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Mausoleum Owner: Clarence Winants Hillyer

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The Hillyer mausoleum is located on Plot #12810, Section 128, Filbert, Woodlawn Cemetery. It is at the corner of Fern Avenue and Park Ave, facing east. Viewed from the Fern Avenue, the mausoleum is sheltered in the shade of several trees (Figure 1-3). Clarence Winants Hillyer is the owner of the mausoleum. The mausoleum was built in 1911, after Clarence's first wife Fannie died.

It was designed and constructed by the Harrison Granite Company,¹ and William Neil Smith was the architect.²

Clarence and his three wives, Fannie N. Hillyer, Ivy T. Hillyer, and Helen Hurlbutt Hillyer lie in the mausoleum. Clarence was born on October 26th, 1869 in Bayonne, New Jersey, and died on December 19th, 1949.³ His ancestries were Dutch, English, and French. His first wife, Fannie N. Hillyer, was born on December 22nd, 1874 and died on April 18th, 1911. They gave birth to their only son, Clive Nelson Hillyer, on June 13th, 1895. After Fannie died, Clarence married Ivy T.

¹ Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Box 9 Folder 4, Mausoleums, Monuments, Etc. by The Woodlawn Cemetery. Avery Library, Columbia University.

² Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Dr 2.2 Folder 32, Office of William Neil Smith to Clarence Winants Hillyer letter. Avery Library, Columbia University.

³ U.S., Passport Applications, 1795-1925 for Clarence W Hillyer.

Hillyer on December 21st, 1911, who lived from December 25th, 1886 to June 25th, 1919.¹ They had no children. Clarence and his third wife, Helen Hurlbutt Hillyer, got married on May 11th, 1924. Helen was born on May, 16th, 1883, and died on August 15th, 1974. Their marriage lasted until Clarence passed away in 1949.² Their only daughter, Claire Winants Southwick, was born on January 24th, 1917.

Clarence was brought up in a wealthy family. His father was George Hyer Hillyer, and his mother was Mary Fanny Hillyer. His grandfather was Garret Ellis Winants, who chartered five steamboats to the United States government and later became a large owner of real estate in New York City, and in Plainfield, Elizabeth, Hudson, Hoboken, and Bergen Point, New Jersey.³

Inheriting the family business, Clarence became a banker, broker and real estate agent after graduating from Princeton University.⁴ He worked at the Fifth Avenue Bank in New York.⁵ When he was in his fifties and sixties, he traveled frequently between England, France and New York with

¹ Clarence Hillyer, in the New York, U.S., State Census, 1915

² The Daily Times (Mamaroneck, New York), 19 Dec 1949, Mon.

³ <https://www.newspapers.com/image/729360808/?terms=Clarence%20Hillyer&match=1>

⁴ Clarena W Hillyer, in the 1940 United States Federal Census. New Jersey, U.S., State Census, 1905 for Clarence Hillyer.

⁵ List of United States Citizens (For the Immigration Authorities), Sailing from Southampton, 21st, July, 1928. Arriving at Port New York, 27th, July, 1928.

Helen and Claire. He worked in Hambros Bank when he was in London.¹ Clarence was also a gentleman of leisure. He was a member of the New-York Historical Society and held the fifth oldest life membership in the New York Athletic Club. He was a member also of the Union League Club of New York and the Belle Haven Club of Greenwich.²

Clarence lived in many different houses and owned several real estate properties. Before he was 20, he grew up in Rye, Westchester and 66th Street in New York. After graduation from college, he resided at West 104th Street, NYC in 1894, rented a house in Atlantic City, New Jersey in 1900, and then lived in Llewellyn Park, West Orange, New Jersey in 1905, which is an idyllic, gated hillside enclave inhabited by famous residents.³ Then he dwelled at 575 Park Avenue, NYC in 1915, 117W. 86th Street in 1928, and also rented a house in 2101 Connecticut Avenue Apartment House, Washington D.C. in the 1920s.

On July 16th, 1933, Clarence bought the house of Florence M. Schmeltzer, located on Zaccheus Mead's Lane, Greenwich, Fairfield, Connecticut. The property consisted of an English-style

¹ UK and Ireland, Outward Passenger Lists, 1890-1960 for Clarence Hillyer.

