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Gone from our home, but not from our hearts: Nineteenth Century Epitaphs In Selected Florida Rural Cemeteries

Maureen J. Patrick

Gravestone studies in Florida are accompanied by a sense of urgency. Much of the state’s pioneer history and heritage rests in its nineteenth century rural cemeteries, and these, overgrown and under-tended, are sinking beneath relentless vegetation and unstable sand. Climate allies with neglect in the assault. Torrential rains, periodic hurricanes, lightning-strikes (with their concomitant fires and felled trees), blistering heat, and a year-round growth season seem united against these embattled sites and their valuable contents. Vandals and robbers swell the offensive ranks; gravestone researchers must often pick their way through shattered monuments and plundered statuary. (Figure 1)

Considering the rapid deterioration of all of Florida’s rural cemeteries and taking note of their immense historical value, it is vitally important that documentation and interpretation of every aspect of these sites proceed apace. Despite the pressing and important nature of such work, however, and apart from the purely genealogical or antiquarian foci of some researchers, little serious scholarly attention has been given the subject. Of the work that has been done in these graveyards, even less attention has been directed to what Dianna Hume George and Malcolm Nelson have called “literary approaches to gravestones,”1 that is, the critical study of epitaphs and memorial inscriptions, along with their material culture implications. The work is necessary and pressing for, as George and Nelson posit: “Epitaphs must be studied seriously as the last and in most cases the only lasting verbal representation of the people who sleep under the stones: ‘I have been and that is all.’”2

Of the people who sleep under Florida stones, few sleep in a cemetery more interesting – or more neglected – than Oaklawn Cemetery in downtown Tampa, Florida. It is hard today to visualize Oaklawn as a rural cemetery. Situated just a few blocks from the bustling center of Florida’s second largest city, the burying-place, with its drooping oaks and twisted cedars, its chipped masonry wall and iron gates, seems incongruent but hardly rural. Cars rattle past on the narrow brick streets
surrounding the site, skyscrapers seem to leer over the cemetery wall, and the county jail, directly adjacent, is a hostile neighbor, with searchlights and coiled barbed wire bristling atop its high stockade.

To view the cemetery in the context of its day, one must remember that when the cemetery was founded in 1850 the city cen-
ter, if it could be generously described that way, was not where it is now but some blocks southwest, and was comprised of the military installation Fort Brooke and its various outbuildings, all built more or less on the banks of the Hillsborough River. That meant that the cemetery, located in the northeast corner of the original plat of the county seat, was nearly a mile from the heart of the settlement, in an area devoted to farming and groves.

Blocked from expansion west and southward by the broad and meandering Hillsborough River, the city grew in a north by northeast pattern. By the turn of the nineteenth century, Oaklawn Cemetery was surrounded by residential and commercial construction, a sylvan refuge of the dead encircled by city sprawl. Its initial tracts, gifted in 1850 by Hillsborough County, in 1874 by B.C. Leonardi, and in 1880 by James T. Magbee, were by 1900 fairly well filled with graves; no adjacent unoccupied land remained. Other nineteenth century burying grounds, like Woodlawn Cemetery (Figs. 2,3,4) in a genuinely rural area north of the city center, and Myrtle Hill to the east, were commodious enough to serve for many years (and continue today to accept both below-ground and mausoleum interments.) But Oaklawn Cemetery, Tampa's first public burying ground, was awkwardly situated and too small to be of much long-range use to the ballooning Tampa community.

In consequence of these demographic shifts, the little cemetery at Morgan and Harrison Streets was all but forgotten. The oversight was disastrous, for Central Florida's climate combined with the work of vandals to wreak havoc on the old graveyard. Since stone markers were costly and difficult to obtain, most of the original markers at Oaklawn were carved cypress slabs or posts; those that survived a fierce fire in the cemetery's early years were lost to wind, rain, rot and flooding. (Some gravesites have vanished utterly, due to these losses and the disappearance of the cemetery's original plat sometime just after the War Between the States.) Above-ground stone tombs and monuments were cracked or shattered by falling tree limbs, tombstones toppled or were defaced, and memorial statuary was robbed on a regular basis. Most of the original gravesites were family groupings and, conforming to the custom of

![Figure 2. Clark memorial, Woodlawn cemetery.](image)

Figure 2. Clark memorial, Woodlawn cemetery.

the age, had iron railings and fences. Over the years, these disappeared or fell to pieces. While civic groups attempted, at intervals, to care for and maintain Oaklawn, neither funds nor public attention was sufficient to insure the graveyard's well-being. In 1974, a reporter from *The Tampa Tribune* recorded, with a mixture of amusement and indignation, an interview with a homeless man living in one of the few above-ground tombs in Oaklawn. Every Halloween the cemetery became the locus for ghoulish pranks, of which spray-painting tombs and statuary was the mildest expression. In 1993, forty grave markers were destroyed in one such Halloween spree of vandalism. As recently as January, 2001, vandals toppled headstones, breaking several, and wrenched iron plot gates from their hinges.

More than common repugnance at the
desecration of graves has motivated latter-day attempts to salvage what is left of Oaklawn and restore, where possible, its uniquely nineteenth century character. In the cemetery rest framers of all five Florida constitutions, two Florida Supreme Court judges, thirteen mayors of the city, members of many of Tampa's founding families, Florida's fifteenth governor, eighty-eight graves from the city's five yellow fever epidemics, mass burials of Ft. Brooke personnel, and soldiers of seven wars (the Second Seminole War, Mexican War, Billy Bowlegs Indian War, War Between the States, the Spanish-American War, and World Wars I and II.)

Of additional importance is the cemetery's role as an early example of the formally designed memorial landscape that was to become known as the rural cemetery. Replacing the crowded, haphazard and unhygienic city center graveyards of the past, the rural cemetery of the mid- to late nineteenth century was lauded by an 1877 writer:

