks is in jail awaiting execution in 1930s Sichuan, he laments that in a previous life he must have been mean to Doggie, his adoptive daughter. Now, though, he has treated her well and thus can beg, "Burn spirit money for me in the Ghost Festivals and you'll have done the right thing by me" (*The King of Masks. Bian Lian*. Directed by Tian Ming Wu, 1996). Previously, the movie showed an episode of an opera set in Buddhist hell and we understand his fear of the underworld creatures, here imitated by actors wearing demon and animal masks.

More data on hungry spirits can be found at
http://sam11.gov.sg/racialharmony/PrimarySchools/articles_hungry

A collection of Hungry Ghosts Festival photos from 2002 appears at
http://www.the-inncrowd.imageshungryghosts/index.html

The film *Big Shot's Funeral* (*Da Wan*. Directed by Feng Yiao Gang, 2001) presents both old and new concepts of proper funeral rites. As movie director Donald Sutherland appears to be dying in Beijing, he instructs his cameraman Yo Yo (Ge You) to put on a "comedy funeral." Reluctant at first, Yo Yo finally succumbs to modernity and plans to display Sutherland's body on a costly Italian bed, garbed in brand-name sunglasses and running shoes, holding mineral water in one hand and, in his mouth, a tea bag, while a blimp advertising an airline flies overhead and posters hawk Bad News Beer, 666 Cigarettes, and Outback Steak House. Yo Yo's transgressive maneuvers cost him his sanity.

[29] The honored film *What Time is it There?* (*Neibian Jidian; Ni Nei Pen Chi Tien*. Directed by Ming-Liang Tsai, 2001) shows many of the funeral customs discussed above. Hsaio-Kang (Kang-Sheng Lee), a bored street peddler of wristwatches in current Taipei, has to adjust to his father's death and the pious demands of his inconsolable mother. In the columbarium, a yellow-robed Buddhist priest conducts the ceremony to place his father's urn in its niche: Hsaio-Kang must listen to chanting and the ring-

ing of a bell, then bow three times. At home, Mother (Yi-Ching Lu) sets dinner for the father as usual, propping up his picture against a wall. When Hsaio-Kang comes to the table with its many bowls, he tastes one, and Mother tells him to bow three times. A priest gives Mother "Yin-Yang water" (1/2 cold, 1/2 boiled), which she places high on apartment's shelf-like altar. She will watch its level to see if the departed father has drunk his fill. Her demands become more bizarre, although they each have precedents in traditional practice. Hsaio-Kang catches a cockroach and drops it into the fish tank for Fatty, a large white pet. Upset, Mother worries, "It could be your Father's reincarnation. Didn't the priest tell you not to harm any living creature for 49 days?" Even when dining alone with the son, Mother sets a bowl for Father and asks, "I wonder if he wants some duck." Finally, as Mother nails blankets over the windows to darken the apartment ("He's afraid of the light"), Hsiao-Kang explodes, "You're crazy!"

APPENDIX I: BUDDHIST CREMATIONS

The two Buddhist cremation ceremonies I observed at Bright Hill followed an identical pattern. Family members clad in white shirts knelt behind tables heaped with food, flowers, and lights like those in temples and homes. After bowing and praying, they rose and followed a bald, saffron-robed Buddhist priest as he chanted and led them clockwise around the offering counters. (Traditionally, one keeps the right side toward the venerated object whether it is a coffin, statue, or *stupa*, the symbolic pillar.) Accompanying his prayers, musicians beat four drums, blew a flute, and shook cymbals, perhaps, like certain Christian practices, to frighten away evil spirits. When the triple circuit ended, the coffin slid quickly into the furnace and the mourners, many stoic, some sobbing openly, filed out of the building. Within two hours, the ashes could be reclaimed and put into an urn. My gracious informant, Angela Goh-Suresh, Corporate Affairs Director of the Dharma Propagation Division, explained that color-coded urns, placed in different sections of the columbarium at different heights, cost from S$3,800 (US$2,280) for a blue container to S$15,000 (US$9000) for a silver one.

APPENDIX II: BUDDHIST COLUMBARIA

The three Buddhist columbaria that I visited encourage tranquility by different means. The state-run columbarium at Choa Chu Kang conforms to feng shui ideals. Trees, water, gently curving walls, well-lit interiors, and complete accessibility invite next of kin to visit, present flowers, and meditate. Its friendly and informative Director, Tan Kai Hee, pointed to these features and noted that the eighteen four-story buildings house some 147,000 niches without seeming crowded.

