

The Ziegler Family Mausoleum

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Historic Preservation Studio I

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Mausoleum and Conditions:

The Ziegler family mausoleum was designed for Ziegler by the Tayntor Granite Company Inc. prior to Ziegler's death in May of 1905. The structure was erected around the year 1899 on the Fairview Plot, with its primary façade oriented north toward Central Avenue.¹ The approach to the Ziegler mausoleum from Central Avenue extends over a 120-foot lawn which gradually slopes up to the granite peripteral temple. Designed to replicate the ancient Greek temples located at the Greco-Roman site of Paestum in Italy (*Figure 1*), the exterior of the Ziegler mausoleum was designed in the Doric order and constructed with granite from the Tayntor Quarry located at Hallowell, Kennebec County, Maine.²



Figure 1: Comparison of the Ziegler mausoleum with the Temple of Hera II, located in the ancient site of Paestum³

The base of the symmetrical mausoleum is approximately 25'-7" and 34' 2", and the structure stands at a total height of 17' 6". The cella of the temple is guarded by two concentric rows of steps and the outer most stylobate. Upon the stylobate stands an outer colonnade which spans the entire perimeter of the mausoleum. These columns follow the strict Classical rules, with

¹ Charles D. Warren et al., eds., *Sylvan Cemetery: Architecture, Art & Landscape at Woodlawn* (Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library : The Woodlawn Conservancy, 2014).

² "Structures and Monuments in Which Maine Stone Was Used," accessed September 30, 2025,

³ "Archaeological Park of Paestum — Highlights, History, Facts," Paestum Tickets, accessed October 1, 2025,

20 flutes rising vertically towards the traditional echinus and abacus.⁴ All the columns have a diameter of 18” at their base. There are 6 columns on both the northern and southern façades, and all equidistantly spaced at 1’ 11,” except for the two most inner columns, which have a spacing of 3’ 7”. This larger gap between the middle columns leaves a semi-unobstructed view of the bronze doors and creates a subtle invitation to enter. Behind the first colonnade are two more steps and a secondary colonnade which consists of four 15” diameter columns. The second colonnade is split into two groups of two columns which flank the entrance on either side. The casing around the entrance is constructed from polished granite and is 16” wide. It traces the outline of the recessed bronze doors symmetrically and simply, with its only ornamentation being two carved pointed corners at the top of the entryway. The ornate bronze doors showcase the emblem “Z” for Ziegler surrounded by laurel leaf wreath motif and geometric patterns.

The traditional Doric entablature of the mausoleum rests upon the outer colonnade. The frieze is ornamented with triglyphs and empty metopes and the architrave is a singular granite block. The only other ornamentation on the frieze is the capitalized sans-serif font centered on the architrave which reads “Ziegler.” Vertically above the entablature is the simple cornice, pediment, and raking cornice which acts as the roof of the structure.

The north and south façade are nearly identical. Their sole difference is exchange of the door on the northern façade for the stained-glass window on southern façade. The stained glass window is guarded by an ornate wrought iron grill. The grill is 4’ by 4’ and characterized by its concentric circles, concentric squares, and arabesque motifs. Similarly, the east and west facades are identical. Each elevation has two steps which wrap around the perimeter of the mausoleum and nine 18-inch diameter columns resting upon the stylobate. Unlike the north and south façades, the

⁴ “Smarthistory – Introduction to Ancient Greek Architecture,” accessed October 1, 2025,.

east and west façades only have the one colonnade. However, the entablature and triglyphs wrap seemly around the entire mausoleum.

Upon entering the mausoleum, the central object is the ornate sarcophagus which sits about 8' from the door and is centrally positioned between two columns which each consist of three stacked crypts. The recessed panel on the crypt doors consists of a grey marble and is framed on the bottom and vertical edges by polished granite. On the edges facing the sarcophagus, the crypts are framed with extruding granite pilasters.

