



SINCE

1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM

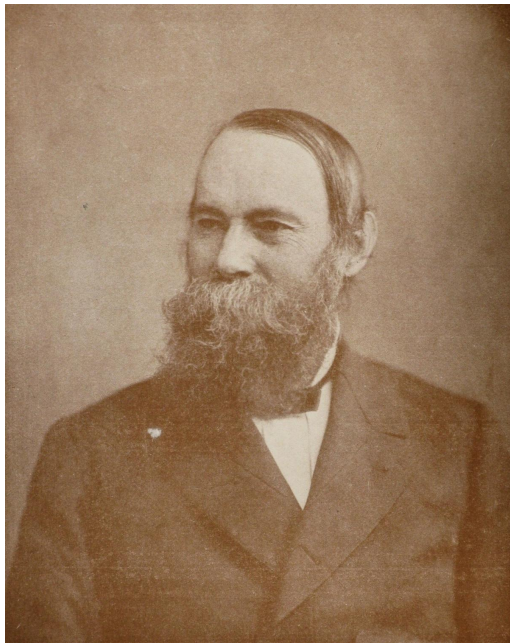
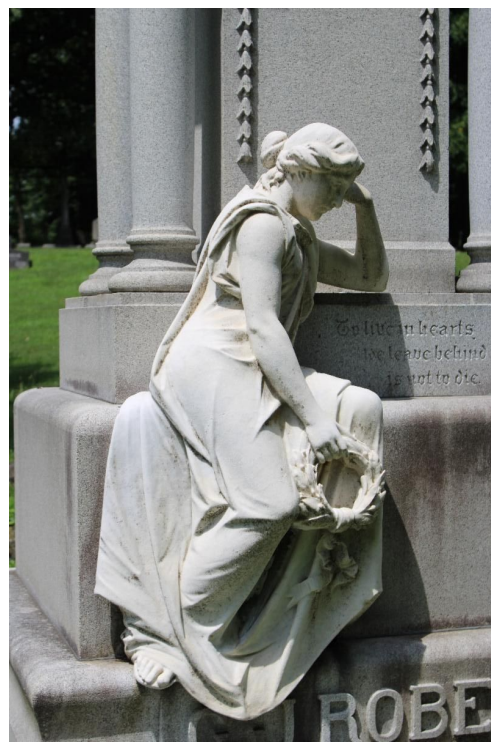


A Brief History of Headstones (Part 3)

In the 16th & 17th centuries, it was thought that marble was the ideal choice for intricate carving work & granite was best suited to architectural uses.

Marble is formed when immense heat & pressure force the mineral components of limestone to recrystallize into something new. Beloved by sculptors since time immemorial, humans have long associated marble with luxury, purity, and beauty. Unfortunately, marble isn't as perfect as its vendors might have us believe—due to its high calcite content, marble is particularly vulnerable to any acid in its environment. Relatively soft & porous, when left to stand in a cemetery, marble can be stained, scratched, and damaged over time.

Granite, on the other hand, is formed when magma cools & solidifies very slowly beneath the Earth's surface over millions of years. If we looked at a piece of granite under a microscope, we would see that it is composed mainly of tightly interlocking crystals of feldspar & quartz—making granite both chemically inert and one of the planet's hardest varieties of natural stone.



In 1820s Scotland, sculptor Alexander MacDonald was looking for new ways to generate profit from Aberdeen's abundant local stone. Inspired by an exhibit of ancient Egyptian artifacts, MacDonald set out to revive the lost art of polished granite. With the power of the newly invented steam engine already used in mining and textile production, he wondered...why not granite? MacDonald's experiments led to the creation of several steam-powered machines for granite working—including a steam-powered polisher, gang saw, and lathe.