A second columbarium, the private An Le Memorial Park, roughly a kilometer away on the same road, likewise comforts with its surrounding greenery. Yet its grand marble Shrine Hall chooses a different way to soothe customers. Three enormous golden statues greet you, emphasizing the sumptuous holiness of this repository. On the left, Di Zang Wang Pa Sa sits, a former monk who promised Buddha that he would remain in the underworld (Di Yu) until all evildoers repented. He holds a fireball in his hand, reminding us that he will not soon reappear on earth because he currently helps someone's relatives. On the viewer's right, Kwan Yin, the popular deity of mercy, sits with a vase of holy water and a willow branch to sprinkle on those who need help (Willows grow at the entrance to this hall, yet another link between life and afterlife.) This divinity looks delicate but has big hands because, like angels in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, s/he can be either male or female depending on the suppliant's gender. (My cordial informants, Yi Ting ["Jade Courtyard"], Secretary of An Le, and Dawn Lim Huishan ["Wisdom"], Publicist, smiled when they noted Kwan Yin should have a more modest robe in case he chooses to become a she.) Serenely located between these reliable helpers, the gleaming Buddha communicates peace. The lotuses on which he sits insulate him from our world of craving and remind viewers that they too can rise above the stressful earth.

Such calm appears impervious to mutability. Flanking the three gods, two warriors carefully watch the hall. Master Kwon, on the viewer's left, safeguards the great hall. The sentry on the viewer's right scrutinizes all who enter. Gwan Yu (born Qie Lan Ru Sa during the period of the Three Kingdoms in the sixth century C. E.) was a fierce fighter before his enemies decapitated him. Like Saint Denis in Paris, Saint Regula in Zurich, and San Miniato in Florence, he walked about without his head until he met a sage who promised, "You killed many; when you do penance, I will join your head to your body." To the right of these five peacekeepers, ancestral tablets in a side chapel mount up behind tables artfully set with food and joss sticks. The 10,000 square meter facility can accommodate 100,000 niches in pious luxury.

The other private columbarium, Bright Hill, connects to the crematorium via a handsome covered walkway. Instead of the open-air configuration of Choa Chu Kang or the grandeur of An Le, this repository is enclosed but accessible by stairs and elevators. It varies the niche-only pattern by placing statues of Buddha or Bodhisattvas (those who achieved enlightenment but volunteered to remain on earth) at the end of several rows. There the Buddha or Budhisattva sits, separated from this world by a lotus cushion, holding a pilgrim's staff in the right hand and, with the left, signifying meditation by his upturned palm *mudra*, or conventional hand gesture. He keeps eternal watch over ancestors, while families visit, open the niche door, present flowers, and address the urns. Because relatives often call upon the departed for special favors, the presence of demi-gods encourages suppliants to believe that their requests will be heard. Such conversations are apparently still felt to be two-way: In *Yi Yi*, even the thoroughly secularized computer company executive Nj Jian (Nianzhen Wu) replies to a spiritual master who says, "A purified soul helps the gods answer prayers," "But maybe I'd anger the gods by making too many requests. If I turn to them only for the big things I can't handle, my sincerity may impress them."

Pictures of all three columbaria appear at
app.nea.gov.sg/cms/htdocs/article.asp?pid+2093

Pictures of Choa Chu Kang, Mandai, and Yishun appear at
www.nea.gov.sg/cms/chd/cck/cckc1.jpg

Five pictures of Choa Chu Kang appear at
www.casketfairprice.com/imagescck-columbo05.jpg

Fig. 1. Grave of Clyde Hart, Route 266, Palmetto, NV.

Isolation and Memory: Lessons From an Unusual Nevada Gravesite

Richard Francaviglia

North of Death Valley, lightly traveled state highway 266 stretches like a roller coaster across the rugged basin-and-range topography of Esmeralda County, Nevada. Motorists nearing a point about half a mile west of the long-abandoned silver ore milling town of Palmetto may notice what appears to be a roadside fatality site memorial marker about one hundred feet north of the highway. Slowing down, one can see that this memorial could also be a religious shrine as it is prominently situated and enclosed by a low fence. However, curious motorists who stop here and walk the short distance uphill to this memorial soon realize that it is not a highway fatality marker, nor is it a shrine. It is, in fact, one of the more interesting gravesites in Nevada (Fig. 1).