Can 'couch more magnificent' be sought for than the beautiful open cemetery, festooned with richest foliage, and glorified with the sunshine, the incense of flowers and the chants of winds? . . . . we do avouch, for many weighty causes, that there are no places more fit to buy our dead in than our gardens and groves or airy fields, sub dis, where our beds may be decked and carpeted with verdant and fragrant flowers, trees and perennial plants, the most natural and instructive hieroglyphics of our expected resurrection and immortality. When compared to the aerial prose of this text, the worn-out little Tampa burying-ground provokes a mild sense of disappointment, for at its best it was never a Greenwood or a Mount Auburn. However, viewed through a kind and reconstructing eye, the cemetery is undoubtedly a pocket edition of those grand and celebrated properties. Brick pathways, while they do not wind or meander, are nevertheless laid out in a pleasing rectilinear pattern throughout the grounds. A neat white Victorian cottage in the northeast section provides storage for the mundane tools of the gravedigger and caretaker, as well as a pleasant porch where, it is said, Confederate veterans used to sit and chat, and where the eulogy was sometimes delivered in poor weather. Memorial plantings are scattered throughout the cemetery: the evergreen Florida red cedar (for life everlasting), the renewing oak (emblem of faith's strength) and the palm (suggestive of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.) In some respects, in fact, now that the oaks have grown and spread their mossy limbs over the brick paths while the aged cedars' trunks have twisted, sculpture-like, among the graves, Oaklawn is more the rural cemetery than it was at its founding, for its peaceful grounds, graceful foliage and broken but eloquent statuary exemplify the aesthetic that brought the rural cemetery into being. (Figure 5)

Recognizing if not the aesthetic then at least the unique historical nature of the

Figure 3. Memorial statuary for Mrs. Hampton, wife of Dr. Hiram Hampton, Woodlawn Cemetery.
graveyard, the Tampa Historical Society has in recent years paid close attention to the site, hosting an annual “Oaklawn Ramble” that attracts the interest of local history organizations and antiquarians. Less salutary are the well-intentioned efforts of some “history buffs” to repair, clean, or replace broken or soiled grave markers, efforts which have resulted in, arguably, more harm than good. Tombstones and memorial sculptures have been scrubbed with bleach and other corrosive substances (increasing the deterioration of inscriptions and monument art), broken stones have been badly patched with cement, and some missing or shattered markers have been replaced with anachronistic modern stones. There is likewise no prohibition against gravestone rubbings by tourists and amateurs, and nearly every visit to Oaklawn uncovers evidence of destructive rubbing techniques in the form of wax crayon smears and newly cracked headstones. In these respects, both the City of Tampa and local preservation and historical bodies lag behind the national movement to restore and maintain historic cemeteries in a careful and technologically up-to-date fashion.

What site and artifact restoration/preservation work has been done at Oaklawn has been augmented by the collection of data (largely genealogical and historical) by amateur and a few scholarly individuals. Julius ‘Jeff’ Gordon, a retired Florida native and independent scholar, has, to date, done the most exhaustive survey and documentation of Oaklawn’s 1,208 graves. But Gordon’s work does not address the literary or iconographic aspects of Oaklawn grave memorials, nor make any attempt to locate the cemetery and its contents in the larger body of cultural archeology. Bearing in mind the validity of a future holistic study of these gravestones that would unify disparate sources of data - iconographic (carving and memorial art), literary (epitaphs and inscriptions) and historical - this study limits itself to the literary aspect of Oaklawn and provides some supportive data from similarly dated Florida cemeteries with the goal of encouraging these graveyards’ placement in their right and proper material culture context.

Study Sample

While Oaklawn is not, comparatively speaking, a vast graveyard, it is nevertheless a fairly “populous” one. In order to produce a sample of a size productive of close and thorough examination, and to effectively interpret the sample in the context of existing time-limited studies, this study restricts itself to the southwest section of the cemetery and to grave markers with dates from 1850 to the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. In this section and time span are located the oldest Protestant burials in Oaklawn and those of many members of Tampa’s “founding families.”

In addition to Oaklawn Cemetery, samplings were taken from several other cemeteries in Florida. The criteria determining the appropriateness of these sources were: 1) the rural nature of the cemetery; 2) the prevalence of dated gravestones in the 1850 - 1920 target time span; 3) the public, rather than family or private, use of the site. The
Figure 5. Oaklawn Cemetery looking toward the southwest.

sites are scattered throughout Florida with the aim of eliminating the "carver specificity" of the sites, that is, to ensure that the literary data gleaned from the samples does not reflect the work of only one carver or stone supplier. While no attempt was made in this study to tie the stones to any particular maker or carver, several distinctly
different styles of carving were noted. This observation, combined with the geographic separation of the sites, suggests that a number of memorial makers supplied the stones or at least carved the inscriptions. Some of the inscriptions are undoubtedly from stock sources, but, as many reliable material culture studies have pointed out, that fact alone need not diminish their utility since the popularity and prevalence of certain memorial sayings, like certain grave art motifs, suggest widespread social concordance in their meaningfulness.

The supplemental graveyards surveyed in this study are: Woodlawn Cemetery (at Indiana and North Boulevard Streets in Tampa), Homeland Cemetery (near Bartow, Florida), Micanopy Cemetery (in Micanopy, Florida, the state’s oldest inland town), and Columbus Cemetery (in the now-defunct north Florida town of Columbus.) The Homeland and Columbus Cemetery samples include every readable marker in these small burying grounds; the Woodlawn and Micanopy samples are from the oldest sections of each cemetery.

Restrictive Terminology

Many definitions of “epitaph” exist. Likewise the phrase “memorial inscription” may be open to disparate meanings. For the purposes of this study, the word “epitaph” will be considered to be equivalent but not identical to “memorial inscription,” that is, an “epitaph” will denote any inscription of a clearly memorial sort which is placed on a gravestone or grave marker, while “memorial inscription” will refer to literary data either from gravestones and grave markers or from memorial statuary, such as cenotaphs. (Ergo, all epitaphs are memorial inscriptions but not all memorial inscriptions are epitaphs.) Epitaphs and memorial inscriptions are denoted by quotation marks. Literary data excluded from the definitions of either epitaph or memorial inscription includes names, birth and death dates, conventional indications of relationship (“son of,” “wife of,” etc.) and conventional ‘dedicatory’ phrases such as “Sacred to the memory of.” As much as possible, this sort of non-memorial literary data from the surveyed graves has been included after the memorial inscription, in parentheses.

Data Collection

Field observation and transcription were used to obtain literary data from the graves in these cemeteries. Due to the age and advanced deterioration of grave markers and memorial statuary, some data has been irretrievably lost. Marginally readable epitaphs and inscriptions were reconstructed, when possible, by comparison with similarly worded inscriptions from studies of similarly dated stones and with the assistance of a Biblical Concordance and a historical dictionary. When an inscription has been reconstructed to any degree, the reconstructed words or phrases are shown in brackets, for example: “[Rest] in the Lord.” Missing and unreconstructed letters, words or phrases are shown by empty brackets,
IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE YELLOW FEVER EPIDemics OF 1853, 1858, 1867, 1871 AND 1887–88 WHO ARE BURIED IN OAKLAWN
TAMPA HISTORICAL SOCIETY—1997


for example: “Our [ ] sleeps in heaven.” Whenever possible, partially obliterated inscriptions have been restored to readability by consultation with local scholarly or amateur graveyard studies or individuals. Prior studies, however, recorded a wealth of genealogical or historical data while consistently omitting purely memorial inscriptions, and so very little re-constructive assistance was available from those quarters.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar errors were recorded as they are on the grave marker, without revision.

