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**Bowne Mausoleum**

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### Introduction

The Bowne Mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery belongs to the Bowne family. The Mausoleum was designed by Harrison Granite Company on May, 1910, a few months before Mr. Samuel W. Bowne's death on October 29, 1910.<sup>1</sup> The Mausoleum recorded numerous noteworthy points in architectural design and preservation over time, as well as the representing life story of the Bowne Family and others connected to them.

### Exterior Environment in Large-scale

The Bowne Mausoleum is located in the midst of the Heather Plot on the north side, adjacent to Prospect Avenue. After turning east at the corner where Walnut Avenue, Heather Avenue and Prospect Avenue cross each other, the Bowne Mausoleum can be easily observed walking on the Avenue due to the long walkway in front of the building, decorative elements like urns on the flank and nearly symmetric landscape trees next to the pavement. (Figure 1) The building's front façade is tilted to the east and faces north. From the walkway, one can see clearly to the north since the opposite Lawn Plot rises as a hill without any significant structures in the way. This structure has many characteristics similar to those of adjoining Carter and Coburn Mausoleum, including architecture, materials, and ornamental features. The pathway between these two buildings is partially submerged by the growing vegetation, but the grass on the lot is not as well-tended compared to others.

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<sup>1</sup> "Samuel W. Bowne Dies: Philanthropist and Manufacturer Yields to Paralysis Was Intimate of Huyler They Vied With Each Other in Giving to Methodist Episcopal Church," Oct 30, 1910. See also, "Bowne Mausoleum," Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, Columbia University.

The planted trees on both sides grow lushly, with the left side tree behind even reaches to the roof of the building.



Figure 1 The Front Elevation of Bowne Mausoleum,  
Photographed by Yaozhi Liu.

The Bowne Mausoleum adopts the usual Neo-Classical style of the era as shown in photographs of other Mausoleums at Woodlawn Cemetery that were planned and built in the 1910s. (Fig 2 & Fig 3) The lengthy walkway and decorative elements connecting the avenue to the building, however, make it distinctive.

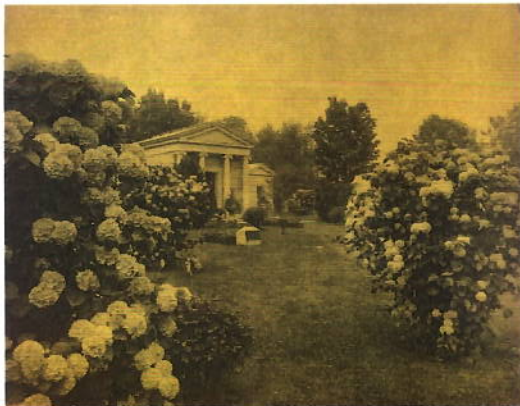


Figure 2& Figure 3 The Mausoleums in Woodlawn in 1910s,  
Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, Columbia University.

### Exterior in Architectural-scale

The building is supported by a foundation that extends down to a depth of about six inches, which is square and roughly 14'x13' in size.<sup>2</sup> The Mausoleum is symmetrical along its central axis as viewed from the front elevation. There is a tripartite divide in the façade. The upper part includes the roof and the entablature with a triangular pediment ornamental with floral decorations in the tympanum, and the family name "Bowne" features on the frieze cornice. The upper portion is buttressed by four granite Ionic columns. Medium-sized smooth granite blocks, a protruding masonry doorframe, and a bronze door with spiral lines metal embellishments make up the front wall. (Fig 4) For the foundation part, the design of this building's stairs was adjusted several days after the it originally came out; for the buttress and second step were extended longer to make the view of architecture looks grander.<sup>3</sup>

On the primary façade, the biological growth is more severe than on the others. The horizontal cornice and the left raking cornice were especially affected by this type of degradation because tree branches shade them. Both mortars on the raking cornices have been severely damaged by rain. (Fig.5)

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<sup>2</sup> "Bowne Mausoleum," Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, Columbia University.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



Figure 4 Front Door,  
Photographed by W. Sun.



Figure 5 Mortar damage, Photographed  
by W. Sun.

The outside walls of the mausoleum's side elevations are built of rusticated granite. To minimize the joints on the walls, the granite manufacturer used huge stone blocks. (Fig.6) The west elevation's frieze cornice suffers water damage, and the gable shows evidence of freeze-thaw cycle damages. (Fig.7) The rear elevation is likewise built from rusticated granite blocks, and a metal railing is present to safeguard the stained-glass window. (Fig.8) Additionally, the mortar on the roof's rear elevation is in such poor shape that much of it is falling. We can see that the mortar had been restored, but it still isn't able to hold on the roof since a piece has already fallen. (Fig.9) When it's raining, it's probable that tree limbs will spill additional water onto the roof, causing extra damage.



