



TOMBSTONE SYMBOLS

Safe in the hallowed quiet
of the past
Lowell

ACANTHUS:	The thorny leaves represent the prickly Journey of life to death.
ACORN:	Symbol of fertility and life.
ALPHA & OMEGA:	These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, they signify that Christ is the beginning and the end.
AMERICAN LEGION:	Patriotic organization for American military veterans
ANCHOR:	Hope, seaman
ANGEL:	Messenger between God and man; guardian angel
ANGELS:	Rebirth, resurrection, protection, wisdom, mercy
ANGEL BLOWING A TRUMPET:	Indicates resurrection
ANGEL FLYING:	Rebirth, resurrection
ANKH:	Eternal life, peace, truth
ANTHEMION:	A classical ornament featuring honeysuckle or palmettes with foliage below, primarily decorative.
ANTS:	Christian industriousness
ANVIL:	Martyrdom
APPLE:	Fruit of salvation
ARCH:	Triumph over death; victory; being rejoined with partner in heaven, passage to heaven.
ARMOR:	protection from evil
ARMS OUTSTRETCHED:	the plea for mercy
ARROW:	Mortality
ARTIST PALETTE:	Artist
BABY'S CHAIR:	small, empty furniture symbolized unfulfilled lives of children; small shoes on chair – connection to childhood, inability to achieve adulthood.
BANNER:	Victory, triumph, rejoicing
BASKET:	Decorative, a tipped basket represents life's end.
BATS:	The Underworld
BED:	A bed is a denial of death; "She is not dead, but

BEES:	Sleepeth” Resurrection; risen Christ
BEE HIVES:	Domestic virtues, education, faith, abundance in the Promised Land, piety
BELL:	Mourning
BELL FLOWER:	Constancy & gratitude
BIBLE:	Resurrection through the scripture; wisdom
BIRDS:	Souls; flight of the soul back to God
BIRD FLYING:	Rebirth
BIRD SITTING:	A sitting bird is guarding the soul
BLEEDING:	Christ suffering for our sins.
BOOK:	The Divine word or one’s accomplishments
BOOK, OPENED:	The embodiment of Faith
BOUQUETS:	Condolences; grief, shortness of life
BUOY:	A symbol of a mariner
BRANCH:	Severed mortality
BREASTS:	(Gourds, Pomegranates): Nourishment of the soul; the church
BRIDAL:	May signify the grave of a young bride or groom.
BUDS:	Renewal of life
BURNING FLAME:	Life or resurrection
BUTTERFLY:	Resurrection
CANDLE BEING SNUFFED:	Time, mortality
CANDLESTICK:	Christ, devotion
CADUCEUS:	Medicine & healing. Two entwined serpents encircling a staff with wings joined to the staff.
CALLA LILY:	Marriage, fidelity; majestic beauty
CANNON:	Military service; when at the base of the stone it May indicate service with the artillery.
CATERPILLAR:	Life, metamorphosis
CARRYING THE DEPARTED SOUL:	as a child in their arms, or as a Guardian embracing the dead. Messengers of God.
CEDAR:	Strong faith
CELTIC CROSS:	Circle on it symbolizes eternity
CHAIN WITH THREE LINKS:	Trinity, faith, Odd Fellows
CHAIR, SMALL:	Emptiness caused by young loss
CHALICE:	Represents the Sacraments.
CHERUB:	Angelic
CHILDREN:	Represent the untimely death of the innocent.
CHRYSALIS:	Christian metamorphosis; resurrection
CIRCLE:	Eternity or life, never ending existence.
CIVIL WAR:	The Civil War was fought in the U.S. from April 1861 to May of 1865.
CLOUDS:	The divine abode or heaven, vehicle of Christ

