

## Grave Marker Symbols: A Field Guide

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This hampers the study's breadth. For example, if this book connects domestic and foreign issues, focusing on three western states, why is there no mention of the temperance movement? And what of suffrage, which receives a paragraph (37) set within a section on gender (read: masculinity) and brief attention on three other pages out of a total 252? Its minimal treatment is inversely proportional to its importance in the 1890s; the question of suffrage—African American and female—often overlapped with the question of citizenship, especially in the age of U.S. empire. In the case of Colorado, it takes but a sentence: "The Populists' one substantial achievement involved their decisive support of a women's suffrage amendment that ultimately appeared on the 1893 ballot" (50). Major female leaders like Carrie Chapman Catt receive passing acknowledgment: "Populists joined state and national women's suffrage leaders (including Carrie Chapman Catt) in promoting the measure, but they did so using explicitly economic arguments. . . . Even Catt—by no means an economic radical—contended that women would vote for free silver and economic equality" (37). Two sentences later, the reader is back to more familiar territory: Populist ideology, the economy, and capitalism. Indeed, in the entire study, only one woman is quoted: Sarah Emery, author of *Seven Financial Conspiracies Which Have Enslaved the American People* (1887).

Although the paucity of women and nonpolitical figures may tempt one to dismiss the study entirely, *Populism and Imperialism* does contribute to the field by exploring how reformers wrangled with the subject of empire overseas at a time when so much was on the line at home.

*Grave Marker Symbols: A Field Guide*, by Loren N. Horton and Michael D. Zahs. Ottumwa: PBL Limited, 2018. 116 pp. Illustrations (many in color), glossary, bibliography, worksheet. \$24.99 paperback.

Reviewer Thomas Connors is associate professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. He served as the principal historian and writer for the National Cemetery Administration's Veterans Legacy Program in 2014–2016 and has published on Washington Irving, Sleepy Hollow, and the rural cemetery movement.

Anyone walking around a Victorian cemetery will notice the wealth of symbolism represented on its markers. Some, like crosses and flags, remain familiar, but many others have become obscure, a forgotten vocabulary of flowers, crowns, and fraternal orders. We can connect a willow to mourning and perhaps a lamb to innocence but will more likely mistake an anchor for naval service than interpret it as a symbol of Christian hope.

In this new guide to decoding the symbolism found on grave markers, longtime Iowa historians Loren Horton and Michael Zahs draw on their experience exploring the midwestern cultural landscape. In separate chapters, they examine different symbols, from doves and gates to trumpets and urns, before looking at what particular types of flora, crosses, and military emblems mean. All of these are well illustrated with photographs and biblical references. A nod to Jewish and Muslim iconography, perhaps when looking at hands, stars, or moons, might have hinted at other traditions. The authors also explore the materials used for markers and add two interesting chapters on zinc monuments (called “White Bronze”) and Andera iron crosses cast in Spillville, both commonly found around the state. A glossary of cemetery terms and a bibliography of nineteenth-century books on funerary symbolism complete the book.

Other works, such as Douglas Keister’s *Stories in Stone* (2004), delve into this topic more exhaustively, often with an eastern focus, but this field guide is a valuable resource for any midwesterner interested in reading the historic landscape and deciphering this lost language of symbols.

*The Great War Comes to Wisconsin: Sacrifice, Patriotism, and Free Speech in a Time of Crisis*, by Richard L. Pifer, with Marjorie Hannon Pifer. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2017. 296 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, index. \$26.95 paperback.

Reviewer Matthew Lindaman is professor of history and chair of the history department at Winona State University. He is the author of *Fit for America: Major John L. Griffith & the Quest for Athletics and Fitness* (2018).

Coinciding with the centenary remembrance of America’s entry into the Great War, Richard L. Pifer provides a thorough account of how numerous individuals, ethnic groups, and institutions in Wisconsin negotiated the first “total war” of the twentieth century. His goal was to capture “the essence of the home front experience” in all its complexities (1). As a result, the book does not contain a strong thesis but rather a strong central message: that “the experience of Wisconsin’s people during World War I suggests that fighting a major war, particularly a ‘total war’ requiring mobilization of the entire society is a complex and risky business” (240). Of course, that held true nationwide but was particularly acute in the Badger State, which hung its hat on the tradition of midwestern isolationism, contained multiple ethnic groups, and boasted a strong Progressive wing of the Republican Party, along with an active Socialist Party.