An interesting motif throughout the interior and exterior of this building is the architectural juxtaposition between the stern doric exterior elements and the ornate details on the interior elements. The sarcophagus, which is 8' long, 6' 2" wide, and 4' tall, attempts emulate traditional Greek architecture on a smaller scale, while simultaneously adding new renaissance elements. The outward facing sarcophagus elevation is characterized by three equally spaced doric pilasters creating two symmetrical rectangular spaces (*Figure 2*). Within each space is a rectangular egg and tongue border, which inscribes a rectangular arrangement of arabesques. Centered at the top of the rectangle, the ends of the arabesques hold a bouquet of flowers. On top of the pilasters, there is an entablature which is ornamented with alternating triglyphs and circular floral metopes, emulating the feeling of a Greek temple at an unusually small scale and in a bronze plated material. The cover of the sarcophagus has more

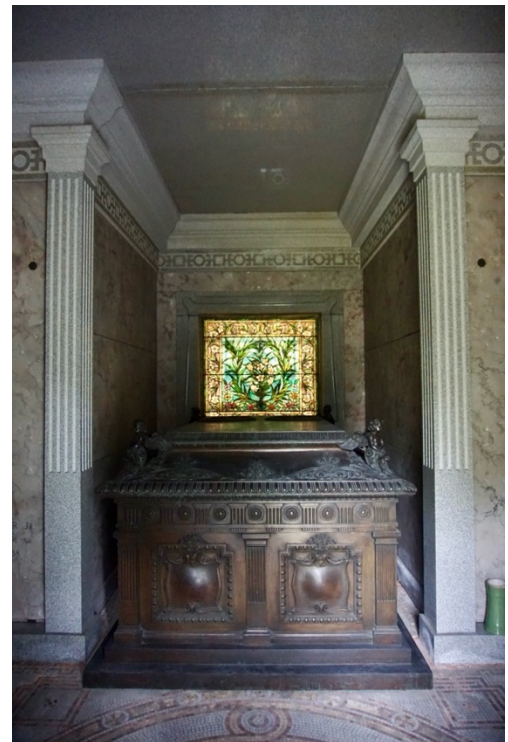


Figure 2: Interior View of Sarcophagus

renaissance features and overhangs the base with an oval and dart cornice, extruding floral ornamentation, and four cherubs which rise out of each corner of the sarcophagus. Directly above the sarcophagus is a stained glass window showcasing a central bouquet of lilies, a traditional Christian symbol of purity, as well as new hope and rebirth.⁵ While most of the window is made of colored stained glass, the individual lily flowers are painted (*Figure 3*). Other notable features in the interior of the mausoleum include the ornate mosaic tiling on the floor which depicts a Greek cross surrounded by a series of concentric circles, as well as the marble panels which cover the southern interior wall and the crypt doors. The Mausoleum is in great condition and shows little sign of deterioration, suggesting that it has been regularly maintained.



Figure 3: Stained glass window on the southern wall of the Ziegler Mausoleum

It is interesting how the Tayntor Company and Ziegler designed a mausoleum that is simple and stately from the exterior, but incredibly lavish on its interior. This contrast is representative of Ziegler's great wealth and quiet ambition. He made his fortune in the mundane business of baking

⁵ "The History and Tradition of the Easter Lily," Extension | University of Nevada, Reno, accessed October 1, 2025,

powder, yet he spent his fortune on funding scientific explorations and becoming a prominent figure in New York real estate. The Doric façade, with its measured proportions and symbolic association with strength and simplicity, conveys a sense of importance while the detailed interior reveals a more private world of opulence and spiritual symbolism.

Currently, the mausoleum hosts the late William Ziegler and his wife Electa Matilda Curtis in the bronze plated sarcophagus, as well as their two adopted children, William Ziegler Jr (abt. 3) and Florence Brant Allen who was cremated.⁶ Additionally, in the front of the mausoleum are two flat graves, Charles William Rivoire and Helen M. Rivoire.

