

The Vogler Mausoleum

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The Vogler mausoleum in Woodlawn cemetery, New York, is situated in Aster plot, lot No. 16490, facing north, positioned on the first row on North Border Avenue. This structure, built in 1928, designed and constructed by Joseph Bermel Inc, from Queens. The mausoleum's current condition is relatively good. The front steps and belt covered by biological growth and on the eastern facade the biological growth appears as well, varying in shapes and patterns.

According to the archival drawings the structure is built on concrete foundations; a peripheral belt of circa 1'-8" thick, and 1' thick inner ribs. The dimension of the rectangular plan is 19'6" by 13'-0" and the height is 14'-0". The mausoleum's symmetrical appearance can be observed both from the entrance facade and indoor space. The dominant materials are the exterior granite stones, and in the interior, marble covering the walls, the crypts, and the ceiling. The main feature that gives this mausoleum a specific identity is articulated in the doorway; the family's surname is sunken into the door's lintel, a semi-oval eye-figure ornament designed in the enframing, and the Freemasonry symbol appears on the keystone. Two identical Ionic order columns support the lintel. They are molded with an egg-and-dart pattern on the capitals. They flank the door, made of two bronze wings decorated with Greek keys. The mausoleum's exterior wall masonry is composed of ashlar masonry, each course is 2'-0" in height of granite and has a 1/4" mortar joint between them. The interior is covered by marble and has two different finishes: polished and Bush-hammered. Each crypt is molded with an acanthus leaf, indicating the interments' full name.

In total, there are thirteen individuals buried in the Vogler's mausoleum. The relation between them is still a mystery given the ambiguous status of the two eldest entities: Peter Vogler and Augusta Vogler. Mr. Vogler was born in Hessen, Germany, on Nov 1844.¹ He immigrated to the United States when he was only eight years old with his immediate family. They lived in Ward 11 District: E.D. 6²,

¹ Germany, *Select Births and Baptisms, 1558-1898* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

² *New York, State Census, 1855* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013.

(today, the Lower East Side. apparently, the house was in the block bordered by Avenues A-B and 6th-7th Streets). Ten years later, when Peter turned 18 years old, he was recruited and served in the American Civil War, in the Union Army, in Unit 29 New York Infantry Regiments³, which was composed of Germans who had fought for two years around Washington D.C, in some of the epic battles against the Confederate army.⁴ After he was released from the military, Peter joined the Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization composed of ex-combatants, with a cultural-political association. The representation badge is still pinned in the ground outside to the mausoleum steps.

In the 1870 United States Federal Census, it appears that at the age of 26, Peter had established his own family; he was married to Rosa Vogler, had six children between the ages 2-11 years old, his occupation was declared to be “cigar store”, and they all lived in New York Ward 17 District 8 (2nd Enum), Today Lower Manhattan .⁵ In this report Augusta has been seen to be his ten year old daughter. On the next federal census of 1880 Peter was designated as a widower .⁶ His occupation was revised to “manufacturing cigars” which in 1896 seemed to have only three workers.⁷ The Vogler family lived in 341 East 10th Street. In 1900⁸, a new marital status was applied to Peter; he has married again, surprisingly to a woman named Augusta. At that point, they were married for 13 years. At this census, Peter’s other children were still recognized as his children, except for Augusta who by then was recognized as his wife. She was noted as 40 years old, she knew how to read, write, and speak English, and in this census, it recorded that she did not have any children; yet, in her obituary,⁹ three people were mentioned as her children, consisting of the same names as her siblings. Her residence changed

³ *New York, U.S., Civil War Muster Roll Abstracts, 1861-1900* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

⁴ New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center. 29th Infantry Regiment. Accessed October 8, 2021. <https://museum.dmna.ny.gov/unit-history/infantry/29th-infantry-regiment>

⁵ *United States Federal Census 1870*, ED 8 ward 17, page 96 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

⁶ *United States Federal Census 1880*, ED 369, page 26, [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com

⁷ *New York, Annual Report on Factory Inspection*. United States: n.p., 1898.

⁸ 1900 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004.

⁹ “Obituary 5 -- No Title.” *New York Times*. 1945.

<http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/obituary-5-no-title/docview/107167584/se-2?accountid=10226>

to 38 Belvedere Drive, in the city of Yonkers, NY. Peter passed away from sepsis pneumonia disease on Jun 28, 1914, in Michigan.¹⁰ Fourteen years later he and his son Peter Vogler Jr were transferred and interred in the mausoleum commissioned by three women who are assumed to be sisters: Mrs. Augusta Vogler, Mrs. Margaret Lorenzo, and Mrs. Veronica Gartner in 1928.¹¹ A meaningful choice was made by them regarding the atmosphere inside their mausoleum; a window glass design of peaceful waterfall was ordered. In Christianity, springs and waterfalls are affiliated with narratives of dehydration punishment for human's behavior and symbolized concepts of rebirth and a river of life. Nature motif at Woodlawn Cemetery and onto Vogler's mausoleum in particular, are well documented at different scales: Woodlawn Cemetery was founded in 1863, imported rural features from cemeteries in Germany, England and France as well as inspired by local "lawn plans".¹² When strolling around the cemetery, it is difficult to ignore the primary building material; granite appears in the monuments, mausoleum, and graves, commemorating not only the deceased but also the raw ground in which the stone was quarried. The sharp contrast between the natural appearance of the landscape (whether created artificially or not) in relation to the chiseled shape of the quarried materials raising questions about the concept of excavating and wounding the ground in order to build a mini- architecture that is supposed to eternally protect the deceased within it.

Moreover, in addition to the visual elements relating to the natural environment such as the flowers, rosettes and the stained-glass window design of the Vogler's mausoleum, there are other naturistic properties which are exhibited in many other aspects, validating the fact that it is an ever-changing space; The adjusting color- varying palate of the bronze patina door and the ventilation detail, still changing constantly from red to turquoise, provide a graphic indicator of indoor\outdoor climate

¹⁰ Michigan, U.S., *Death Records, 1867-1952* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

¹¹ Vogler, major monuments folder, Woodlawn Cemetery records, 1863-1999, Drawing & Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University.

¹² "Garden Necropolis", Charles D Warren, eds Carole Ann Fabian, Charles Davock Warren, Janet Parks, Sylvan Cemetery: Architecture, Art & Landscape at Woodlawn. United States: Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, (n.d.).

conditions. Furthermore, as well as the material decay emerging on the walls, steps, and roofing, another form of decay occurred incessantly in other organic substances; the earliest burial in the mausoleum transpired in 1928, whereas the latest in 2018. In this time span of nearly a century, the organic process of body decay is continuously occurring, emphasizing the naturalistic scenes in this place.