

WOODLAWN RESEARCH PROJECT:  
**WESTINGHOUSE MAUSOLEUM**



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*Site and Context*

The Westinghouse Mausoleum is located in the Whitewood plot of Woodlawn Cemetery near the Jerome Avenue Entrance. Situated in section 133 on a 30' x 50' plot, the mausoleum faces Whitewood Ave, with Linden Avenue to its east. Currently, two solitary yew trees flank either side of the mausoleum, however, a landscape plan dated "1/15/60" indicates that there were two sizes of yew trees, ten total, surrounding the mausoleum sides and back corners (Figure 1). This may explain why Mr. Henry Westinghouse requested that the mausoleum be sited 9' from the rear line, rather than 5', which was initially recommended by Woodlawn Cemetery.<sup>1</sup> It is likely that this request was made to accommodate a landscape plan that would encircle the museum in verdant foliage year-round.

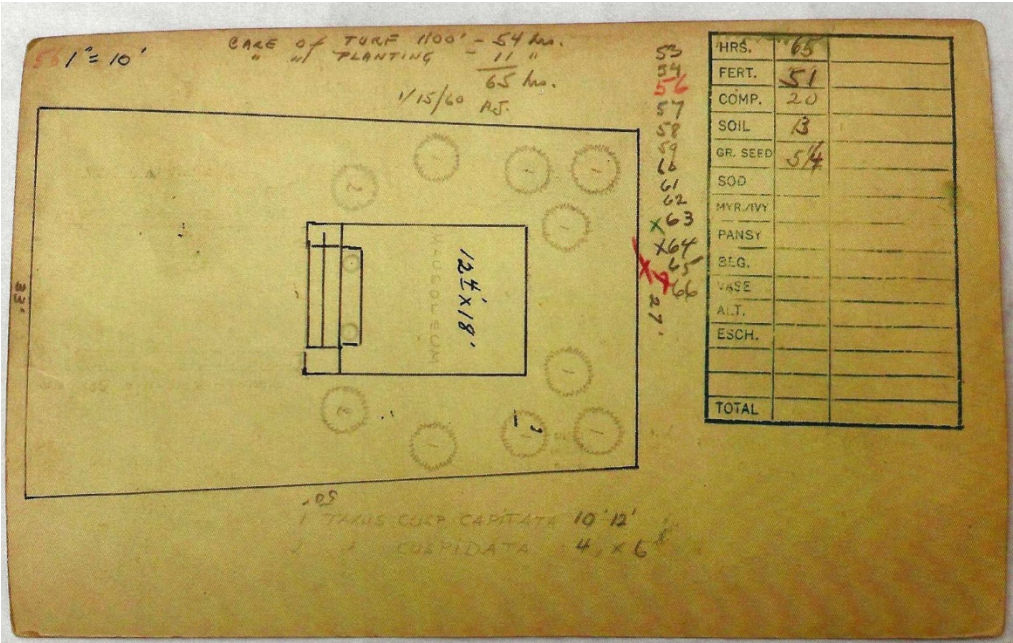


Figure 1. View of the landscape plan dated 1/15/60, indicating two sizes of yew trees surrounding the mausoleum, with ten trees total. Image provided by Woodlawn Cemetery.

### *Architecture of the Mausoleum*

On May 8, 1911, C.E. Tayntor Granite Company, a prestigious firm specializing in the design and construction of memorials, contacted Woodlawn Cemetery on behalf of Henry and Clara Westinghouse to announce their plans to build a family mausoleum.<sup>2</sup> Correspondence exchanged between C. E. Tayntor Granite Company and Woodlawn Cemetery indicate that the cemetery received specifications on May 29 and that foundation plans were submitted on September 2 of that year.<sup>3</sup>

The Westinghouse mausoleum measures 18" long x 12'-4" wide. The mausoleum is a Greek Doric temple with a distyle in antis design. Two wide steps lead up to a modest porch upon which stand two fluted Doric columns. The columns flank a pair of richly patinated filigree bronze doors with panel glass. Atop the Doric capitals sits an entablature consisting of an unadorned architrave, a frieze with the name "WESTINGHOUSE" engraved across the front, and a simple banded cornice. Above the family name, a low pediment supports C. E. Tayntor's patented non-leaking roof design. On the west right side of the mausoleum just below the roof line is the engraved phrase "PAT'D MAY 14, 1907", which refers to the patent C. E. Tayntor received on May 14, 1907, for a roof design specific to mausoleums (Figure 2).

The mausoleum's exterior is made of fine-cut Barre granite, with a fine hammered finish. On the back of the mausoleum, a decorative, bronze window guard, now heavily patinated, is inset into the wall, approximately six inches behind which sits plate glass to protect a stained-glass window. Two decorative vents are located on each side of the mausoleum for ventilation.

