

The Thorley Mausoleum



Tayntor Granite Co (1903)

In Memory of Lulu Kathryn Lyons

Charles Thorley

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HP Studio 1

Introduction

The Thorley Mausoleum is a Greek inspired structure commissioned in 1903 by Charles Thorley, in memory of his youngest daughter, Lulu (Figure 1). There are seven individuals interred in the mausoleum, composed of Thorley and his wife, his daughters, the husband of his eldest daughter, and two infants (Figures 2,3). Charles Thorley was a preeminent florist as well as banker and real estate investor at the turn of the 20th century. Through his celebrated floral shop on Fifth Avenue, Thorley, born in 1854, instigated numerous floral arrangement trends and positioned himself as a 'self made man' within the upper-class social set of New York City. Lulu Thorley, for whose remains the building was constructed and dedicated, died in the month following the birth and death of her only child, who is interred with her. This tragic narrative directs not only the mausoleum's existence, but also informs features, such as the stained glass, within the structure.

The Producers: The Tayntor Granite Company

The Thorley Mausoleum was constructed by the Tayntor Granite Company, a prolific manufacturer and designer of mausoleum structures at Woodlawn Cemetery. Charles E. Tayntor owned a large granite quarry in Barre, Vermont and Hallowell, Maine. The Vermont quarry boasted the largest steel derrick in the world which lifted the largest single piece of stone, fifty-seven and a half tons, in 1895.¹ The impressive operation evidenced their immense influence in granite quarrying in the United States at the turn of the century. Further, the Tayntor

¹"Biggest Derrick in the World: Has a Mast 99 Feet High and Has Lifted a Stone Weighing 5 Tons.," *St. Louis Post - Dispatch (1879-1922)*, May 19, 1895.

Granite Company channeled regular commissions through mausoleum production and design. Tayntor's patented roof design bolstered the mausoleum enterprise.² Advertisements of the time claimed that roof stones were 'locked in a way which, according to the builder, makes it impossible to remove them except by turning the edifice upside down'.³ Patent 722,392, which supported this claim, awarded Tayntor Co exclusive rights to a roofing system in which a central roof stone with ribbed edges were fixed to side roof stones which have ribs along their inner top edges.⁴ In 1910, Tayntor pursued a patent infringement case against another mausoleum manufacturer who employed the feature.⁵ Tayntor's case was dismissed, the judge finding no "patentable novelty" in their roofing system.⁶ However, having exclusive rights to this roofing system from 1903 to 1910 enabled Tayntor and Co to carry out a considerable number of mausoleum commissions. A drawing produced for the Thorley Mausoleum documented the use of this patented feature, along the roof of the side elevation (Figure 4).⁷ Correspondence for the construction of the Thorley Mausoleum makes it clear that the Tayntor Granite Co positioned themselves as an all-inclusive manufacturing enterprise, from quarrying materials, drafting patented plans and final construction.⁸

The Thorley mausoleum was designed according to other Tayntor Granite Co precedents.

Specification documents produced for the structure dictate that the overall plan, exterior and

² "Litigation Over Mausoleum Roof Patent," *Park and Cemetery and Landscape Gardening (1900-1931)* 20, no. 9 (November 1, 1910): 409.

58th Congress, "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1903" (Washington: Government Printing Office, March 10, 1903).

³ Tayntor Granite Company, "Tayntor Granite Company," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 26, 1916.

⁴ "Litigation Over Mausoleum Roof Patent."

⁵ "Litigation Over Mausoleum Roof Patent."

⁶ "Litigation Over Mausoleum Roof Patent."

