

CEMETERIES

by Mike Harris

Hallowed Ground, Graveyards, Boot Hill, Potters Field, Stone Orchards, Memory Depositories, Memory Lockboxes, all the foregoing are what cemeteries are sometimes called or referred to.

Way back, long before human man filled the planet, several millennia ago, there were no cemeteries. The nearest thing to a cemetery was hallowed ground, a place spirits were supposed to be contained. Humans lived in a spiritual world which helped to explain the unexplainable. This world had its representatives and authorities, who maintained a higher status in the society that existed at that time.

Over the many years, the planet that was full of many creatures became dominated by the creature called man, mainly because he possessed a unique brain. The only creature on the planet able to grasp a thought and then implement it. It was this which over time allowed him to achieve and to this day, crowd out other creatures who have become extinct as man took over their habitat for his personal use.

First man was ill equipped to survive, lack of fur, fangs, and huge muscles, he was a poor predator in his environment. Survival depended on his ability to enhance his predatory skills. So perhaps his first was a club, and then a spear, perhaps a sling. I have not done a history of weapons for a five hundred word essay, also I have not done a sociological study of how man came to live in groups, families, tribes, and larger communities, but in numbers there is strength, and the human brain was and is capable of implementing thought and learning. We dominate our planet and are exploring space to further enhance our power.

But back to cemeteries, most of humankind have implemented societies and live on this planet which has become crowded. We have developed our thinking, but have changed little in our physical appearance, the body which houses the machinery that makes us what we are is fragile, and over time it wears out and is subject to disease. I would venture that two hundred years ago, the average of humankind at death would not exceed forty years and now we are knocking on the door of one hundred years. All these bodies that stopped working had to be disposed of and the progression from hallowed ground to cemeteries. Now we find that cemeteries are not economically satisfactory, and cremation is taking hold as a means of disposing of the human remains of the worn out machines as we die. Cremation seems to be the answer of the future and in time cemeteries will disappear.