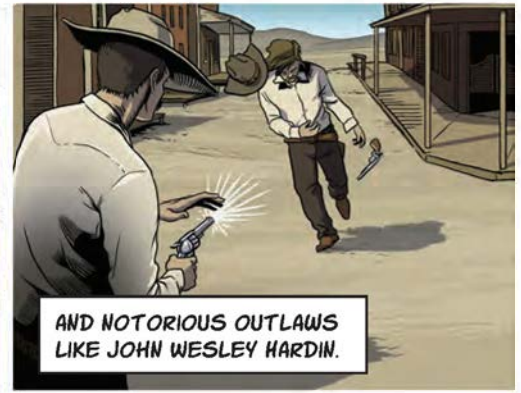
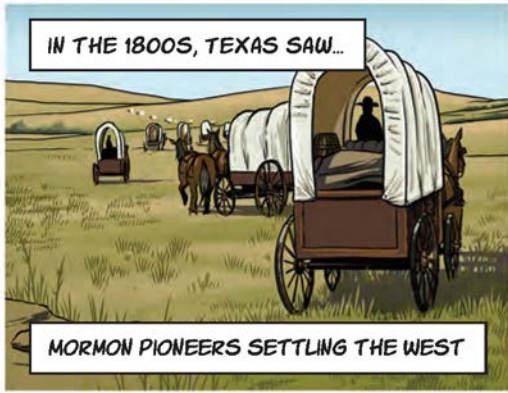
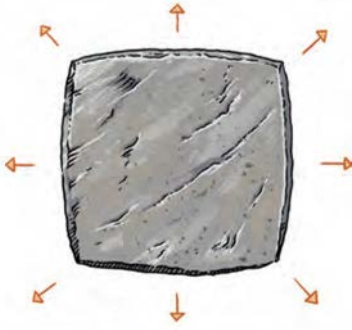


GRAVESTONES BITE THE DUST

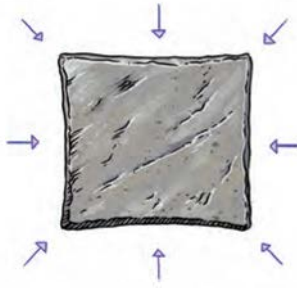
BY JOHNNA RIZZO AND MATTHEW TWOMBLY



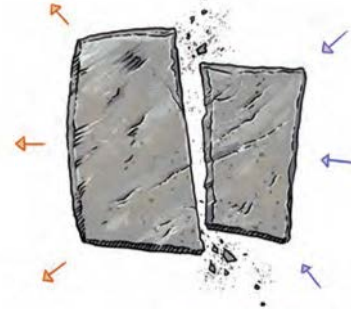
STONE, LIKE MOST MATERIAL, EXPANDS AS IT GETS HOT.



AND CONTRACTS AS IT GETS COLD.



AS HOT STONE IS SHOCKED WITH COLD WATER, EXPOSED AREAS CONTRACT QUICKLY, RESULTING IN CRACKS.



GRANITE, A COMMON MATERIAL FOR GRAVESTONES, IS ESPECIALLY GOOD AT HOLDING HEAT.

THESE STONES CAN REACH TEMPERATURES MORE THAN 40 DEGREES HIGHER THAN THE SURROUNDING AIR ON A SUNNY DAY. AND THE DARKER THE STONE, THE HOTTER IT GETS.

GROUNDS ARE WATERED ONCE A DAY, GENERALLY IN THE MIDAFTERNOON, WHEN THE SUN AND TEMPERATURES ARE AT THEIR PEAK.

TEMPERATURE IS NOT THE ONLY PROBLEM. THE WATER'S CHEMICAL COMPOSITION PLAYS A ROLE.

SOUTHWESTERN GROUNDWATER IS HIGH IN DISSOLVED MINERALS, SUCH AS IRON, WHICH CAN STAIN, AND CALCIUM, WHICH CAN LEAVE DEPOSITS.

AS THE WATER EVAPORATES, THESE MINERALS ARE LEFT BEHIND ON THE GRAVESTONE'S SURFACE, OVER TIME FORMING A SKIN.

AVOIDING THIS BUILDUP REQUIRES REGULAR, CAREFUL CLEANINGS, BUT THERE AREN'T ENOUGH VOLUNTEERS TO CLEAN EVERY HEADSTONE.

26
Fe
Iron

20
Ca
Calcium

12
Mg
Magnesium

14
Si
Silicon

16
S
Sulfur

WATERING IN THE EARLY MORNING WHILE GRAVES ARE STILL COOL CAN MINIMIZE MINERAL DEPOSITION AND PREVENT THERMAL SHOCK. EVEN BETTER, KEEPING TO NATIVE LANDSCAPING IS A SURE WAY TO PRESERVE THE PIECES OF AMERICA'S HISTORY AMONG THE HEADSTONES FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.