Figure 6 Side Elevation, Photographed by W. Sun.



Figure 7 Frost-thaw Cycles, Photographed by W. Sun.

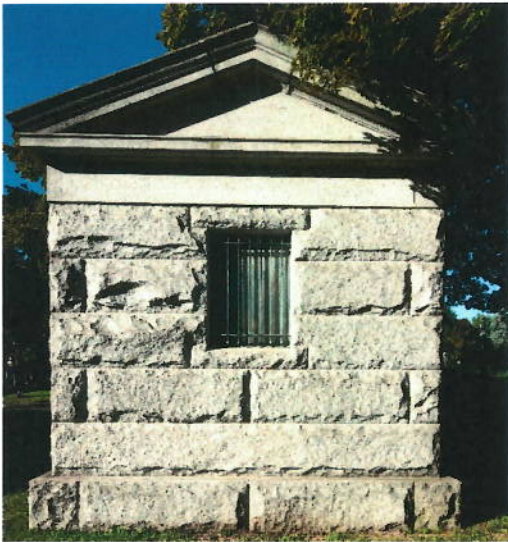


Figure 8 Rear Elevation, Photographed by W. Sun.



Figure 9 Repaired Mortar, Photographed by W. Sun.

### Background

The Bowne Mausoleum in the Heather plot of Woodlawn is unusual for employing the pavement and ornamental components to accentuate the architecture's grand sentiments rather than for having a specific style. These characteristics are connected to the Bowne family's life. The mausoleum's owner, Samuel W. Bowne, was the third of nine children

born to Cyrus and Hester Wood Bowne and was born in New York on January 3rd, 1842.<sup>4</sup> He initially began working at a Wall Street broker's firm. The industrial chemists Scott & Platt kept him as a traveling salesperson after that.<sup>5</sup> In 1874, Bowne became a partner of the firm, the name of which became the "Scott & Bowne". Following his commercial success, Samuel wed Nettie Youngs in Manhattan in 1875.<sup>6</sup> After their marriage, Samuel and Nettie shared a home on 110 East 64th Street during the first ten years with the Carter family because Nettie's sister Hanna married to Mr. Robert K. Carter later.<sup>7</sup>(Fig.10). The Bowne family and the Carter family had a strong association, which is presumably why the Carter family mausoleum and the Bowne family mausoleum were built by the same company in very similar designs and were placed next to one other.

With the release of the renowned Scott's Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil in the 1880s, Bowne's business flourished. At that time, not only did the cod liver oil enjoy great popularity, but also the advertisements also caught the public's imagination. The advertisement for the oil published in 1884 depicts a scene of a man carrying a huge cod fish on his back with the use of a rope. The background shows sky, water, a sailboat and a village.<sup>8</sup> The 1880s saw the launch of this product in Europe, while the 1900s saw its

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<sup>4</sup> "Samuel W. Bowne Dies: Philanthropist and Manufacturer Yields to Paralysis was Intimate of Huyler They Vied With Each Other in Giving to Methodist Episcopal Church," *New York Tribune*, Oct 30, 1910.

<sup>5</sup>"The 1891 Schieffelin-Bowne House -- No. 35 West 57th Street," *Daytonian in Manhattan*, <http://daytoninmanhattan.blogspot.com/2012/03/1891-schieffelin-bowne-house-no-35-west.html>.

<sup>6</sup> New York City, "Compiled Marriage Index, 1600s-1800s."

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "1880 United States Federal Census."

<sup>8</sup> "Scott's Emulsion of Pure Cod Liver Oil," *Laupus Library History Collections*,

expansion to China. Historical advertising in Chinese and English both demonstrated that people's beliefs at the time were that cod fish liver oil could be the most beneficial to newborns and could also treat their coughs and colds. (Fig.11) Samuel's prosperous company made him wealthy in the 1900s, enabling him to buy the 35 West 57th Street mansion from William H. Vanderbilt's granddaughter.<sup>9</sup>(Fig.12)

The long customer list of Harrison Granite Co. from all over U.S highlights those of a long walkway and platform on the mausoleum was an unusual way of design, so it's reasonable to make an assumption that Samuel's property gave the Bowne family a chance to have their mausoleum feature more elegant decorative elements.



Figure 10 110 East 64th Street in 1940s, [https://1940s.nyc/map/photo/nynyma\\_rec0040\\_1\\_01398\\_0168a#17.73/40.764908/-73.966089](https://1940s.nyc/map/photo/nynyma_rec0040_1_01398_0168a#17.73/40.764908/-73.966089).



Figure 11 Historic Advertisements of Scott & Bowne's products, Scott & Bowne Manufacturing Chemists, Mad Space Organization Archive, <https://madspace.org/db/Advertisers?ID=100>.



