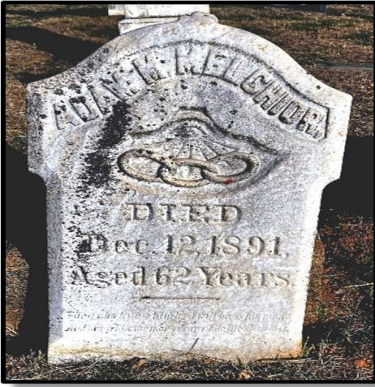




Headstone Symbols: Odd Fellows

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows, IOOF, is a fraternal and service organization, one of four founding fraternal orders in the "union" that formed Placerville Union Cemetery in 1871. Union Cemetery is located at 650 Bee Street in Placerville, CA.

The IOOF Morningstar Lodge remains active in Placerville and meets regularly in their historic downtown digs adjacent to the courthouse. The lodge is famously equipped with a remarkable old spring-loaded dance floor.

Historically, Odd Fellows often memorialized their fraternal membership on their tombstones with one or more symbols representing the principles espoused by Odd Fellowship. Many are on display here. The most common is the familiar three links, often paired with the letters, F L T, signifying Friendship, Love, and Truth.

Other familiar Odd Fellows' symbols, including the "all seeing eye" and the "heart-in-hand," have crossed over into popular art and culture.

Union Cemetery's oldest and most interesting headstones are located in the historic Odd Fellows Section 29. Many are visible from the walkway. There you'll find Archie Bosquit, a member of a branch of Odd Fellows known as The Encampment, which emphasizes the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Its primary symbol is a tent with two crossed shepherd's hooks. The hooks are a reminder of the nomadic Israelites who watched over flocks of sheep to make sure they were safe. The tent symbolizes the transitory nature of life, as evidenced by the sentiment that *"we abide here, as we are on a pilgrimage to the grave."*

Fraternalists often have many "degrees" to which members may aspire. Encampment membership is limited to third degree Odd Fellows, and includes its own degrees, each with requirements, rituals and specific virtues.

The Rebekahs are a female counterpart to Odd Fellowship. Symbols include beehives, doves, lilies, the moon and 7 stars. There's also a Ladies Encampment Auxiliary with its own tent symbol.



Oddfellows Ladies Encampment
Auxiliary Symbol

Interpretation by Mike Roberts, 2023

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Category

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