

Truss Mausoleum



Bruno Elias

October 1, 2019

Project 2: Woodlawn Cemetery: Graphics and Research

Studio I: Andrew Dolkart, Claudia Kavenagh, Kate Reggev

Bruno Elias

Andrew Dolkart, Claudia Kavenagh, Kate Reggev

Studio I

October 1, 2019

Truss Mausoleum at Woodlawn Cemetery

The Truss Mausoleum is located in the Columbine Plot of Woodlawn Cemetery, Section 95, Lot number 46 (Fig. 1, 2). It is a monument commissioned in 1931 by Darwin W. Truss to Farrington, Gould & Hoagland, a high-end mausoleum and funerary monument company, as model number 3425. The mausoleum is in the third row of lots from Myosotis Avenue, and with no paved path leading towards it (Fig 3). It is occupied by Darwin Walter Truss and Minnie B. Truss, husband and wife who did not have any descendants.

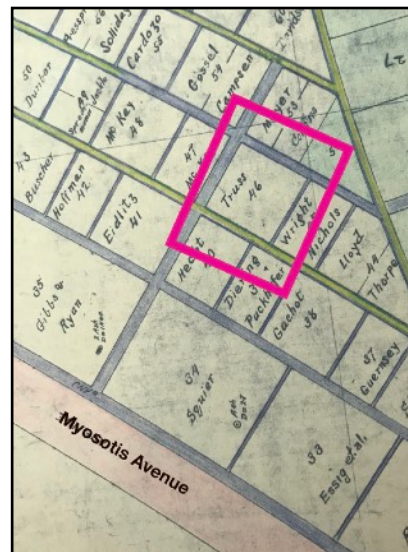
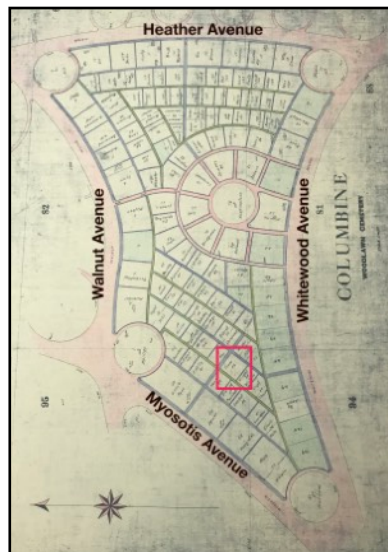


Fig 1 (left): Columbine plot. Fig. 2 (right): Location of the Truss lot within the plot¹.

¹ Woodlawn Cemetery records. Major Monuments Collection. Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.



Fig. 3: Truss mausoleum as approached from Myosotis Avenue.

Darwin W. Truss was born in 1859 in Brandon, Vermont, as the youngest of three sons (his father was from New York, and his mother was an immigrant from Wales).² In 1880, at age 21, he lived with his parents and siblings in their house on 13 Harrison Street in Syracuse, New York.³ He got married at age 24 to the then 20 year old Minnie B. (whose maiden name is unknown), born in Canada to Irish immigrant parents. She was naturalized after marriage.

Prior to 1908 the couple moved to New York City, where they lived in a rented apartment property on 143 West 73rd Street, a building that still exists today as an upper-middle class apartment building.⁴ During that time Darwin was the provider of the household, working as a

² United States Census 1930, ED 0396 [Enumeration District - 0396], page 15B.

³ United States Census 1880, ED 216 [Enumeration District - 216], page 359A

⁴ United States Census 1930, ED 0396 [Enumeration District - 0396], page 15B.

treasurer and co-owner of Hegeman Printing Corp (at 460 West 34th Street) in New York.⁵

Before his involvement in the printing trade in New York City, he was a producer of musical comedies and light operas, having managed the local companies Primrose and West Minstrels.

After his wife's passing in 1931, he retired.⁶

Minnie was unemployed, and was a participant in a number of social events, as an active member of the American Criterion Society and the Eclectic Club, that held meetings, luncheons and varied events in venues like the Plaza and the Waldorf-Astoria hotels. Minnie was the organizer of the Auction Bridge Club⁷.

Minnie B. was the first one to pass away at 68 years old on July 9th 1931, and was interred 2 days later on July 11th. Her funeral service and, a decade later, Darwin's funeral was held at Frank E. Campbell "Funeral Church" on Madison Avenue in New York City.⁸ Darwin W. acquired and planned for the mausoleum at Woodlawn the very same day of his wife's passing, according to correspondence between him and the engineer of Farrington, Gould & Hoagland.⁹ The mausoleum chosen is an exact duplicate of Louise A. Turner's mausoleum (also at

⁵ "Darwin W. Truss Dies; Was Printing Executive". New York Herald Tribune (1926-1962); New York, NY [New York, N.Y.]13 June 1941: 16A. *ProQuest*. Web. Accessed 24 September 2019

⁶ *ibid*.

