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Richard E. Meyer Collection

1948-2007 (*Bulk:* 1982-2007)

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A member of the English and Folklore faculty at Western Oregon University, Richard E. Meyer studied at Northwestern University and the Universities of Washington and Oregon. A prolific author, he has published on topics ranging from British and American literature to American folklore, but particularly on the culture and history of the American cemetery and gravemarkers. A founder of the Cemeteries and Gravemarkers section of the American Culture Association (1986) and longtime member of the Association for Gravestone Studies, serving as editor of its journal, *Markers*, for twelve years, Meyer has delivered dozens of talks on the

subject, is co-author (with Peggy McDowell) of *The Revival Styles in American Memorial Art* (1994), and editor of *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture* (1989) and *Ethnicity and the American Cemetery* (1993).

During the course of his extensive research in cemeteries throughout the United States and Europe, Meyer documented over 20,000 grave monuments. His collection consists of over 16,000 color slides and 200 black and white photographs, all meticulously well-identified, of gravestones and cemeteries. Meyer also collected ephemera and realia relating to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and to commemoration of the dead of the First World War.

See similar SCUA collections:

Gravestones

Photographs

Background

Richard E. Meyer was born September 20, 1939 in Chicago, Illinois. He graduated summa cum laude from Northwestern University before completing his graduate work in English literature and folklore at both the University of Washington and the University of Oregon, with some additional studies at the Folklore Institute in at Indiana University and at UMass Boston. He is Professor Emeritus of English and Folklore at Western Oregon University, where he taught for about 28 years. His published works include several papers and articles on British and American literary figures, American outlaw ballads and legends, gravemarkers of loggers and pioneers of the Pacific Northwest as well as other cultural aspects of different funerary customs. Meyer has also edited two books, and co-authored one, with similar themes. As one of the leading experts in gravestone studies he has been interviewed for local newspapers as well as appearing in *The New York Times*, on National Public Radio and The History Channel.

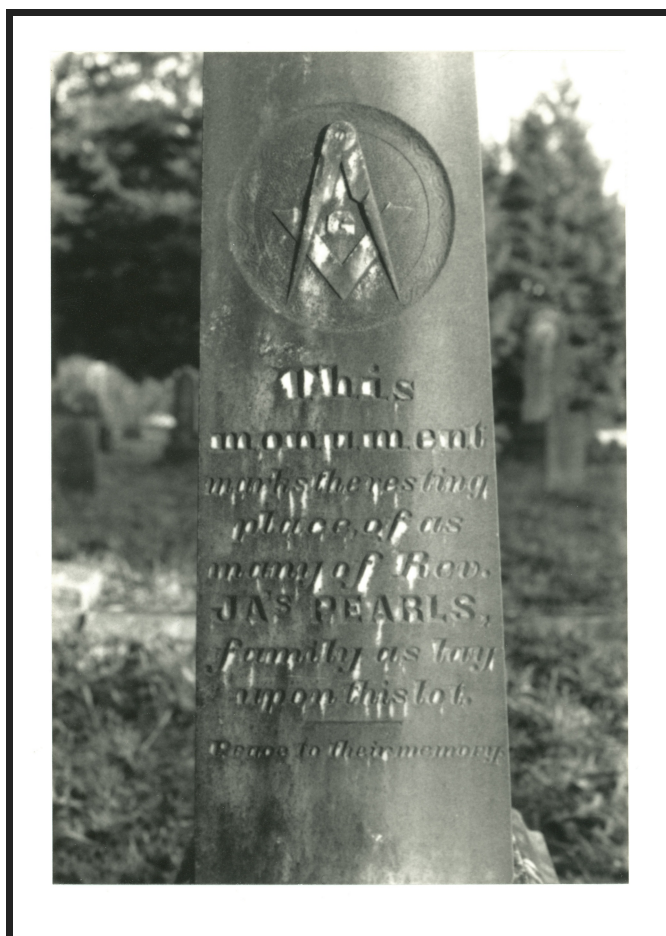
Meyer has been studying the cultural traditions of cemeteries, gravestones, and honoring the dead since the early 1980s. He was the founding member of the Cemeteries and Gravemarkers permanent section of the American Culture Association, serving as chair for ten years. A long time member of the Association of Gravestone Studies, he edited the organization's annual journal *Markers* for 11 years and, in 1998, won the Harriet M. Forbes award for excellence in gravestones studies. Meyer also served as a consultant on historic graveyards for multiple state and federal government agencies.

Meyer travelled throughout the United States and internationally, photographing and documenting different national, ethnic, and cultural funerary customs. He used his fieldwork to write and lecture about the differences in imagery and language used between cultures, religions, eras, and even the role war plays in how soldiers are remembered. In particular he has reserched two cultural traditions started during World War I: remembrance poppies and The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

With all his study of gravemarkers it is not surprising, then, that Meyer already has decided the epitaph he wants for his own gravemarker, quoting Mercutio from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, "Look for me tomorrow and you will find me a grave man."

