

## Stories in Stone II

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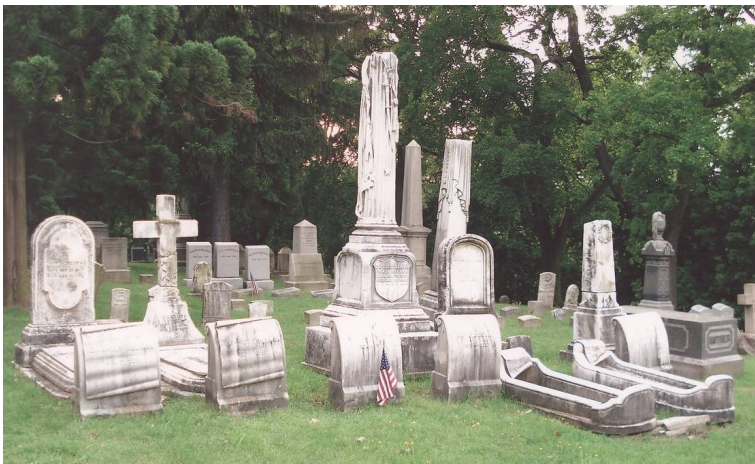


Nowhere is the language of symbols more apparent than in cemeteries, which are virtual encyclopedias of symbolism. As the old saying goes... "Dead Men Tell No Tales, but Their Tombstones Do".

**Donaldson Plot—1872:** Like an army of soldiers guarding the entrance into the Barber Cemetery, the Donaldson plot, consists of two rows of markers with a monument in the center. The grave markers denote burials in the late 1800s. "Mourning and Everlasting Life." The center monument gracefully reflects the Victorian attitude toward death, and is richly symbolic. The Corinthian column is decorated with ivy winding all around it. It sits on a rock base with a broken urn lying on its side. The ivy symbolizes immortality and fidelity. It is eternally green, even in the harshest of conditions. Its three pointed leaves represent the Trinity. The ivy clings to its strong support...the broken column. The column symbolizes attachment, friendship and undying affection. The overturned urn represents the finality of life as



well as its fragility. The reverential urn holds the essence of a person's soul. Acanthus leaves adorns the top of the column. Their use derives from the fact that the leaves are thorny, and symbolize the prickly journey of life to death and then the final triumph of eternal life.



### Silliman Plot—Late 1800s

The Silliman plot is located in the oldest part of the cemetery. The plot displays over 10 different types of grave makers with Capt. Jas. Silliman (1833–1865) veteran's monument rising above the others. "Resting place of Heroes and Ministering Angels to the Afflicted." the Silliman family plot is the final resting place for the Silliman sisters, who served as volunteers to help Schuylkill County soldiers during the Civil War. It is also the final resting place of Captain James Silliman, who died during the Civil War. Ponder Capt. Silliman's tall monument/obelisk: The obelisk is draped with a sword very near the drape. These symbols represent a soldier who has gallantly given his all for the sacred cause of country. The column represents a ray of sunlight, and its drape epitomizes the sunlight fading from life. Two monuments are of the sarcophagus type, appearing as beds. This style exemplifies a container for the body, but is unlike a coffin or casket and is designed to last for eternity. It is really a piece of sculpture. The body rests beneath these types on monuments. Notice the large cross. This symbol is closely associated with the Christian religion. Sadly, several years ago, vandals destroyed the column and the cross beyond repair.