CLOCK:	Symbol of mortality. A clock with the hands pointing at 11:00 is associated with the Benevolent & Protective Order of the Elks.
CLOVER:	Symbol of the Trinity & symbol of Ireland
COBRA:	Two depicted with the winged sun are said to guard the gates of the underworld.
COCKS:	Awakening to resurrection, vigilance
COFFIN:	Father time, picks/shovels
COLUMN:	Noble life
COLUMN, BROKEN:	Early death, grief
COMPASS:	Mason. A compass on a Coat of Arms or Family Crest represents "direction"
CONCH SHELL:	Wisdom
CRADLE:	Emptiness caused by young loss
CRESCENT:	The deceased was probably a Muslim.
CONCH SHELL:	Wisdom, reincarnation
CRANE:	Vigilance, good works & loyalty. In China the Crane symbolized longevity & immortality.
CREST/COAT OF ARMS:	Family crests/sometimes found with incredible detail.
CROCUS:	Youthful, gladness
CROOK/CROSIER:	Odd Fellows. Carried by or before an abbot, Bishop or archbishop as a symbol of office.
CROSS:	Salvation, faith, resurrection
CROSS, ANCHOR & BIBLE:	Trials, victory & reward, referring to Christ as "Hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both Sincere and steadfast" (Hebrews 6:19).
CROSSED KEYS:	St. Peter
CROWN:	Glory of life after death
CROWN UPON SKULL:	Triumph of death
CROZIER:	Bishop
CUP OR CHALICE:	The Sacrament
CURTAIN OR VEIL:	A symbol of passage from one type of existence to another.
CYRESS:	Hope, mourning, death & eternal life
DAFFODIL:	Death of youth, desire, art, grace, beauty
DAISY:	Innocence of child, youth, purity of thought
DAR:	Daughters of the American Revolution
DARTS:	Mortality
DEATH HEADS:	Symbol of mortality that is typically depicted with a skull and bones.
DEAD LEAVES:	Sadness, melancholy
DEID BELL:	Scottish symbol generally depicted as a small hand bell which was rung at funerals and to give notice of a funeral.
DOG:	Implies a good master worthy of love

DOGWOOD FLOWER:	Symbol of regeneration, divine sacrifice & triumph of eternal life.
DOLL:	Premature end of childhood
DOLPHIN:	Resurrection, salvation, bearer of souls across water to heaven.
DOORS:	Entrance to heaven
DOVE:	Peace; innocence; purity; the Holy Spirit/Ghost
DOVE, ASCENDING:	Souls flight to heaven
DOVE, DESCENDING:	Holy Ghost
DOVE DEAD:	Prematurely shortened life
DOVE – DIVE BOMBING:	A dive-bombing dove with a twig represents the Holy Ghost.
DOVE, FLYING:	Indicates resurrection
DOVE WITH AN OLIVE BRANCH IN ITS BEAK:	Hope & deliverance
DOVE STANDING:	Mourning
DRAGON:	For the Chinese the dragon is an emblem of Imperial Power.
DRAGONFLY:	Immortality, regeneration
DRAPERY OVER ANTHING:	Sorrow; mourning
EAGLE:	Courage, faith, generosity, contemplation, Military
EGG:	Regeneration
EYE:	Humility
EYE OF GOD OR ALL SEEING EYE:	symbolized the all-knowing and ever-present God.
EYE OF RA/HORUS:	Sun/Moon, Life/Death, protection against evil
EYE OF GOD SURROUNDED BY A TRIANGLE:	The Holy Trinity. Surrounded by a circle and radiating rays of light is used to symbolize the Holiness of the true God.
FATHER TIME:	Father time is generally equipped with a scythe & Hour glass representing mortality & the passage of Time.
FAWN:	Innocence & is generally found the graves of Children.
FEMALE FIGURE:	Sorrow, grief
FERN:	Sincerity, sorrow.
FISH:	Christ, faith, life, spiritual nourishment
FIELD ARTILLERY:	military profession
FINGER POINTING DOWNWARD:	Calling the earth to witness, invites the viewer of the stone to consider the fate of the person laying beneath it.
FINGER POINTING UPWARDS:	Pathway to heaven, heavenly reward