² New York Times (1923-); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y.]. 20 Dec 1949: 31.

³ New Jersey, U.S., State Census, 1905 for Clarence Hillyer.

residence of stone, brick and half-timber, with fourteen rooms, five baths and a three-car attached garage, on a landscaped plot of three acres, with a lake. It was reported to cost \$100,000.¹ After his retirement, he enjoyed gardening, trimming shrubs, and cutting down trees in the plot.² He lived there until he died in 1949.

From the above information, it is clear that the Hillyers were a wealthy family, so the mausoleum is quite impressive. In general, the mausoleum represents a Greek Neoclassical style, with four Doric columns on the front. There is a circular floral pattern on the pediment. Beneath the pediment is the sign of “Hillyer”, with two rings on each side of it (Figure 13). The walls are almost blank, showing the taste of simplicity and grace (Figure 4-7). Its contractor, Harrison Granite Company, established in 1845, is a New York based company famous for building monuments in classic forms. All the stones come from Barre, Vermont. The Harrison company had built lots of memorials, crosses, grave stones, steles, carvings, and mausoleums before 1911.³ The Hillyer mausoleum is a middle-sized one among them.

¹ New York Times (1923-); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]. 16 July 1933: RE1.

² Princeton Alumni Weekly, Volume 49, Sept. 17th, 1948. No.1.

³ Harrison Granite Company Clientele Catalog (& Monuments), Jan.1st, 1918.

Specifications from this time period, including the letter between the architect William N. Smith and Clarence, very typically instructed the builder to use only the best quality materials. The details are shown below:

- In the field research, I speculate the column and masonry are made of granite because the grains are evenly distributed, crystals are tightly packed and there is no space between them.

The documentary evidence in Avery verifies the field evidence. The document shows that all stones used in the walls are good sound local building stones and come from light Barre, Vermont granite. Large stones run through the walls and are staggered every 2'6". According to the archive, stones are laid solid in cement mortar, with portions of one part Atlas Portland cement to two parts sands.¹ All walls are laid to a line on both sides.

- The bottom, sides, tops and backs of catacombs were made of the best quality sound Pennsylvania slate slabs in one piece.² The slabs were doveled and rabbeted in bottoms, tops, and corners, and into granite fronts. There is one inch of air space between granite walls and

¹ Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Dr 2.2 Folder 32, Office of William Neil Smith to Clarence Winants Hillyer letter. Avery Library, Columbia University.

² Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Dr 2.2 Folder 32, Office of William Neil Smith to Clarence Winants Hillyer letter. Avery Library, Columbia University.

slate backs of catacombs, and one inch air space at sides.¹

- The roof stone is continuous from end to end and rests on the walls for support. The stones of the inside roof are also continuous from end to end to rest upon walls for support. Roof stones are keyed and rabbeted to prevent moisture from entering the building and to prevent slipping.
- The door and its frame, the window frame, the exterior window grilles, vent screens, and the rosette handles at catacomb fronts are all made of bronze.
- Inside the window grilles is a 3/8" thick plate glass, the inner part of which is leaded to make a stained glass memorial window decorated with the image of Jesus Christ.² The Jesus is standing, wearing a white and blue robe, with his hands on his chest, looking into the distance (Figure 11).
- The stone mosaic floor with the pattern "H" differentiates the mausoleum from others. The central black "H" pattern is surrounded by a black ring, with a floral pattern outside it. Then the floral pattern is surrounded by two rings and four square frames (Figure 12).
- Concrete for footings and floors are composed of one part of Atlas Portland cement, two parts

¹ Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Dr 2.2 Folder 32, Office of William Neil Smith to Clarence Winants Hillyer letter. Avery Library, Columbia University.

² Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Dr 2.2 Folder 32, Office of William Neil Smith to Clarence Winants Hillyer letter. Avery Library, Columbia University.

of clean sharp sand and four parts of machine broken stone.¹

- The foundation is made of earth, cement rubble, dry rubble, and concrete. The approximate price of the foundation is \$600.²

From the field research, the materials of the visible part follow the original design, but the plan does not. The architect intended to put two coffins at the back of the mausoleum.³ However, all the coffins are placed on the sides, and the building is shorter than originally drawn. Perhaps it was because the original design was too expensive.

Regardless, the large scale, the high-quality materials, the floral pattern on the pediment, the fluted Doric columns, and the stone mosaic floor all indicate that the mausoleum is a relatively expensive one at Woodlawn Cemetery. From the letters between the Hillyers family and the Woodlawn Cemetery in 20th Century, we know that the mausoleum experienced several restorations, including removing discoloration and the green moss from the exterior, repairing the marble mosaic tile floor

¹ Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Dr 2.2 Folder 32, Office of William Neil Smith to Clarence Winants Hillyer letter. Avery Library, Columbia University.

² Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Dr 2.2 Folder 32, Office of William Neil Smith to Clarence Winants Hillyer letter. Avery Library, Columbia University.

³ Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Box 9 Folder 4, The plan of the mausoleum for Clarence Hillyer by Woodlawn Cemetery. Avery Library, Columbia University.

and roof leak, repointing, et cetera.¹ Today, there are four main problems of the mausoleum:

- The building is suffering from water collection, which is the biggest problem of the mausoleum.

First of all, there are water stains between the mortar and the masonry on the exterior wall, indicating that water can penetrate inside from the exterior, or that there is moisture on the interior that is trying to evaporate to the exterior through the mortar joints.

Secondly, there are obvious water marks on the interior walls, columns, ceiling, and the ground, which has a negative impact on the appearance of the interior (Figure 10).

Thirdly, the salts dissolved in the water have damage to the surface of the stone, and the damage goes deeper than the surface, causing the stone to flake off and blister. Some parts of the stone on the ground besides the mosaic have broken down into powder (Figure 9). The salts are carried by water because of condensation and poor ventilation.

- Some organisms are growing on the exterior walls. A tree is just one foot away from the north wall of the mausoleum, and three trees are about ten feet from the front, while the other two

¹ Woodlawn Archive, Mausoleum Owners Correspondence Box 7 Folder 74. Avery Library, Columbia University.

sides are very open. Therefore, the south and west side wall can get more sunlight, and the moisture can quickly dry out. These two sides do not suffer much from the biological growth.

However, the north side is covered with lichens and other organisms.

- The vents on the north side are not working as well as they should because there is biological growth beneath them. The vents are made of bronze, and bronze can kill the organism. If the vents work pretty well, the moisture in the air that flows out could carry out some bronze. Therefore, there should not be organisms under the vents. By contrast, the vents on the south side are working.
- There are gaps between step stones, so water could flow down to the foundation and cause damage to the foundation, or movement of the earth that would result in damage to the foundation (Figure 8).

To sum up, the mausoleum has a Greek Neoclassical style and shows a simple and elegant taste.

There are some ornaments on the pediment and entablature but quite restrained. Viewed from the outside, the mausoleum largely retains its integrity. The main problem of the exterior is the biological growth on the north and east walls. However, the water and salt damage in the interior is

