

The Barney Mausoleum at Woodlawn Cemetery

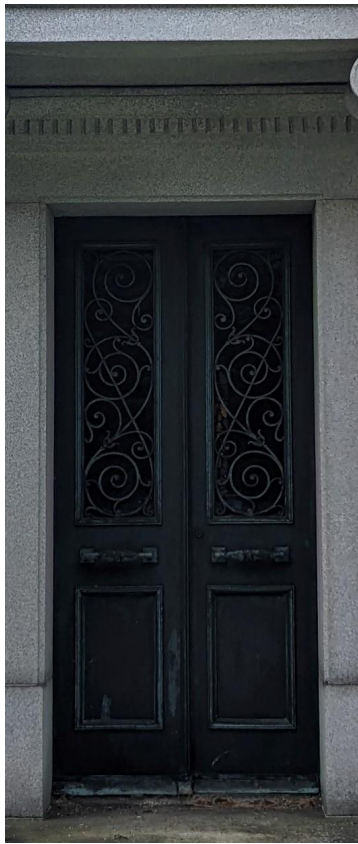
The Barney Mausoleum is located at the intersection of Pine and Park Avenues in the Pine section of Woodlawn Cemetery. The mausoleum is well-located within the cemetery, only a five to ten minute walk from the cemetery's Jerome Avenue entrance. The mausoleum is the final resting place of husband Hiram Bushnell and wife Jane Eales Barney. Designed in the Classical style, the mausoleum was built prior to 1900, before records were kept in Woodlawn. The architect of the mausoleum is unknown, and it is one of many temple-fronted Classical mausoleums in the cemetery.



Grimmer, *Barney Mausoleum*, 2023

The mausoleum is placed on a sizable circular plot with an approximately 30 foot radius. The size of the plot is notable due to the mausoleum's small footprint on the site, as one might expect a larger mausoleum given the large plot. The front facade consists of a honed granite base with four Ionic columns. The columns' shafts are made of polished granite while the capitals are made of honed granite. The capitals are particularly striking given their width and overwhelming size. The exterior

walls on the front facade consist of honed granite blocks. The roof of the mausoleum is made up of a honed granite pediment with the Barney name in raised lettering. The front facade has two honed granite steps leading up to the doorway, which has a honed granite frame with ornamentation at the top. The double doors to the mausoleum are likely made of bronze (or possibly iron) and have a vignette (“an ornament of running vine scrolls with...leafwork”)¹ pattern on the windows.



Door close-up

The side facades of the mausoleum are made of a combination of honed and rusticated (or rock face) granite blocks. The granite base consists entirely of rusticated blocks with a 5 inch honed trim on the top of the blocks and edges of the base, unlike the solely honed blocks used on the front facade. A level of honed granite blocks is then used, and then five levels of rusticated granite blocks

¹ Cyril M. Harris, *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1983), 566.

leading up to the honed granite pediment, which has two small vents. Most notably, the side facades each feature a large window with an entirely honed granite frame and bronze bars. Each frame houses a stained-glass window.



Left: eastern facade, right: western facade

The design of the rear facade is largely similar to that of the side facades, using a combination of rusticated and honed granite blocks. The rear facade also possesses a stained-glass window with a honed granite frame and bronze bars. A small difference is the lack of a vent on the pediment of the rear facade.



Rear facade

The interior of the mausoleum consists entirely of white matte marble. Marble is used for the ceilings and floors, with both a marble base trim and molding. Perhaps the most notable feature when entering the mausoleum is its three stained-glass windows (artist unknown). The windows consist of two matching windows on the building's western and eastern walls, and a separate design on the southern wall. The designs do bear one key similarity in that they both have Doric columns on the side with an arch connecting them. The western and eastern windows use a combination of green, blue and white glass to create an image of a six-pointed star with rays of light emitting from it. The six-pointed star is surrounded by a sea of white lilies, a common symbol of purity, rebirth and hope in Christianity.² The southern window consists of a mix of green, blue and yellow glass. The design of the southern window utilizes a ribbon below the archway with leaf draping down next to the window's Doric columns. The leaves resemble oak leaves, which were used to symbolize righteousness as referenced in the Bible.³ The center of the window has two bushels of long grass, and is suggested to symbolize the mortality and fragility of human life.⁴ All three windows have a marble frame around them.

² College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources, "The history and tradition of the Easter lily," University of Nevada, Reno, accessed November 6, 2023, <https://extension.unr.edu/publication.aspx?PubID=2140>.

³ Shelley S. Cramm, "A Lenten Look at Trees," Garden in Delight, accessed November 6, 2023, <https://www.gardenindelight.com/lenten-look-at-trees-oak/>.

⁴ Joseph M. Jordan, "What does grass symbolize in the Bible?," Christian Faith Guide, accessed November 6, 2023, <https://christianfaithguide.com/what-does-grass-symbolize-in-the-bible/>.



