

# Aichele Mausoleum Research Paper

GSAPP M.S.H.P. First Year Studio

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## **Mausoleum overall background**

The Aichele Mausoleum is one of the major memorials in Woodlawn Cemetery, which is recognized as one of the most historically significant sites in America. Located in the Bronx, New York, Woodlawn displays the largest and finest collection of funerary art in the country. The main memorial this paper further investigates is the Aichele Mausoleum, which sits in Lot 13311, plot Pansy and section 116. The construction was commissioned by Edward Richard Aichele in 1915 and the total cost of the lot was thirteen thousand and two hundred dollars. The architecture company that was responsible for the design and construction of the mausoleum is C. E. Tayntor Granite Co., which was established on October 26th, 1910 and was located at 29 West 34th Street, New York. Moreover, C. E. Tayntor Granite Co. is a new construction and builder corporation and at the time when Edward Richard Aichele commissioned the project.

## **Aichele Family Biographical Background**

As mentioned above, the Aichele Mausoleum was commissioned by Edward Richard Aichele, who was the son of John Jacob Aichele. John J. Aichele (1851 - 1929) was the leader of the Aichele family, with parents who originally were born in Germany.<sup>1</sup> According to real estate transaction records, he acquires more than 5 properties mostly on the Upper East side of Manhattan, but the place John and his family spent the most time in was a rented house on Ninth Street. Based on real estate guides and records, John J. Aichele seemed to be either an investor or a broker in the field of real estate.<sup>2</sup> Julianna Aichele (1853 - 1941) was John's wife, whose occupation appeared to be a housewife. John William Aichele (1882 - 1949) is the first son of John and Julianna. According to the US Census, he was a druggist and had his own store that opened in the city of New York.<sup>3</sup> Henry P. Aichele (1883 - 1960) is the second son,

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<sup>1</sup> New York Times (1857-1922); Dec 5, 1900; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times with Index pg. 14

<sup>2</sup> Real estate record and builders' guide New York, F. W. Dodge Corp. Electronic reproduction. v. 41, no. 1,034 (Jan. 7, 1888)

<sup>3</sup> New York Times (1857-1922); Sep 16, 1902; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times with Index pg. 14

who worked as a clerk in a bank. George J. Aichele (1887 - 1960) is the third son, who was an insurance broker and lived in Rose Hill Ave in North Corner, New York. Lastly, Edward Richard Aichele (1893 - 1969) is the fourth son, who worked as an inspector in the office.<sup>4</sup> Edward was married to Clova Boylis Aichele and unlike the rest of the Aichele family, they lived in St. Petersburg, Florida.<sup>5</sup> One interesting fact among the four sons of John and Julionna is that Edward was the only child who got married, therefore, this might be one of the reasons why Edward is the owner of the Aichele Mausoleums since there would potentially be more people who could take care of the memorial.

### **Mausoleum specs**

The general order from the description of the specification of the Aichele Mausoleum will be explored in the fashion of from bottom to top, outside to inside, and larger scale to smaller scale. To make sure the information of construction and design of the mausoleum is accurate and comprehensive, the description written below is based on both my observation during my site visit at Woodlawn Cemetery and what was recorded in the *Specifications For The Manufacture & Completion Of A Mausoleum To Be Erected In Woodlawn Cemetery New York City By C. E. Tayntor Granite Company*.<sup>6</sup>

Exterior:

Within eyesight, the main material for Aichele Mausoleum is Light Barre Vermont Granite. The selection of this igneous stone really emphasizes the look of permanency and supremacy of the Mausoleum in which even with close observation, the surface of the barre granite is in bright and even color without any streaks, knots, waves, iron rust, or sap. Based on the specification, all exposed surfaces of the mausoleum are fine axed (known as ten-cut), with

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<sup>4</sup> New York Times (1857-1922); Jul 24, 1900; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times with Index pg. 10

<sup>5</sup> New York State Archives; Albany, New York; State Population Census Schedules, 1905; Election District: A.D. 30 E.D. 04; City: Manhattan; County: New York; Page: 30

<sup>6</sup> Archival Collections Portal; Avery Drawings & Archives Collections; Woodlawn Cemetery records, 1863-1999; Aichele, John William; Box MOC 01 Folder 9. Specifications For The Manufacture & Completion Of A Mausoleum To Be Erected In Woodlawn Cemetery New York City By C. E. Tayntor Granite Company.

the exception of the top of the roof stones which is to be eight-cut. The design of the Aichele Mausoleum is based on typical Greek Revival Style, with three steps at the front and four doric columns in front of the door. From observation, the steps and buttresses were all barre granite, the same type of material used for the other parts of the mausoleum, cut from one solid stone that ran the whole width of the buildings and extended to the front wall.



Front view of the Aichele Mausoleum showing steps, buttresses, doric columns, pediments, walls, and roof in barre granite.

