

Rich Mausoleum, Woodlawn Cemetery

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Studio I

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The Patron

Everett Rich, born April 23, 1883, is the patron of the Rich Mausoleum, located on the Heather plot in the Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York. He commissioned the mausoleum upon the death of his first wife, Helen Louise Vaughan Rich, who died at the age of 29, on February 9th, 1918. Everett's second wife, Thalia Pilalas Rich, would be the second entombed there in 1943. Everett Rich would be the third in 1960 followed by his son-in-law, Charles D. Donohue in 1978, then by one of his daughter, Frances Rich Donohue, in 2004, leaving one crypt empty today.

The third son of Wisconsin farmer Frederick William Rich (1857-1937) and housewife Mary A. Rich (1857-1922), Everett spent much of his childhood on a farm in Wisconsin before moving to Chicago, Illinois at the age of 17 in 1900. ⁱ By December of 1911, in New York City, Everett married his first wife, Helen Louise Vaughan who hailed from Florida. The two would live in New York City together where Everett worked on the New York Stock Exchange. Helen gave birth to their daughter Frances Louise Rich in 1913 and named her after Helen's sister. ⁱⁱ Frances grew up in Westchester, New York and attended Sarah Lawrence College, later marrying Columbia University graduate, Charles D. Donohue in 1938. ⁱⁱⁱ The pair never had any children and would live in Frances's hometown in Westchester, New York, for most of their marriage. ^{iv}

In 1917, the United States entered World War I and many young men were drafted for service both overseas and domestically. Everett was called to serve in Washington D.C., leaving his wife and four-year-old child at home in New York. It is during this time that Helen died of an undocumented cause which is the most likely provocation of the erection of the Rich Mausoleum.

Everett was honorably discharged from the military shortly after his wife's death in December of 1918, returned to his young daughter and moved into a 6-bedroom house in White Plains, New York. In 1923,^{vi} Everett married his second wife, Thalia Pilalas, daughter of Greek immigrants. Thalia and Everett had one daughter together, Mary Catherine Rich (1925 – 2003).^{vii}

Despite the Great Depression which followed the devastation of WWI, Everett was able to establish his own firm in 1931, Everett Rich & Co., and continued to work on the New York Stock exchange for ten more years.^{viii} The beginning of the United States involvement in World War II had Everett drafted again in 1942.^{ix} By this time, he was retired and nearing 60-years-old. It is unclear where he served, but it may be assumed that due to his age, Everett was drafted into the reserves rather than active duty.

Everett spent his retirement raising poultry and pigs on a farm in Vermont, returning to the quiet, rural life he knew as a young boy.^x He died September 7, 1960.

The Mausoleum

The Rich Mausoleum's design and construction was completed by Davis Granite Co. in 1918. The company had a showroom and office on Fifth Avenue, in New York City, probably where Everett Rich had first come across the business.^{xi} It is unclear how much of the mausoleum was built to Everett's unique specifications, and how much was standard catalog style, but the design of the mausoleum quite aptly reflects its patron nevertheless; quaint, sturdy, and without dramatic flourish.

Located in Woodlawn Cemetery's, Heather Plot, section 69, lot number 14143, the Rich Mausoleum is situated on a right trapezoidal site of approximately 750 square feet (figure 1).^{xii} The mausoleum's front façade faces west, and, when approached from Heather Avenue, the austere granite face of the mausoleum slowly appears from behind a small stand of trees. When

the foundation was first laid, the plot was accessible via two small walking paths, one directly in front of the mausoleum on the west side, and one behind it on the east side (figure 1). As the structure stands today, only remnants of the west side walkway remain, and is no longer directly accessible from the main road.

According to the original plan, the lot would be framed on all four sides by plant life: two large marble planters at the front of the plot, and two taxus trees in the back, one flanking either side of the mausoleum.^{xiii} Though the planters remain, albeit filled with sand rather than flora, the trees are no longer there. The delineation of the plot is still prominent today mostly due to the presence of the planters, guiding visitors from an overgrown path to the front steps (figure 2). A masonry surveyor's monument also remains at the southeast corner of the plot marked with its patron's last initial, "R" (figure 3). Additionally, the original site plan indicates space for four additional in-ground graves on the lot, however, these remain unused and unmarked (figure 1).

