

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION STUDIO 1-FALL 2023

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Schlemmer Mausoleum: Documentation and Research

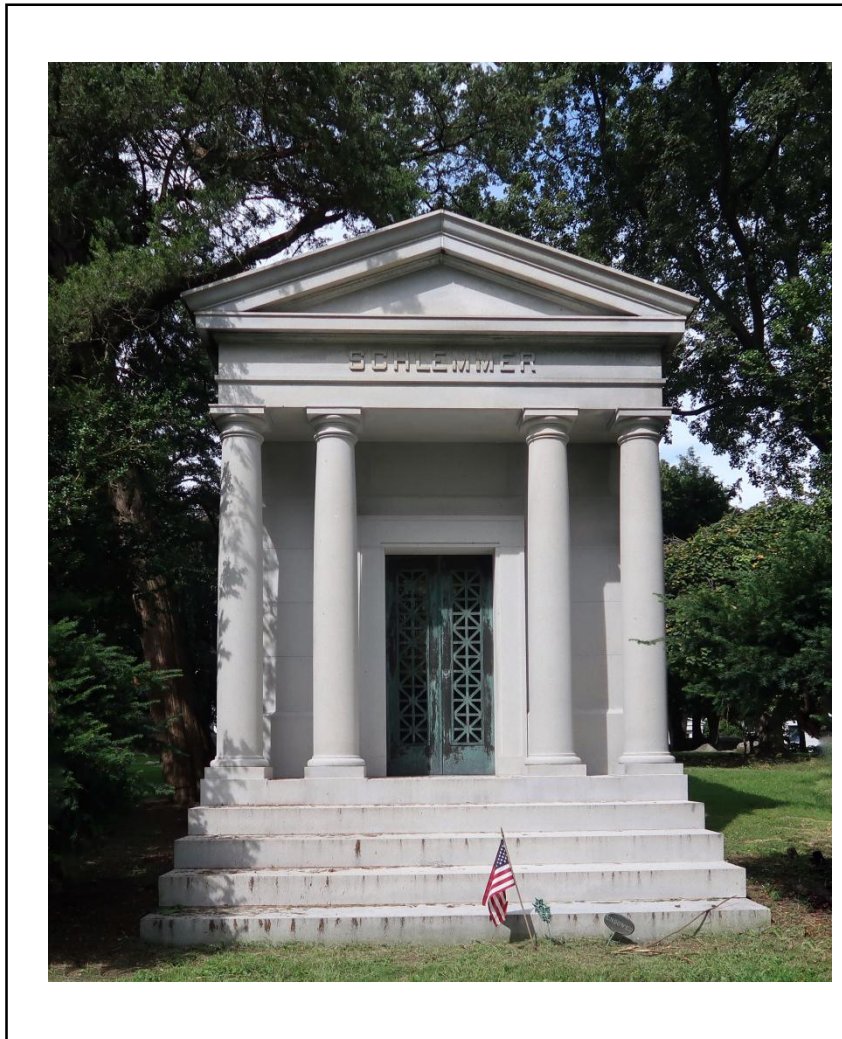


Figure 1: The appearance of the Mausoleum (Author, 2023)

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5th, OCT, 2023

ASSIGNMENT 4: Field Documentation and Research

Mausoleum Description

Nestled amidst the Woodlawn Cemetery in the New York City, the No. 456 mausoleum which belongs to the Schlemmers had stood here since 1916. The site was bought in 1912 by William Schlemmer and built by C.E. Tayntor Granite Company (Fig. 2).¹

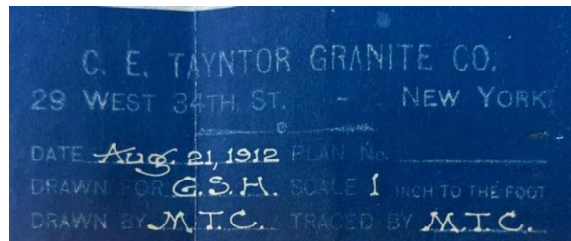


Figure 2: Remarks on the drawings

The mausoleum stands tall at a height of 18'-2" (14'-10" excluding stairs), stretching 20'-2" in length. Its exterior granite walls are impeccably preserved, which poses a challenge in identifying the composition of the interior walls - whether they are made of brick or not. However, *the specifications for the manufacture & composition* recorded by the builder clearly show that the granite was more than a veneer (Fig. 3).² The finest Hallowell granite, which is quarried from Kennebec, Maine. Numerous finest public monuments and mausoleum in the US were cut from Hallowell granite. It was light and fine grained, glittered like diamonds when been polished.³

