

Elizabeth Canon  
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Faculty: Francoise Bollack, Ward Dennis, Andrew Dolkart



Problem 3: Woodlawn Cemetery  
The William Gammie Mausoleum

## The Gammie Family

William Gammie was born on March 7, 1862 in Keig village, which is part of Aberdeenshire, Scotland.<sup>1</sup> Gammie immigrated to the United States in 1885 and married Margaret Jane Bannerman in New York in 1891.<sup>2</sup> The Gammie family resided in several residences on the Upper West Side in New York City, and their daughter Alice Jessie Gammie was born in 1892.<sup>3</sup> All three of the family members are in the William Gammie Mausoleum at Woodlawn Cemetery.

In New York City Gammie made a living as a speculative builder and created a company with another Scottish immigrant, John Robertson; together they established Robertson & Gammie, which was an active building company from 1898 through 1920.<sup>4</sup> The majority of Robertson & Gammie's projects were located on the Upper West Side, Morningside Heights, and the Bronx. Together Robertson and Gammie would purchase lots and commission an architect to design apartment buildings; most of their buildings were five story apartments built of brick and stone.<sup>5</sup> Robertson & Gammie often commissioned architect Henry Anderson, and several of their buildings in Morningside Heights designed by Anderson were demolished in the 1920's for Columbia University buildings.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "United States Federal Census." 1900. Ancestry.com. 2004.

<sup>2</sup> "United States Federal Census." 1910. Ancestry.com. 2004.

<sup>3</sup> "U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007." Ancestry.com. 2015.

<sup>4</sup> "North of 59th Street." *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, Vol. 61, February 12, 1898.

<sup>5</sup> "North of 59th Street." *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, Vol. 61, February 12, 1898.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Dolkart, *Morningside Heights: A History of Its Architecture & Development*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

In New York society, William Gammie was involved in The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesman, serving on the Literary and Pension Committees.<sup>7</sup> Gammie may have also been a member of the St. Andrews Society of New York, as he was mentioned to be dining at their 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet in *The Caledonian*, which was a book dedicated to the Scottish living in America.<sup>8</sup> Gammie was very proud of his Scottish origins, and was active in Scottish organizations in Manhattan.

### The William Gammie Mausoleum

The site of the Gammie mausoleum is located on the Clover plot of Woodlawn Cemetery. The Clover plot is organized in rows; from the road there are two rows of mausoleums, similar in size. Behind the mausoleums there are medium size grave markers, and further back there are smaller tombstones (Figure 1). The Gammie mausoleum is located in the second row of mausoleums and it sits fifteen feet back on its square site. The Gammie mausoleum stands out from the other mausoleums in the Clover plot because it has two apses projecting from each side of the rectangular plan. On each side of the Gammie mausoleum there are mausoleums of similar size and height, but they do not have any curvature, such as the apses in the Gammie mausoleum (Figure 2).

The mausoleum is close to the road, but is hidden behind the first row of mausoleums, and the visitor has to walk around the McVeigh mausoleum in order to enter the Gammie mausoleum. Immediately the Gammie mausoleum draws the visitor in with its ornate classical volutes that extend from the steps that lead to the mausoleum.

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<sup>7</sup> "Real Estate Transactions in City and Suburban Fields: Mechanics Have Been Organized Now 145 Years." *New York Tribune/ Herald Tribune*, March 8, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> "The 160th Anniversary Banquet of St. Andrew's Society, New York." *The Caledonian*, April 1, 1916, 350.

Although there is not an exact date for the construction of the mausoleum, the Gammie mausoleum was most likely built between 1885, after William Gammie immigrated to the United States, and before 1907 when Margaret Jane Gammie died, leaving William widowed. The time period the mausoleum was built reflects Gammie's choice of a neoclassical style, which was popular in America from 1895 to 1955.<sup>9</sup> In addition, an architect on the Presbrey-Leland staff designed the mausoleum.<sup>10</sup> Both in plan and elevation the mausoleum exhibits neoclassical elements including symmetry, a centered door, and Corinthian column capitals. The decorated bronze copper alloy door is centered at the top of the stairs and the name William Gammie is engraved into the stone above the door. Tall Corinthian pilasters, or engaged columns, flank either side of the door.

The exterior ornamentation of the William Gammie mausoleum is very personal and representative of Gammie's loyalty to Scotland. On the exterior of the mausoleum the capitals on the Corinthian columns are decorated with thistles, which are a national symbol of Scotland.<sup>11</sup> There are also small thistles hidden in the acanthus leaves engraved into both sides of the volutes on the stairs (Figure 3). Traces of classical architecture are also present in the Greek ornamentation of the egg-and-dart bands running along the top of the apses. The exterior of the mausoleum is Etowah Pink Georgia marble, however the exterior appears more of a brownish grey due to the weathering of the marble.<sup>12</sup> Inside the mausoleum the letter "G" is engraved into the marble walls of William Gammie's

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<sup>9</sup> McAlester, Virginia, and A. Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1984.

<sup>10</sup> "Gammie Mausoleum." Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York City.

<sup>11</sup> "The Scottish Thistle." In *The Scots Observer*, 272. Vol. 1. 1889.

<sup>12</sup> "Gammie Mausoleum." Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York City.

tomb. Both the exterior and the interior of the mausoleum have elements that make it personal to the Gammie family.

