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## **WALTER FAMILY BUSINESSES & HISTORY**

Louis F. Walter, born to John and Mary Walter in 1857, emigrated to the United States from Prussia in 1872.<sup>1</sup> Walter married his wife, Susanna Buckner in 1878 and they, per census records, had six children; George, Bruno, Henry, Louis Jr., Mary, and Louise. Louis Senior had been a baker prior to his departure from Germany and continued this practice upon arrival to New York City. By 1880, they were living on the Lower East Side of Manhattan as census records show. In the decades that followed, they moved frequently, and slowly migrated north to the Bronx<sup>2</sup> (fig 1). By 1900, the New York City Directory lists Walter's son Henry as a baker, and Louis Jr. as a bookkeeper.<sup>3</sup> In 1905, the New York State Census listed both of these sons as bakers.<sup>4</sup> By 1910, census data show that Louis senior had retired from his business and telephone directories indicate his sons Henry and Louis had taken up his practice as "Baker Cruller".<sup>5</sup> The term cruller refers to a twisted donut that is said to originate from Germany. Known by the Germans as Eberswalder Spritzkuchen, this pastry

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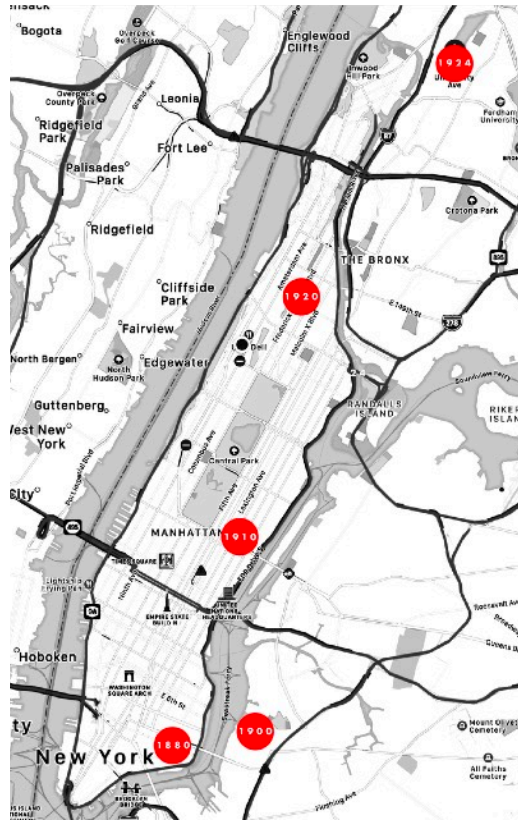
<sup>1</sup> United States Federal Census. "1860 United States Federal Census." Ancestry.com. Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> United States Federal Census. "1880 United States Federal Census." Ancestry.com. Online publication - Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010. 1880 U.S. Census Index provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Trow Directory, Printing & Bookbinding Company. "Trow's General Directory of the Boroughs of Manhattan and Bronx, City of New York for the Year ending July 1, 1901.

<sup>4</sup> New York State Archives. "1905 New York State Census." Ancestry.com. Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> United States Federal Census. "1910 United States Federal Census." Ancestry.com. Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006.



**1880: 53 Willet St.**

**1900: 113 Seventh St.**

**1910: 209 E. 61st St.**

**1920: 243 W. 135th St.**

**1924: 2766 University Ave.**

(Figure 1) Places of residence between 1880 and 1924

became essential to the “celebration of carnival” which was the week that preceded the onset of Lent.<sup>6</sup>

The brothers’ interests apparently shifted, and by 1915, Henry and Louis Jr. were merchants in hardware. At this time, their business was located at 3367 Third Avenue in the Bronx.<sup>7</sup> A photograph taken as part of the 1940 survey of New York City confirmed the existence of “Walter Brothers Hardware Supplies” at the Third Avenue location showing both storefront and vehicle signage<sup>8</sup> (fig. 2).

<sup>6</sup> “Cruller.” ifood.tv. Accessed October 01, 2021. <https://ifood.tv/french/cruller/about>.

<sup>7</sup> R. L. Polk & Company. “New York City Telephone Directory, 1915, part 2.” 1915.

<sup>8</sup> “3367 Third Avenue Tax Photo.” 3363 Third Avenue - DOF: Bronx 1940s Tax Photos. Accessed October 29, 2021.



(Figure 2) "Walter Bros" Vehicle pictured outside of the Walter Brothers Hardware Store at 3367 Third Avenue. Photo courtesy New York City Municipal Archives

Between 1905 and 1910, Louis senior's daughter, Mary Walter, was married Frank A. Ruckel who was a traveling salesman and sold silk textiles. By 1910, the Walters and the Ruckels were listed as living in the same home on East 61st. Street.<sup>9</sup> The two families continued to reside proximate to one-another in the two subsequent homes they moved to.

In 1924, Louis Senior commissioned then-esteemed monument designer and builder Robert Caterson to construct his family mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery.<sup>10</sup> Commissioned in 1924 and dedicated in 1929 at the time of Louis Walter Senior's death, the Walter mausoleum today inters twelve members of the family. Interred in the catacombs are: Louis F.