⁷ Charles Thorley, major monuments folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Archive, Avery Architecture Library Columbia University, Box MM 4.1, Folder 77. INCLUDE DRAWING NUMBER

⁸ Charles Thorley, major monuments folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Archive, Avery Architecture Library Columbia University, Box MM 4.1, Folder 77.

interior finishes be based on the mausoleum erected for J. B. Rose at Woodlawn in 1901.⁹ The Thorley Mausoleum, however, is grander in detailing and size. The Thorley Mausoleum is finished in the Doric order. The Rose Mausoleum is completed in a simpler order with no detailing on the entablature and is nearly a foot shorter (Figure 5).¹⁰ Nonetheless the similitude of the two structures demonstrate Tayntor Granite Co's contracting and design process, in which existing structures were used as samples or reference documents for producing other works.

The Individuals: Charles Thorley and family

Charles Thorley started from humble beginnings. In 1894, at fifteen, he opened a small flower shop on 14th street.¹¹ He moved his shop "The House of Flowers" to 604 Fifth Avenue and quickly began attracting wealthy clientele.¹² His floral shop popularized many trends in floral arrangements, including ribbons to tie up bouquets, long stemmed flowers loose in boxes, and orchids.¹³ In 1922, Thorley estimated he spent 12,000,000 dollars a year on flowers.¹⁴ He attested that the key to advancement in the floral industry was "personality", an attribute which can be found in Thorley's prominent role in local politics, real estate, and sport.¹⁵ Thorley had a vast array of interests and investments, as the boxing commissioner, as well as the lease holder to the

⁹ J. B Rose, major monuments folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Archive, Avery Architecture Library Columbia University, Box MM 3.2, Folder 119.

¹⁰J. B Rose, major monuments folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Archive, Avery Architecture Library Columbia University, Box MM 3.2, Folder 119.

¹¹ "Times Square Loses Name That Abided 60 Years: Immortalization in Granite Proves All Too Mortal Refacing of Times Tower to Remove Thorley 'Plaques' A Budding Career Lease at \$4,000 a Year," *The New York Times*, August 24, 1963.

¹²"Times Square Loses Name That Abided 60 Years."

¹³ "Half a Century of Flowers: Recollections of Fifty Years in a Big Business That Touches Closely Both Life and Death.," *The New York Times*, October 21, 1923.

¹⁴ "Half a Century of Flowers."

¹⁵ "Half a Century of Flowers."

Times Tower.¹⁶ In 1902, Thorley bought a hundred-and-five year lease on the corner property of Broadway and 42nd street for 4,000 dollars a year. He then subsequently leased it to the Times for 27,000 a year. His only condition was to inscribe his name on the new building, and any other structure which comes after. The Times purchased the leasehold from Jennie Thorley on his death in 1923.¹⁷ Thorley's plaque was removed by the Allied Chemical Corporation, which purchased the property in 1963.

His legacy extended beyond real estate and floral influence. Thorley died on November 13th 1923, on his way back to New York from a collegiate sports game.¹⁸ His funeral was a grand affair, more than 1,000 persons attended at the West End Collegiate Church, including well-known figures.¹⁹ A memorial meeting was held at the Hadley Rescue Hall, a social services venue at 203 Bowery, in the wake of Thorley's passing. Two hundred disenfranchised individuals attested to Thorley's legacy as a philanthropic figure who 'had by kindness and money helped men to their feet when they were in trouble.'²⁰ Thorley, as one who started from little, was primarily interested in supporting enterprising opportunities.²¹ Following the death of his youngest daughter, to whom the Thorley Mausoleum is dedicated, the Thorleys established The Lulu Thorley Lyons Home for Crippled and Delicate Children in 1905. The mansion in Claverack, New York, was a non-sectarian school and home which promoted education through

¹⁶ Fred Hawthorne, "Boxing Notes," *New - York Tribune* February 5, 1918.

¹⁷ "Times Square Loses Name That Abided 60 Years."

¹⁸ "Chas. F. Thorley Dies Following Princeton Game: Florist Succumbs in Car at Pennsylvania Station; Excitement Is Believed to Have Overtaxed Heart Charles F. Thorley," *New - York Tribune*, November 11, 1923.

¹⁹ "More Than 1,000 Attend Funeral of Charles F. Thorley: Squad of Motorcycle and Mounted Policemen Serve as Escort for Body; Hulbert Among Pallbearers," *New - York Tribune*, November 14, 1923.