FISH:	Indicates faith
FLAG:	Military, patriotism
FLAME OR LIGHT:	Life, resurrection
FLEUR DE LYS:	Perfection, light, life, royalty
FLOWER/FLOWERS:	Brevity of earthly existence; sorrow; broken, premature death; fragility of life
FLOWERS, PLUCKED:	Early severance of a life in bloom
FOO DOG:	Chinese guardians, one male & one female Foo Dog Guard each assigned entryway to the cemetery.
FORGET-ME-NOT:	Remembrance
FOX:	cunning
FROG:	Worldly pleasure, sin
FRUITA:	Eternal plenty
GARLAND:	Victory over death
GOOD SHEPARD:	with a lamb around his shoulders represents Christ and the soul which he has saved.
GOURDS:	Deliverance from grief
GRAPEVINE, GRAPE	I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth fruit. inevitability of Death.
GRIM REAPER:	inevitability of Death.
GUN:	Military service
HAIR, FLOWING:	Penitence
HANDS:	Devotion; prayer
HAND OF GOD CHOPPING:	Sudden death
HANDS BLESSING:	Blessing of those left behind
HANDS, CLASPED:	Signify farewells said at death, hope to meet in eternity or bonds of marriage.
HANDS HOLDING A CHAIN WITH A BROKEN LINK:	Death of a family member.
HANDS, PRAYING:	Now in God's care, asking God for Eternal life
HAND POINTING UPWARD:	Indicates the pathway to heavenly reward
HANDSHAKES:	Farewell
HANDS TOUCHING AT HARP:	The hands are making the "Live long and prosper" Praise to the Maker
HAWTHORN:	Hope, merriness, springtime
HONEYSUCKLE:	Bonds of love, generosity & devoted affection
HORNS:	The Resurrection
THUMBS:	gesture that Mr. Spock used on Star Trek (Leonard Nimoy is Jewish, and that's where he got it).
HARP:	Hope, praise to the maker
HART:	(male deer) faithfulness, thirsting for God, or Christ slaying Satan.
HEART:	Love, devotion, sorrow, joy, mortality
HEARTS:	Soul in bliss or love of Christ
HEARTS JOINED:	Two joined hearts on a stone mark a marriage
HEART, PIERCED BY SWORD:	Virgin Mary, Christ, repentance

HEART, FLAMING:	Religious fervor
HEBREW SYMBOLISM:	Represents the Hebrew words po nikbar or po nitman, meaning “Here Lies”
HELMET:	Military service, strength, protection
HOLY BOOKS (2)	On Mormon headstones indicates the Bible and the Book of Mormon.
HORSE:	Courage or generosity.
HORSESHOE:	Protection against evil
HORNS:	The resurrection
HOURGLASS:	Swift passage of time, temperance
HTWSSTKS:	Acronym for “Hiram the Widows Son Sent to King Solomon” and is found on a keystone or Royal Arch Masons.
HUMMINGBIRD:	Hummingbirds are primarily decorative.
IHS:	Eternity (Christian symbol: “In His Service” or “In this sign conquer” commonly used in Celtic crosses.
IMPS:	Mortality
IRIS:	Messenger of the Gods
ISIS:	Rebirth, the Virgin Mary
IVY:	Abiding memory; friendship
KEYS:	Knowledge, cemetery keys stand for spiritual knowledge or entrance to heaven.
KVA:	Korean Veterans of America
LALLA:	Beauty, marriage
LAMB:	Christ the Redeemer; sacrifice; innocence; purity, common animal on a child’s grave.
LAMP:	Stand for knowledge & the immortality of the Spirit.
LAUREL:	Victory; triumph; glory
LILY OF THE VALLEY:	Purity, Virgin Mary
LILIES:	Resurrection; purity
LION:	Indicative of courage
LOTUS:	Purity, resurrection, perfect beauty, spiritual revelation
MAGNUS:	Educational Achievement
MARIGOLD:	association with Mexico’s Day of the Dead; mostly because of its availability in that season.
MASONIC COMPASS AND SET SQUARE:	Freemasons, uprightness, judgment
MEANDER:	Graphic symbolizing Clouds and Rolling Thunder, God and his power in the heavens
MEMENTO MORI:	Symbol of death and reminder of mortality
MENORAH:	Divine wisdom, an emblem of Judaism
MERMAID:	Dualism of Christ, half God, half man