Scope of collection

This collection contains the research material created and collected by Richard E. Meyer, as well as memorabilia related to two cultural movements from World War I: remembrance poppies and the poem "In Flanders Fields," and Tombs of Unknown Soldiers, chieily the site in Arlington, Virginia. The bulk of the collection consists of color slides and reference cards documenting gravemarkers throughout the United States and other countries, primarily in Oregon. Other research material includes field notebooks, black and white photographs of headstones, background information on local stone carvers, and records from



Monument for Rev. Pearls.

cemeteries in Oregon. Published material includes conference papers, books, reviews, public lectures and interviews in print and recorded on VHS and cassette. Memorabilia consists of a wide variety of items from novels, magazines, articles and comic books to commemorative plates, pins, photographic material and stuffed animals.

Series descriptions

Series 1. Gravemarker Studies

1982-1990s

Consists of research on gravemarkers. Included are photographs, negatives and slides; their corresponding reference cards and notes, records from several different cemeteries in Oregon, organized by county, and research on related topics such as grave robbing, vandalism and grave stone carvers in Oregon.

Series 2. Professional Works

1983-2007

Contains works written and edited by Meyer, including papers, lectures, books and reviews. Also included are five video, one audio, and several print interviews with him.

Series 3. Memorabilia

1948-2000s

Includes memorabilia relating to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington, VA, and some from other countries, and relating to remembrance poppies and the poem "In Flanders Fields".

Inventory

Series 1. Gravemarker Studies

Photographs: Gates/Signs

1980s

Box 1

Photographs: Long Shots

1980s

Box 1

Photographs: Photographs: Husband/Wife

1980s

Box 1

Photographs: Cause of Death

1980s

Box 1

Photographs: Children (Includes Mult-C and Mother-C)

1980s

Box 1

Photographs: Ethnic

1980s

Box 1

Photographs: Pioneer

1980s

Box 1

Photographs: Signed (i.e. not included elsewhere)

1980s

Box 1

Photographs: Vandalism/Neglect

1980s

Box 1

Photographs: Symbols (Full Stone)

1980s

Box 1

Photographs: Symbols (Close Up)

1980s

Box 1

Negatives

1980s

Box 1

Negatives for black and white photos

Carver Book

1980s

Box 1

Notebook of headstones by different carvers.

Carvers/Marble Dealers

Box 1

Dept. of Trans. Study

Box 1

Grave Robbers

Box 1

Misc.

Box 1

Misc. from pio memoirs, biogs, etc.

Box 1

Pet cems (including Presidio)

Box 1

OR revised statutes/cems

Box 1

Vandalism, etc.

Box 1

Oregon Cemetery Records

Box 28

Also includes news clippings and records from a few cemeteries in Washington state.

Reference Cards

1984-1985

Box 2

Reference cards for slides 33-84 to 4-85.

Reference Cards

1985-1988

Box 3

Reference cards for slides 5-85 to 3-88.

Reference Cards

1988-1991

Box 4

Reference cards for slides 4-88 to 37-91.

Reference Cards

1991-1995

Box 5

Reference cards for slides 38-91 to 1-95.

Reference Cards

Box 6

Reference cards for X-series slides and slides of gravestones in other countries.

Color Slides

1982-1984

Box 7

1000 color slides, numbered 1-82-1 to 15-84-32; slide description cards, numbered 1-82-1 to 2-83-20. Also contains cemetery cards with names of cemeteries in Oregon and years visited, organized by county, Baker through Linn.

Color Slides

1983-1984

Box 8

1000 color slides, numbered 16-84-1 to 45-84-7; slide description cards, numbered 3-83-1 to 5-84-24. Also includes cemetery cards with names of cemeteries in Oregon and years visited, organized by county, Malheur through Yamhill; Northwest cemeteries, by state, Alaska to Washington, through Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Seattle.

Color Slides

1984

Box 9

1000 color slides, numbered 45-84-8 to 74-84-22; slide description cards, numbered 5-84-25 to 14-84-37. Also includes cemetery cards with names of cemeteries in the Northwest and years visited, organized by state, Washington (Mt. View Cemetery, Connell, WA) through Wyoming; Southwest cemeteries, by state; South cemeteries, by state, Arkansas through Florida.

Color Slides

1984-1985

Box 10

1000 color slides, numbered 1-85-1 to 23-84-7; slide description cards, numbered 15-84-1 to 23-84-7. Also includes cemetery cards with names of cemeteries in the South and years visited, organized by state, Georgia through Virginia; Midwest cemeteries, by state, Illinois through Wisconsin; East cemeteries, by state, Delaware through Pennsylvania; New England cemeteries, by state, Connecticut to Massachusetts (Pine Grove Cemetery, Templeton, MA).