The mausoleum is a single story, rectangular and extremely symmetrical structure. The exterior of the mausoleum, as well as the interior floor, is built entirely from light Barre Vermont granite. The exterior walls are 10-inch-thick stacked granite blocks joined with cement mortar. The joints are struck flat and slightly recessed from the face of the stone, they do not appear to have been heavily tooled. The joints remain in fair to good condition and do not show signs of recent repointing. The placement of the blocks appears to be completely plumb and true, remaining straight vertically and horizontally. The condition of the structure indicates that the foundation remains structurally competent and has not experienced significant erosion. The roof is made from the same stone the structure is made of and is comprised of two large flat slabs at a pitch of 4:12 with a raised keystone at the same pitch running the entire length of the ridge. The keystone rests directly on the two roof planes. On the front façade, facing west, are two steps

which lead up to the portico, each a single slab of granite. The columns of the portico are Ionic, with smooth, tapered shafts, and are punctuated by carved stone rosettes on the frieze above them. Centered on the frieze is the name "RICH," engraved in sunken letters into the granite using what looks to be a triangular tool (figure 4). Flanking either side of the double bronze doors is a single pilaster echoing the design and placement of the columns. The doors of the mausoleum are decorated with a repeating pattern of simplified acanthus leaves and a sash which resembles the Ionic columns. The stile and rails of the doors are flat and without ornamentation. The south panel of the doors includes a round opening for insertion of the key required to open the doors. There is no saddle under the door, however there is a small bronze water-stop threshold. There is no ornamentation on either side of the mausoleum aside from the hole-punched bronze vent covers which only remain on the north façade. Each of the four remaining vent covers is bowing considerably, and, similar to the door, have a green patina and some additional dark discoloration. On all four façades is clear evidence of biological growth on the granite, mostly lichen, and remnants of climbing vines (figure 5).

The interior of the mausoleum is similarly modest in most aspects. Holding six single crypts, three on either longitudinal side, the inside is rather narrow, measuring at 3 feet 4 inches wide. However, the prismatic light which streams in from the stained-glass window centered horizontally on the east wall opens the space and alights in stark contrast to the grays of the white-veined Vermont marble cladding the interior. The stained-glass window combines a Greek key border with symmetrical floral motifs and a large, central cross (figure 6). The flower motifs were achieved by painting directly onto the glass panels, likely with an enamel paint. Using this method, the window design attained a more delicate, but subtle composition. The window is bowing slightly inward at the bottom. Iron rods were placed across the width of the window

attaching to the frame of the stained glass either at the time of manufacture to stabilize the frame or attached later in a possible attempt to prevent further damage to the bowing window. This bowing could be due to many factors, including but not limited to heat getting trapped between the window and the protective plexiglass layer on the outside, which would amplify the differential movement of the stone building elements and the metal used to construct the window. As the heat from solar insolation from the window's eastern exposure affected the metal components of the window, leading to expansion of metal, the constraint of the stone around the perimeter of the window would cause the window to bow inward.

The engraving of the crypts are in capital serif letters except for the most recent entombment of Frances Rich Donohue, whose crypt is labeled with a bronze plaque (figure 7, 8). Perhaps an unintended consequence of being the last direct member of the Rich family to be interred in the mausoleum, the engraving method of the other crypts could not be properly or economically executed, leading to the affixing of the bronze plaque.

Conclusion

The Rich Mausoleum from afar, appears uncomplicated, even plain, but sturdy and well-constructed, in many ways a built metaphor for the life of its patron. Upon closer proximity to the mausoleum, its detail and nuance begin to appear, enriching the visual experience and lending to the processional aspects of entering hallowed space. Adding to the ceremony of entering are the size and weight of the bronze doors. Rising from grade, step by step, passing through the implied gateway created by the columns and roof of the portico, opening the bronze doors, and entering the cool austere space hews to the intended purpose of creating a place of contemplative solitude. Once inside, the stained-glass window creates a focal point and provides the sole source of color within the space, a reference to the Christian belief of the patron and an

element contrapuntal to the stone surfaces. The lack of any seating in the mausoleum implies that it was not a space for extended visitation. The ossuaries themselves, each virtually identical to the others, implies an equality of the entombed. Aggregated, the elements of the mausoleum, its siting and landscaping, echo religious conventions consistent with the patron's beliefs, needs of the grieving, and projection of the family's status in society. The monument can also be seen in the larger context of Woodlawn Cemetery where the design and materials of the mausoleum, although more monumental than gravestones and other similar markers, remains consistent in design, size, and materials with most of the other mausoleums.