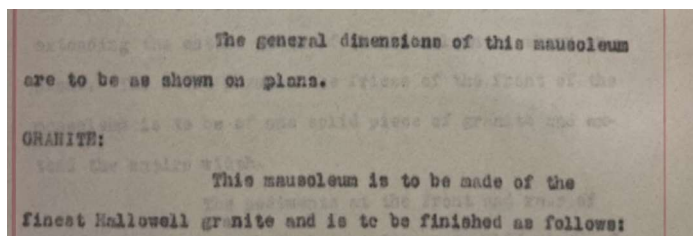


Figure 3: The specifications for the manufacture & composition

¹ C.E. Tayntor Granite Co.. 1912. *General Plan for William Schlemmer's Mausoleum*. New York, New York: Avery Library.

² C.E. Tayntor Granite Co.. 1912. *The specifications for the manufacture & composition for William Schlemmer's Mausoleum*. New York, New York: Avery Library.

³ Historic Hallowell - Solid Foundations - Hallowell Granite.

Upon approaching the front facade of the mausoleum, one sees four steps in front of the bronze door. Each surface of the steps shows no signs of joints (Fig. 4). Thus, each stair may be a complete piece of granite (four stairs means four pieces of granite in total). A similar situation exists for the platform step in front of the bronze door, and it is therefore presumed that the material was also cut directly from a single piece of granite, as confirmed by the floor plan created by the architect. There are four columns on the topmost step. These columns support the architrave of the entablature in front of the gate. The columns have no superfluous ornamentation and the tops of the columns consist of cubic or cylindrical architrave, frieze and cornice. The mausoleum is surmounted by a pediment composed of a single block of granite, found both in the front and back facade. Overlapping the top of the pediment are two rectangular stones which extend the full width of the mausoleum as roof.



Figure 4: Stairs of the mausoleum (Author, 2023)

Opening the bronze double doors and stepping inside, one sees that the left and right sides are each separated into five rectangular tombs vertically. Only two on the right-

hand side are empty. The stained glass in the windows presents a Greek or Rome style design. The edges of the window are surrounded by guilloche, with rosettes at the corners and midpoints, and the center motif is presumed to be a bay-leaf garland and laurel leaf. The whole motif symbolizes wisdom, and glory and eternal blessing (Fig. 5).⁴



Figure 5: The Stained Glass. (Author, 2023)

Interestingly, if one does not see the rust on the door, the biological growth on the steps, the white water erosion marks on the walls, and the white powder from wind erosion of the interior marble (one of the disadvantages of marble), it may be hard for a visitor to imagine that this is a building that is more than one hundred years old. It is

⁴ Hatice Yılmaz, Ünal Akkemik , and Karagöz Şehrazat. 2013. *Identification of Plant Images and Their Symbols on Stone Figures and Sarcophagi: Hellenistic and Roman Periods in the Middle Eastern Mediterranean Basin of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum*. *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeology* 13, No. 2.

not broken or bare on the exterior, and the color is not mottled (Fig. 6).



Figure 6: Building Corrosion (Author, 2023)

The Schlemmers

The grave honors a family of eight people including William Schlemmer,⁵ and main family members (Fig. 7). The sponsor of this mausoleum is William Schlemmer, who was born in 1841. He was an immigrant from the Westphalia region of Germany. In 1853, at the age of 12, William traveled to New York to join his uncle, Charles Tollner

⁵ Hammacher Schlemmer Company , 2023. ‘*The Hammacher Schlemmer History Timeline*’Hammacher Schlemmer official website. <https://www.hammacher.com/mc/history>

who owed a hardware store which is quite unique.⁶ The store was established to sell hard-to-find-tools (Fig. 8). From here, William started his illustrious life.