This gravesite is unusual for several reasons. First, its base consists of a rectangular pile of rocks. This technique recalls western frontier locales where rocky soils prohibited digging deep graves, or time was scarce. Under these circumstances, graves were shallow and rocks were piled on top of the corpse or casket to protect it from animal predators and scavengers. The second unusual aspect of this grave, which lies in an east-west direction essentially paralleling the highway, is that it is carefully fenced (Fig. 2). Although fencing around graves was common in Victorian-era Nevada cemeteries, this grave is all alone. The rectangular enclosure around this gravesite is actually *two* fences, both painted white. The outermost fencing is perforated metal similar to that used for road signposts. Each post is topped by a ball that resembles a home-made finial. This outer fence appears to date from the 1950s. The interior fence, however, is wooden and much older—evidently the original enclosure around this grave.

A look inside the enclosure reveals the third element that makes this site so unusual—a hand-carved wooden grave marker that faces east. The marker is of the type classified as a "tablet"; that is, a flat marker featuring a curved, semi-circular top.[1] These were common in the late nineteenth century but were also used in cemeteries in the first quarter of the twentieth. The marker seems out of place by itself, and so close to a highway. A look at the date carved into this wooden marker—1907—confirms that this gravesite is nearly a century old. The name on the marker—Clyde Hart—is accompanied by the information that he was "age 5" when he died in 1907. With this revelation, the pathos mounts because this is not only an isolated grave but also a child's final resting place. A cross in a circle is carved below Clyde Hart's name, age, and date of death. Normally, a child's grave is lo-

Fig. 2. View of fenced grave of Clyde Hart, Palmetto, NV.

cated close to the graves of other family members, but because Clyde Hart's grave is so completely isolated, it evokes a sense of loneliness. Its desert setting is a metaphor for this child's grave being so utterly deserted by family.

People who pause at Clyde Hart's grave may wonder if he had a connection to the nearby ghost town of Palmetto. A historic marker near the ruins of Palmetto's buildings provides a tantalizing glimpse of boom and bust. Additional research reveals that Palmetto boomed because its geographic location in a valley between the Sylvania and Palmetto mountains, the sites of mines whose ores were shipped to Palmetto for milling and concentration. Palmetto was one of several mining-related communities in the area, including Sylvania and Pigeon Spring, but Palmetto had several advantages over the others, including a dependable source of water, its central position in this mining area, and its location on the road connecting part of western Nevada with communities in eastern California. All these factors helped it grow faster than the other communities.

Palmetto experienced several booms beginning in 1860, but the third boom, which began in 1906, was short-lived. By 1907, most of the town's residents had left for more promising areas, including the Silverpeak district.[2] That association with boom-bust history makes Clyde Hart's grave all

the more interesting and poignant. He died at just the time when Palmetto was beginning its rapid descent into ghost-town status. Genealogical records provide the barest of facts: Clyde Marshall Hart and his brother Kenneth Victor Hart (d. Jan. 12, 1907, Palmetto) apparently were the sons of Victor Emmett and Lydia Evelyn (Pepper) Hart, originally from Humbolt County, California.[3] The little information we have about Palmetto and Clyde Hart helps sustain the mystery of this unfortunate young boy. One assumes that Clyde's parents, and perhaps his siblings, buried him here during what turned out to be the town's last boom. Although the town of Palmetto is but a pile of rocks and a few forlorn walls today, Clyde Hart's grave stands in stark contrast. It is, in fact, the best maintained feature in a landscape marked by desolation.

If Clyde Hart's gravesite is so well-maintained that it contrasts with the town's forlorn ruins, it also resonates as peculiar for a deeper reason. This is a ghost-town site, but we sense that *someone* is still lavishing attention on a site that is otherwise abandoned. Moreover, it appears that more than one person is involved; in fact, people of varied ages continue to place items—plastic flowers, and toys—in remembrance of the five year old who was laid to rest here about a century ago. What are we to make of this enigmatic gravesite, which is so isolated and yet so well-maintained?