Similar to the exterior, the interior of the mausoleum is Etowah Pink Marble, which provides an overwhelming pink color. The pink color and the detailed stained-glass windows cannot be seen from the outside of the mausoleum and the colorful interior is a surprise to the visitor. Inside the mausoleum there is a bench in each alcove, further illustrating the inviting theme of the mausoleum; these niches are elements of classical architecture on the interior of the mausoleum (Figure 4). Above the benches there are opalescent stained-glass windows with yellow painted flowered trees in a sky background (Figure 5). On the exterior, the viewer can only see the sky background of the stained glass.

Another unique feature of the Gammie mausoleum is the combination of neoclassical elements. For example, the column capitals are Corinthian with added Ionic volutes, which implies a composite order, designed by the architect. In addition, the columns are also flat and recessed, unlike the typical rounded columns of classical architecture. An interesting feature of the mausoleum is the way the volumes come together in the back of the mausoleum. In plan the mausoleum is a square with two apses that extrude out of the sides, and in the rear there is another rectangle holding the tombs that connects to the square (Figure 6).

While the design of the Gammie mausoleum is unique, the building footprint is similar to the Neptune Society Columbarium in San Francisco built in 1898 (Figure 7).<sup>13</sup> On the interior of the mausoleum there are references to Roman or classical niches. In

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<sup>13</sup> "The Columbarium." Neptune Society Northern California, 2015. Accessed October 14, 2015.

conclusion, the William Gammie mausoleum is very personal and represents Gammie's ties to Scotland. The Gammie mausoleum stands out on the Clover plot due to its use of neoclassical architecture in a mannerist approach.

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Figure 1



Figure 2





Figure 3

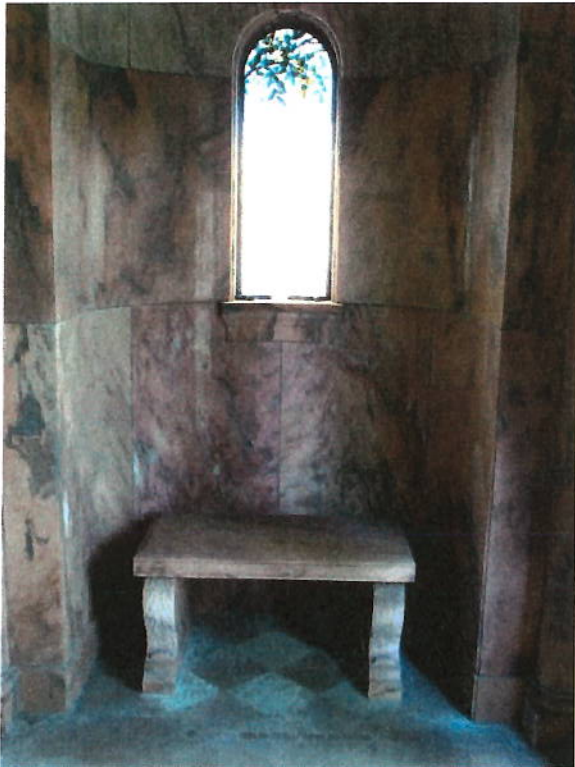


Figure 4

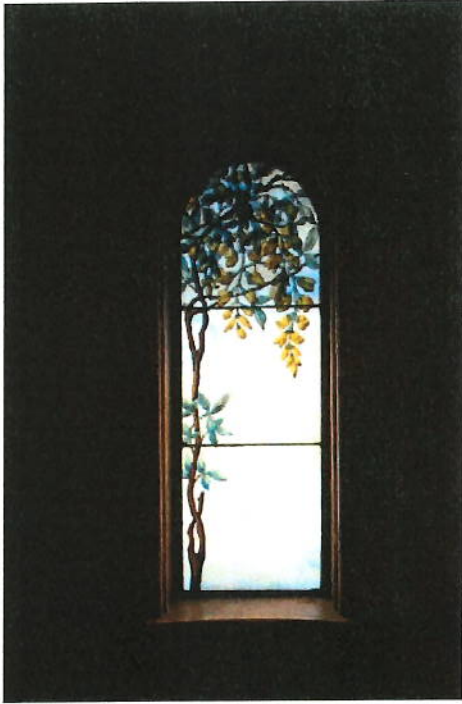


Figure 5



Figure 6

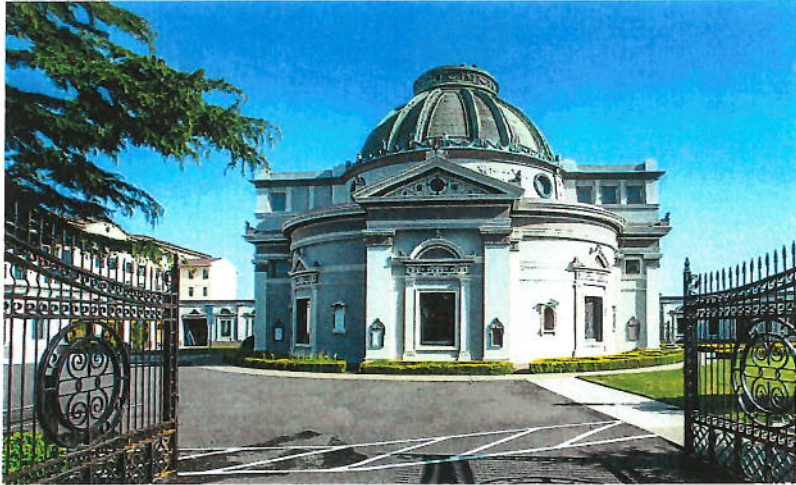


Figure 7  
*The Columbarium*. Neptune Society Northern California. <http://www.neptune-society.com/columbarium>.