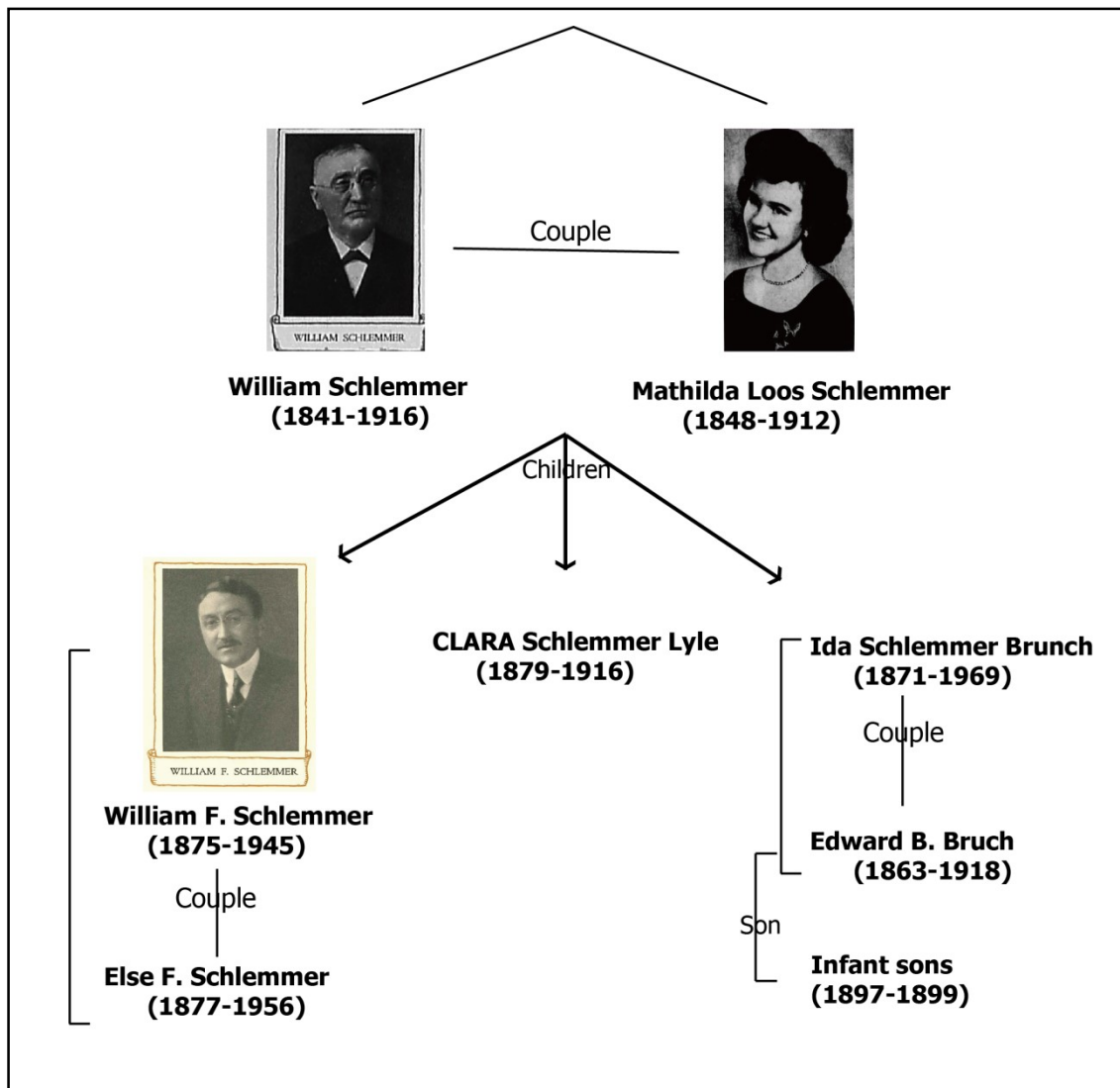


Figure 7: The Family tree of Schlemmers' (Author, 2023)

The entire life for William was tied directly to the hardware store. His career can be roughly divided into three phases, in terms of apprenticeship (1853-1867), shareholder (1867-1892) and sole owner (1892-1918). Due to a construction boom in 1857, the hardware business was in high demand. A friend of Toller named Albert

⁶ Trade Periodical Company. 1904. "Story of a Prosperous House". *The Furniture Journal* , Vol. 21, 36–37.