No data was recorded from grave markers lacking memorial inscriptions (such as the many military graves in Oaklawn), nor from markers where all but the barest information was obliterated beyond any hope of reconstruction.

Sample Organization

Readable or reconstructed inscriptions from Oaklawn and the other cemeteries surveyed are grouped by type. Five categories have been assigned to the literary data and are based on similarity of content. The categories are:

Spiritual or “other-worldly:” This category embraces inscriptions which focus largely or exclusively on the after-death condition as visualized and expressed in spiritual, though not necessarily or exclusively religious, terms. Examples are inscriptions like “He sleeps in Jesus,” “Gone to glory,” or “She waits in heaven.”

Tributes: Tributary inscriptions are frequently unique to the individual memorialized and their primary focus is on the individual in life, his or her inherent virtue(s), professional, familial, or vocational achievements and excellence. “A loving husband and father,” is one such inscription.

Those left behind: In this category are inscriptions that focus on the grief of survivors, their sense of loss or separation, or establish an implied dialogue with the dead. The not uncommon “Gone from our home, but not from our hearts” is one example, as is the imperative “Remember me.”

Combination epitaphs: While some epitaphs are purely of one type, many more combine the foci and symbolic language from two or more groups. One frequently encountered combination epitaph which originates in Biblical verse is
“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” In this inscription, the deceased is given tribute as “pure in heart,” while the expectation of spiritual union with God is recorded as the consequence of such purity.

Unique epitaphs: This label is used by Dianna Hume George and Malcolm A. Nelson to describe “the intricately detailed poetic epitaph which obviously applies to the unique situation of the particular person memorialized.” 12 J. Joseph Edgette calls the form “original” and says of its examples: “Highly personalized and peculiar to one specific person, they are, so to speak, customized to fit one individual and one individual only.” 13 I have modified the descriptions of Edgette, George and Nelson to include inscriptions, “poetic” or otherwise, which, whether or not they can be identified as falling into any of the preceding four categories, are demonstratively atypical among the sampled grave markers. The most striking example from this study is undoubtedly the Ashley gravestone in Oaklawn Cemetery. (Figure 3)

Interpreting the data

Any critical interpretation of these Florida epitaphs must at the outset take into account the paucity and expense of stone for durable markers during the period of the study. Florida has little native stone of the sort that would suit for grave markers, and stone for this and other purposes had, at the time, to be shipped from stone-bearing states to Florida ports, then transported by an awkward and expensive combination of sailing or steam vessels, river barge, rail, and wagon to points within Florida. (Until the very late 1800s, Florida's railroads were a patchwork of non-standard lines, many of which started and ended “nowhere.”) Wood (usually cypress) markers, not stone, were the norm for many graves; these could not and did not survive the long years, corrosive natural elements, and prevalence of fire in these cemeteries. The expense of stone markers and their concomitant rarity leads to a conclusion that any grave marker study will, by necessity, omit data from the hundreds of poor people, slaves, and marginal persons (such as seasonal fishermen, cattlemen and farm laborers, Native-Americans, domestics and others) whose loved ones or estate could not support the cost of a stone marker and the services of a stone carver. Such a deduction is borne out by the markers from the earlier half of the period of this study, that is, from the years 1850 - 1885. In Oaklawn Cemetery, for example, the majority of graves in the southwest section are those of Tampa's prominent families whose relative wealth entitled them to enduring markers of stone or white bronze, as well as protective plot fences of iron, masonry or stone. (Figure 6) Thus, the democratic 1850 dedication of the cemetery as a burying place for “white and slave, rich and poor” is belied by the physical evidence of the graves.

However, one should not be too hasty in supposing that the cemetery is or was entirely non-representative, overall, of the population of nineteenth century Tampa. For instance, a mass grave of Fort Brooke...
soldiers and settlers (originally interred at the military site but removed to Oaklawn in 1982) bears no individual markers. Likewise, a mass grave of nineteenth century yellow fever victims is denoted by a single (recent) commemorative stone. (Figure 7) Slaves and domestics may well be interred with the families of their masters, and their graves – while rarely unmarked – were more likely to have merited perishable wood rather than enduring stone markers. (The earliest burials at Oaklawn were those of a Cuban pirate and a slave belonging to the family of Rev. L. G. Lesley; both graves now bear modern replacement marker stones.) Native-Americans were also buried at Oaklawn; a sizeable number of Seminole Indians were recently disinterred from Oaklawn and moved to a tribal burying place. Additionally, Florida has always been an attractive locale for speculators, adventurers, and transients; lacking family or friends in the area, these disconnected souls may have been buried with a minimum of outlay by whatever segment of the community took on the job. There are then the problems of defacement, breakage, theft, and the deterioration or replacement of stones, which have resulted in the loss of data from countless graves, a problem compounded by the disappearance of the cemetery’s original plat. The uncomfortable truth of cemeteries like Oaklawn, along with its cousins Woodlawn, Homeland, Columbus and Micanopy, is that a significantly greater number of persons are doubtless interred in these grounds than those whose graves are marked. Hence, while the visible data seems to suggest that only well-to-do white families make up the population of dead in these Florida rural cemeteries, enough data is irretrievable that any such postulation is, at best, risky.

