
THE
BLACK ANGEL
MONUMENT

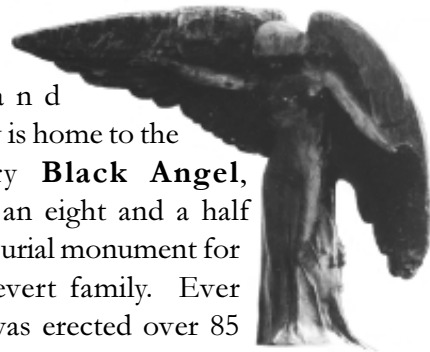


OAKLAND CEMETERY
1000 BROWN ST.
IOWA CITY, IA



I o w a
C i t y ' s
O a k l a n d

Cemetery is home to the legendary **Black Angel**, which is an eight and a half foot tall burial monument for the Feldevert family. Ever since it was erected over 85 years ago, the Black Angel has been the subject of many stories, myths, and legends surrounding its mysterious change in color from a golden bronze cast to an eerie black.



THE TRUE STORY

Teresa Dolezal Feldevert was born in 1836 in Strmilov, Bohemia where she became a practicing physician. Teresa and her son, Eddie Dolezal, moved to Iowa City where she worked as a midwife. Their stay in Iowa City lasted until 1891 when Eddie died of meningitis at age 18. He was then buried in the east half of Lot #4 in Block #9 of the Oakland Cemetery, and Teresa had a tree stump monument erected on his grave. Teresa then moved to Eugene, Oregon where she married Nicholas Feldevert, who died in 1911. Following her husband's death she returned to Iowa City and hired Mario Korbel, a Bohemian artist in Chicago, to design the \$5,000 monument to tower over the remains of her son and the ashes of her husband. The Angel arrived on a flatcar in Iowa City on November 21, 1912.

Over the years, the Angel has stirred up many stories, starting with the date it was actually erected. In accordance with oral history provided by many longtime Iowa City

residents, the Angel was installed upon its arrival in 1912. According to other publications, it was stored in a barn for six years and was not erected until 1918 following a court case brought against the artist by Teresa. She refused to pay the \$5,000 because it did not meet her specification to include a replica of her son's tree stump monument in the Angel monument, but she eventually lost the case.

Some time following the installation of the Angel, her son Eddie's monument was moved from its original location to its present site alongside the Angel, and his remains, along with the ashes of her late husband, Nicholas Feldevert, were buried in repositories under the Black Angel. Teresa died of cancer on November 18, 1924, and her ashes were also buried under the magnificent Black Angel Monument.

In spite of these historical facts, the legends surrounding the powers and mystique of the Black Angel continue to thrive in this modern age.

WHY DID THE ANGEL TURN BLACK?

The mysteriousness and superstitions have been a part of the Black Angel since it was placed in the cemetery. It is still visited by interested and curious people from all over, mostly due to the stories concerning its change in color from a golden bronze casting to black. These stories blame evil behavior, storms, infidelity, and even murder.

One version is that Teresa Feldevert was a very mysterious woman, and her evil caused the Angel to turn black, which would serve as a constant reminder of the sins in the family. Another story behind the color

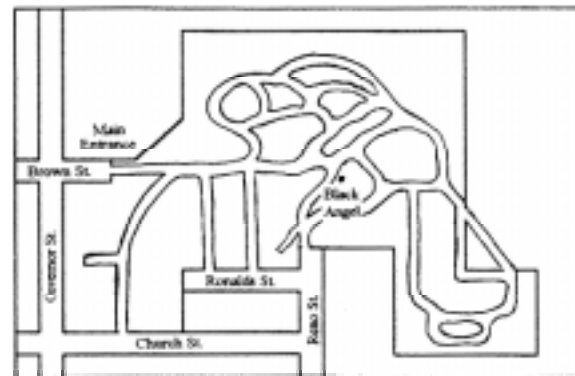
change is that there was a storm on the night following Teresa's burial and the Angel was said to have been struck by lightning.