Left: western stained-glass window, right: southern stained-glass window

The mausoleum has two matching marble sarcophagi for Hiram and Jane Barney. The sarcophagi are of a considerable length at 8 feet and 5 inches long, almost measuring the full length of the mausoleum with approximately three inches of space between them and the opened door, and measure at 2 feet and 11 inches tall. The tops of each sarcophagi have Hiram and Jane's names engraved along with their years of birth and death. Both sarcophagi are of a simple design, with an engraved rectangle on each side. The only notable detail on the sides of the sarcophagi are the small bronze flowers at the top corners of the rectangle.



Left: Barney sarcophagi, right: bronze flower on sarcophagi



Sarcophagi engravings

While the overall condition of the mausoleum is good, there appears to be considerable staining on the western side facade, with some mild staining on the pediment of the eastern side facade. The mausoleum's front facade also has biological growth appearing on its granite steps and at the base of the columns. The stained-glass windows have been kept in good condition. While the mausoleum does have a large amount of dust buildup on the interior, the entirely marble interior has been kept in good shape. The interior does house a small wasp nest, although it does not appear to be active.



Left: staining on western facade, right: biological growth on on front facade columns

The mausoleum is the final resting place of husband and wife Hiram Bushnell Barney (born 1823 in Bennington, Vermont, died 1900 in New York City, New York) and Jane Eales Barney (born 1835 in New York, died 1915 in New Providence, New Jersey). Hiram was remembered as a successful businessman in Omaha, Nebraska. Jane was remembered as Hiram's widow, which is unsurprising given the times and unfortunately, the fact that she was considered "mentally unsound" at the time of her death. The Barneys had no children survive them, with the next of kin after Jane's passing being her cousin Louis V. Ennis. While the records on both are sparse, information has been gathered from US censuses and newspaper articles dating from 1850 to 1915 to develop a picture of Hiram and Jane.

Hiram was born in Bennington, Vermont in 1823 to a father of Welsh descent and a mother who traced her ancestry to the Pilgrims.⁵ He moved to New York City at the age of 16 to begin working. Approximately a decade later, he was recorded in the 1850 US federal census to be working as a clerk in a "not specified retail trade", while living in a boarding house with almost 20 other

⁵ "Obituary," *New York Tribune*, January 4, 1900, 7.

inhabitants.⁶ Hiram married Jane two years later on January 20, 1852 in a United Methodist Church, with Jane's parents in attendance.⁷ It is unclear how the couple met.

By 1860, Hiram had begun to amass some money, with his personal estate valued at \$4,000⁸, approximately \$148,000 in today's money⁹. The 1860 federal census no longer listed his occupation as "clerk" but now "merchant", suggesting that he started to move up in the world.¹⁰ This was around the time that he had entered into a partnership with his brother¹¹, establishing their business H.B. Barney & Brother in Omaha which grew to be one of the largest dry goods stores in the young city.¹² Hiram traveled between New York City and Omaha, and after the death of his brother reportedly transferred his home to Omaha¹³, although the 1870 federal census still lists his city of residence as New York City. The 1870 census is also the earliest appearance of the dwelling number 135. The dwelling aligns with his 1880 census address and home address at his time of passing, 135 East 45th Street, which has since been demolished.

⁶ "Hiram Barney," *1850 United States Federal Census*, New York Ward 7 District 1, New York, New York; Roll: 539; Page: 158a, digital image, Ancestry.com.

⁷ United Methodist Church, "Marriage of Jane Eales," *New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, U.S. United Methodist Church Records, 1775-1949*, digital image, Ancestry.com.

⁸ "Hiram Barney," *1860 United States Federal Census*, New York Ward 17 District 2, New York, New York; Roll: M653_809; Page: 686, digital image, Ancestry.com.

⁹ "CPI Inflation Calculator," Official Data, accessed November 7, 2023, <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "Obituary," *New York Tribune*, 7.

¹² "Pioneer Merchant of Omaha," *Omaha World Herald*, January 5, 1900.

¹³ "Obituary," *New York Tribune*, 7.

Hiram eventually retired in about 1880 with a “comfortable fortune” and moved back to New York City, with his 1880 census data now listing his occupation as “No Business”.¹⁴ While H.B. Barney & Bro. was remembered as a successful business in Omaha by its early settlers, but by the time of his passing in 1900 it had been forgotten due to not having been in business for two decades. Hiram later entered into business with H.B. Claffin & Company,¹⁵ which became one of New York’s largest dry stores at the turn of the century, likely growing the Barneys’ wealth.

PIONEER MERCHANT OF OMAHA

New York, Jan. 3.—Hiram B. Barney, a retired merchant, died at his home in this city today. With his brother, he established one of the largest dry goods stores in Omaha. One of his brothers was a founder of Denver.

H. B. Barney & Bro. was a dry goods firm doing business in Omaha in the early '80s. The firm is remembered by the old-timers, though it has not been in business here during the existence of the later generation.