⁷ "Events in the World of Society". New - York Tribune (1911-1922); New York, NY [New York, N.Y.]03 May 1914: C1. *ProQuest*. Web. Accessed 24 September 2019 <<http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/96942391?accountid=10226>>

⁸ "Darwin W. Truss Dies; Was Printing Executive". New York Herald Tribune. 13 June 1941: 16A. *ProQuest*. Web. Accessed 24 September 2019.

"Obituary 5 -- no Title." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Jun 11, 1931. Accessed 24 September 2019. <<http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/99337232?accountid=10226>>

⁹ Correspondence from Engineer of Farrington, Gould & Hoagland, 11 July 1931, Woodlawn Cemetery records. Mausoleum Owners Correspondence Collection. Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.

Woodlawn, on the Chestnut plot, lot number 15032), but with the decorative vases selected from another model. The vases in front of the mausoleum were supposed to have pansies planted in them, a flower that symbolically is associated in cemeteries with remembrance.¹⁰

Almost exactly a decade later, on July 11th, 1941, Darwin suddenly passed at age 81 in the bathtub of his apartment and joined his wife in the mausoleum. As Darwin and Minnie didn't have any children of their own, the family survived through Darwin's nieces¹¹.

According to the instructions and correspondence, the mausoleum's foundations were to be laid on or before August 10th, 1931 feet from the rear lot lines, following the designs submitted on July 15th 1931.¹²

Following the commissioned design, the structure is a rectangular freestanding monument with rusticated granite facades. The building faces north, with a base where two pairs of rusticated square columns hold up a stylized entablature and pediment, also in rough-hewn granite. The bronze door is between the columns, with a decorative floral motif and a draped female figure. (Fig. 4.)

¹⁰ Estimate of Perpetual Care Fund, Woodlawn Cemetery, 9 July 1941, Located in the Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.

¹¹ Obituary of Darwin W. Truss. *New York Herald Tribune (1926-1962)*; New York, NY [New York, N.Y.]13 June 1941: 16. 3 June 1941: 16A. *ProQuest*. Web. Accessed 24 September 2019.

¹² Correspondence from E. D. Riehl of Farrington, Gould & Hoagland to Woodlawn Superintendent, 15 July 1931, Woodlawn Cemetery records. Mausoleum Owners Correspondence Collection. Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.



Fig. 4: North facade.

The ornamented bronze door carries the signature of 'Loester Sculptor ©' at the bottom (Fig. 5, 6), indicating it was designed by Julius C. Loester, a sculptor who was associated with a number of statuary manufacturing foundries, such as Gorham Manufacturing Company, Eagle Bronze Works and Roman Bronze Works.¹³



Fig. 5 (left), 6 (right): Bronze ornamented door and the detail of the artist's signature at the bottom.

The east and west facades do not have any openings aside from two pairs of metal vents on the bottom and the top of the walls that are very likely copper due to their green oxidation

¹³ Art Inventories Catalog. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS). Accessed 24 September 2019. <<http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=Loester%2C+Julius+C>>

pattern (Fig. 7). The surface of the granite isn't rusticated or worked uniformly across the elevations, with some of the blocks having rougher surfaces than others. The motivation behind this difference in treatment is unknown, but results in a varied rhythm of the surface in the more rough-hewn surface than the honed granite.



Fig 7: West facade, with the noticeable difference of surface texture.

The south facade is the only elevation with a window. It has a bronze window frame with a protective plate of glass on the outside that is divided into four panes. From the exterior, this protective glass conceals the painted glass artwork contained within (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8: South facade

The monument's composition reinforces strong horizontal lines, in a way adhering to traditional tripartite organization of a slightly wider base, a mid-section and again a wider top or crowning section.

The exterior and interior floor are granite, possibly Barre (Fig. 9). Due to the lack of further archival evidence to confirm the attempt to match the material, a probe should be collected to identify the type of granite. The interior walls, ceiling and crypt of the mausoleum are clad in a polished stone that morphologically resembles Tennessee pink limestone due to its color, veins and use as cladding (Fig. 10). The same limestone was chosen for a bench inside of the mausoleum. As this bench was not included in the original drawings, it is unclear when it was added. Inside the mausoleum it is possible to see the drawing on the painted glass window, depicting a bucolic landscape with coniferous trees and fields of flowers with mountains in the background. This scene is possibly evocative of Vermont and eastern Canada, the places of birth of Minnie and Darwin (Fig. 11). While the stained-glass artwork had no signature, it was accounted for in the scale drawings of the mausoleum.