²⁰ "Bowery Derelicts Pay Thorley Honor: Two Hundred Gather at Memorial Meeting for Florist in Rescue Hall. Ex-Convict Voices Praise. Tells of Instances Where He Helped Down-and-Outers With Money and Kind Words," *The New York Times*, November 21, 1923.

²¹ "Bowery Derelicts Pay Thorley Honor."

“manual skills’. It was the express wish of Thorley that the children be self-supporting and given an allowance for the work they did.²² The wills of Thorley and his wife further display a philanthropic interest. On his passing, Thorley’s will transferred the holdings of his floral company to long time employees.²³ The will for Jennie Thorley stipulated thirty-thousand dollars to the Lulu Thorley Home, ten-thousand to the Society for the Destitute Blind, ten-thousand to the Volunteers of America, five-thousand to the West End Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church and the remainder for the establishment of a charitable, non-sectarian home for ‘needy and aged men and women’ known as the Charles Thorley Home.²⁴ The mausoleum is also the resting place of Thorley’s eldest daughter, Countess Frances Vonder Palen-Klar, and her husband, Count Adolphe Vonder Palen Klar. Frances Palen-Klar died on October 25, 1944 and Adolphe Palen Klar in 1948. When the Count died his will set aside a scholarship fund in memory of his wife. The fund awarded a four-year college scholarship to one student graduating from Greenwich High School.²⁵ This detail further evidences of the social and philanthropic influence of the extended Thorley family.

Building Description

The Thorley Mausoleum is an impressive granite structure in the northeast corner of the Pine plot of Woodlawn Cemetery. The contractor who carried out the mausoleum, from sourcing materials to the final construction, was the C. E. Tayntor Granite Company of New York. The

²²“Give Home for Cripples. Mr and Mrs. Charles Thorley Donate Mansion Near Hudson,” *The New York Times*, May 3, 1905.

²³ “Employees to Operate Thorley Florist Business,” *New - York Tribune* November 23, 1923.

²⁴ “Mrs Jennie Thorley Dead at Hotel Here: Widow of Charles Thorley, the Capitalist, Sportsman and Fifth Avenue Florist.,” *The New York Times*, May 10, 1935;

“Mrs. Jennie Thorley’s Will Filed,” *New York Herald Tribune* May 15, 1935.

²⁵ “Engineer’s Will Aids Pupils in Greenwich,” *The Hartford Courant* July 16, 1948.

edifice measures fifteen feet in width and eighteen feet and four inches in height with foundations that extend six feet deep. It is a Greek inspired tetra-prostyle temple, or a portico carried by four columns in the Doric order. The entablature continues along each elevation with triglyphs at each corner of the frieze. A classical pediment sits atop the entablature of the front and rear elevations. The light granite used for the structure was excavated from Tayntor and Co's quarry in Hallowell Maine. The granite is fine-hammered on the platform, steps, columns, entablature and pediment as well as on the first course of stone and on the caps of the top course of stone. The door jambs and lintel are also finely hammered with Thorley's name carved in relief. The remaining granite blocks used for the mausoleum are rock-faced. The interior of the mausoleum is finished in light Italian marble paneling. Proceeding from the double-doors is a central vestibule with a stained-glass window on each side wall. Across from the entrance on the rear wall is another discrete stained-glass window framed by ten catacombs arranged five to a side and made of slate.