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<sup>9</sup> United States Federal Census. "1910 United States Federal Census." Ancestry.com. Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> "Specification for the Erection of a Mausoleum for Louis Walter at Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City". 1926. Robert Caterson Designs.

Walter, Susanna Walter, Louis F. Walter Jr., Louise M. Walter, Johanna Walter, George L. Walter, Mary A. Ruckel, and her husband Frank A. Ruckel. Among those cremated and interred here are: Louise Masin, Anthony Masin, Mary Ruckel Probst, and Geraldine M. Ruckel.

### **WALTER FAMILY MAUSOLEUM & THE THIRD EGYPTIAN REVIVAL**

From its battered exterior walls, papyrus column capitals, and large cavetto cornice profiles to its winged-sun emblem above the entry doors, the Walter mausoleum perfectly epitomizes Egyptian influence on architecture in the United States. The discovery of King Tutankhamun's (King Tut) tomb in 1922 by archeologist Howard Carter fueled an Egyptian resurgence in the arts, fashion, and architecture in the respective decade.<sup>11</sup> There has long existed a fascination in the western world with ancient Egyptian culture, namely for the great mystery surrounding it. In fact, the revival here described was the third witnessed in the nation's history. The first was during the 1820's after the translation of the Rosetta Stone which revealed many of the secrets of hieroglyphics. The second is said to have occurred during the Victorian era, after the Suez Canal's opening in 1869.[citation needed] During this latest wave, academic studies were conducted of ancient Egyptian architecture which helped inform American architects of specific details which they would employ in their designs.<sup>12</sup>

Woodlawn Cemetery possesses a trove of Egyptian-inspired designs both before and after the discovery of King Tut's burial. In their 1910 photographic portfolio of burials, Farrington, Gould & Hoagland, a New York City-based monument design corporation,

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<sup>11</sup> History.com Editors. "Tutankhamun." History.com. A&E Television Networks, November 9, 2009.

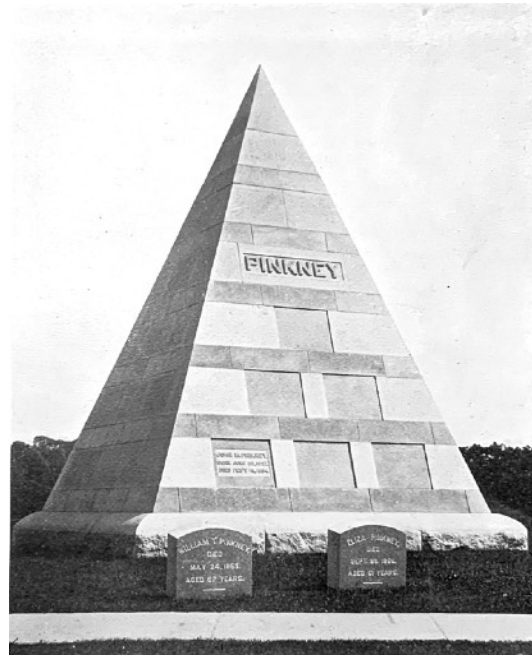
<sup>12</sup> "Egyptian Revival." Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP), September 30, 2019.

showcases several mausoleums exhibiting characteristics similar to the Caterson-designed Walter mausoleum (fig 3). Robert Caterson's portfolio also features other references to Egyptian architecture – notably, his proposal for the John M. Pinkney mausoleum at Kensico Cemetery of Kensico, New York. It is pyramidal in form, with six accent stone bands (fig. 4).



(Figure 3) Design by Farrington, Gould & Hoagland for the F.W. Woolworth Mausoleum, Woodlawn Cemetery

Photo courtesy Avery Architectural Library, Columbia University.



(Figure 4) Design by Robert Caterson for the John M. Pinkney Mausoleum at Kensico Cemetery, Kensico, NY

Photo courtesy Avery Architectural Library, Columbia University.

Key features shared among the other Egyptian style monuments in Woodlawn Cemetery are sphinx figurines guarding the entrances, Egyptian rolls along the edges of walls (fig. 5) and doorways, trapezoidal door enframements, battered walls, lotus flowers in bronze on the entry doors, and notably, images of the winged sun or winged disk, one of the oldest religious symbols known (fig. 6). For the Egyptians, this image was referred to as

Behedti, "with the wings of Horus". It was representative of the immense power of the sun god Re, as well as the Pharaoh's divinity. The sun or disk in this image is often flanked by two serpents, which in this context are called Uraeus. These represent divine authority and the Goddess Wedjat "as the all seeing eye of Re".

