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The Otto A. Runk mausoleum was erected in 1922 at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York, to stand as a lasting memorial and eternal resting place for the Runk family. The solid granite structure denotes permanence and stability, and was most definitely driven by aesthetic choices selected by the Runk family, when working with the mausoleum company Farrington, Gould and Hoagland. This company was very prominent during the 1920's to 1930's and acquired many prestigious commissions. Well known for their large cuts of Barre Granite, they were able to bring in huge pieces of stone, and create incredibly sturdy structures. FG&H were also well known for their "stable" of artisans to work on mausoleum detailing.<sup>i</sup>

The Runk mausoleum contains six crypts, five of which are occupied, by Otto A. Runk, his wife Emma Hertlein Runk, his brother Arthur Runk, and Arthur's wife Ella Hertlein Runk, and Otto and Emma's daughter Ella Runk, who died when she was 12, and was the first to be entombed in the structure in 1922. Otto A. Runk worked in the textile industry, at his wife's family company C.E. Hertlein Textile Company, which was also known as Hertlein & Schlatter Silk Trimming Factory. They had a factory in the Bronx, now on the National Register of Historic Places. The company was started by two German immigrants in 1887, one of which was Emma and Ella's father, Christopher Hertlein, and rose to prominence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, pioneering the migration of garment industry out of central Manhattan.<sup>ii</sup> The business would later dissolve in 1935, during the Great Depression. The Runk's main residence appears to have been Mount Kisco, New York, however there is evidence of several New York City addresses associated with the family. While the Runk mausoleum is not as ostentatious and grand as others at Woodlawn, evidence that they traveled extensively<sup>iii</sup> and invested in real estate<sup>iv</sup>, leads one to believe they were well to do.

The Runk Mausoleum is located in the Heather plot of Woodlawn Cemetery, set back from the road, and built into a slight upward slope. The structure itself is visible from various points on the road, because of its slightly elevated placement, and lack of landscaping, making it an important feature of the landscape despite its smaller size. The main bulk of the building is also elevated on a pedestal like platform with two protruding "feet," which originally were most likely planters, but show no evidence of being used for that purpose. The mausoleum's placement also makes it appear to be removed from the immediate proximity of other mausoleums in the plot, adding to this feeling of importance.

As one moves closer to the mausoleum from the road towards the entrance, one walks up a slight slope, and is confronted by a small set of steps with stretch around the front base of the body of the mausoleum and meet the planter extensions. These extensions seem to bar the visitor from proceeding beyond them to the sides and back of the structure. From there steps lead up to a recessed entrance vestibule, set into the granite façade, and flanked by two ionic columns. This approach and entrance to the mausoleum is not very inviting, and accentuated the block-like, solidity of the structure. One gets a sense that this dense little building with massive stones is not a place to linger, but however is a very permanent entity. The massing on this structure is thick and constructed of incredibly large stones of Barre Milford pink granite, which create a uniform structure, and make the mausoleum appear to almost be a single block of stone. When one crosses the threshold into the structure, it becomes evident that the exterior properly communicates the interior, which consists of a narrow "hall" between the tombs. The catacombs themselves appear to be a part of this sturdy massing, not indicating the void behind the Tennessee Pink marble facing. Like the exterior, the interior space extends the visitor with the sense that this structure is for the deceased and not the living.

The detailing on the building is particularly interested in relation to the family history. While the structure appears to be sturdy, solid and composed of massive blocks of stone, the details themselves are quite delicate. The façade is topped with a neo-classical pediment, which tops a protruding cornice

that wraps around the entire top of the building. Above the door is a bronze plaque, displaying two young girls arranging flowers around a casket marked "Otto A. Runk." The possible significance in this choice of subject matter, which in original drawings of the mausoleum façade showed two angels, could reflect the burial of Ella Runk, who died at the age of 12, and was the first person to be placed in the structure. Other delicate details include a gentle battering on all sides of the mausoleum, and a slight lipped molding on the base of the structure. All these delicate or feminine details counter the massive solidity of the main parts of the Runk mausoleum, denoting both a balance between the delicate and the sturdy, or feminine and masculine.

Lastly it is important to talk about the individuality of this structure, which is essentially only found in the details, as it is Design #2885 of Farrington, Gould and Hoagland's catalog. It is in fact identical, with the exception of bronze detailing to the Takamine mausoleum, which is also in the Heather plot at Woodlawn Cemetery. It is clear however that the Runk family sought to individualize their mausoleum by introducing the bronze plaque with a rare motif, not seen anywhere else at Woodlawn. The balance of delicate and massive detailing is also indicative of choices, made by the Runk family to display both masculine and feminine characteristics, as well as a sense of permanence and stability in their place of final rest.

#### Bibliography:

"Arthur H. Runk, Obituary," *New York Times*, (1923-current file),  
"Otto A. Runk," *New York Times*, (1923- current file), July 11 1942; Proquest Historical Newspapers NYT,  
p.13.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Susan Olsen, conducted on October 11, 2010 at Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, New York.

<sup>2</sup> Dolkart, Andrew, "Hertlein & Schlatter Silk Trimmings Factory, Bronx, New York." National Register of Historic Places Nomination and Report, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> "Rowing Races and Other Sports at this Place, Lake George," *New York Times*, August 10, 1902; p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> "Investor Acquires Mt. Vernon Corner," *New York Times*, August 9, 1929; p. 39.