In assessing the collective epitaphs from these four rural burying grounds, one can readily see that of the five types of inscriptions into which they have been divided combination epitaphs are the most numerous (totaling 37 of 126; the next largest category is spiritual, numbering 35 of 126.) Recalling again the scarcity and cost of stone memorials and stone carving, it is notable that so many survivors would spend so much to memorialize their departed in complex sentiments. This fact speaks eloquently of the compelling needs of mourners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to present relatively lengthy and often poetic characterizations of the dead, their presumed after-death condition, and/or the feelings of those left behind. Of course, in “combination,” as in other types of epitaphs, some carvers and mourners were more “economical” than others. An example of elegiac economy is the Wiggins epitaph from Columbus Cemetery: “She sleeps in Jesus for she was ready.” In just eight words the deceased is given tribute for her Christian piety and consigned to a restful sleep in heaven. Such verbal thrift is the exception rather than the norm, however, in “combination” epitaphs. More often they hold forth on their several topics at such length that they barely fit on the grave-stone, as is the case with the Mollie and Jackson Cannon stone, also in Columbus Cemetery, which reads: “These died in faith not having received the promise but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them and embraced and confessed that
they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.” This slightly confusing epitaph is touching in the necessity which it reveals in the mourners (obviously children of the deceased, since “Mother and Father” is also inscribed on the stone) to incorporate into the stone faith, doubt, reassurance, spiritual reunion, and a sense of the alienation and hardship of Florida pioneer life. One gains an even deeper sense of the compelling emotions behind this carving when reading the epitaphs of Baby Cannon, died December 16, 1906, and Jearl Cannon, died June 4, 1907. Both were children of Jack Cannon, Jr. and Rosa Cannon, the son and daughter-in-law of the parents memorialized in the “strangers and pilgrims” epitaph. In one and a-half years (and quite possibly less, since the 1906 parental marker is not dated as to month and day) Jack and Rosa Cannon underwent mourning for the second of deceased parents and two small children of their own. All three epitaphs are of the “combination” sort, and all three reflect the impulse of these hard-stressed mourners to memorialize the dead in complex sentiments and at considerable expense.

The Jearl and Baby Cannon epitaphs turn our attention to children's epitaphs, of which there are in this study what seems, to modern eyes, like a disproportionate number. Thirty-five of the one hundred and twenty-six interments in this sample are those of children under eighteen years of age; thirty-one of those graves bear the bodies of children under ten years old. Keeping in mind the high infant mortality and limited medical technology of the era, as well as the risks associated with a primitive Florida environment (beset with tropical diseases, poor sanitation, Indian attack and the hardships of a blockaded coastal region during the War Between the States), the fact that so many graves of young children are found in these rural cemeteries is not surprising. What is notable is that, overall, the children’s grave markers bear inscriptions no less fulsome or complex than those of adults. Clearly, if the epitaph evidence is taken as an indicator of the relative social worth of the departed, then children were valued as highly as adults, and mourning sentiments for them were as fervent, lengthy and complex. To be sure, the child-related gravestone and mourning art from this period has been much studied for its forms, aesthetics and iconographic content, all of which yield a portrait of childhood as the era saw it: pure, fragile, and close to God. Epitaphs and memorial inscriptions verbalized this view of idyllic and vulnerable youth. Martha Pike and Janice K. Armstrong have written: “Children were understood to be innocent and beloved by God. There existed a pervasive fear (often realized) that an adored child would be taken to Heaven too soon by a God who chose him as His own. The good died young, and many families knew the anguish of bereavement.” Pike and Armstrong illustrate their argument with the 1842 epitaph of Elizabeth F. Mills, but the authors might just as well have chosen these lines carved on the 1865 Columbus Cemetery marker for William Tison:

“Farewell our little angel
We miss thy smiling face
We miss thy little prattling voice
But with Jesus thou art safe.”

The many similar epitaphs for children buried in these Florida rural cemeteries are proof in stone that the conventional aesthetics of childhood, mourning, and spirituality were as compelling and widespread in nineteenth and early twentieth century Florida as in more developed and populated parts of the country. The difficulties of life in what was at the time a frontier state cannot be overestimated, but far from relinquishing the mourning conventions which, collectively, one scholar has described as “a predominantly bourgeois phenomenon,” the epitaphs of the dead in these cemeteries support the deduction that, whatever sacrifices these pioneer Floridians made and whatever socio-cultural appurtenances they were forced to discard in their frontier environment, their idealization of childhood, their attitudes toward juvenile death, and their modes of memorializing their dead children were no different than those of their contemporaries in more settled parts of the Eastern Seaboard.

The linking of childhood with the heavenly condition, so often found in children's epitaphs, leads one to an examination of religion generally as it appears – or does not – in these rural burying grounds. Here the data from this study produces an interesting observation: of the surveyed epitaphs from these four cemeteries, nearly two-
thirds contain overt references to Christian religious doctrine (in the form of words such as “Jesus,” “Christian,” “angels,” and the like, or by including exact or paraphrased Biblical quotations, such as “He giveth His beloved sleep.”) A small additional number of epitaphs contain oblique or ambiguous Christian references, such as “thy heavenly face,” or “We will meet again.” (While a strictly denotative reading of the obliquely worded epitaphs might leave them open to non-religious, or at least non-Christian interpretation, they would have contained no such ambiguity for nineteenth and early twentieth century readers. As Barbara Rotundo points out in “She Hath Done What She Could,” “Men and women in the nineteenth century knew scripture and recognized which gravestone epitaphs were biblical quotations.”) 

That very close to two-thirds of these surveyed epitaphs bear religious content may seem to modern assessors an indication of high religiosity in the culture which produced them, but it is the non-religious one-third that should truly capture our attention, for compared to the gravestone inscriptions of, say, eighteenth century New England, the sizeable number of epitaphs in this survey which contain no markers at all of Christian doctrine, symbolism and/or literature suggests a growing secularization of death and bereavement. This secularizing process was by no means peculiar to the cemeteries in this survey, but was part of the generalized movement over time from the doctrinal narrowness of America’s Colonial and post-Colonial periods to the Romantic era broadening and reorientation of both the religious and the aesthetic spheres. Even overtly religious memorials reflected, over time, a lightening and “softening” of literary content. James Deetz has described how epitaphs evolved from eighteenth century examples which “stress decay and life’s brevity” to early nineteenth century stones, focused on “resurrection, and later, heavenly reward.”

Along with the progression of death and bereavement away from purely religious dogma and symbolism, the domestication of death and mourning in the nineteenth century play a part in understanding the increase in non-religious imagery in memorial inscriptions. Critics Pike and Armstrong have suggested that the American cult of domesticity that “idealized and sanctified the home, the family and the women who formed them” stimulated a vision of the after-life as a well-ordered domestic environment and death as a temporary separation until a final happy reunion in the better world of the hereafter. (Figure 8) The rural cemetery, with its pleasant vistas, artistic statuary and graceful landscape, was the vehicle for a rich subtextual discourse of ideas on the family and household, death, mourning, and the after-life, while the epitaphs and memorial inscriptions were shorthand versions of that subtext. All five cemeteries surveyed in this study contain examples of the genre. The Brown family’s white bronze cenotaph in Oaklawn bears this fine specimen: “He was a mother’s idol but death, like the dew from heaven, fell quickly, yet gently on this drooping flower.” (Figures 9, 10) Such domestic imagery, springing from a memorial vocabulary verdant with drooping flowers, sunbeams, buds, and blooms challenges, in these Florida graveyards, the religiosity that formerly monopolized the death and mourning experiences. In all five samples, as a matter of fact, only two stones bear the dour and once commonplace epitaph which, by the mid-nineteenth century, is conspicuous by its rarity:

Remember man as you pass by
As you are now so once was I
As I am now so you must be
Prepare for Death and follow me.