The Stained-Glass Window: Memorials to Lulu Thorley

The stained-glass window opposite the main entrance to the Thorley Mausoleum depicts a standing female figure in a flowing white dress (Figure 6). She is standing before a small pool amongst a bed of lilies, symbols of purity and fertility. Her left hand reaches for a lily, while her right hand is raised to her chest with two fingers raised. Above her head is a winged cherub. At the bottom the window is dedicated "In Loving Memory of Lulu Kathryn Lyons. Oct. 8th. 1903". The work itself, titled *Angel and Cherub*, is rich with symbolic interpretation as it is established that Lulu Thorley died giving birth along with her child. The window was designed by Frances White, who produced another glass window for the West End Collegiate Church on 77th Street

(Figure 7).²⁶ The latter window was also commissioned by Charles Thorley in honor of his daughter and bears the dedication “Not Changed But Glorified”. This phrase is lettered on the bottom of the Church window and expressed Mrs. Thorley’s wish that the subject of the window represent the figure of “Resurrection”.²⁷

Because of their shared context – both designed by White for the Thorley family– it is valuable to investigate the windows for the Thorley Mausoleum and the West End Collegiate Church as companion pieces. The window at the Church depicts fourteen female figures surrounding a central female figure who bears a striking resemblance to the figure in the Thorley Mausoleum window. A closer comparison of the two figures reveals that they are both represented in the draping garments, with similar hairstyle and facial features. Both central figures recall the stained glass of Edward Burne-Jones of Morris & Co, who produced influential stained glass on behalf of the Arts and Crafts movement. One can see the similarity in the rendering of the figure’s drapery in Burne-Jones’s window of Saint Cecilia. (Figure 8).

Further, the companion windows interpretation enriches an analysis of Frances White’s authority as a female stained-glass artist. The condition of female stained glass artists in America in this period is one that still warrants further study. For female stained-glass makers, their positionality towards the craft was often dictated by their attachments to male family members. Betty Macdowell addresses these tenuous conditions under which female artists worked as a ‘mixed blessing’. A blessing which offered commissions and opportunities for little or no

²⁶ Francis R. Lowe, “Stained Glass Window Art in America,” *Broadway Magazine*, December 1904, 16. Dutch Reformed Church in America, “A Beautiful Window Unveiled,” *Christian Intelligencer* 79, no. 16 (April 15, 1908): 249.

²⁷ Dutch Reformed Church in America, “A Beautiful Window Unveiled,” *Christian Intelligencer* 79, no. 16 (April 15, 1908): 249.

acknowledgment.²⁸ Frances White was the sister of Walter Janes, who had a stained-glass window practice.²⁹ White was active from 1897 and 1903. This paper was able to identify four known stained-glass windows attributed to Frances White and Janes.³⁰ Throughout, her work displays a rich understanding of stained glass window production techniques, conventions and stylistic decisions. The Thorley Mausoleum window displays the use of both opalescent glass, which was popularized by celebrated American firms like La Farge and Tiffany Studios, as well hand painted details.³¹ However, opalescent glass was falling out of favor with stained glass makers as dirt could settle between layers and quickly age a work.³² Further, a renewed interest in medieval architectural spaces and craftsmanship encouraged stained glass makers to explore more ‘antique’ designs and techniques.³³ Frances White was clearly aware of this technical and stylistic shift, and responds to these developments in her window for the West End Collegiate Church. Here, she utilizes many individual plates of colored glass which are richly painted. This denser composition, compared to that one at the Thorley Mausoleums, displays White’s awareness of architectural setting. It is notable that Thorley decided to work with White on more than one occasion. This established relationship attests to White’s legitimacy within the field.

Building Today

The building today stands in good condition with no structural deterioration. Owing to Tayntor & Co’s roofing system the interior only sustains slight evidence of soiling and biological growth.

²⁸ Betty Ann MacDowell, “American Women Stained Glass Artists, 1870s to 1930s: Their World and Their Windows” (Ph.D., Michigan, Michigan State University), 1986, 124.

²⁹ Mary F. White. Year: 1900; Census Place: Manhattan, New York, New York; Roll: 1103; Page: 15; Enumeration District: 0470

³⁰ These may be found in Appendix A: Work attributed to Frances White

³¹James L. Sturm, *Stained Glass from Medieval Times to the Present: Treasures to Be Seen in New York*, 1st ed (New York: Dutton, 1982). 34-35.