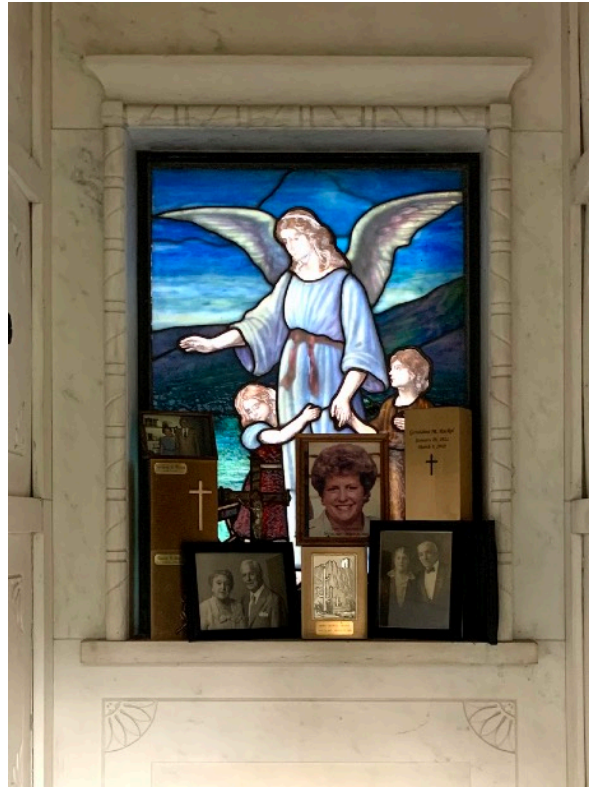


Above: (Figure 5) Winged-Sun  
Emblem over Mausoleum Entrance  
Photo by author



Right: (Figure 6) Egyptian Roll  
Along Building Edges  
Photo by author

The marbled interior of the Walter mausoleum also features some of these Egyptian references, but not as strongly. The marble enframement around the stained glass window carries the same Egyptian roll motif that is featured on the exterior of the building, along with a matching cavetto cornice profile at the lintel (fig. 7). The stained-glass window itself appears more Western and Christian in design and makes no nods the Egyptian references displayed elsewhere. It depicts the image of an angel flanked by two children.



(Figure 7) Marble Interior  
with Egyptian roll and  
Cavetto cornice  
Photo by author

## **MAUSOLEUM OBSERVATIONS & CURRENT CONDITIONS**

In examining the current state of the Walter Mausoleum, some minor issues are evident on the exterior, along with some more pressing ones that may require attention on the interior. Upon approaching the entry, of note is a case of deterioration in the square granite piers that flank the carved columns. These square piers, on their inside face, show signs of scaling and flaking on the granite's finished surface. The pattern appears to point to the leading edge of the lintel above bearing the "Walter" name, suggesting that this upper stone drains onto the problematic square piers and is causing their ailment. Another contributor that may exacerbate this issue lies in the quarrying and finishing process of the granite. Micro fissures may have been inflicted on the finished surface when the stone was cut

to size, and the infiltration of moisture, combined with freeze/thaw cycles could have lead to the scaling seen today.

While at the entry elevation, the only other notable indication of weathering is revealed by the bronze doors, which appear to have oxidized with a verdigris patina. It is also apparent that attempts to remove this patina have followed, in a somewhat incomplete manner, leaving a blotchy appearance of both turquoise and red-brown colors. The locking mechanism in the door appears to work almost perfectly still, despite nearly 100 years of exposure to the elements.

To the north of the mausoleum approximately fifteen feet stands a very large deciduous tree, the limbs of which have started to rest on the capstone roof of the structure. The north facade, as a result of receiving little sun exposure combined with the stillness that the tree canopy has provided, has allowed the development of biological growth on the granite wall and frieze. The oxidized bronze ventilation grilles and joint caps confirm this is a biological growth, as paths of clear granite can be traced beneath them (*fig. 8*). The remainder of the exterior is in near perfect condition, save a few minor stains from the oxidization of the bronze fixtures. The granite plinths on which the structure stands also appear to show no settlement or major weathering issues.

Almost the entire interior is clad with white Vermont marble<sup>13</sup>, save the granite lintel above the door and the granite floor. With regard to surface condition, this marble bears evidence of staining and subsequent cleaning attempts. The one inch thick marble catacomb slabs present a potentially major issue as some are significantly deformed from their original plane. Six of the eight cover slabs are bowed out at their midpoint to such a degree that a

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<sup>13</sup> "Specification for the Erection of a Mausoleum for Louis Walter at Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City". 1926. Robert Caterson Designs.



gap has formed between the slab and the adjoining marble rails. The only feature appearing to prevent these slabs from crashing to the floor are the twin bronze dowels and rosette caps with which each slab is supplied. Construction drawings of the building do not reveal how substantial this armature is or to what the dowels are secured. The likely cause of these deformations lies in the quarrying process that this marble underwent. A common ailment with marble cut into slabs as thin as these is called hysteresis. When quarried, marble may have been witness to tremendous pressure under the earth. Cutting such marble into dimensions as small as one-inch thick slabs creates new surfaces, releasing this pent-up pressure. Too, this thin profile leaves the slab more susceptible to the effects of temperature and humidity fluctuations. There is potential for the panels to continue to bow outward.<sup>14</sup> The marble ceiling slabs also appear to be suffering from the same condition, though not as severe and posing no obvious danger to the congregants or integrity of the building.

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<sup>14</sup> Hatridge, Reese. "Thermal Hysteresis." *Failure Mechanisms*, April 10, 2014.

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Figure 8: Absence of biological growth beneath copper-containing ventilation grilles.



**MISCELLANEOUS SITE PHOTOGRAPHS**