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26190- 10/3/78

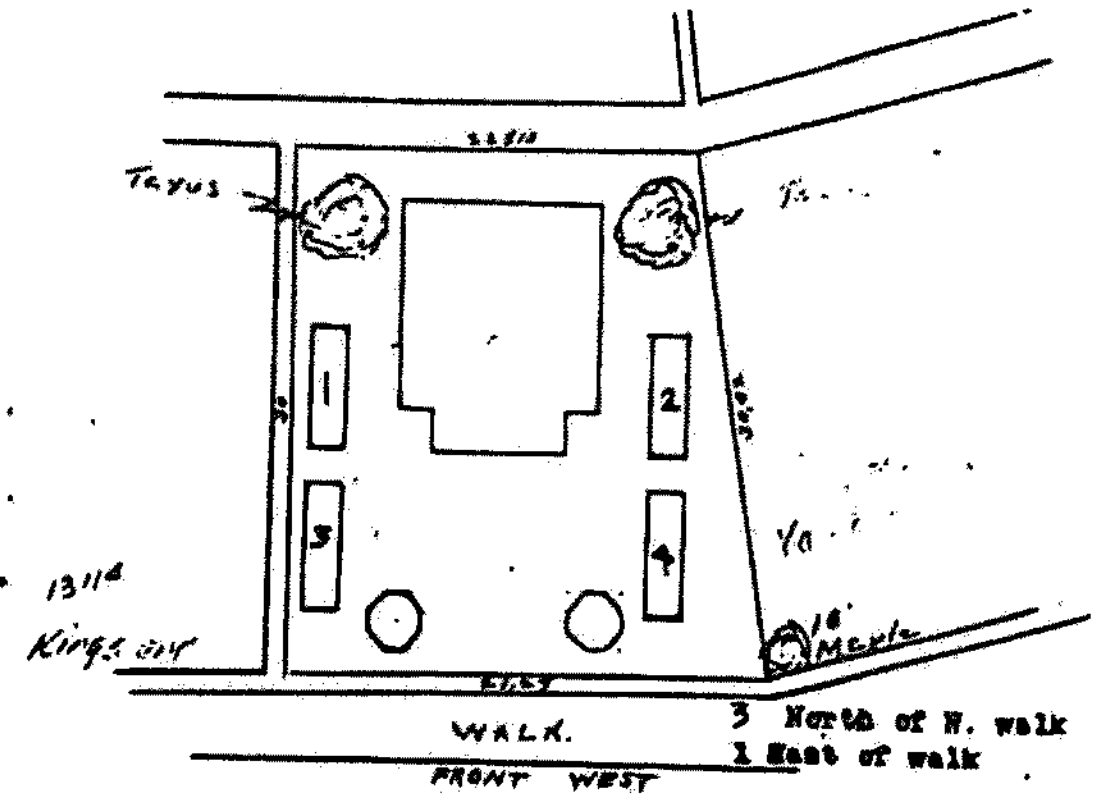


Figure 1
 Joseph Costigliosei. Site plan of lot no. 14143, Rich Mausoleum plot, 9 June 1970, Woodlawn Cemetery Collection, Avery Library Drawings and Archives^{xiv}



Figure 2
West (front) façade of the Rich Mausoleum and planters.



