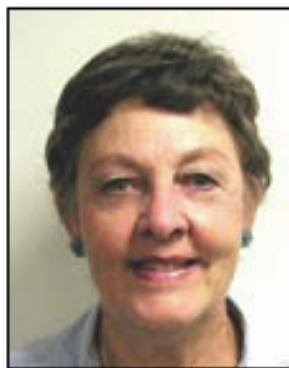


## Genealogy Rocks!

### Monument Art and Epitaphs Reveal Ancestor's Life

Visiting a cemetery can be an artistic journey back in time. Older cemeteries of the 19th century are full of monuments of various sculptured designs. This age of artistic expression replaced the morbid skull and crossbones, and angel of death, found in early New England cemeteries. The symbols carved on a stone and the epitaph can provide us with an insight to our ancestor's life, what was important to them or how the family wanted to remember them.



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You can find obelisks, crosses, and slabs sculptured with flowers, urns, drapery, angels and many other designs. A lamb almost always signified a child. A weeping willow stood for grief. Here are some further interpretations: urns – immortality, angels – spirituality and guardians, dove – peace, oak – strength, lily – purity, ivy – fidelity, rose – beauty and love, wheat

– harvest, book – education.

Epitaphs, the saying or poem that was sometimes inscribed on a stone are certainly reflections of the fashion of the time. Some are wordy, some religious, some truly heartbreaking, and some with a sense of humor: “I told you I was sick,” and another, “Here lies an atheist – all dressed up and nowhere to go,” Frank Sinatra’s stone reads, “The best is yet to come,” and Mel Blanc’s tombstone says, “That’s All Folks!”

More modern monuments can have colored photographs preserved in the stone.

There is also the possibility of having a medallion chip imbedded that can be read by a smart phone and describe details of the person’s life. Many books have been written about monument art and epitaphs. For an interesting website visit: [www.alsirat.com./silence](http://www.alsirat.com./silence).

❖ *Ceil Damschroder is an instructor, speaker, and library volunteer for Larimer County Genealogical Society. Please visit our society website at [www.lcgsc.org](http://www.lcgsc.org) or our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/lcgsc](http://www.facebook.com/lcgsc) to see our calendar of events.*