Hammacher invested \$5000 in business, then it called Hammacher & Tollner had moved to 209 Bowery st. in New York City from 221 Bowery (Fig. 8).⁷ In 1862, with the start of the American Civil War, Hammacher & Tollner began supplying hard-to-get tools and hardware to the Northern army. This decision laid the groundwork for the company's subsequent military-industrial partnerships with the government. After Toller' s passing in 1867, William bought out all of Toller's shares in the company. He was made a partner in this firm. The company was renamed A. Hammacher & Co.

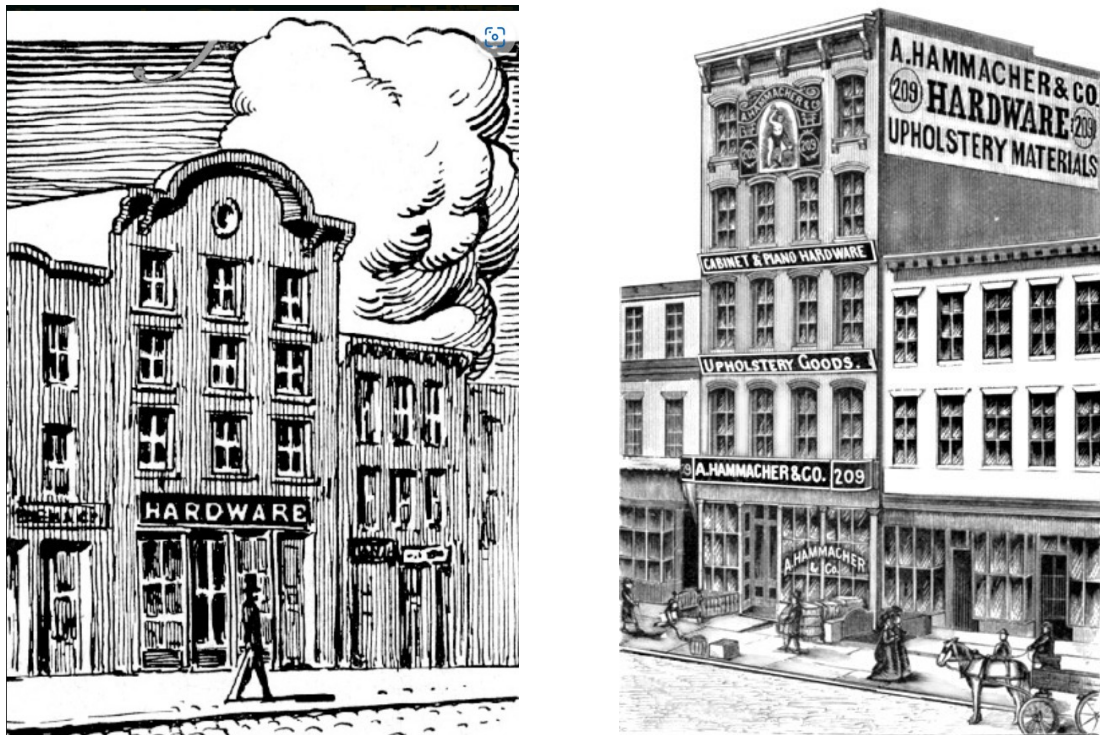


Figure 8: The company of William Schlemmer moved from 209 to 221 Bowery

Remarkably, William always seemed to take advantage of the times. In 1883, ornate