Figure 3
Masonry surveyor's monument on southeast corner of Rich Mausoleum plot



Figure 4
Portico details of Rich Mausoleum

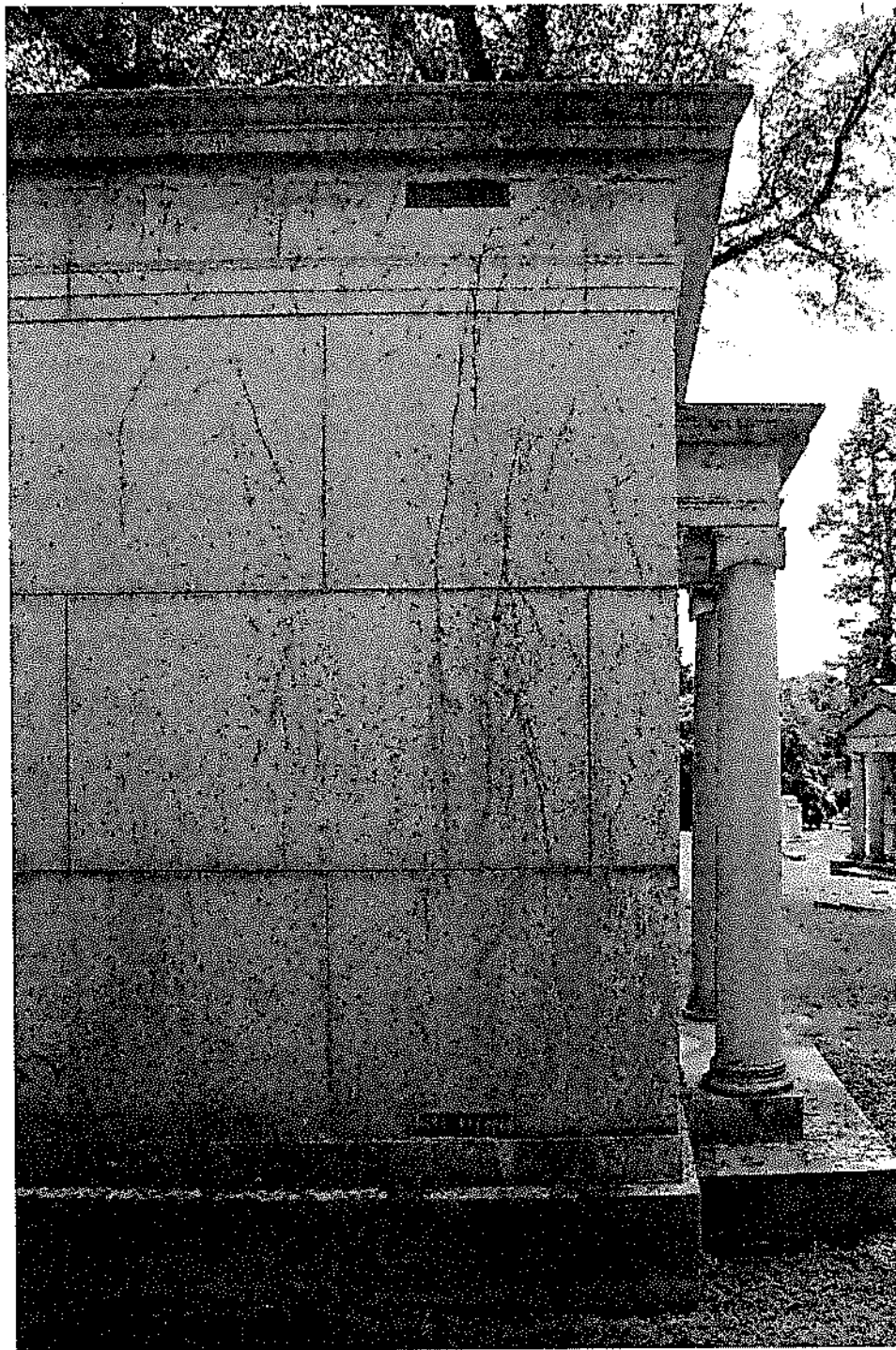


Figure 5
North façade of Rich Mausoleum showing biological growth and vent covers