A check of the records reveals no Hart family nearby today, although the maintenance conceivably could represent the actions of other family members who occasionally visit the site. A call to the Esmeralda County recorder's office confirmed that Clyde Hart has no remaining kin here. When I called that office, I was fortunate to make contact with Angela Hague, who knows many of the local people. She confirmed that Clyde Hart's grave has been maintained for several generations by unrelated people who cherish the county's history. For many years, Steven Loncar maintained the grave, and for the last twenty years, Nora "Tootsie" Adams and her husband, Dee Adams, have kept this grave in fine condition.[4]

This private citizen involvement in the maintenance of an unknown person's grave may seem unusual to those not from a rural county in the Intermountain West. One's first tendency might be to think that some *governmental* agency maintains the gravesite. This, however, is not the case. In rural Nevada, there is a high degree of independence from government, and a paradoxical emphasis on individualism and volunteerism. Clyde Hart's well-maintained grave could be a manifestation of the fact that Esmeralda County is so conservative politically. It is one of those "red" counties where a majority of the people, over 75%, voted Republican in the 2004 election.[5]

Regardless of the motives of its caretakers, however, the gravesite continues to impress passersby of varied beliefs. The site—or should one say sight?—of Clyde Hart's grave is so touching that some of them have placed items of remembrance. The toys include a small truck, a colorful plastic

biplane, and stuffed animals—for example, a pink and gray hippopotamus. Although we commonly think of the desert as a locale whose dry air can preserve artifacts, the elements here can be harsh, even destructive, on such objects. Nevada's stark desert landscape basks in bright sunlight much of the year, and the overall character of the landscape—a sagebrush, piñon pine, and Joshua Tree high desert—is painted by nature in subtle earth and subdued tones. The fierce Nevada sun bleaches and fades nearly everything here, but many of the objects on Clyde Hart's grave are brightly colored—an indicator that they were placed here in the recent past. Although the gravesite is well maintained, the caretakers themselves do not place objects there. According to Angela Hague, that is done by "persons unknown" who travel the highway. Those toys just appear from time to time with no fanfare. As testimony to this gravesite's uniqueness, there is even a Webpage dedicated to it on the "Ghost Town Seekers Remote Nevada" Website.[6] The Website's authors note that "[t]here is [sic] several toys on the grave site, one was so new the paint was not even faded."

This gravesite reveals relatively little information about Clyde Hart, but much more about the power of some sites to prod emotions and stimulate memory. A closer look at the dynamics of this site reveals eight major factors worth interpreting:

1) Suggested Isolation. Whereas true isolation—a site totally away from traveled roads—may result in oblivion, this gravesite is located close enough to a paved but lightly traveled road to *suggest* isolation but to be seen daily by travelers. Passersby who gaze away northward from the right of way are very likely to see the gravesite because it is within their line of sight as they drive along highway 266 (Fig. 3).

2) Sequestered Visibility. Although the gravesite is located in a prominent position, it is far enough *off* the road to suggest a specialness. It is highly visible because its whiteness contrasts with the more somber colored, rocky, brush-covered hillside. That encourages curious passersby to stop. Close enough for easy visitation, but visually separate from the roadway, it conveys a sense of specialness.

3) Partitioned Space. The fence around the gravesite draws our attention because it suggests that something of value inside it is being *protected.* At this level of perception, the whiteness of the fence conveys a sense of a Victorian propriety, and the double fencing itself reinforces the impression that this is a site that is not only private, but perhaps even sacred.

Fig. 3. Clyde Hart's grave seen from Route 266, Palmetto, NV.

4) Historical Contextuality. People who gaze into the gravesite immediately recognize the marker as "historical" for at least two reasons: its weathered wood suggests a historic artifact, as does its tablet shape, which subliminally reminds one of "Boot Hill" in the popular mind. The date 1907 confirms the viewer's suspicion that the site is venerable—and venerated.

5) Poignant Narrative. In the simplest of phrases, "AGE 5," the marker evokes pathos and provokes questions about untimely loss and the unfairness associated with the death of children. We know so much, and so little, about Clyde Hart from the phrase. Even the modern passerby feels the loss associated with Clyde Hart's fate, for he died so young that he was denied the full life we all subconsciously assume is "normal."

6) Causal Ambiguity. This gravesite provides just enough information—a male child was buried here nearly a century ago—to start our minds racing. We assume he was an Anglo-

American, as suggested by his name and by the late-Victorian style marker and enclosure, which reinforces that identity. But we are left with many questions: What caused Clyde Hart's untimely death? Was it disease, or perhaps even a buckboard accident along the road? Local legend going back generations claims that he was bitten by a rattlesnake, but that raises even more questions: Is the story true or apocryphal—a generic warning to children to be careful and on the lookout for poisonous snakes that inhabit the region?