“Pioneer Merchant of Omaha,” *Omaha World Herald*, January 5, 1900.

Hiram died on January 3, 1900 in the Barneys’ home at 135 East 45th Street after a short battle with pneumonia, having fallen ill on Christmas Day. Hiram was buried at Woodlawn shortly after on January 6, 1900. Hiram’s financial success was remembered at the time of his passing, having been dubbed a “Pioneer Merchant of Omaha” by the *Omaha World Herald*¹⁶. While the value of his estate

¹⁴ “Hiram B Barney,” 1880 United States Federal Census, New York City, New York, New York; Roll: 892; Page: 510B; Enumeration District: 538, digital image, Ancestry.com.

¹⁵ “Faith in Claffin Costly to Widow,” *New York Tribune*, March 15, 1916, 4.

¹⁶ “Pioneer Merchant of Omaha,” *Omaha World Herald*.

left to Jane is unknown, her estate was valued at \$500,000 at the time of her death in 1915¹⁷. The value of this estate was likely affected by Jane's refusal to dispose of her shares in H.B. Claflin & Co. before the company's eventual collapse.¹⁸

Jane Eales Barney (née Eales) was born in New York in 1835 to parents who had immigrated from England via Canada.¹⁹ At the age of 17, Jane married Hiram (then 29) in a United Methodist Church. While Hiram was remembered for his success as a merchant, Jane's lived a fairly typical life for a woman of her time, with her occupation having been recorded as either "null"²⁰ or as "housewife"²¹ when Hiram was alive and then "own income" after his death. Given Hiram and Jane's wealth, it is possible that Jane participated in philanthropic activities during his life although no such record could be found. Jane's 1880 census record does note her that she was "sick" and "insane", which suggests that the mental illness that would affect her later in life had already begun. Jane had spent time in the Bloomingdale Asylum, although the years of her time there were undocumented. During her stay at the asylum, she was diagnosed with early dementia and paranoia²²

According to the 1905 New Jersey state census, Jane moved to the borough of New Providence, New Jersey after Hiram's death. Jane purchased a farm in New Providence, and lived with

¹⁷ "17 Cousins Fight Mrs. Barney's Will," *New York Times*, March 11, 1916, 11.

¹⁸ "Faith in Claflin Costly to Widow," *New York Tribune*, 4.

¹⁹ "Jane Eales," *1850 United States Federal Census*, New York Ward 10, New York, New York; Roll: 545; Page: 79a, digital image, Ancestry.com.

²⁰ "Jane E. Barney," *1870 United States Federal Census*, New York Ward 19 District 5, New York, New York; Roll: M593_1003; Page: 135B, digital image, Ancestry.com.

²¹ "Jane E. Barney," *1880 United States Federal Census*, New York City, New York, New York; Roll: 892; Page: 336A; Enumeration District: 529, digital image, Ancestry.com.

²² "Faith in Claflin Costly to Widow," *New York Tribune*, 4.

two companions (Bella Weismen, then Phoebe Kent) during her ten years at the property. Jane's 1910 federal census data lists her a widow with no children, and subsisting off her own income. Jane likely suffered a considerable financial loss in 1914 due to her refusal to dispose of her shares in H.B. Claffin & Co. before the company's bankruptcy that year. However, as noted earlier, her estate was still considerably large at the time of her death in 1915, having been valued at \$500,000 (approximately \$15 million today)²³.

A clearer image of Jane emerged after her death, when she left her \$500,000 estate to her cousin Louis V. Ennis, a banker living in New York at the time. Jane's will was contested after her death by 17 cousins who argued that she was not of sound mind when she entrusted the majority of her estate with Ennis, with the 17 cousins only receiving \$1,000 each. While a jury ruled in favor of the cousins in 1917, Ennis appealed the decision, and ultimately lost in 1923. It was during this time that a considerable amount of Jane's personal details were disclosed by acquaintances and psychiatrists in support of the cousins' contestation. An alienist declared that Jane had displaced signs of "dementia praecox" and "paranoiac tendencies", and was of unsound mind and lacked the capacity to make a decision on her property and its heirs.²⁴ Various acquaintances of Jane testified in support of her being of unsound mind, sharing anecdotes of her sharing plates of food with her cats and cutting her lawn's grass with scissors in the rain.²⁵ Jane also made numerous unsound financial decisions during the time,

²³ "CPI Inflation Calculator," Official Data.

²⁴ "Alienist Undaunted by 3-Hour Question." *New York Tribune*, March 17, 1916, 7.

²⁵ "Aged Woman Tells of the Barney Cats." *New York Times*, March 14, 1916, 22.

such as not disposing of her shares in H.B. Clafin²⁶ and missing payments on securities. Ultimately, the picture of Jane's life depicts a woman that was unable to receive the help she certainly needed.



"17 Cousins Fight Mrs. Barney's Will." *New York Times*, March 11, 1916, 11.

²⁶ "Faith in Clafin Costly to Widow," *New York Tribune*, 4.

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