³²MacDowell, “American Women Stained Glass Artists, 1870s to 1930s.”, 277.

³³Sturm, *Stained Glass from Medieval Times to the Present.*, 62.

Additionally, the deep foundations have aided to an even settling of the building. The mausoleum was endowed by Charles Thorley.³⁴ However, his granddaughter, Mrs. Frances Balding, closed the structure to additional internment on the passing of her step-father, Adolphe Palen-Klar in 1948.³⁵ Additionally, correspondence reveals that Mrs. Balding was keen to remove surplus funds from her grand-father's mausoleum endowment in 1944.³⁶

In closing, The Thorley Mausoleum is a monument to his daughter's passing, in the nature of its commission and the stained-glass window within. Charles Thorley's investment in his daughter's legacy, from the mausoleum to the West End Collegiate Church, displays the way in which a public record may uncover private grief.

³⁴ Charles Thorley, major monuments folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Archive, Avery Architecture Library Columbia University, Box MOC 14.1, Folder 43.

³⁵ Charles Thorley, major monuments folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Archive, Avery Architecture Library Columbia University, Box MOC 14.1, Folder 43.

³⁶ Charles Thorley, major monuments folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Archive, Avery Architecture Library Columbia University, Box MOC 14.1, Folder 43.

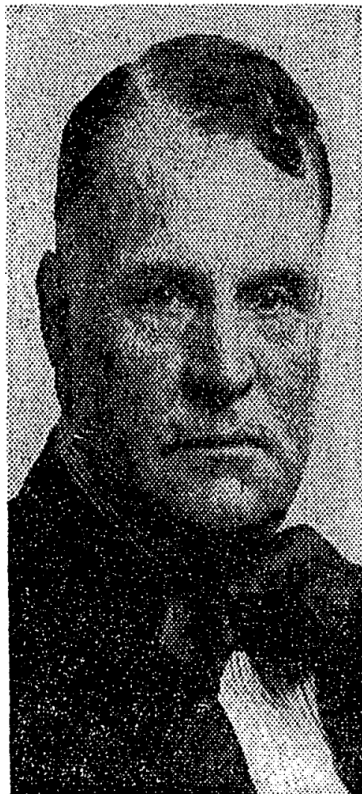


Figure 1. Charles Thorley.³⁷ Image courtesy of the New York Times.



Figure 2. Mrs. Jennie Thorley. Image courtesy of the New York Times.³⁸

³⁷ "Times Square Loses Name That Abided 60 Years."

³⁸ "Blue Bird Ball Will Be Gala Social Affair: All Boxes Are Sold Mrs. Charles Thorley," *New - York Tribune (1911-1922)*, December 14, 1919.



Figure 3. Thorley Mausoleum, 1903. Image courtesy of author.