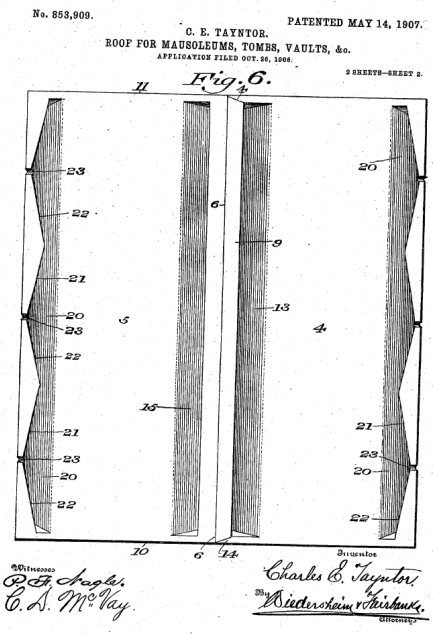
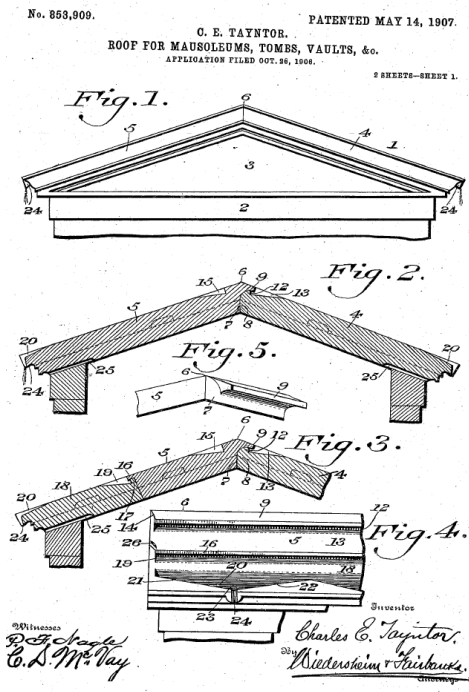


Figure 2. Images of Patent No. 853,909, design for mausoleum roof by C. E. Tayntor, May 14, 1907. United States Patent and Trademark Office.

### Stained Glass Window

Upon entry into the Mausoleum, the eye first encounters a stunning stained-glass window with the phrase “I am the Resurrection and the Life” at the top (Figure 3). This phrase references scripture from the New Testament of the Christian religious tradition.

The Westinghouse family were members of West End Presbyterian Church on West 105<sup>th</sup> Street and at the time of his death, Henry was a trustee of the church. <sup>4</sup>

The 3’ wide x 4’-5” high stained-glass window features a nature scene, with a gradated sky, body of water, and field of lilies below. The stained-glass window is the work of Louis Comfort Tiffany, who frequently focused on “The River of Life” theme in his memorial windows in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> The window is particularly significant

because some lilies feature a raised, opalescent glass, not often seen in stained glass windows at that time.

The mausoleum's interior has four catacombs on either side, with eight total. Apart from the granite floor, the interior is exclusively constructed in light-veined Italian white marble. A pair of bronze rosettes are affixed to each catacomb, the centers of which can be removed and handles attached to open the catacombs when needed. A bronze air vent is installed in the marble ceiling.



Figure 3. Left: Tiffany-stained glass window in Westinghouse Mausoleum. Right: Detail showing the opalescent glass that was used in some of the lilies. Photo by Heather Oakley

### *Condition of the Mausoleum*

The Westinghouse mausoleum was found to be in good condition overall. It was apparent that it had been recently cleaned and therefore there was little evidence of

biological growth on the exterior. There was some evidence of rusting on the bronze air vents located on either side of the mausoleum. Inside the mausoleum, it appeared that the patented roof by C.E.Tayntor and Co. was effective, as the interior did not appear damaged and there were no obvious signs of cracking or warping.

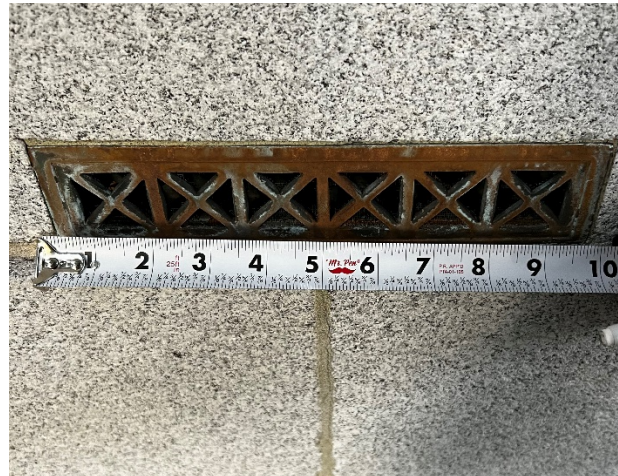


Figure 4. Right: image of west side of Westinghouse mausoleum showing air vents. Left: Detail image of rusting on bronze air vent. Images by Heather Oakley