Fig. 9 (left): Comparison of Barre granite sample and mausoleum. Fig. 10: Polished limestone interior.



Fig. 11: The painted glass on the window, with orange lead-glass fillets on the border.

Archival documentation about the construction offers only the cost estimates for the excavation and foundation work, in total \$453.58 at the time (roughly to current day \$7,565, when adjusted for inflation).¹⁴ The mausoleum was endowed with the sum of \$4,000.00 put into a trust for the perpetual maintenance and upkeep of the plot. This fund was to be used for the repair, preservation and renewal of any structures or plantings that would be in the plot. It was bequest through Darwin's will and executed through the attorneys Holm, Whitlock & Scarff¹⁵.

Regarding the conservation aspects of the mausoleum, the granite on the exterior of the monument does not present visible cracks or damage. However, there is considerable biological growth, particularly along the east and west facades, and lichen growth spots on the lower portion of the eastern elevation and on the decorative vases in the front of the mausoleum.

¹⁴ W. Franch, *The Woodlawn Cemetery Mausoleums, Monuments, Etc.*, 14 July 1931, Located in the Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.

¹⁵ Correspondence from J. J. N. Edwards, Assistant Secretary of Woodlawn Cemetery, 2 December 1942. Woodlawn Cemetery records. Mausoleum Owners Correspondence Collection. Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.

Due to the rustication of the granite, water flows according to the curves of the surface. This results in patterns and streaks along the areas with biological growth, and indicates a large quantity of water flowing from the top vents (Fig. 12). The amount of biological growth spots indicate water retention, which was corroborated by inspecting the interior of the mausoleum.



Fig. 12: Water run off path highlighted from top east vent (near south elevation).

Internally, the polished Tennessee pink limestone cladding in the west interior face presents possible salt damage and moisture retention spots (Fig. 13), resulting in three possible situations. It could be that the granite exterior might be retaining a lot of humidity; or there is a cavity between the outer granite wall and inner limestone cladding through which ground moisture can rise into and condense; or that roof joints aren't properly sealed, as the mausoleum's original drawings display an attic that could also be accumulating water.



Fig. 13: Water spots on the interior cladding.

Although there is no information about how the cladding interfaces with the granite exterior walls, if there is any metal anchorage or metallic fixed elements the moisture can result in damage to this anchoring. In the future this damage can cause the pieces of limestone to be dislodged or even come loose. Therefore, further investigation to source the moisture retention is advised.

Overall, with moisture retention being the main concern internally in the otherwise structurally sound mausoleum, the monument isn't immediately at risk. The exterior of the construction could be cleaned in order to remove the biologic growth

Works Cited

- Art Inventories Catalog. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS). Accessed 24 September 2019. <<http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=Loester%2C+Julius+C>>
- Correspondence from E. D. Riehl of Farrington, Gould & Hoagland, 15 July 1931, Located in the Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.
- Correspondence from Engineer of Farrington, Gould & Hoagland, 11 July 1931, Located in the Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.
- Correspondence from J. J. N. Edwards, Assistant Secretary of Woodlawn Cemetery, 2 December 1942. Located in the Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University
- "Darwin W. Truss Dies; Was Printing Executive". New York Herald Tribune (1926-1962); New York, NY [New York, N.Y]13 June 1941: 16A. *ProQuest*. Web. Accessed 24 September 2019.
- Estimate of Perpetual Care Fund, Woodlawn Cemetery, 9 July 1941, Located in the Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.
- "Events in the World of Society". New - York Tribune (1911-1922); New York, NY [New York, N.Y]03 May 1914: C1. *ProQuest*. Web. Accessed 24 September 2019. <<http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/96942391?accountid=10226>>
- "Obituary 5 -- no Title." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Jun 11, 1931. Accessed 24 September 2019. <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/99337232?accountid=10226>.
- United States Census Year: 1880; Census Place: Syracuse, Onondaga, New York; Roll: 908; Page: 359A; Enumeration District: 216.
- United States Census Year 1930, Census Place: Manhattan, New York, New York; Page: 15B; Enumeration District: 0396; FHL microfilm: 2341288.
- "What is Going on in the World of Women's Clubs: Discussions of Public Questions Enliven Meetings Women of 1915 Club Plan to Advance War Preparedness." *New*

- *York Tribune (1911-1922)*, Nov 14, 1915. <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/575467094?accountid=10226>.

W. Franch, *The Woodlawn Cemetery Mausoleums, Monuments, Etc.*, 14 July 1931,
Located in the Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts
Library, Columbia University.

Woodlawn Cemetery records. Located in the Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery
Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University. Edited.