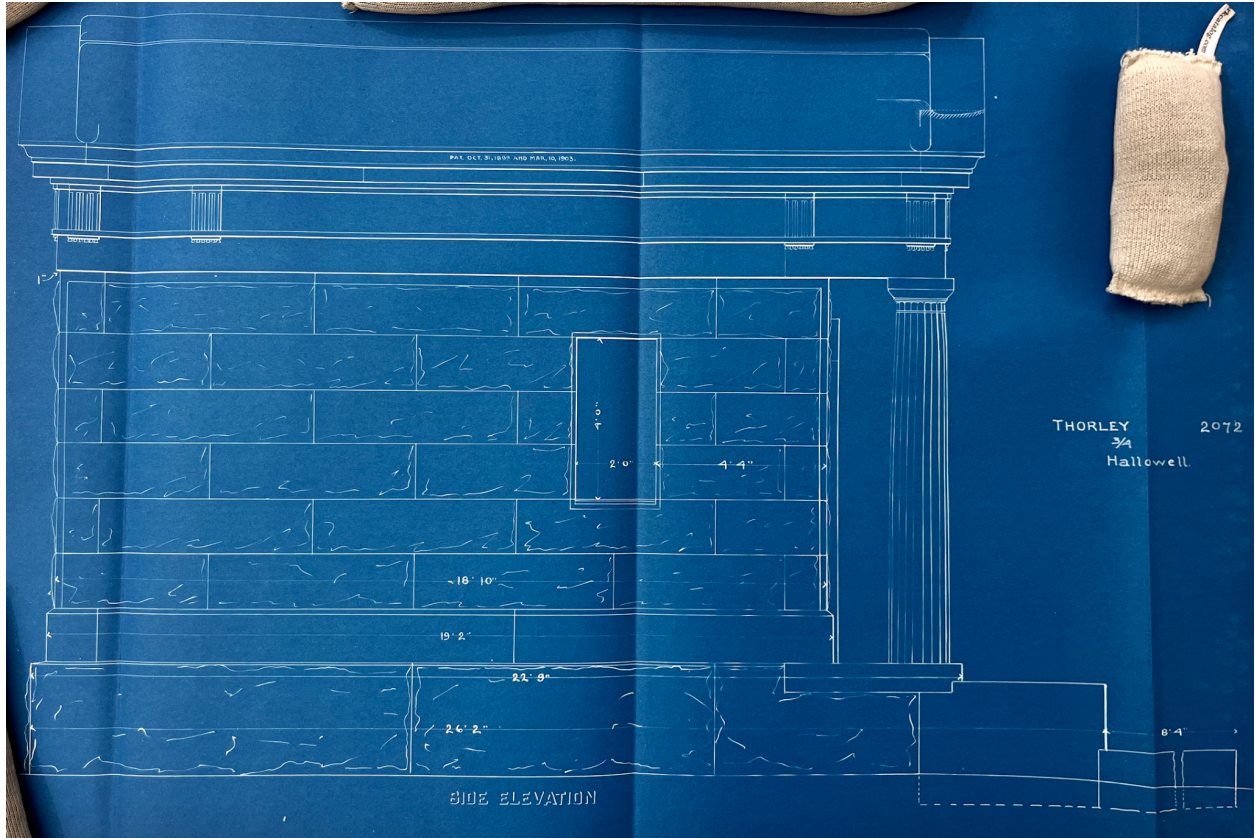


Figure 4. Side Elevation of Thorley Mausoleum with patent no on roof. Image courtesy of Avery Archive.



Figure 5. J.B Rose Mausoleum with. Image courtesy of Avery Archive.