MILITARY MEDALS:	U. S. military graves for distinguished services such as the Air Medal & the Purple Heart.
MISTLETOE:	Immortality
MITRE:	Headdress worn by a Bishop.
MONOGRAM OF CHRIST:	formed by interlacing two letters of the Greek alphabet: X (chi) and P (or) which are the first two letters of the Greek word “Christos” or Christ.
MOON:	Death, rebirth, victory, sorrow of the crucifixion
MOOSE:	“Loyal Order of the Moose”
MOTHER AND CHILD:	Charity, love
MORNING GLORY:	Beginning of life, brevity of life, departure
MYTLE:	Undying love, peace
NAKED FIGURE:	Truth, purity, innocence
NATIONAL GUARD:	Civilians who served their country, state & Community on a part time basis.
OAK:	Supernatural power and strength; eternity, Oak was looked upon as the tree from which the cross was made for Jesus/
OAK LEAVES & ACORN:	Maturity, ripe old age
OBELISK:	Rebirth, connection between earth and heaven
OLIVE BRANCH:	Peace, forgiveness, humanity
OPEN GATES:	Afterlife, the soul entering heaven
ORANTE:	this praying figure with open arms symbolizes the soul which lives in divine peace.
ORB:	Faith
OWL:	Wisdom, solitude, a warning of impending death
PALL, PICK:	Mortality, mourning
PALM BRANCH:	Signifies victory & rejoicing
PALMETTO TREE:	Is on the state flag of South Carolina to represent the defense of the palmetto-log fort during the Revolutionary War.
PAPYRUS:	Natural symbol of life itself & the primeval marsh From which all life came. Papyrus pillars were said to hold up the sky.
PASSION FLOWER:	symbolizes Christ’s Passion, Redemption & Crucifixion.
PEACOCK:	symbolized the incorruptibility of flesh, Resurrection, beauty of soul, immortality
PELICAN:	Redemption through Christ
PENTAGRAM:	Offers protection against evil, symbolism to suggest the five wounds suffered by Christ on the cross. the five senses, the five mosaic books, the eastern star, protection against demons.
PHOENIX:	mythical Arabian bird, which, according to the beliefs of the ancient, after a thousand years arises

	from its ashes, is the symbol of the resurrection of the bodies.
PICK:	Death, mortality
PINECONE:	Immortality
PINWHEELS:	First appearing on the graves of children, pinwheels Now can be seen on the graves of adults. The continual movement suggests constancy, perhaps of Affection. The wind which propels the mills evokes the Spirit.
POPPIES:	Eternal sleep
PORTALS:	Passageway to eternal journey
PINECONE:	Hospitality
PYRAMID:	Resurrection, eternal life, enlightenment, spiritual attainment
QUATREFOIL:	Composed of four equal lobes, like a four-petaled flower. Used for good luck, similar to the four-leaf clovers.
RAINBOW:	Union, fulfillment of the promise of resurrection
REVOLUTIONARY WAR	Loyalists were sympathetic to the British during the Revolutionary War. Many fled to Nova Scotia, Canada.
LOYALIST:	
RIPENED FRUIT:	Nourishment of the soul
ROD OR STAFF:	Comfort to the bereaved
RISING SUN:	Resurrection; life
ROCK:	Steadfastness of Christ; stability
ROOSTER:	Resurrection
ROPE CIRCLE:	Eternity
ROSE, FULL-BLOOM:	Prime of life
ROSES:	Condolence; sorrow; the brevity of earthly existence
ROSEBUD:	Normally a child 12 or under
ROSEBUD BROKEN:	Life cut short, young person's grave
ROSE, PARTIAL BLOOM:	Normally a teenager
ROSE, FULL BLOOM:	Normally in early/mid twenties
ROSEMARY:	Rosemary is for remembrance
ROSETTE:	The Lord, messianic hope, promise, love
SACRED HEART OF JESUS:	An image unique to Catholics. The heart represents the suffering of Jesus for our sins. Prayers to the sacred heart are said to be efficacious for the release of souls from Purgatory.
SAINTS:	The choice of the saint is up to the person who Commission the monument.
SCALES:	Weighing of justice for the judgment of the dead
SCALLOP SHELL:	Birth, baptism, resurrection, life everlasting, Pilgrimage of life
SCARAB:	Resurrection, transcendence
SCEPTER:	Fortitude