### *Westinghouse Family*

Henry Herman Westinghouse was born in Central Bridge, New York, and was the youngest son and seventh child of George Westinghouse and Emiline Vedder. He attended Union School in Schenectady and then studied engineering at Cornell University. In 1869, while at Cornell, his older brother George Jr. patented the design for an air brake for train cars. This led to the founding of the Westinghouse Air Brake Company (which would later become known as Westinghouse Electric). George's invention transformed the rail industry, making braking significantly safer and allowed

trains to travel at higher speeds. By 1905, over 2 million train cars were equipped with the Westinghouse air brake.<sup>6</sup>

In 1873, Henry H. Westinghouse married Clara Louise Saltmarsh and the couple settled in Pittsburgh, where Henry joined his brother at Westinghouse Air Brake Company. Like his brother, Henry Westinghouse became a successful engineer in his own right, establishing his own engineering firm, Westinghouse, Church, Kerr and Co. He patented improvements to the air brake and invented the single-acting steam engine which had an impact on railways and farming machinery. The Westinghouse companies grew exponentially, so Henry and Clara Westinghouse eventually left Pittsburgh in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, moving to The Clarendon apartment building, on Manhattan's Upper West Side.<sup>7</sup> While at Westinghouse Air Brake Company, he served many roles and at the time of his death, he was chairman of the board.

### *A Family Mausoleum*

The mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery was built to accommodate two of their daughters who died tragically young. Their first daughter, Florence Erskine Westinghouse succumbed to typhoid pneumonia, a complication of typhoid fever at the family home in Pittsburgh on December 15, 1890 at the tender age of 13.<sup>8</sup> Nearly twenty years later, the Westinghouse family, now living on Manhattan's Upper West Side, unexpectedly lost their third and youngest daughter Marjorie Caldwell Westinghouse on her birthday, May 13, 1909. Marjorie had been celebrating with her friends at the Westinghouse home at The Clarendon apartment building when she was

stricken by “heart disease”. According to the *New York Times*, she “had been in ill health for two years”.<sup>9</sup> The tragic loss precipitated a lengthy departure by Henry and Clara to Europe; they did not return to New York until April of the following year.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 5. Left: “Marjorie Coldwell Westinghouse”, Auction N08802. Sotheby’s, Lot 58. Accessed September 26, 2024. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2011/american-paintings-drawings-sculpture/lot.58.html>. Right: “Henry Herman Westinghouse, c. 1910.” George Westinghouse Museum Collection, c.1864-2007, MSS 920, Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center. Historic Pittsburgh. Accessed October 4, 2024. <https://historicpittsburgh.org/islandora/object/pitt:20170323-hpichswp-0048>.

On November 18, 1933, Henry H. Westinghouse, age 80, passed away at the couple’s Goshen, New York farm, Floremars, He had been in ill health for some time after a fall the previous December.<sup>11</sup>

Clara Westinghouse remarried two years later to John F. Miller, a former President of Westinghouse Air Brake Company and friend of Henry Westinghouse. They lived in Goshen, New York until his death in 1939.<sup>12</sup> According to Woodlawn Cemetery records,



John F. Miller was moved out of the cemetery and relocated, likely to his family plot in Pittsburgh.<sup>13</sup>

On December 4, 1950, Clara Miller passed away at her home in Goshen. While Florence, Marjorie, and Henry have catacombs that are engraved, catacomb number 5, which is assigned to Clara in Woodlawn records, remains unmarked.<sup>14</sup>



Figure 6. Image of Henry Herman Westinghouse catacomb 6, with unmarked catacomb 5 below it. Photo by Heather Oakley.

## Bibliography

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- <sup>2</sup> Westinghouse Major Monuments Folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Archive, Avery Architecture Library, Columbia University
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- <sup>7</sup> "Westinghouse", City Directory, 1909.
- <sup>8</sup> "Dec 16, 1890, Page 2 - The Pittsburgh Post at Newspapers.com," Newspapers.com. Accessed September 24, 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/86439770/>.
- <sup>9</sup> "May 15, 1909, Page 1 - the New York Times at Newspapers.com," Newspapers.com. Accessed September 20, 2024, sec. Dies at Her Birthday Party, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/20427857>.
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<sup>13</sup> Westinghouse Major Monuments Folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Archive, Avery Architecture Library  
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