Sixty (just under half) of the interments in these Florida rural cemetery samples are those of women or girls. (One infant’s grave marker is gender-unspecified.) When the grave markers are examined for gender distribution by category, there is near parity in most categories, however, two - “tributes” and “combination epitaphs” - show a lopsided distribution. There are half again as many female as male graves marked by “tributes” (12 to 8), and a reverse preponderance of male to female “combination epitaphs” (23 to 15.) Since, of all five epitaph categories, “tributes” and “combination epitaphs” deal most directly with life achievements and activities as interpreted by survivors, the gendered qualities of those achievements and activities might be expected to reveal themselves with somewhat more frequency than in epitaphs focusing on other aspects of the death and
after-life conditions. While the sample size in this study is not large enough to legiti-
mately postulate on this point, the disparity by gender in these two categories should 
stimulate more study on gender as it affects epitaph type in Florida graves from the era.

Some interesting points arise when 
examining the epitaph categories and their 
distribution temporarily. If the study sample 
is divided in half, with the earlier half 
including grave markers from 1850 - 1885, 
and the later half those from 1886 - 1920, 
then 42 interments are dated in the first 
half while 77 occur in the second. (Seven 
stones are not dated or bear unreliable 
dates.) Only one category – that of “trib-
utes” – seems to occur with near-parity in 
both halves of the study; “tribute” epitaphs 
constitute 19% of the earlier grave markers 
and 14% of the later ones. There is a 
marked decrease in the prevalence of “com-
bination” epitaphs, which decline from 43% 
in the earlier half of the sample to 24.7% in the 
later half. “Unique” epitaphs also 
decrease in the newer graves, from 14.3% 
before 1886 to 5.2% between that date and 
1920. Two epitaph categories show an 
increase in frequency from earlier to later 
halves of the study: “spiritual” (increasing 
from 19% to 37.7%) and “those left behind” 
(increasing from 9.5% to 18.2%.) 
Interpreting the seeming increase, over 
time, in these two categories, however, ben-
ets from extending the *terminus ante 
quern* of the first half of the study to 1900. 
For “spiritual” epitaphs this adjustment 
produces a frequency of 52.4% in the earlier 
period versus 37.7% in the 1900 - 1920 
period. These percentages reflect Deetz’ 
observations on the decline, overall, in 
overly “spiritual” or religious memorial 
sentiment as grave markers move into the 
modern era. Moreover, advancing the cut-
off date of the “older” half of the survey to 
1900 adds only two graves to the “those left 
behind” group of older memorials, yielding 
adjusted frequencies of 14.3% in the earlier 
time span and 18.2% in the later one. This, 
too, conforms to material culture studies 
demonstrating the increased secularization 
of death in modern memorials, with its 
resultant shift of focus from mortality and 
the Hereafter to the needs and feelings of 
survivors. Keeping in mind that the limited 
size of this survey cannot offer conclusive 
findings in any category, the data from 
these five burying grounds suggest that the 
stones in Florida rural cemeteries may mir-
ror results from studies in other locales, as 
well as prefigure results from more ambi-
tious Florida epitaph studies, studies which 
might themselves incorporate the data 
gleaned from this preliminary work.

It is surprising, considering the interpret-
eive fruitfulness of the literary data from 
these Florida rural cemeteries, that 
there are so few intensive studies devoted 
to similar sources. The paucity of critical 
studies – both local and national – of the 
literary data from gravestones is doubly 
surprising when one considers that such 
studies are by no means new or novel. As 
early as the Renaissance, when tomb carv-
ings and memorial inscriptions were looked 
upon as historical documents and/or curi-
os antiquities, burial sites were examined 
and epitaphs recorded by the hundreds. 
The historiographic and archeological pre-
occupations of the eighteenth century led 
to renewed interest in tomb art, epitaphs 
and memorial inscriptions, while the 
nascent sciences of psychology and sociolo-
gy sought to assign motivations and 
“national characteristics” to the literary 
data from these sources. By the nineteenth 
century, John Kippax was moved to publish 
in Chicago the book called *Churchyard 
Literature: A Choice Collection of 
American Epitaphs*. In addition to the cus-
tomy taxonomy of epitaphs as “Admonitory,” “Professional,” “Devotional,” 
“Ludicrous,” and so on, Kippax formulates 
a quite objective definition of “epitaph” and 
suggests that deductions of a socio-cultural 
nature may be gleaned from a careful study 
of the genre. For the purposes of this study, 
however, Kippax’s real contribution arises 
not from his analysis of historical epitaphs 
but from his comments on contemporary 
one, the virtues and standards of which 
he defines with a clarity that enlightens 
critical readers more than a hundred 
years later:

They may recount the virtues and glori-
ous actions of the deceased, and hold 
them up for our imitation; and they may 
also narrate the descent of the individ-
ual, and may mourn his loss. A moral or 
admonitory precept, too, may be added, 
and in this manner important instruc-
tion may be conveyed. An epitaph 
should unquestionably be brief, and
should combine beauty of expression with tenderness of feeling. All that is expressive of love, sorrow, faith, hope, resignation and piety, should characterize an epitaph. It ought to be made almost exclusively applicable to the individual interred, and certainly not too long for remembrance. Its object is to record what is worthy of remembrance, and to excite sympathy in the beholder. True and genuine sorrow is never loquacious. In conveying consolation and admonition it should have reference to the common lot of all, and teach us to look up from the grave to a higher sphere of existence.20

It is doubtful that any one epitaph could embody all the virtues recommended by Kippax's formula, but the practical applications of his words are transcended in importance by what those words tell us about the needs, beliefs, tastes and lifestyles of the nineteenth century readers for whom they were intended. When read along with the literary data from rural Florida cemeteries, a well-articulated image begins to form, an image of a time and place and of people who lived and died then and there. The mouths of those people have been stopped by the passage of years, but they are by no means mute, for their epitaphs and memorial inscriptions encourage dialogue with moderns who know that to read a sufficiently large sample of gravestone epitaphs from a particular era and location is to have an eloquent, if one-sided, conversation with the past.

ENDNOTES

Maureen J. Patrick is an M.A. candidate in Humanities at the University of South Florida. A native Tampan, she is the Curator of Education for the Ybor City Museum Society. Her study of epitaphs in Florida rural cemeteries, Gone from our home, but not from our hearts, was presented at the 2002 American Culture Association's Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada, and also at USF's 2002 Annual Graduate Student Research Symposium. Ms. Patrick continues her work on cemeteries and grave markers in her current project: epitaphs and memorial art at Il Cimitero dell'unione Italiana, Ybor City's circa 1896 Italian cemetery.