7) Public Empathy. Clyde Hart's death raises still other questions: Where was his family when he died? Where did they go after he died? Where is his family today? These lingering questions ensure that the site will continue to haunt the intellect and tug at universal human emotions. Like the unknown soldier, Clyde Hart becomes a public figure by virtue of his being lost to family, but embraced by a much larger number of people who immortalize him to ensure he will not be forgotten.

8) Generational Homage. The maintenance of Clyde Hart's grave has become a community affair in an area where residents are few and far between. The plastic flowers placed on the gravesite are evidently the work of adults, but the toys suggest a sacrifice by more recent children who have become engaged in the process of mourning—and storytelling. As noted above, one of the most poignant features of the site is the presence of toys; perhaps these were placed not by adults but by children who visit the site in the company of adults. In a sense, the children "remember" Clyde Hart by sacrificing their own toys in his memory. In another sense, however, they realize their own good fortune as they ponder the meaning of his gravesite.

Conclusion

Located in a seemingly isolated setting but not far from a paved highway in extreme western Nevada, the gravesite of Clyde Hart stimulates both the senses and the intellect. On a road where travelers are primed to experience the remote West's history of pioneer-era mining towns and stunning desert-mountain scenery that dwarfs the works of humankind, the gravesite is evidently irresistible to some passersby. Once there, they encounter an enigma—the grave of a child who has been left utterly alone in a seeming wilderness. The remains of nearby Palmetto are explained in an informative historical marker, but Clyde Hart's grave is essentially undocumented—except for the scant biographical information carved into the wooden grave-

marker. The site's poignancy is, therefore, due in part to its incompleteness as a document of what we sense is evidently a very interesting and touching story. It is also a function of design and positioning as a fragile artifact preserved in a landscape of ruin and desolation.

A step-by-step analysis of questions about this mysterious individual gravesite reveals several very important lessons about the power of a single gravesite to affect the human mind. My interpretation points to the necessity of tension, even embedded internal conflict, as a factor in remembrance. It also reveals why an entire cemetery that is constantly surrounded by hundreds of thousands of people may be more easily forgotten, relatively speaking, than one grave by which a few hundred people pass daily. Thus it is that from even the most "empty" of places, we can learn much about the richness of human behavior.

NOTES

All photographs are by the author.

[1] Richard Francaviglia, "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 61.3 (September 1971): 501-509.

[2] Stanley W. Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps* (1970; Las Vegas: Nevada Publications, 1984), 412.

[3] An unidentified family source, registering information through "One World Tree" at Ancestry.com, provided birth, death, and marriage dates and locations for this family. The family genealogy differs somewhat from the gravestone inscription, but that is not terribly unusual. Clyde Marshall Hart therefore would have been only 3, not the 5 years old listed on the marker. The U. S. Federal Census tracks family residences and provides additional information that shows that the family returned to California shortly after the death of the two sons in Palmetto.

[4] Angela Hague, personal communication with author, October 28, 2004.

[5] In fact, 76% of the county voted for George W. Bush, in contrast to Las Vegas (Clark County), where John Kerry won with about 52% of the vote. Interestingly, however, Esmeralda County is not the most politically conservative county in Nevada, with Eureka (77%), Elko (78%), Lander (78%), and Lincoln County (77%) casting even more conservative votes; see Website (http://network.ap.org/dynamic/files/elections/2004/general/by_county/pres/NV.html?SITE=CSPANELN&SECTION=POLITICS), C-SPAN 2004 General Election Results for Nevada, 2/22/05.

[6] http://www.robertwynn.com/PalC.htm, October 18, 2004.