SCYTHE:	Death, cutting life short, the final harvest
SEASHELL:	Resurrection; life everlasting; life's pilgrimage
SETTING SUN:	Death
SEVERED BRANCH:	Mortality
SEXTON TOOLS:	Tools of the sexton, or cemetery keeper, represented As a spade & turf cutter with a triangular blade representing mortality.
SHAMROCK:	Irish descent, Holy Trinity
SHATTERED URN:	Old age
SHELL:	Pilgrimage; baptism of Christ; stability
SHEAVES OF WHEAT:	Time; the divine harvest, old age, fruitful life
SHEPHER'S CROOK:	Charity
SHIELD:	A shield may be a family crest, or may indicate a soldier's burial. Union Civil War soldiers typically had a shield.
SICKLE:	Death as the 'Last Harvest'
SHIP:	Generally used to mark a grave of one who led a seafaring life. Christians also use the symbol to represent passage to afterlife.
SHOES:	symbol of profession, such as a dancer
SHRINERS:	Philanthropic, Fraternal organization. All Shriners share a Masonic heritage. Each is a Master Mason in the Freemasonry fraternity.
SKELETON:	Death, life's brevity
SKULL:	Death, sin, transitory nature of earthly Life, penitence, mortality
SKULL & CROSSED BONES:	Death, crucifixion, mortality
SLEEPING CHERUB:	Innocence (usually on a child's grave)
SMOKE:	Vanity, futility of seeking earthly glory
SNAIL:	Laziness, sin
SNAKE WITH TAIL IN MOUTH:	Everlasting life
SNAKE COILED:	Sin
SNAKE ENCIRCLED:	Everlasting life in heaven. (Also called oroboros)
SPADE:	Mortality, death
SPIRAL:	The single spiral symbolizes the concept of growth, Expansion & cosmic energy depending on the culture. It represented the sun in ancient Ireland. Egyptian male modeled after the Great Sphinx at Giza & the female Greek Sphinx, guard the tomb.
SPHINX:	
SPIDER WEB:	Human frailty
SQUARE:	It represents the earth and earthly existence.
SQUIRREL WITH A NUT:	Religious meditation or spiritual striving
STAG:	A stag on a Coat of Arms represents Policy, Peace & Harmony.
STAR:	Divine guidance, Recognized as the international Symbol of Judaism.

STAR, SIX POINTED:	The God
STAR OF DAVID:	Unity, transformation
STARS & STRIPES	Eternal vigilance and liberty. Often
AROUND EAGLE:	seen on military markers
STEPS, 3 TIERED:	Faith, Hope and Charity
STONES SHAPED LIKE	Usually signify that the deceased was a
STUMPS:	member of the Woodmen of the World
STORY STONES:	Tells a story & are sometimes a pictorial
	representation of how the deceased died.
SWALLOW:	Motherhood
SUN DISC, WINGED:	Spirituality, everlasting life
SUNFLOWER:	The sunflower with its practice of following the sun
	with its face symbolized the adoration of Christ,
	Symbolized as the sun.
SUN RISING:	Renewed life, resurrection
SUN SETTING:	Death
SUN SHINING:	Life everlasting
SWALLOW:	Motherhood, spirit of children, consolation
SWORD:	Military
SWORD, BROKEN:	Life cut short
SWORDS CROSSED:	Life lost in battle
SWORD, INVERTED:	Relinquishment of power, victory
SWORD, SHEATHED:	Temperance
TABLETS OF THE	Containing the test from Exodus and Deuteronomy
DECALOGUE:	given to Moses on Mount Sinai as a symbol of the
	Old Covenant.
TETRAGRAMMATON:	Four Hebrew letters Y, H, W, H spelling the true
	Name of God, reminder of God's omnipresence
THISTLE:	Scottish descent, earthly sorrow, defiance,
	remembrance
TORCH:	Immortality, purification, truth, wisdom
TORCH, INVERTED:	Life extinguished
TOYS:	The loss of a child
TRAIN:	typically represents the occupation of the deceased
TREE:	Faith; life; The Tree of Life, knowledge, the fall of
	man through sin, human fruition or frailty
TREE SPROUTING:	Life everlasting
TREE STUMP:	Life interrupted
TREE TRUNK:	Premature death, brevity of life, number of broken
	Branches can indicated deceased family members
	Buried at that site.
TREE TRUNK LEANING:	Short interrupted life, mourning
TREFOIL:	Three equal circles joined generally represent the
	Trinity.
TRIANGLE:	Holy Trinity
TRIQUETA (3 INTERLOCKING	Eternity, Trinity, popular motif on