2. Ibid., 88,89.
3. A northerly extension of Morgan Street in the early 20th Century 'trimmed' a portion of the old graveyard and forced the relocation of a number of graves to other parts of Oaklawn or to other cemeteries.
5. Ibid., November 5, 1993.
9. Woodlawn Cemetery, located in an early suburban neighborhood north of downtown Tampa, contains gravesites dating from the late 1800s to the present. The cemetery is laid out in true rural style, with meandering paths and memorial plantings and statuary. It is adjacent to several highly interesting cemeteries, one Jewish, one Latin, and the Showmen's Rest, where are buried circus and show people.
10. Homeland, a community in eastern Hillsborough County near the present town of Barrow, was established in the 1850s. It flourished briefly and then fell into decline at the turn of the century, leaving behind scattered homesteads and the Homeland Cemetery.
11. Columbus Cemetery is now enclosed within the grounds of the Suwanee River State Park, near Live Oak in northern Florida. In the mid-1800s, Columbus was a thriving settlement of 500 souls; its location on the Suwanee River made it an ideal shipping and passenger depot for steam-powered paddlewheelers, and the River also powered mills and grinding operations at the site. During the War Between the States, Confederate troops mustered at Columbus to protect its vital bridge across the Suwanee and protect the river from blockades by Union troops. Columbus's importance waned toward the end of the nineteenth century as rail transportation supplanted river transport, and the community was defunct by the second decade of the twentieth century. Family connections, however, produced burials in Columbus Cemetery until 1973.
14. At the Homeland Cemetery can be seen a number of depressions in the terrain. They are suggestively sized and shaped and it is quite conceivable that these are graves whose surface markers are completely gone. Also at the site are stones and parts of stones embedded nearly flush with the ground cover and nearly concealed with vegetation; these may be toppled gravestones or those which have sunk so deeply into the grave beneath that only their tops are visible. Considering the exposed location of the cemetery, the absence of a supporting community, the soft soil of the site and the advanced deterioration of the markers, this charming little cemetery may someday soon be entirely lost to view.
America (New York: The Museums at Stony Brook, 1980), 17.
16. Buckley, op cit, 123.
17. Barbara Rotundo, "She Hath Done What She Could," AGS Quarterly, Spring 1999, 11. The title of Rotundo's essay is a case in point, and one which appears among the epitaphs surveyed for this study. "She hath done what she could" is derived from Mark 14:iii-ix; it is the inscription on the 1893 Mary Weissbrod gravestone at Oaklawn Cemetery.
19. Pike and Janice Gray Armstrong, op cit, 16.
20. Kippax, op cit, 32.

APPENDIX ____________

Oaklawn Cemetery, SW portion

Spiritual or 'other worldly'


"Jesus called a little child unto Him." (Leslie William, son of Dr. & Mrs. L.W. Weeden. Born Aug. 29, 1891. Died Dec. 6, 1892.)

"He has gone to the mansions of rest." (Wm. Milton Cathcart, son of Wm. M. & N.J. Cathcart. Born Apr. 29, 1858. Died Nov. 10, 1893.)

"He giveth His beloved sleep." (May Wall Smith. Born July 30, 1876. Died April 15, 1909.)

"At rest with Jesus." (Mary Ann Collins. Apr. 23, 1827. Aug. 16, 1913.)

"Hush! Angels hover near." (E. Maud Mobley, Aged 5 Years. Richard N. Mobley, Aged eighteen months.)

"Suffer little children to come unto me and [forbid] them not for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." (Sacred to the memory of Malcolm Donald McNabb, son of Malcolm & Catherine C. McNabb. Born [ ] 1836. Died [ ] 4.)

"Our bud has [ ] [it]s early bower And burst to bloom in Paradise." (In memory of Mary E. Daughter of R. B. & Ma[ry] E. Thomas. Died Mar. [ ] 0th, 1857. Aged 2 mon[ths], 15 days.)

"Our darling has gone home to God. For of such is His Kingdom." (In memory of Delia. Daughter of Wm. C. & Eliza Ferris. Born Feb. 18th 1852. Died March 10th 1857.)

"He gathers the lambs to His bosom." (Ruby Nunez Lamb. Aged 5 yrs.)

"Christ took her to be with Him. Saved through the blood of Christ." (Annie, Wife of Robert F. Nunez. Oct. 9, 1870. Jan. 4, 1900.)


"Peaceful be thy silent slumber." (J. Henry C. Daqhentryd. 1801 - 1862.)

"At rest." (H. Weissbrod. Born Dec. 15, 1818. Died June 8, 1900.)


Tributes

"An upright man, and exemplary Christian." (In Memory of Wm. W. Wall. Born Nov. 29th 1834. Died April 22nd 1878.)


"His [ ] Bible integrity and ardent patriotism, his social qualities and his works of charity won for him the admiration of every honest heart." (Darwin Austin Branch, M.D. Son of Dr. F. & M. V. Branch. M.W. Grandmaster of the Grand Lodge of the [Masonic Order] For the State of Florida. Died at Tampa August 16, A. D. 1878. Aged 26 years.)

"She lived and died a Christian." (Matilda V. Branch. Wife of Dr. Franklin Branch. Died August 23rd A. D. 1857. Aged 18 Years.)


"Pioneer. Teacher." (Daniel Plumby. 1804-1860. [Replacement granite marker,])

"Here lies the remains of Christopher R.
Perry Butler 1st Regiment [C.]S. Army. With the tender affection of a son and brother he united the spirit of a Gallant Soldier tempered with the gentle influence of Christian piety. Born in Greenville District of South Carolina August 26th, 1829. Died at Tampa Bay November 1st, 1853. In the courageous discharge of his duty. This stone is erected by his mother.

Those left behind


“Thou didst give and Thou has taken. Blessed Lord Thy will be done.” (Gay. Infant. Son of Chas. F. & Ida Gay. Oct. 6, 1903.)

“Remember Me.” (Sacred to the memory of James M. Harris. A native of N. York. Born September, 1819. Died October 19th, 1855. Aged 56 years.)

“We shall go to him but he shall not return to us.” (Darwin Orson. Son of Rev. J. O. & G. H. Branch. Born Dec. 24th 1858. Died Aug. 8th 1859.)