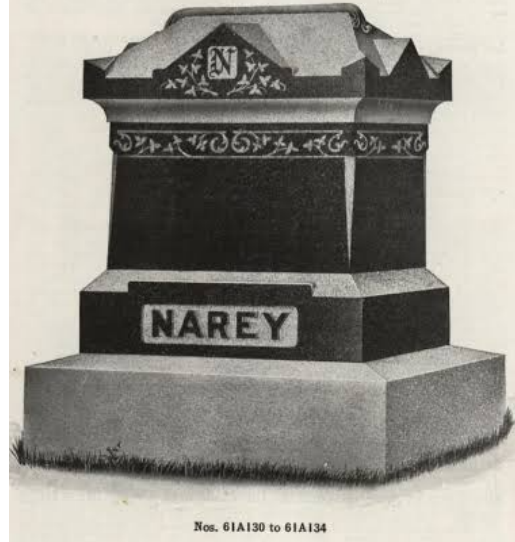
Decades later & an ocean away, the Civil War would lead Benjamin Chew Tilghman to invent sandblasting. Seeing the effects of wind-blown sand on windows in the desert, he thought it could be quite useful for removing rust from metal objects. In 1870, Tilghman invented & patented the sandblasting process. By 1891, Tilghman's sandblasting technique was used to inscribe letters in stone, but did not

become commonplace for several more decades.

The period between the end of the Civil War & the beginning of World War I is sometimes referred to as the Golden Age of American Memorials. During this time, communities grew larger, and demand for grave markers increased. Advances in technology made stone quarrying & cutting less difficult, the expanding railroad made it less expensive to transport large blocks of stone throughout the country, and mass production allowed vendors to quickly produce thousands of identical grave markers. This new reality combined with the popularity of planned family lots in rural cemeteries to make large, multi-piece monuments less expensive, more common—and more desirable.

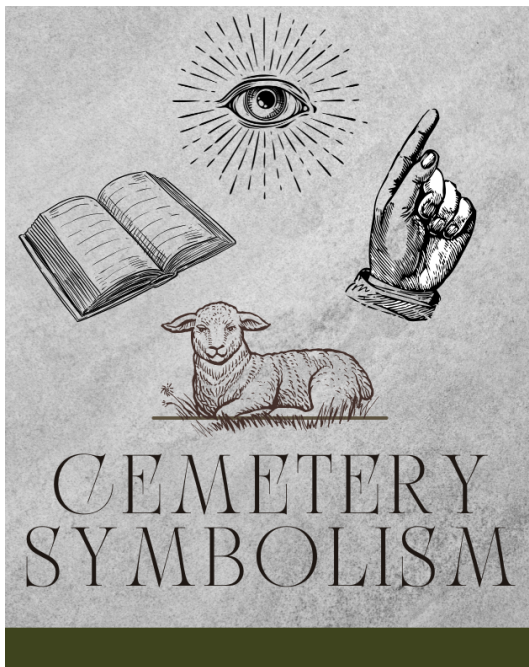
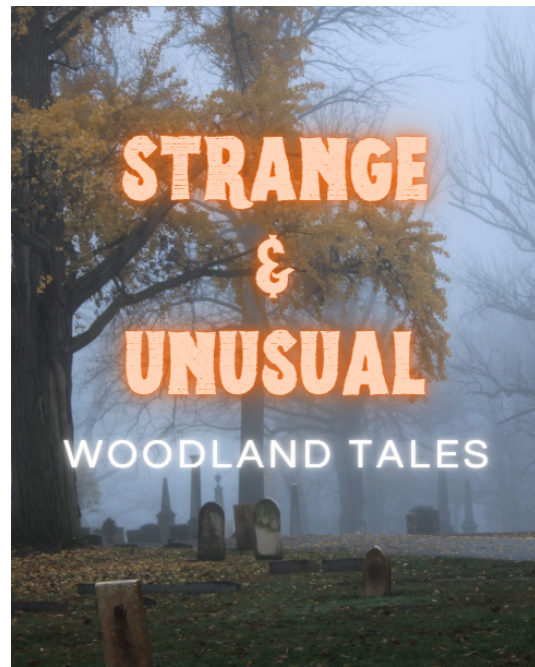
Grave markers were first advertised in Sears' 1900 Fall Catalog, ranging from small, simple \$5 grave markers to fairly large, 3-piece pillar monuments for about \$27. These were quite popular—by the time Sears produced its 1902 Spring Catalogue, an entire memorial department had been established.

The Sears Roebuck Company would continue to advertise cemetery monuments in its general catalog until 1949.

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