

Bethinking of Old Orleans

5-25-99

Vol XXI

C.W. Lattin County Historian

No.21

MT. ALBION TOUR MAY 30

ALBION — Local historians Neil Johnson and Bill Lattin have again teamed up to present a guided walking tour in Mt. Albion Cemetery on Sunday, May 30.

This informative event will commence at 2 p.m. rain or shine at the cemetery chapel located on Rt. 31 a mile east of Albion. This tour will more or less cover the south-western section of Mt. Albion not concentrated on in previous tours.

As in the past, a \$10 dollar prize will be given to the person who finds a designated symbol which will be announced at the beginning of the tour. This aspect of the tour is primarily intended to attract the interest of students.

Mt. Albion is rich with funerary art and liturgical symbolism. Our photos which accompany this article show various monuments with symbols which have been designated as the ones to find on previous tours. Starting in the upper left corner and working clockwise around, we begin with the Grinnell monument. Our first prize winner was the ear of corn which appears in the panel to the left. The ear of corn is representative of God's bounty or the eucharist. In the panel to the right is another symbol showing the sheaf of wheat and a sickle. This was a favorite Victorian logo suggesting a full and complete life. Aside from these two I might also mention here the draped funeral urn at the top. This suggests death and being draped indicates mourning and renunciation of the world. The Grinnell monument was erected in 1888 and is made of zinc which was probably cast at the Kendall Manufacturing Co. in Bridgeport, Conn. These monuments from the late 19th century and early part of this century were available through the Sears & Roebuck catalogues.

The next funeral symbol is the upside down torch found on the Bennett monument, Cast in bronze and applied to granite, it is shown with a laurel (wreath). The laurel is a symbol of glory or victory coming down to us from Roman times. The upside down torch signifies death. In this case you put the two together and you get victory over death or eternal life.

Below this monument we find an early headstone with the typical weeping willow, suggesting weeping and mourning. However, entwined with the branches, is an anchor. This too was a favorite Victorian symbol suggesting hope. Words inscribed over this bas-relief picture states: "Hope as an anchor". This headstone is on the grave of Welcome Mitchell who died July 10, 1860.

At the bottom right is a headstone for William E.



Minckley who died Oct. 18, 1886. At the top of the stone is a fraternal emblem for the AOUW which was the Ancient Order of United Workmen. The engraved insert in the corner shows it more distinctly. It consists of a shield suggesting protection and an anchor. In other words, fraternal art and religious art are often the same. The AOUW lodge once had a hall on the third floor of a building located on East Bank Street in Albion.

Finally, at the bottom left, we see the Hibbard monument. On our last tour we chose an epitaph as the thing to find. The epitaph here simply states "Trusted and True". Epitaphs are commonly found on older headstones and monuments. They usually consist of Biblical passages or quasi-religious poetry. It is more unusual in this locality to find something which is personalized. "Trusted and True" is perhaps a little more secular than some.