CIRCLES OR TRIANGLES)	Celtic crosses
TRUMPET:	Announcement of the resurrection or the soul's Entrance into heaven
URN:	Represents immortality, penitence, death of the Body and its return to dust in the final resting place
URN, DRAPED:	Deep mourning
URN WITH FLAME:	Undying remembrance
VIOLET:	Humility
WHEEL:	Cycle of life, enlightenment, spiritual power
WEEPING WILLOW:	Mourning, grief, lamentation, sorrow
WHEAT SHEAVES:	The divine harvest
WILLOW:	Weeping; grief; earthly sorrow; mourning or natural grief
WINGED FACE:	Effigy of the deceased soul, the soul in flight
WINGED HOURGLASS:	Fleetsness of life, mortality
WINGED SKULL:	Flight of the soul from mortal man
WREATH:	Victory in death; eternity
WHEATH OF ROSES:	Heavenly joy and bliss
WREATH ON SKULL:	Victory of death over life
YEW TREE:	sadness, eternal life
YIN YANG CIRCLE:	Harmony, balance, birth and death

INITIALS OF FRANTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS:

AOH	Ancient Order of Hibernians
BPOE	Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks
CAR	Children of the American Revolution
DAR	Daughters of the American Revolution
FOE	Fraternal Order of Eagles
FOP	Fraternal Order of Police
F&AM	Free and Accepted Masons

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 F&AM- Free and Accepted Masons
 GAR- Grand Army of the Republic
 I.O.R.M.- Improved Order of Red Men
 IOF- Independant Order of Foresters

IOOF- Independant Order of Odd Fellows
IOJD- International Order of Job's Daughters
J.O.A.M.- Junior Order of American Mechanics
J.O.U.A.M.- Junior Order of United American Mechanics
K.of C.- Knights of Columbus
K.of P.- Knights of Pythias
KT- Knights Templar
LOM- Loyal Order of Moose
M.W.A. Modern Woodmen of America
N.O.W. Neighbors of Woodcraft
RA- Royal Academy
RA- Royal Arcanum
R.A.M.- Royal Arch Masons
*R.N.A. Royal Neighbors of America
SAR- Sons of the American Revolution
S.F.W.C. Supreme Forest Woodmen Circle
U.S.A.- United States Army
U.S.A.F.- United States Air Force
U.S.M.C.- United States Marine Corp
U.S.N.- United States Navy
YMCA- Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA- Young Women's Christian Association
W.C. Woodmen Circle
W.O.W. Woodmen of the World
W.O.W. Women of Woodcraft

FRATERNAL ACRONYMS:

AAONMS Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (Masonic) "The Shriners")
AASR Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (Masonic)
ABA American Benefit Association
AF&AM Ancient Free and Accepted Masons
AMD Allied Masonic Degree
AMORC Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis(Rosicrucians)
AMOS Ancient Mystic Order of Samaritans (see IOOF)
AOF Ancient Order Of Foresters
AOH Ancient Order Of Hibernians
AOKMC Ancient Order Of Knights of Mystic Chain
AOUW Ancient Order Of United Workmen
ALOH American Legion of Honor
APA American Protective Association
AUM Ancient Order of Mysteries (MASONS)
AUSA Association of the United States Army
AUV Association of Union Veterans
BARE Benefit Association Of Railway Employees