The top granite surface of the entrance platform, buttresses and water table course were cut with enough pitch outward to properly drain the rain. The porch has a 3 feet depth that provides visitors a nice shaded space before entering the mausoleum. The stone over the porch and were used for the pediments were also cut in one solid stone extending to the whole width of the building as there is no vertical joint gap seen on the front surface. The pediments had deep panels and mouldings on both front and rear ends of the building. Based on the specification written for Aichele Mausoleum, each pediment contained two tenons out on the top bed, one on

each side that fit into corresponding mortices or sockets cut on the underside of the roof stones so that the roof stones will fit closely over these tenons, holding permanently and securely in position.<sup>7</sup> As one can see, the design of this Mausoleum was not only aesthetically elegant but also delicate and thoughtful in its engineering. The name "Aichele" was cut in raised axed letters on the front surface of the stone over the columns. The roof of this mausoleum consists of two stones running the full length of the building with a cap to cover the joint in the middle that ensures a non-leaking roof. The cap for the roof is not as obvious as many of the other Mausoleums, perhaps due to the intention to not interrupt with the overall form of the Mausoleum. The cap is only visible when the person uses a ladder to reach above the eaves or looking at the west side of the mausoleum from far away.



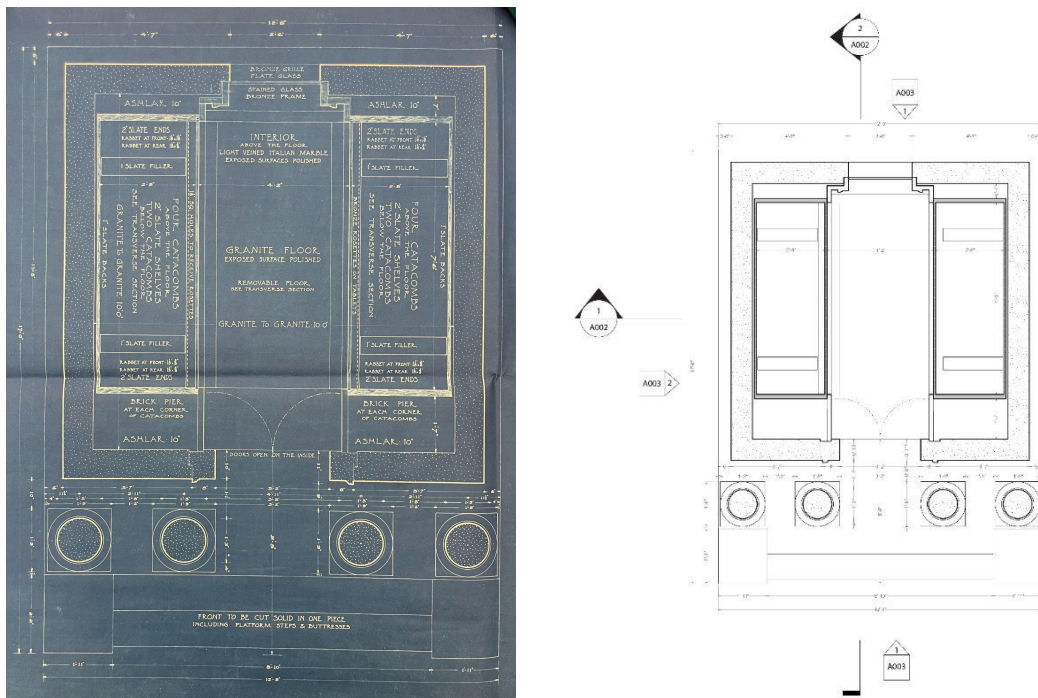
West elevation of the Aichele Mausoleum, showing the roof stone in one piece with a small cap on top.

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<sup>7</sup> Archival Collections Portal; Avery Drawings & Archives Collections; Woodlawn Cemetery records, 1863-1999; Aichele, John William; Box MOC 01 Folder 9. Specifications For The Manufacture & Completion Of A Mausoleum To Be Erected In Woodlawn Cemetery New York City By C. E. Tayntor Granite Company. Page: 1-5.

Interior:

The Aichele Mausoleum contains twelve catacombs, arranged as shown on plan and sections with four stacked on each side above the floor and two on each side below the floor with the fashion of stacking. The catacombs are all slate shelves for both above and below the floor and the slate plates are in one solid piece reaching from front to rear of each catacomb. Based on the original construction drawings of the Mausoleum, the slate shelves are 2" thick on the front and back and 1" thick on both sides.<sup>8</sup>



The original plan drawn by C. E. Tayntor Granite Company vs my own plan drawing, showing the interior layout with the catacombs.

The surface of these catacombs is highly polished light veined imported Italian marble in which these marble stringers were rabbeted to set on slate and doweled into the slate plates with bronze anchors. It is interesting that the specification mentioned that the quality of the marble in

<sup>8</sup> Archival Collections Portal; Avery Drawings & Archives Collections; Woodlawn Cemetery records, 1863-1999; Aichele, John William; Box MOC 01 Folder 9. C. E. Tayntor Granite Co., Construction Drawings.