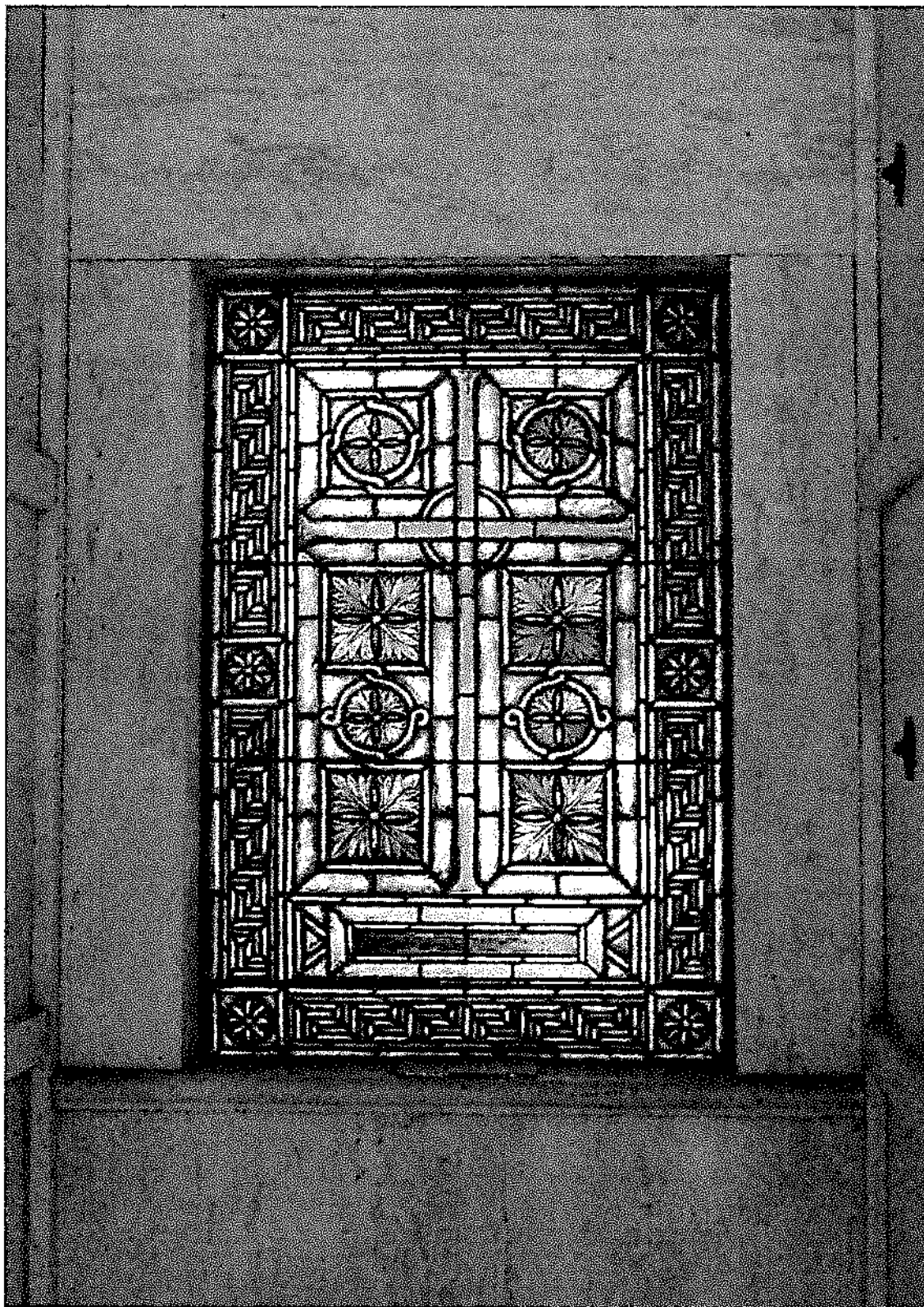


Figure 6
Stained glass window detail of Rich Mausoleum

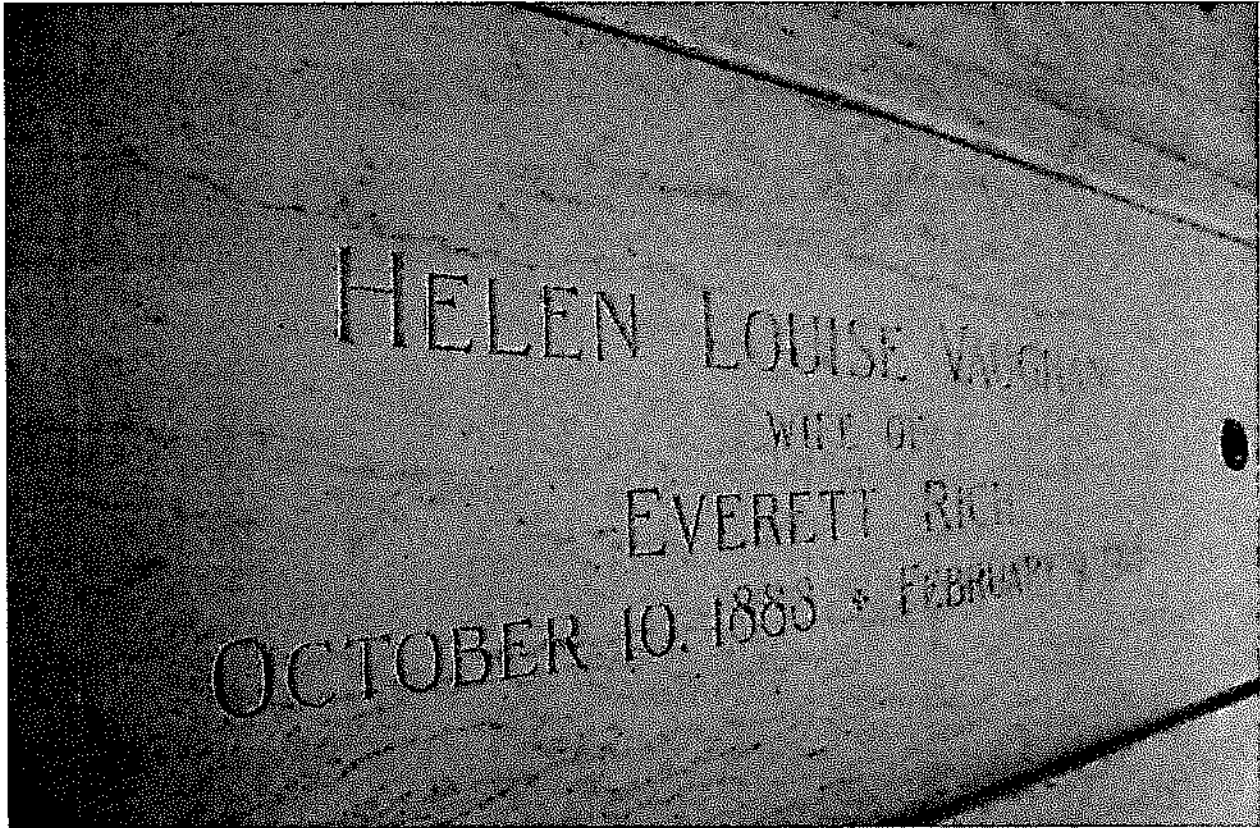


Figure 7
Crypt of Helen Louise Vaughan inside Rich Mausoleum, on south wall. Photo taken facing the door



Figure 8
Crypt of Frances R. Donohue inside Rich Mausoleum, on south wall. Photo taken facing door

Notes

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- ⁱ US Census Bureau; ancestrylibrary.com, 1920 United States Census, Frederick William Rich
- ⁱⁱ *New York Times*; "Miss Vaughan Weds Everett Rich."
- ⁱⁱⁱ *New York Times* "Bridal in December for Francis L. Rich."
- ^{iv} 1940 United States Federal Census - AncestryLibrary.Com.
- ^v New York, U.S., Abstracts of World War I Military Service, 1917-1919 - AncestryLibrary.Com
- ^{vi} 1920 United States Federal Census - AncestryLibrary.Com.
- ^{vii} 1930 United States Federal Census - AncestryLibrary.Com.
- ^{viii} "Everett Rich Forms Firm." ProQuest.com
- ^{ix} U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942 - AncestryLibrary.Com.
- ^x 1950 United States Federal Census - AncestryLibrary.Com
- ^{xi} Davis Granite Co. to Woodlawn Cemetery, 27 May 1918, SPC.2006.009, box 15, folder 14, Woodlawn Cemetery Collection, Avery Library Drawings and Archives, Columbia University, New York, NY
- ^{xii} Site plan of lot no. 14143, 9 June 1970, SPC.2006.009, box 15, folder 14, Woodlawn Cemetery Collection, Avery Library Drawings and Archives, Columbia University, New York, NY
- ^{xiii} Site plan of lot no. 14143, Woodlawn Cemetery Collection
- ^{xiv} Site plan of lot no. 14143, Woodlawn Cemetery Collection

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