⁷ Hammacher Schlemmer Company. 2023. 'The Hammacher Schlemmer History Timeline.' Hammacher Schlemmer official website. <https://www.hammacher.com/mc/history>

furniture became popular in the United States. William Schlemmer seized this opportunity and founded a new upholstered furniture department. His son, William F. Schlemmer, became head of the department. The company began to be introduced as Hammacher Schlemmer & Co. In 1876, after the telephone had been created by Bell, Hammacher & Co. began purchasing and stocking accessories for telephones and was actively involved in being one of the first companies to begin using the Bell Telephone (Fig. 9).⁸ In 1896, Hammacher Schlemmer became the first store in New York to use lamps when he installed electric lights in his showroom. Despite the fact that there were fewer than 600 cars and no gas stations in New York City at the time, Schlemmer opened the first auto parts department, selling parts and tools for "trackless carriages," including automotive travel kits that allowed drivers to repair broken vehicles. These seizing of opportunities allowed the company to grow rapidly and his son was able to become involved in the business. His wealth was further accumulated.

⁸ Hammacher Schlemmer Company , 2020. “*Celebrating a history of quality and innovation*” Hammacher Schlemmer YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dIMAjaHhvA> (2020)

EDWIN HOLMES, President. W. C. HUMSTONE, Gen'l Supt.

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS —TO THE— Central Office System OF THE BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY OF NEW YORK.

<p>BANKS, BANKERS AND BROKERS.</p> <p>Arthur & Keicham, 34 Wall St Britton & Burr, 27 Wall St Bloodgood, John & Co., 82 Broadway Blake Bros. & Co., 24 Wall St Clarkson, Ferk. W. & Co., 64 Pearl St Clark, Wm. M., 1 Broad St Dunning, E. J., Jr., 63 Wall St Farrester & Greenwood, 20 Broad St Friedmann & Co., 17 Broad St Frank, F. L. & Co., 32 Exchange Pl German Savings Bank, 4th Avenue & 14th St Glendenning, Davis & Co., 17 Wall St Gwynne & Day, 16 " " Hatch, W. F. & Sons, 34 " " Hilmers, McGowan & Co., 65 " " Iselin, A. & Co., 48 Wall St Jessup, Paton & Co., 22 William St Johnson & Bell, 24 Wall St Kennedy, Hutchinson & Co., 40 " " Kidder, A. M. & Co., Cor B'way & Wall Lawrence Bros. & Co., 16 Wall St Laffer, A. & Co., 38 Exchange Place Leland, Chas. H., 21 NASSAU ST Livermore, Edward, 19 " "</p>	<p>TEA AND COFFEE.</p> <p>Avis, Wm. A. & Co., 168 Pearl St Arnold, B. G. & Co., 125 Front St Carter, Hawley & Co., 104 Water St Edwards & Ranworth, 96 Wall St Fells, C. N., 130 & 132 Water St M. H. & Co., 2411 11 St</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Windsor, Fifth Ave., 46th & 47</p> <p style="text-align: center;">UMBRELLAS.</p> <p>Smith's, Isaac Son & Co., 405 Broadway Lyon, Amasa, 771 " "</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HATS.</p> <p>Ferry, Conrow & Co., 558 Broadway</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HARDWARE.</p> <p>Curley, J. & Brothers, 136 Nassau St Gaynor, Thomas E., 90 Chambers St Graham & Haines, 115 Chambers St Hammacher & Co., 209 Bowery Kamak & Co., 190 Chambers St King, Briggs & Co., 220 Broadway Little, Charles E., 59 Fulton St Mills, Wm., 7 Warren St Place, Geo. Machinery Agency, 121 Chambers St Paterson Brothers, 27 Park Row Remington, E. & Sons, 283 Broadway Riker, C. S., 104 Chambers St Steinback, B., 61 Warren St Wolf, R. H. & Co., 46 Cliff St</p> </div>
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Figure 9: Customer List of the Bell Company

Under William Schlemmer's planning, the company had published a total of three catalogs showing items for sale before he passed away, beginning with the first catalog in 1881⁹ (Fig. 10, 11). This decision helped customers learn about their products more quickly. During World War I, tools and hardware were supplied to the U.S. War Department. Due to the readability of the brochures, the U.S. Army later adopted Hammacher & Schlemmer's brochures as their official equipment list. This greatly included the company's popularity, and many more celebrity dignitaries subsequently purchased the company's merchandise, increasing the heir to the Rothschild family and Queen Elizabeth's mother.