William Ziegler and the Baking Powder Fortune:

The commissioner of this mausoleum was William Ziegler, who was born in September of 1843 as the son of German immigrants. At the age of three his father passed, and young Ziegler and his mother Ernestina Blake moved to Muscatine, Iowa. As a teenager Ziegler held a variety of jobs, from printing in the office of the Muscatine Journal to becoming a druggist clerk.⁷ Upon graduating Eastman's Business College in Poughkeepsie in 1863, Ziegler moved to New York City with only 50 cents to his name.⁸

Determined to break into the baking power business, Ziegler partnered with his colleague, John H. Seal to start their own business. Coincidentally, the Hoagland family was also in search of breaking into the New York baking powder market and had recently moved their business from

⁶ "Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Request NO. 6072," Woodlawn Cemetery Archive, Avery Architecture Library Columbia University,.

⁷ "Death of William Ziegler: Brooklyn Capitalist and Promoter of Arctic Expeditions. Made Fortune in Baking Powder Business and Organized the So-Called Trust -- Printer by Trade.," *The Washington Post* (1877-1922), May 25, 1905.

⁸ "William Ziegler Dead: Old Injury Thought to Have Caused Apoplectic Stroke," *New - York Tribune* (1900-1910), May 25, 1905.

the Midwest to 71 Williams Street New York City in 1868. Shortly after, the Hoagland family hired Ziegler and Seal as sales representatives for the Manhattan and Brooklyn areas.⁹

Ziegler and Seal began selling the Royal Baking Powder products for commission under a new name, “The Royal Chemical Company.” When the Hoagland family found out, they sued them for the use of Royal in their name, which ultimately resulted in the merger of the two companies in 1873. Shortly after, the merged business set up its offices and a small factory at 178 Duane Street in Lower Manhattan. Ziegler and the Hoaglands had a strained relationship, and on multiple occasions, the Hoaglands tried to force Ziegler out of the company. However, by the late 1800s, Ziegler, who had been one of the Royal Baking Powder Company’s founding members since its inception in New York, held a considerable amount of the company’s stock and had major influences on the company’s growth through pioneering marketing strategies. This made it impossible to push him out of the business.¹⁰ First as salesmen, then treasurer, and eventually owner of the company, Ziegler amassed his generational fortune through the manufacturing and selling of baking powder.

The Royal Baking Powder company owes its success to its experimental marketing techniques. The company would use traditional techniques such as canvassing house to house but is also credited with creating one of the first “corporate cookbooks.”¹¹ They released multiple cookbooks with featured recipes utilizing their superior baking powder to appeal specifically to the female demographic. The Royal Baking Powder Company even published a children’s picture book in 1926 titled, “The Comical Cruises of Captain Cooky,” which was an unusual hybrid between a recipe book and a children’s story (*Figure 4*).

⁹ Linda Civitello, *Baking Powder Wars: The Cutthroat Food Fight That Revolutionized Cooking*, Heartland Foodways (University of Illinois Press, 2017).

¹⁰ Civitello, *Baking Powder Wars*.

¹¹ Civitello, *Baking Powder Wars*.

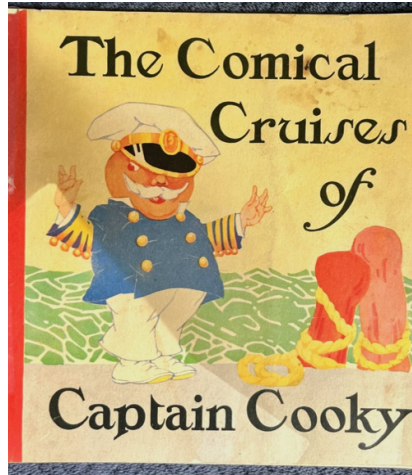


Figure 4: 1926 Royal Baking Powder Company Book¹²

However, the Royal Baking Powder Company had to turn to new marketing strategies when they began losing market share to companies who were selling a new form of baking powder formulated with aluminum. Aluminum baking powder was known to be more reliable and cheaper than the traditional form of baking powder formulated with tartar. The Royal Baking Powder Company had begun manufacturing with aluminum in certain areas of the country, but their original, “natural” formula was far more expensive, and therefore, lucrative. Ziegler and the Company began their “absolutely pure” campaign, capitalizing on studies such as the one discussed in the Brooklyn Eagle on January 10th, 1888. The article titled “Testing Baking Powders” reports findings from the Ohio Food Commission which stated, “Of the first, or cream of tartar class, the commission place the royal Baking Powder First. The analyses show it to be the purest and the best of the powders examined.”¹³ Through these campaigns, Ziegler profited by preying on people’s fears of eating unhealthily. At the time this was a pioneering marketing strategy and is a concept still frequently seen in 21st century marketing.