BAY Brotherhood of American Yeomen
BKA Benevolent Knights Association
BKofM Black Knights of Molders
BPOE Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks
BPOEW Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World
BofRTM Brotherhood of Rail Road Track Men
BLE Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers
BLF&E Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Engineers
BRT Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen
CBL Catholic Benevolent Legion
CD of A Catholic Daughters of America
CKofA Catholic Knights of America
CMBA Catholic Mutual Benefit Association
COOF Catholic Order of Foresters
CTAS Catholic Total Abstinence Society
CBKA Commandery Benevolent Knights Association
CCTAS Crusaders-Catholic Total Abstinence Society
DAC Daughters of the American Colonists
DAR (NSDAR) National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
DAV Disabled American Veterans
D of A Daughters of America
DoL Daughters of Liberty
DAN Daughters of the Nile (Masonic)
DOKK Dramatic Order Knights of Khorassan (Knights of Pythias)
DOLLUS Dames of the Loyal Legion of the United States
DUV Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War
ECV E Clampus Vitus
EAU Equitable Aid Union
EBA Emerald Beneficial Association
FAM Free and Accepted Masons
F&AM Free and Accepted Masons
FCB Knights of Pythias
FLT Independent Order of Odd Fellows
FOE Fraternal Order of Eagles
FOAST Fraternal Order of Alaska State Troopers
FOF Fraternal Order of Firefighters
FOP Fraternal Order of Police
GALSTPTR German American Legion of St. Peter
GAR Grand Army of the Republic
GLAUM Grand Lodge Ancient Order of Mysteries- Masonic Order
GLDS Grand Lodge Daughters of Scotia
GUOOF Grand United Order of Odd Fellows
HZ Haro Zaro
IBBH International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and Helpers
ICBU Irish Catholic Benevolent Union
IHSV Red Cross of Constantine

IOA International Order of Alhambra
IODE Independent Order, Daughters of the Empire
IOGT International Order of Good Templars
IOH Improved Order of Heptasophs
IOHH International Order of Hoo-Hoo
IOI Independent Order of Immaculates
IOKP Independent Order of Knights of Pythias
IOOF Independent Order of Odd Fellows
IOOF-PM Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Past Master
ISH Independent Sons of Honor
IOStL Independent Order of St. Luke
IOF Independent Order of Foresters
IORM Improved Order of Redmen (Sons of Liberty)
IOR Independent Order of Rechabites
IOV International Order of Vikings
IUOM Independent United Order of Mechanics
IWW Industrial Workers of the World
IOF Independent Order of Foresters
IOOF Independent Order of Odd Fellows
IOJD Independent Order of Job's Daughters
IORG International Order of Rainbow Girls (Masonic)
ISDA Italian Sons and Daughters of America
JOAM Junior Order of American Mechanics
JOUAM Junior Order of United American Mechanics
JAOUW Junior Order-Ancient Order of United Workmen
JOUAM Junior Order-Order of United American Mechanics
KC Knights of Columbus
KGC Knights of the Golden Chain
KGC Knights of the Golden Circle
KGE Knights of the Golden Eagle
KGL Knight Grand Legion
KLH Knights and Ladies of Honor
KM Knights Militant (See KKK)
KofC Knights of Columbus
KofFM Knights of Father Matthew
KFM Knights of Father Matthew
KofH Knights of Honor
KOL Knights of Labor
KofL Knights of Loyola
KM Knights of Malta (Masonic)
KMC Knights of the Mystic Chain
KOTM Knights of the Macabees
KPC Knights of Peter Claver
KofTM Knights of the Macabees
KP Knights of Pythias
KofP Knights of Pythias

KSC Knights of St. Columbkille
KG Knights of St. George
KSTG Knights of St. George
KSTI Knights of St. Ignatius
KofSJ Knights of St. John
KSTJ Knights of St. Joseph
KSL Knights of St. Lawrence
KSTM Knights of St. Martin
KofSTP Knights of St. Patrick
KSTP Knights of St. Paul
KSTP Knights of St. Peter
KSTT Knights of St. Thomas
KofSTW Knights of St. Wenceslas
KT Knights of Tabor
KofT Knights of Tabor
KT Knights Templars (Masonic)
KWM Knights of Wise Men
KGE Knights of Golden Eagle
KHC Knights of Holy Cross
KKK Knights of Klu-Klux Klan
KOTM Knights of Macabees
KSF Knights of Sherwood Forest
LAOH Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians
LDG Independent Order of Foresters
LGAR Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic
LKofA Loyal Knights of America
LOL Loyal Order Orange Lodge (The Orange Order){Orange Men}
LOM Legion of the MOOSE
LOOM Loyal Order of the MOOSE
LOVUS Legion of Valor of the United States
MBS Mutual Benefit Society
MOLLUS Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States
MOOSE Loyal Order of the Moose
MOPH Military Order of the Purple Heart
MOVPER Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets of the Mystic Realm (Grotto) (Masonic)
MRA Royal Arcanum
MCL Marine Corps League
MWA Modern Woodmen of America
NCOA Non-Commissioned Officers Association (Military Society)
NEOP New England Order of Protection
NOK New Order Knights (see KKK)
NL Navy League
NSDAR National Society Daughters of American Revolution
NSSUP National Society Sons of Utah Pioneers
NU National Union
OofA Order of Amaranth (Masonic)