Combination epitaphs

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Mat. 5:11” (Gay. Ida Kennedy. Wife of Charles Francis Gay. Born May 8, 1880. Died Apr. 7, 1919.)

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth [ ] saith the spirit that they may rest from their labors and their souls do follow them. Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” [Our Father and Mother. Rev. J. J. Wells. Born Aug. 18, 1796. Died Jun. 6, 1866. R. A. Wells. born Apr. 10, 1803. Died July 6, 1872.)

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. [ ] Confederate veteran wound­ed at [ ] [Member of Light Guards Columbus, Ga.” (Clement C. Shepperson. Born June 3, 1840. Died Mar. 20, 1904.)

“He was [ ] amiable disposition [ ] and religious life [ ] loved him for his [ ] he died in the [ ] faith in the [Lord.]”

(In memory of Martin Cunningham. Born December 9th A.D. 18 [ ] 9. Died Apr. 5th A. D. 18 [5].)

“He was a mother’s idol but death, like the dew from heaven, fell quickly, yet gently on this dropping flower.” (In Memory of John F. Brown. born Feb 7, 1846. Died August 2, 1867.)

Brother thou art gone to rest We will not weep for thee For thou art now where oft on earth Thy spirit longed to be.”

“To know him was to love him. Though taken from us, let us not forget that he has crossed over the rolling, restless tide of death, and awaits us on the other side.” (In Memory of William H. Brown. Born Sep. 17, 1842. Died May 31, 1870.)

“An honest man, at rest. His soul has returned to its original home, to go no more out forever.” (In Memory of William T. Brown. Born in 1810. Died August 11, 1868.)

[The above three memorial inscriptions are taken from a white bronze cenotaph inscribed “Brown.” The Brown gravestones are adjacent and contain only names and birth-death dates.]

“I know that my Redeemer liveth. His life work of pure unselfish and noble deeds is done and he has joined the throng of loved ones in the Fathers house where are many mansions.” (Clairborne R. Mobley. Aged 46 years.)

“Too pure and angelic for [earth] She has gone to her home above Relieved from the trials of life To live with the God of Love.”

[In Cunningham family plot. Stone effaced except for four lines above.]

“This stone was placed here by his discon­solate widow who with their children mourn the loss of a good husband, a good father and a good Christian citizen.

Remember man as you pass by As you are now so once was I As I am now, so you must be Prepare for Death and follow me.”

(Sacred to the memory of Malcolm McNabb. Born June 22, 1818. Died Dec. 1, 1858.)

“Rest sweetly our little [ ] We will meet thee in Heaven.” (Clara Vashti, Daughter of
E.A. and H.M. Clarke. Died October 21st 1857 aged 6 months and 26 days.

Unique epitaphs

“Here lies Wm. Ashley and Nancy Ashley. Master and Servant. Faithful to each other in that relation in life, in death they are not seperated. Stranger consider and be wiser. In the Grave all human distinction of race or caste mingle together in one common dust.” (To commemorate their fidelity in each other this stone was erected by their executor John Jackson 1873.)

“Thy meek spirit retired unpolluted and bright ere by woe or remorse was riven. May the scene of thy death be a pharos of light to guide thy survivor to Heaven.” (In memory of Mary E. Wife of R. B. Thomas. Born 28 July 1839. Died March 25, 1857. [Replacement marble slab; graphic style of inscription suggests replacement in 1930s.])

“Killed Steamer Alabama.” (Willie Ferris. 1863-1882. [Replacement granite marker.])

“Died At Sea.” (Elpenice Moore. 1802-1856. [Replacement granite marker.])

Homeland Cemetery

Spiritual or 'other worldly'

“Sweetly Sleeping.” (Clyde E. Langford. Born Feb. 9, 1888. Died Dec. 4, 1890.)

“At Rest.” (Marion J. Son of J. & M.B. Watson. Born March 11, 1876. Died Nov. 7, 1900.)

Those left behind

“As I am [so you must be] Prepare to [die] and follow me.”


“Our father.” (Wm. H. Durrance. born Aug. 30, 1815. Died Feb. 27, 1879.)

Tributes


“The friend of youth, the friend of age, the [ ] of [ ]” (Sebron A. Smith. Born Apr. 24, 1848. Died Dec. 10, 1882.)

Combination epitaphs

“[ ] in soft repose dearest pride.”

([ ] and is blessed [ ] slumbers are [ ] and [h]om[e]” (Sacred to the memory of [ ]me Tison. [ ]th, 1852. [ ] 1881.)

Woodlawn Cemetery, sample

Spiritual or 'other worldly'


“Sight after mystery Peace after pain.”

(G. A. Hannon. 1834 - 1909.)


‘Sweet babe thy spirit now hath rest. Thy sufferings now are o’er.” (Maxine, daughter of L. H. & M. B. White. Born June 1, 1910. Died Mar. 18, 1912.)

“Gone to a bright home, Where grief can not come.” (Elizabeth. wife of U. C. Graham. July 25, 1882. Mar. 15, 1907.)

“God in His wisdom has recalled
The boon His love had given
And though the bodies slumbers here
The souls are safe in Heaven.”


“It was not an enemy that took our loved one from us, but our Father in Heaven called him home.” (E. A. Clark. Born in Cornwall on the Hudson, New York, Dec. 16, A.D. 1831. Died in Tampa, Fla. Nov. 7, 1886.)

“Not lost, blest thought
But gone before
Where we shall meet
To part no more.”
(Allen Waters. Born April 1, 1882. Died March 1, 1909.)

“Sleep oh sweet babies & take thy rest.”

Those left behind

“Precious ones from us have gone,
The voices we loved are stilled.
Places are vacant in our home.
Which never can be filled.”
(Mollie B. Terry. Born Jan. 15, 1858. Died Sept. 11, 1908.)

“To [live] in hearts we leave behind is not to die.”

“Our darling. Gone but not forgotten.”
(Hillard J. Pierce. Oct. 5, 1906. Dec. 9, 1911.)

“She was the sunshine of our home.”

“Dearest loved one, We have layed thee in the silent grave’s embrace. But thy memory will be cherished Till we see thy heavenly face.”
(M.J. Haley. 1876 - 1916.)

“A sunbeam from the world has gone.”

“We had a little treasure once
He was our joy and pride
We loved him oh perhaps too well
For soon he slept and died.”
(Our darling baby. Lewie Barber. July 5, 1905. Apr. 19, 1912.)

“A precious one from us is gone
A voice we loved in stilled
A place is vacant in our home
Which never can be filled.”

“Gone but not forgotten.”