⁹ Hammacher Schlemmer Company, 1881; 1897; 1907 "Illustrated Catalogue and Price List of A. Hammacher & Co."

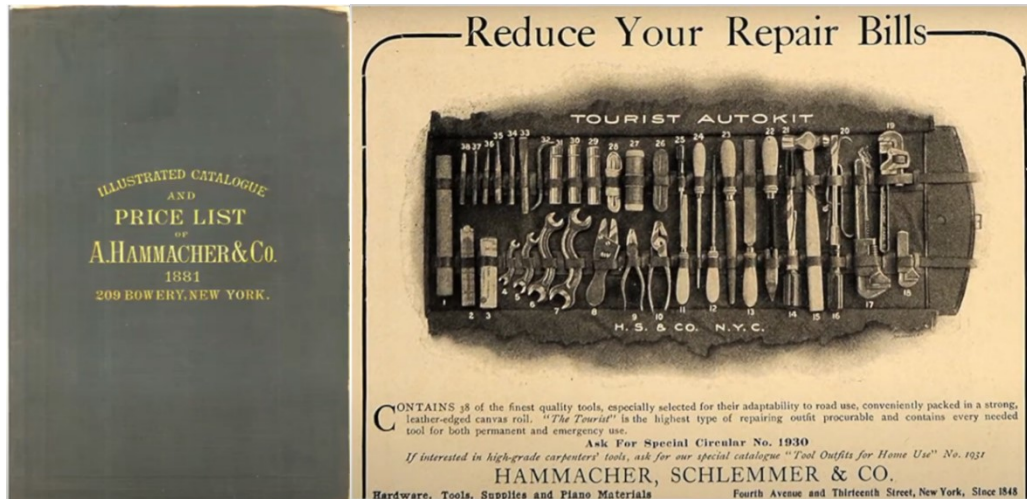


Figure 10: The first catalog published in 1881



Figure 11: Early catalogs published in 1897, 1907

With the celebrity clientele, the company saw unprecedented growth. After William Schlemmer's death in 1918, his son William F. Schlemmer began to change his business strategy from a hardware TOOLS company to luxury items and utilized Broadway jingles 'the Little Snow' to promote his factory. In 1920, he adopted gnomes as a mascot to represent the company's hardworking image (Fig. 12) and this mascot has been used until now.



Figure 12: Advertisement of the little show in Broadway ¹⁰

The growing popularity of the company and the clientele from middle and upper class changed the positioning of the company's products. Therefore, the company moved to 147 East 57th Street in 1926 which is a twelve-story building with luxury entrance for exhibition (Fig. 13).¹¹ The store offered a tuxedo doorman greeting and a great shopping environment for everyone who enters the store. Until William F. Schlemmer's death in 1945, the company had survived two wars, financial crises, and other competitors. Upon his death, his wife, Else, inherited the company. Having no children, Else distributed all of the company's shares to about half of the company's employees when she died in 1955¹².

¹⁰ Hammacher Schlemmer, "Hammacher Schlemmer - Celebrating a History of Quality & Innovation."

¹¹ Structurae, "Hammacher Schlemmer Building (Manhattan, 1926) | Structurae."

¹² The Peninsula Times Tribune, 1952, 28 Feb, Thu. P 21. 'Woman to give bequests to half her 200 employees'.



Figure 13: 147 East 57th Street (used since 1926-now)

Among the other family members, Clara's story is interesting. Clara Schlemmer, whose remains are in the mausoleum, was engaged to a man who ‘romantically’ died two days after their wedding. But not before leaving her all his stocks in his will¹³.

Conclusion

The Hammacher & Schlemmer Company generously funded the development of the Schlemmers. Each change in the firm's name and address marked a milestone in William Schlemmer's flourishing career. Although the Schlemmer family departed

¹³ Buffalo Courier Express ‘Death Recalls a Romance’, 08 Sep 1902, Page 5. .

from the firm after 1955, the innovative spirit they instilled continued to shape the world. William Schlemmer, William F. Schlemmer, and Else F. Schlemmer undoubtedly left an indelible mark on the firm's legacy.

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