Figure 12 35 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street in 1940s, [https://1940s.nyc/map/photo/nynyma\\_rec0040\\_1\\_01398\\_0168a#17.73/40.764908/-73.966089](https://1940s.nyc/map/photo/nynyma_rec0040_1_01398_0168a#17.73/40.764908/-73.966089).

<https://digital.lib.ecu.edu/20971>.

<sup>9</sup> "Margaret Louisa Vanderbilt Shepard," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret\\_Louisa\\_Vanderbilt\\_Shepard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Louisa_Vanderbilt_Shepard).



## Interior

A magnificent stained-glass window of Jesus spreading his arms to welcome the believers is the first thing that comes into view as you open the huge bronze entrance door to enter the mausoleum's interior. The window's right-hand bottom reveals that Lederle Studio manufactured it. Founded by a former employee of Tiffany Studio, Lederle Studio followed their steps to create the aesthetic vision of the artist and the structural integrity of their windows.<sup>10</sup> Placing structural fins within a window instead of using the traditional support bars, the stained-glass window would endure for a longer time and stay flat. (Fig 13)

On the marble wall above the window there writes "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord that they may rest from their labours and their works do follow them". Connect to Samuel's entrepreneur life, where he managed his "fish oil empire" up to 1908. He bought the Mausoleum lot on March 3rd, 1909, when his health began to deteriorate, and he passed away the following year. Samuel donated majority of his properties to the churches, schools and other public facilities, and he indeed deserve the good rest after his death.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Arthur J. Femenella, "Leading and Structural Support Techniques of American Opalescent Era Studios," *Corpus vitrearum newsletter* 47, bulletin of the International Committee for Conservation and Technological Research, 2000, 35.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Olsen's email, 10/10/2022.

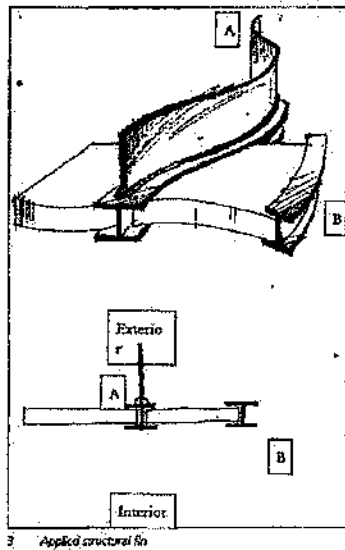


Figure 13 structural fins within a window, Arthur J. Femenella, "Leading and Structural Support Techniques of American Opalescent Era Studios," 2000, 37.

The inside of the mausoleum is made of marble. Two rows of coffins are laid out on both side of a slight arch in the interior area. On the marble surface of the coffins, there are decorative pairs of metal rings. Mrs. Nettie Bowne's coffin is opposite to Samuel's, and she passed away twenty years after her husband in 1930. Most of Samuel's riches went to charitable causes, but Nettie still received around \$100,000.<sup>12</sup> In honor of her late spouse, she continued to donate money to hospitals and schools.<sup>13</sup> Nettie rarely went to social gatherings, but she did like traveling; in fact, she crossed the Atlantic 62 times between the U.S. and the U.K. Kate Harkness, an immigrant from Ireland who started working for the Bowne family not long before Mr. Bowne died, accompanied her on her travels after 1910.

<sup>12</sup> "S. W. Bowne Left \$1,976,976.: Widow Receives Nearly \$1,000,000 -- Bequests to Colleges and Missions," *New York Times*, May 18, 1912.

<sup>13</sup> "Mrs. S. W. Bowne Gives \$50,000," *New York Tribune*, Jul 21, 1911.

She must have formed a solid friendship with Mrs. Bowne during the lady's last twenty years since she was allowed to be buried with the Bowne family in the mausoleum. Despite not having children, Samuel and Nettie adored their family. The correspondence between Mrs. Bowne's agent and the Woodlawn Cemetery reveals that Mrs. Bowne left some of her money to maintain not just the mausoleum for herself but also the mausoleum for her sister Hanna's family (the Carter & Coburn Mausoleum).

Water damage has affected the interior. Because of the water that falls from the roof, the marble coffin slab on the left side's top became somewhat curled in addition to leaving a mark on the ground. In comparison to the state on the right side, it is feasible to infer that the vegetation growth on the gable on the left side is affecting the inside portion of the left side.

### Conclusion

The Bowne Mausoleum stands out from other Neo-classical mausoleums not because of its size or design but because of the ornamental items chosen and the layout of the surrounding area. It reflects the owner's beliefs about the afterlife and their obligations to their family. It also partially documents the life of a wealthy family at that time and helps us today trace the stories of the past.

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