

Student Handout – Common Gravestone Iconography (16th-19th centuries)

What do you think the following icons found in early Maine and New England Euro-American settlements might mean? Have you ever seen these in a local cemetery before?

Death's Head/Winged Skull

Skull (no wings, or skull with bones)

Cherub (winged human-like face)

Clasped Hands

Coffin

Heart

Hand with index finger pointing upward

Cross

Urn/Urn and Willow

Spoked Wheel/Gaelic Cross

Flowers

Shell

Rosettes (Flowers)

Column(s)

Portrait

Hourglass/Hourglass with wings

Scythe/Sickle

“Memento Mori”

“I.H.S.”/“I.H.S” with Cross