There are also a few stories that blame the black color on infidelity. One tale is that a man erected the monument over his wife's grave, and because of her unfaithfulness to him during their marriage the Angel blackened to serve as a reminder of her sins. Another explanation is that the Angel turned black after a grieving woman buried her husband and vowed that the Angel would turn black if she was ever unfaithful to him.



One of the most bizarre explanations for the Angel's blackness is that a preacher's son is buried beneath the Angel, and it turned black because the preacher had murdered his son.

The strictly scientific explanation is that the blackness is caused by oxidation of the bronze resulting from its natural exposure to the elements.



The Black Angel and tree stump monuments are located on Lot #1 in Block #24.

MYTHS

- ❖ No University of Iowa coed is a true coed unless they have been kissed in front of the Black Angel.
- ❖ Any girl kissed near her in the moonlight will die within six months.
- ❖ If a girl who is innocent of men and the world is kissed in front of the Angel, the Angel will return to its original color, and the curse that turned it black will be lifted.
- ❖ Touching the Angel at midnight on Halloween means death within seven years.
- ❖ Anyone who kisses the Angel will die instantly.
- ❖ Every passing Halloween causes the Angel to turn one shade darker as a reminder of the people she has killed.

PECULIARITIES

- ❖ The monument has been the sight of many weddings in the past.
- ❖ The cement tree stump monument has no date inscribed, and there is no death date on the Black Angel monument for Teresa Feldevert.
- ❖ Neighbors of the cemetery could be found scraping the statue trying to figure out the reason for the blackness.
- ❖ Angels on graves are usually positioned with their heads and wings uplifted as a symbol of aiding in the ascent to heaven, but the Black Angel's face is looking down towards the ground and her wings are not uplifted.





INSCRIPTIONS & TRANSLATIONS

The inscriptions on the Black Angel and the “tree stump” are not easily discernable by most visitors to the cemetery. The inscription on the Black Angel monument is in an old dialect of Bohemian, and time and the elements have taken their toll on the tree stump’s scroll.

RODINA FELDEVERTOVA

“The Feldevert Family ”



The following inscription can be found on the south side of the base of the Black Angel monument:

***“PRO MNE SLUNCE MRAKY
KRYLY GEST BYLA TRNITA NEZ
UTEGHY UBIHALY DNOYE MEHO
ZIYOTA PRAGI SYOJI VYKONALAS
UDZY JEN K DOBRU SUET RUCE
SKLADAS HLAVA KLESA DUGH M
DALKY OKLETA KDE
POSTRASTEKGH TEBESTALA
OCEKAYN ODPLATA”***

This Bohemian inscription has been translated many times by University students and neighbors in nearby Goosetown. This is the most



recent translation:

*“The sun and clouds stood above my journey
There were tough and joyful days in my life.
You did my work just to make the world better.
You fold your hands and your head goes down.
Your spirit flies away where everlasting reward
Is waiting for you after hardship.”*

-Translated by Rostislav Hruby
from Vizovice, Czech Republic (6/2/00)

THE “TREE STUMP” MONUMENT

The inscription on Teresa’s son’s monument was written in English and reads:

*“Like a bud just opening
Commenced my life to be
But death came without mercy,
without pity
The Lord had sent for me
I was not granted time to bid adieu
Do not weep for me, dear mother.
I am at peace in my cool grave.”*





OAKLAND CEMETERY

Open 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.,
seven days a week

Cemetery office hours:
Monday - Friday, 8:00a.m.-4:30 p.m.

(319) 356-5105

Special Use permits are available at the office for all groups or special projects. Please make arrangements well in advance of need.

Look and enjoy, but please don't touch the monuments. Rubbings and tracings of monuments are not allowed due to the fragile nature of many of the stones.



Oakland Cemetery is located at 1000 Brown Street on the Northeast side of Iowa City.

designed by...

DS Document
Services

Text and research: Joyce Carroll & Allison Settles
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