¹² “The Comical Cruises of Captain Cooky Published by Royal Baking Powder Co.,” (1926)

¹³ “Testing Baking Powders,” *Brooklyn Eagle* January 10, 1888.

Additionally, Ziegler gained some public notoriety when he was accused of bribing a state legislator to solidify “pure-food legislation” in Missouri which directly banned the purchase of alum baking powder. Ziegler was able to fight the court case and was not extradited to Missouri, allowing him to continue to run the business until he passed in 1905.¹⁴

The Ziegler Family and Legacy:

Throughout William Ziegler’s adulthood, he demonstrated interests outside of the baking powder industry and was particularly invested in the development of Brooklyn. His first New York City residence was recorded at Quincy Street in Brooklyn, Ward 23, or modern-day Bedford-Stuyvesant, in 1875¹⁵. With his self-made fortune, Ziegler became a large figure in New York City real estate. The New York Tribune claimed in his obituary article that at one point his holdings stood at “1500 lots in Flushing, Long Island; 6000 at Linden N.J, 2000 lots in Staten Island, and improved property in Liberty St., Cedar St., 5th-ave., and Madison-ave., Manhattan.” Ziegler is also credited with helping to facilitate the discounted sale of the Long Island Water Supply Company to the City of Brooklyn, saving the city considerable amounts of money.¹⁶

Ziegler also is remembered for financing two expeditions to the North Pole, with the first expedition being headed by Evelyn. B. Baldwin. Baldwin left in search of the North Pole in 1901 and had a falling out with Ziegler when he returned without locating the North Pole. Anthony Fiala, the photographer on Baldwin’s expedition, captured film footage of the expedition. According to National Geographic, this footage could be the very earliest footage of human Arctic exploration. Ziegler organized for Fiala to head a second attempt to reach the North Pole which

¹⁴ “Death of William Ziegler,” *The Washington Post* (1877-1922), May 25, 1905

¹⁵ “William Ziegler,” New York, U.S., State Census, 1875, Kings, Brooklyn Ward 23, ED 03 Sheet 11.

¹⁶ “William Ziegler Dead: Old Injury Thought to Have Caused Apoplectic Stroke,” *New - York Tribune* (1900-1910), May 25, 1905.

departed in 1903.¹⁷ When Fiala and his crew did not return, Ziegler sent multiple search expeditions to find Fiala and his team. However, William Ziegler passed away earlier in 1905 before they were rescued.

Personal life and Death:

William Ziegler married his wife, Electa Matilda Curtis in the summer of 1886. The couple adopted both the son, William Ziegler Jr. and daughter, Florence Brandt Allen, from George William Brandt, Ziegler's half-brother. In October of 1904 William Ziegler was thrown from a carriage and suffered from severe internal injuries. He never fully recovered and passed away at the age of 62 in May of 1905. His son, age 13 at the time, was said to inherit his father's fortune which was estimated at \$25,000,000.¹⁸ William Ziegler Jr. continued the family business of operating the Royal Baking Powder Company and had two marriages, Gladys Virginia Watson in 1892, Helen M Murphy in 1990. Although William Ziegler Jr. contracted Tayntor Granite Company Inc. to design a new monument for himself in front of his father's mausoleum in 1952(*Figure 5*), it was never completed, and he was laid to rest in crypt 3 in his father's mausoleum in 1958. After William Ziegler Jr.'s death, Helen Murphy remarried to Charles Revoire, and they were buried on the Fairview plot in 1974 and 1975 respectively.

¹⁷ "115 Years Ago, This Arctic Expedition Ended in Disaster," Culture, October 3, 2025,

¹⁸ "William Ziegler Dead: Old Injury Thought to Have Caused Apoplectic Stroke," *New - York Tribune (1900-1910)*, May 25, 1905.



Figure 5: William Zigeler Jr.'s proposed design for a new catacomb on the Fairview plot.

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