The Year's Work in Cemetery and Gravemarker Studies: An International Bibliography

Gary Collison

Starting with *Markers XXI* (2004), this annual bibliography of scholarship begun by Richard E. Meyer in 1995 appears in a more streamlined form, with coverage of pre-modern and non-English language titles significantly curtailed. The bibliography still aims to provide comprehensive coverage of the most recent English-language scholarship about gravemarkers, cemeteries, monuments, and memorials in the modern era (i.e., post-1500). As in the past, most marginal materials are necessarily omitted, including entries that would fall under the heading of "death and dying" as well as newspaper articles, book reviews, items in trade and popular magazines, and compilations of gravemarker transcriptions. For books and articles with vague or ambiguous titles, I have tried to include brief subject descriptions. This year's bibliography includes items published in 2004 and 2005; items published in 2005 after this bibliography was compiled will be included in next year's listing. Notable this year is the growing number of heavily illustrated cemetery books in the "Images of America" series published by Arcadia Press. Books from self-publishing services such as iUniverse and Authorhouse also are increasing, as computers, the Internet, and related developments make both printing and distributing self-published books easier and more economical.

Books, Monographs, Pamphlets, etc.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Gary Collison, editor of *Markers* since 2003, is a professor of American studies and English at Penn State York. He has given numerous presentations on gravemarkers at annual meetings of the American Culture Association and the Association for Gravestone Studies and is founder and chair of the Death in American Culture section of the Mid-Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association. He is researching Pennsylvania German gravemarkers and historic cemeteries.

Richard Francaviglia, historian and geographer, has written numerous books and articles about the way the American landscape has changed through time and how this change is depicted in maps, literature, and popular culture. He has taught at the University of Minnesota, Antioch College, the University of Arizona, and Wittemburg University. Currently at the University of Texas at Arlington, he is a professor of history and director of the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography.

James A. Freeman, professor of English at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, has published books on John Milton's relation to ideas of war and to Latin poetry. His articles have investigated Hesiod, the medieval "Vigil of Venus," Shakespeare, Swift, Tennyson, James Agee, and Donald Duck. His most recent works have dealt with "golden age" American radio, a history of exercise nutrition, and Joan of Arc. *Markers X* contained his "Protestant Cemetery in Florence and Anglo-American Attitudes Toward Italy."

Albert N. Hamscher is a professor of history at Kansas State University and the author of two books as well as scholarly articles that examine judicial administration and politics in seventeenth-century France. He teaches a popular course on "death and dying in history" and regularly gives presentations about cemeteries in towns across Kansas under the auspices of the Kansas Humanities Council. In recent years, he has also published articles on U.S. cemeteries. His edited collection of scholarly articles, *Kansas Cemeteries in History*, appeared in 2005.

Keagan LeJeune, assistant professor of folklore and English at McNeese State University (Lake Charles, Louisiana), has been collecting the legend of Leather Britches Smith since 1999. He lectures extensively on various aspects of Louisiana folklore and currently holds the position of president of the Louisiana Folklore Society.

William Lowenthal lives surrounded by the classic graveyards of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. He received a BA in anthropology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and pursued a PhD in the same at Brandeis University. The move east gave him his first actual exposure to the source subjects for James Deetz's famous seriation analysis, which he had studied as an undergraduate in California, becoming the inspiration for his subsequent longtime fascination with gravestones. He is a product manager for Lodestar Corporation, an energy software company.

Richard E. Meyer, professor emeritus of literature and folklore at Western Oregon University, served as editor of *Markers X* through *XX*. He also edited *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture* (1989; rpt. 1992) and *Ethnicity in the American Cemetery* (1993), and is co-author (with Peggy McDowell) of *The Revival Styles in American Memorial Art* (1994). His articles on cemeteries and gravemarkers have appeared in *Markers XI, XII, XVI, XX*, and other publications. In 1998 he received the Harriet Merrifield Forbes Award from AGS in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the field.

NEW EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Blanche Linden is the author of *Boston Freedom Trail* (1996; 2005), *Spring Grove: Celebrating 150 Years* (1995), and the well known award-winning *Silent City On a Hill: Picturesque Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery* (1989), the revised and expanded edition of which is due out later this year from the University of Massachusetts Press. She has a Ph.D. in history from Harvard and has published many articles, book chapters, and reviews on a variety of topics. Her article on "The Fencing Mania" appeared in *Markers VII*.

David Charles Sloane received his Ph.D. in American history from Syracuse University and is a professor in the School of Policy, Planning, and Development at the University of Southern California. His studies consider a wide range of topics, including roadside shrines, medical malls, cemeteries, and hospitals. He is the author of *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (1991). A revised edition is in the works from a different publisher. His recent work has appeared in edited collections such as *Metropolis in the Making: Los Angeles in the 1920s* (2001), *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J. B. Jackson* (2003), and *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* (2005).

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