Color Slides

1984-1987

Box 11

1000 color slides, numbered 34-85-14 to 26-87-8; slide description cards, numbered 24-84-1 to 32-84-37. Also includes cemetery cards with names of New England cemeteries and years visited, organized by state, Massachusetts (Pine Hill Cemetery, Westfield, MA) through Woodside Cemetery, Westminster, MA) through Vermont; also three Washington, D.C. cemeteries.

Color Slides

1984-1988

Box 12

About 1000 color slides, numbered 4-87-31 to 21-87-38 and 26-87-19 to 11-88-26; slide description cards, numbered 43-84-1 to 52-84-18.

Color Slides

1985-1990

Box 13

About 1000 color slides, numbered 11-88-27 to 1-90-36; slide description cards, numbered 22-85-1 to 34-85-20.

Color Slides

1985-1991

Box 14

About 1000 color slides, numbered 2-90-1 to 17-91-6; slide description cards, numbered 34-85-21 to 7-86-36.

Color Slides

1986-1992

Box 15

About 1000 color slides, numbered 17-91-7 to 6-92-22; slide description cards, numbered 8-86-1 to 3-87-36.

Color Slides

1989-1993

Box 16

About 1000 color slides, numbered 6-92-23 to 4-93-22; slide description cards, numbered 3-89-1 to 14-89-10.

Color Slides

1989-1994

Box 17

About 1000 color slides, numbered 4-93-23 to 19-94-30; slide description cards, numbered 14-89-11 to 2-91-36.

Color Slides

1991-1995

Box 18

About 1000 color slides, numbered 19-94-31 to 16-95-21; slide description cards, numbered 3-91-1 to 14-91-36.

Color Slides

1992-1996

Box 19

About 1000 color slides, numbered 16-95-22 to 9-96-17; slide description cards, numbered 25-92-1 to 7-93-15.

Color Slides

1993-1997

Box 20

About 1000 color slides, numbered 9-96-18 to 17-97-8; slide description cards, numbered 7-93-16 to 7-94-36.

Color Slides

1994-1999

Box 21

About 1000 color slides, numbered 17-97-9 to 5-99-12; slide description cards, numbered 8-94-1 to 19-94-36.

Color Slides

1999-2004

Box 22

About 1000 color slides, numbered 5-99-13 to 1-04-3. Also included are reference cards organized by category.

Color Slides

2004-2007

Box 23

About 1000 color slides, numbered 1-04-5 to 1-07-34, and X-series slides numbered X-1 to X398. Also included are reference cards for master carvers and idea cards.

Color Slides

Box 24

About 1000 X-series color slides, numbered X-399 to X1197 (end of the series).

Series 2. Professional Works

1983-2007

1983-2007

Box 25

Box contains five VHS tapes, one cassette tape, and several print interviews with Meyer, three books written or edited by him, awards speeches, calls for papers, and other written works relating to gravestone studies, including academic conference papers.

Academic Conference Papers

1983-1985

Box 25: 1
Academic Conference Papers
1985-1987
Box 25: 2
Academic Conference Papers
1988-1990
Box 25: 3
Academic Conference Papers
1990-1994
Box 25: 4
Academic Conference Papers
1995-1999
Box 25: 5
Academic Conference Papers
2000-2003
Box 25: 6
Academic Conference Papers
2004-2007
Box 25: 7
Public Lectures
1983-1997
Box 25: 8
Published Articles
1990-2006
Box 25: 9
Series 3. Memorabilia
Commemorative Material

Box 26
Material relating to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier including videos, music, plates, coins, dolls and other realia.
Commemorative Material

Box 27
Material relating to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the poem "In Flanders Fields".
Commemorative Material

Box 29
Material related to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, remembrance poppies and "In Flanders Fields", and four packets of poppy seeds.
Commemorative Material

Box 30
Material relating to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.
Commemorative Material

Box 31
Material related to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, including stereoscopic pictures, postcards, photographs, pamphlets, and postal first day covers.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Richard E. Meyer, 2016.

Processing Information

Processed by Adrienne Zimmerley, 2016.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

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Search terms

Subjects

Material culture

Sepulchral monuments

Sepulchral monuments in literature

Sepulchral slabs

Soldiers' monuments

Tomb of the Unknowns (Va.)

Genres and formats

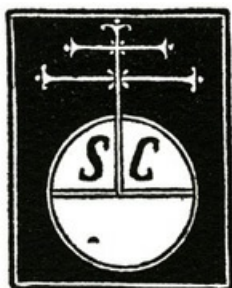
Color slides

Photographs

Link to similar SCUA collections

Gravestones

Photographs



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