OCF Order of Chosen Friends
OofUF Order of United Friends
OGC Order of the Golden Cross
ODHS Des Schwestern Verbandes (Sisters of the Federation)
OES Order of the Eastern Star
OSC Order of Scottish Clans (St. Andrew's Societies)
OUAM Order of United American Mechanics
PFofA Patriotic Friends of America
PH The Order of Patrons of Husbandry (The Grange)
PM Patriarchs Militant (Independent Order of Odd Fellows)
POSA Patriotic Order of the Sons of America
RA Royal Academy
RA Royal Arcanum
RAM Royal Arch Masons
RC Republican Club
RMOKHSJ The Religious and Military Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem
RSGF Royal Society of Good Fellows
RSM Royal and Select Masons
ROJ Royal Order of Jesters (Masonic)
RSTV Rite of St. Vaclara
RSTV Rite of St. Vita
RK Roman Knights
RTT Royal Templars of Temperance
SAR Sisters of the American Revolution
SAR Sons of the American Revolution
SBCL Saint Bonifazius Catholic Union
SBL Society B. Lafayette
SCV Sons of the Confederate Veterans
SofE Sons of England
SMAA Scandinavian Mutual Aid Association
SNA-AUM Shrine of North America
SR Scottish Rite (Masonic Order)
SofSt.G Sons of St. George
ST Sons of Temperance
ST.G SoNY St. George's Society of New York
SUVCW Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
SV Sons of Veterans of the United States of America
TCL Tall Ceders of Lebanon (Masonic)
TH Temple of Honor and Temperance
Templars of Honor and Temperance is a fraternal order based on Christian values and practicing complete abstinence from alcoholic drinks. Its purpose is to instill high morals and ideals in its members.
<http://www.tempelriddareorden.org>
TPLF Temple of Honor and Temperance
TROA The Retired Officer's Association
UAOD United Ancient Order of Druids
UCV United Confederate Veterans

UDC United Daughters of the Confederacy
UFL Union Fraternal League
UFM United Friends of Michigan
UOPF United Order of Pilgrim Fathers
VFW Veterans of Foreign Wars
WKSC White Knights of the Southern Cross (See KKK)
WOW Woodmen of the World
YMCA Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA Young Women's Christian Association

Initials after ancestors' names may provide useful information. The following list includes initials you may come across when reading old wills or other documents.

a.a.s. died in the year of his/her age (anno aetatis suae) (86 y/o died in year 86)
d.s.p. died without issue (decessit sine prole legitima)
d.s.p.l. died without legitimate issue (decessit sine prole mascula supersita)
d.s.p.m.s. died without surviving male issue (decessit sine prole mascula supersita)
d.s.p.s. died without surviving issue (decessit sine prole supersita)
d.unm. died unmarried
d.v.p. died in the lifetime of his father (decessit vita patris)
d.v.m. died in the lifetime of his mother (decessit vita matris)
Et al. and others (et alia)
Inst. present month (instans)
Liber book or volume
Nepos grandson
Nunc Nuncupative will, an oral will, written by a witness
Ob. he/she died (obit)
Rel. or Relict widow or widower (relicta/relictus)
Res. or Residue widow or widower
Sic so or thus, exact copy as written
Testes witnesses
Ult. late (ultimo)
Ux. or vs. wife (uxor)
Viz. namely (videlicet)

<http://www.ajlambert.com>