Aichele Mausoleum is the same as the one used in the Spadone Mausoleum, which is another Mausoleum designed and built by C. E. Tayntor Granite Company. To create air ventilation spaces and prevent moisture being captured on the interior, all marble and slate are kept away from the granite wall. There is also an air space at the back of the catacombs, over the ceiling, and under the granite roof, which connects with ventilation holes below the roof stones, thus, providing an adequate circulation of air on the interior of the building. Moreover, each catacomb tablet has two bronze rosettes and the centers of which can be removed and attached with handles for the purpose of removing and replacing the tablets when desired.



John Jacob Aichele's slate catacomb with white Italian marble surface finishes and bronze rosettes.

The window or the stained glass of the mausoleum is a duplicate of the one in the Davis mausoleum with the approval from the purchaser for an amount of a hundred and fifty dollars. The pattern of the stained glass has a Saint holding an anchor by the sea with rays of sunlight forming a cross behind the Saint. The colors of the stained glass provides a warm and calm tone for the interior of the Aichele Mausoleum. To protect this piece of art glass, the stain glass

window has its back set on a plate glass. This mausoleum has double bronze doors that swing inwards, and are the same as the one in the Davis Mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery. Each door has an open grille that is hung with a plate glass shutter, securely set into a bronze frame to be able to open or close as desired.



Images from left to right: 1) the stained glass window and the interior of the Aichele Mausoleum 2) back view of the Aichele Mausoleum with bronze grilles outside of the stained glass window 3) the double bronze doors.

#### Foundation and Joint Details:

From the specification and original drawings of the Aichele Mausoleum, one can see that the material for the foundation is concrete, that is specifically composed of hard broken stone, clen sharp sand, and portland cement. Portland cement was being used consistently for all setting, grouting and pointing. The mortar is required to be mixed in small quantities during the construction so that the consistency of the mixture will not be affected by the stretch of time.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Archival Collections Portal; Avery Drawings & Archives Collections; Woodlawn Cemetery records, 1863-1999; Aichele, John William; Box MOC 01 Folder 9. Specifications For The Manufacture & Completion Of A Mausoleum To Be Erected In Woodlawn Cemetery New York City By C. E. Tayntor Granite Company. Page: 2, 8.



## Mausoleum Conditions

The overall present condition for the Aichele Mausoleum is fairly good with the exception of a small crack on the pediment that was maybe caused by freeze-thaw damage. There is a lot of biological growth on the roof stones as well as the stairs and buttresses that are not covered by the porch. The main reasons for these biological growth are: 1) vegetation 2) orientation. Due to the exuberance of the trees nearby, it is inevitable for the surface of the Mausoleum to stay dry and clean. Moreover, the stairs and buttresses are facing north where there is no direct sunlight that can dry off the excessive moisture on the stone surface, but the impact these biological growth has on granite is very limited. With careful examination on the interior, there are no signs of water leaking on the ceiling and the interior material surface conditions are fairly good as well.



The two images on the left show the biological growth on the roof, stairs, and buttresses of the Aichele Mausoleum.

The image on the right shows the crack at the joint of roof and pediment in the middle.

Correspondence letters between Woodlawn cemetery and Edward Richard Aichele, the owner and commissioner of the mausoleum, documented the condition and service of the Aichele Mausoleum in different years. The letters are quoted underneath for references :

On May 15, 1962, Woodlawn wrote to Edward R. Aichele “The estimated total fund for quarterly interior cleaning and reserve for future cleaning and repairs to exterior is \$17240.” On March 26, 1969, Woodlawn wrote to Edward R. Aichele “Mausoleum supervisor has made a careful inspection. Reported that the building is in good condition at present. He noticed a slight warping of the tables on the unoccupied catacombs, and he will spot seal these tablets to prevent further warping.” On July 24, 1967, Woodlawn wrote to Edward R. Aichele “Mausoleum is in good condition both inside and outside, no repairs required. The interior is cleaned every other month, six times a year.”<sup>10</sup>

Comparing what was written in these correspondences and the present condition of Aichele Mausoleum, one can see that the mausoleum has been kept in good condition throughout history due to two main reasons: 1) good design and construction 2) frequent maintenance with high service costs. It is interesting that there was no more correspondence about the condition and services of the Aichele Mausoleum. There were letters between the Woodlawn Cemetery and Edward Richard Aichele Jr. about the potential value of the empty catacombs and the possibility of selling them. Therefore my speculation would be that the financial condition of the Aichele family after 1967 was not as prosperous and may have difficulties to continuously afford the expensive frequent maintenance like before.

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<sup>10</sup> Archival Collections Portal; Avery Drawings & Archives Collections; Woodlawn Cemetery records, 1863-1999; Aichele, John William; Box MOC 01 Folder 9. Correspondences.

**Citations:**

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Archival Collections Portal; Avery Drawings & Archives Collections; Woodlawn Cemetery records, 1863-1999; Aichele, John William; Box MOC 01 Folder 9