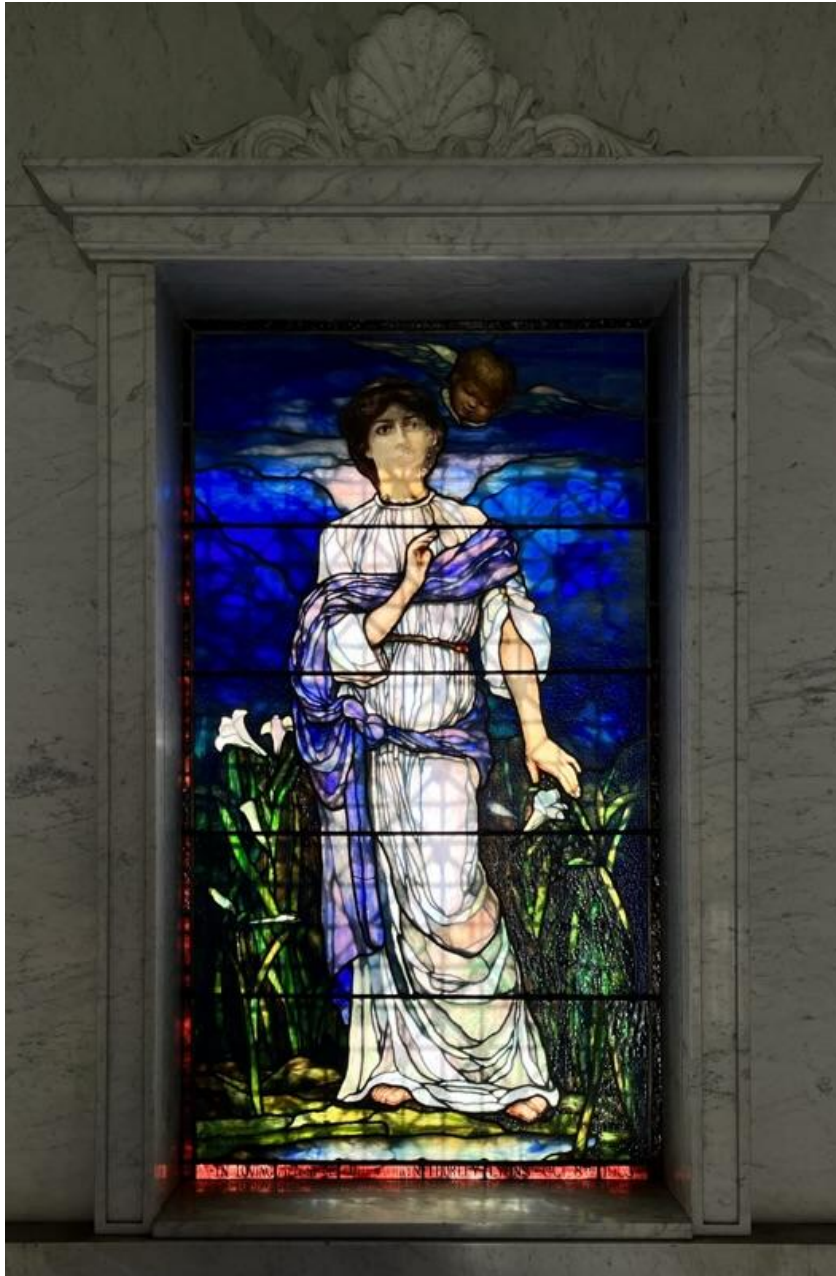


Figure 6. *Angel and Cherub*: Thorley Mausoleum, Woodlawn Cemetery NY (1903)
Found in Lowe. 16.



Figure 7. *The Lulu Thorley Memorial*: West End Collegiate Church, New York NY (1903)
Found in James L. Sturm, *Stained Glass from Medieval Times to the Present: Treasures to Be Seen in New York*, 1st ed (New York: Dutton, 1982), 100.



Figure 8. *Saint Cecilia*, Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, circa 1900. Image courtesy of the Wikimedia Commons.

Appendix A: Other Work attributed to Frances White



St John the Divine: St Mary's Church, Tuxedo Park NY (1897)

Found in Walter Janes, *Illustrations of Memorial and Decorative Stained Glass Windows* (New York, N.Y.: Walter Janes, 1897)



Parable of the Talents: First Congregational Church, Ithaca NY (1903)

Found in Francis R. Lowe, "Stained Glass Window Art in America," *Broadway Magazine*, December 1904. 13.



Pentecost. Dwight Memorial altar window, Church of the Holy Spirit, Lake Forest, Illinois (1904)
Found in Francis R. Lowe, "Stained Glass Window Art in America," *Broadway Magazine*, December 1904. 13.



Peace and Victory. Ermold Mausoleum, Woodlawn Cemetery NY (1908) Found in the *Architectural League yearbook*, 1911.

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<https://www.proquest.com/docview/303500349/abstract/95507EABF834529PQ/1>.

Mary F. White. Year: 1900; Census Place: Manhattan, New York, New York; Roll: 1103; Page: 15; Enumeration District: 0470

New - York Tribune (1911-1922). "Blue Bird Ball Will Be Gala Social Affair: All Boxes Are Sold Mrs. Charles Thorley." December 14, 1919.

New - York Tribune (1923-1924). "Chas. F. Thorley Dies Following Princeton Game: Florist Succumbs in Car at Pennsylvania Station; Excitement Is Believed to Have Overtaxed Heart Charles F. Thorley." November 11, 1923.

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