

# **Tombstone Markings**

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When looking at the tombstones of your ancestors, look at the markings on the stone. These symbols can reveal many things about your loved ones. A good practice would be to take a picture of the stone, for closer examination later. Look for the engravers markings too, look down near the base of the stone. Don't jump to conclusions when trying to decipher the markings. Read literature about the work of the individual carvers and about life during the period it was carved. Keep in mind, any symbol can have more than one accurate interpretation, for example... an anchor is traditionally a sign of hope, but if the deceased was a sailor, it would likely represent his profession, so keep an open mind when doing your research.

The following is a list of symbols and their meanings that most scholars agree upon.

**Anchor** -Hope, Seaman

**Angels** -Rebirth, resurrection, protection, judgment, wisdom, mercy, divine love

**Bird** -Eternal life, winged soul, spirituality

**Chain with three links** -Trinity, faith

**Fish** -Christian symbol of plenty

**Frog** -Worldly pleasure, sin

**Lamb** -Innocence, sometimes used on a child's grave

**Lamp** -Immortality, knowledge of God

**Lily** -Purity

**Lion** -Courage, strength, the Resurrection

**Hand pointing upward** -Reward of the righteous; confirmation of life after death

**Hands folded** -Devotion, prayer

**Handshakes** -Farewell to earthly existence

**Ivy** -Fidelity, attachment, undying affection

**Poppies** -Eternal sleep, military service

**Rope Circle** -Eternity

**Rose** -Victory, pride, triumphant love, purity

**Snake with its tail in its mouth** -Symbolizes eternity

**Tree Trunk, Leaning** -Short interrupted life, mourning

**Urn** -Immortality, death of the body and its return to dust

**Wreath on Skull** -Victory of death over life