“Weep not father and mother for me. For I am waiting in glory for thee.”
(Ruth E. Daughter of [ ] and Mrs. E. [ ] Brannen. Apr. 16, 1907. June 18, 1907.)

“In love she lived,
In peace she died,
Her life was craved,
But God denied.”

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Mat. V.VII”
(Rev. J.T. Duncan. 1850 - 1914. His Wife Agnes A. 1854 - 1932.)

“Weep not father and mother for me. For I am waiting in glory for thee.”
(Rev. J.T. Duncan. 1850 - 1914. His Wife Agnes A. 1854 - 1932.)

“Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God.”

“He that believeth though he were dead yet shall he live.”

“Saved. Departed to be with the Lord.”
(Mary Ellen Agney. May 1, 1905.)

Unique epitaphs

“I love my companions and appreciate my friends on earth, and crave that we may have a reunion after death.”
(Dr. Hiram J. Hampton. Born Jan. 5, 1852. Died June 7, 1920.)

“He gave his life for his country and for the sacred cause of liberty and for all mankind. His body lies in Suresnes Cemetery, Paris, France. His soul has returned to its giver.”
(In memory of First Lieut. Louis A. Torres A.E.S. Born in Tampa Feb. 13, 1893. Died in France Sept. 1, 1918.)

Tributes

“To know her was to love her.”
(Lola G. Schooley. Born Aug. 16, 1876. Died July 31, 1895.)

“A true husband, a loving father.”

“A loving wife and mother.”

“Jesus loves the pure and holy.”
(Annie S. Schooley. Born Apr. 15, 1850 at Marebak Falsteb ID. Died Apr. 18, 1898 at Tampa, Fl.)
Columbus Cemetery

**Spiritual or 'other worldly'**

“We shall sleep but not forever. There will be a glorious dawn. We shall meet to part no never On the resurrection morn.”


**Those left behind**

“Gone from our Home But not from our hearts.” ([iron marker] Eugene. Wife of G.A. Mcivor. [dates oblit.])

**Combination epitaphs**


“Mary, thou art remembered yet with doting love and keen regret. And faith can yield no joy for me, Brighter than that of meeting thee.” (Mary R. Wife of J.M. Barclay. Born Nov. 10, 1849. Died Oct 20, 1885)

“Murray Darling, only son. I'll meet thee when life is done. Meet where parting is no more, On the happy peaceful shore.”


“Farewell our little angel. We miss thy smiling face. We miss thy little prattling voice. But with Jesus thou art safe.” (Sacred to the memory of Wm. Tison 3rd Son of J.B. & Sarah C. Spence. Who died at Sunny side, Fla. Aug. 11th 1865.)


“Oh, how hard but we give thee up, our precious little one. For such is the Kingdom of God.” (Earl Cannon. Daughter of Rosa & Jack Cannon, Jr. Born Feb. 12, 1902. Died June 4, 1907.)

“Words cannot paint neither can stone perpetuate the graces of our mother's life. Her virtues are enshrined in the hearts of her children by whom this simple monument is erected. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'” (Sacred to the Memory of Mary A. Hardee. Wife of the late Thomas E. Hardee. Who departed this life May 26th, 1862 near Columbus, Fla. Aged 60 Years.)

“She sleeps in Jesus for she was ready.” (In memory of Mrs. M. H. Wiggins Who died May 24 A.D. 1870.)

“Sleep husband sleep thy toils are o'er. Sweet be thy rest so oft needed before. Well have we loved you but God loved you more. He has called thee away to that bright happy shore.” (Thomas E. Swift. Beloved husband of Amanda Swift. Born May 9, 1851. Died July 11, 1893.)

“These all died in faith not having received the promise But having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them and embraced and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.” (Mother and Father. Mollie Cannon. Born 1843. Died 1890. Jackson Cannon. Born 1823. Died 1906.)

**Unique epitaphs**

“Leaving an infant son 7 weeks old She told her relations and friends a few hours before her death that she was happy and for them all to meet her in Heaven. What a glorious Death. 'Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord.'” (Sacred to the memory of Sarah C. 2nd wife of J.B. Spencer. Who died at Sunny Side, Fla. May 31st 1867. Aged 33 years & 11 days.)

Micanopy Cemetery, sample

**Spiritual or ‘other-worldly’**


“Her end was peace. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” (Mary Eleanor Bellah. Consort of Dr. John Wesley Price. Born Dec. 10, 1828. Died Mar. 20, 1904.)

“Gone in her young years afar from Life's tears.” (Gertrude Chitty. Wife of Chas. R. Carter. Mch. 28, 1882. April 4, 1909.)

“Be thou faithful unto death and [ ] thee across [ ] Rev. 11:10.” (Martha A. Thrasher. Sept. 26, 1828. Apr. 24, 1894.)

“Sleep in the arms of Jesus, safe on his
gentle Breast.” (In Memory of Louie S. Means. Sept. 11, 1868. Feb. 21, 1897.)

**Tributes**

“Her words were kindness, Her deeds of love.” (Cora Hill, wife of J.T. Blount. July 27, 1851. Jan. 28, 1922.)

“Thy trials ended, thy rest is won.” (In loving memory of Our Father William Marion Avant. Born Au. 12, 1850. Died May 20, 1895.)

“She hath done what she could.” (Mother Martha S. Ley. 1928 - 1914.)

“No one knew thee but to love thee.” (Roy Infant Son of E. L. & S. E. Ley. Born Apr. 29, 1892. Died Nov. 16, 1892.)

“As a wife devoted, as a mother affectionate, As a friend ever kind and true.” (Lina F. wife of J. L. Crisman. Died Apr. 22, 1885. Aged 27 yrs. 5 mos. 6 ds.)


**Those left behind**

“Mother thou hast from us flown
To the regions far above.
We to thee erect this stone
Consecrated by our love.”
(Mary A. Keaton. Born Nov. 21, 1820. Died Mar. 17, 1889.)

**Combination epitaphs**

“He believed in the Lord Jesus For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Romans [ ] (Wm. H. McGuire. Born in Montreal Canada. Died Feb. 9, 1889. AG. 29 yrs. 6 mos.)

“Gone to be with my precious darling and Jesus my saviour.” (J. T. Blount. Apr. 6, 1838. Nov. 24, 1922.)


“Farewell my wife and children all
Tis true a father, Christ doth call;
Weep not, weep not my children,
It is sweet to die a Christian.”

“Cheerful he gave his being up and went, to share the holy rest that waits a life well spent.”

**Unique epitaphs**


“Away from home and kindred dear
Among some strangers he lies here.”
(Columbus M. Putnam. Born Jan. 1, 1858. Died Dec. 19, 1880.)