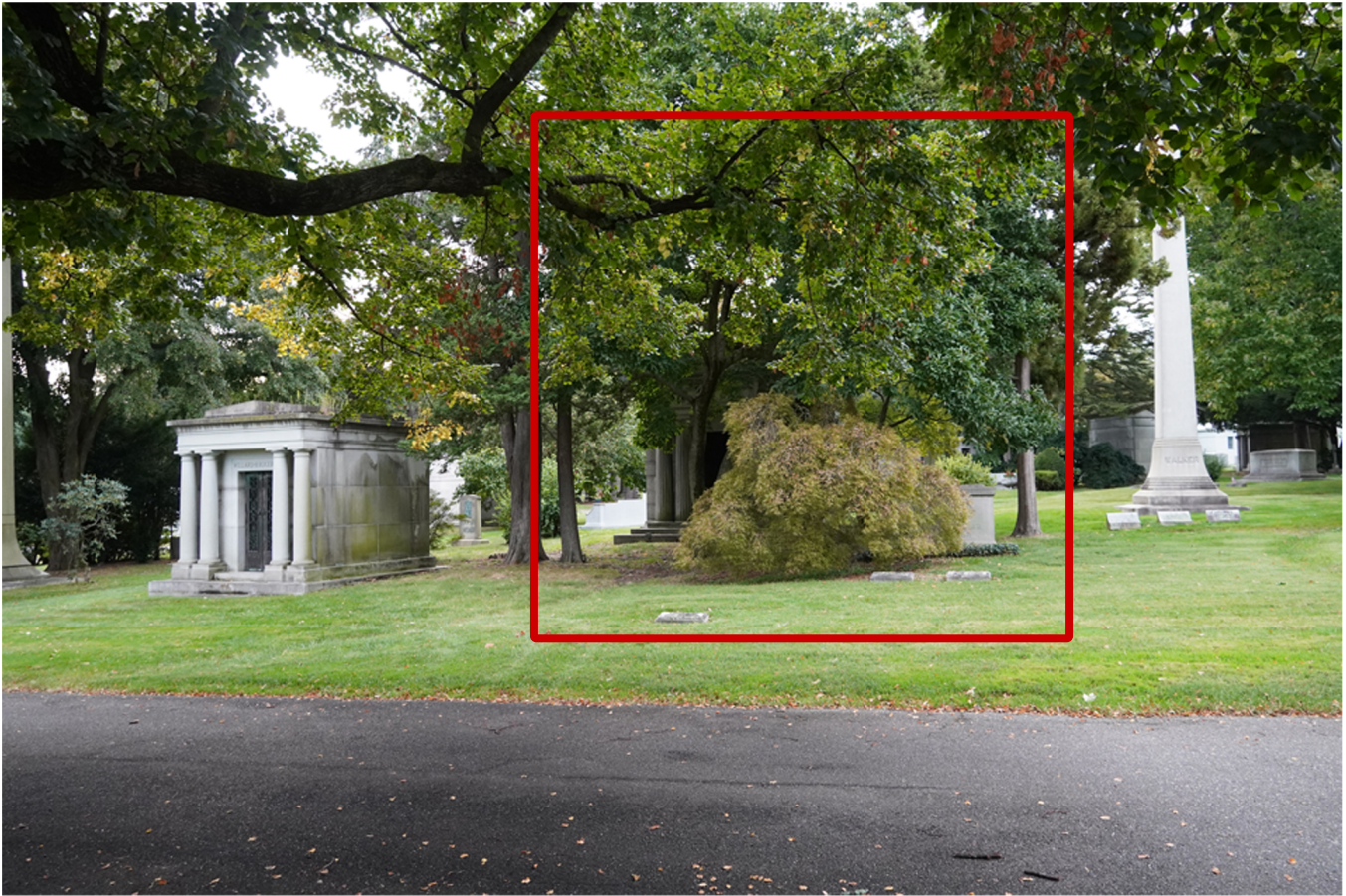
quite severe due to condensation and poor air flow. To better preserve the mausoleum, the staff should prune the trees beside it frequently to help more light and air get to the mausoleum, and examine how the ventilation system could be improved to resolve the interior water problem. Besides, since evidence of moisture on the interior is obvious, they should also take a closer look at the roof to see if there are any places that rain and snow can enter.

Reference

- [1] Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Box 9 Folder 4, Mausoleums, Monuments, Etc. by The Woodlawn Cemetery. Avery Library, Columbia University.
- [2] Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Dr 2.2 Folder 32, Office of William Neil Smith to Clarence Winants Hillyer letter. Avery Library, Columbia University.
- [3] U.S., Passport Applications, 1795-1925 for Clarence W Hillyer.
- [4] Clarence Hillyer, in the New York, U.S., State Census, 1915
- [5] The Daily Times (Mamaroneck, New York), 19 Dec 1949, Mon.
- [6] <https://www.newspapers.com/image/729360808/?terms=Clarence%20Hillyer&match=1>
- [7] New Jersey, U.S., State Census, 1905 for Clarence Hillyer.
- [8] Clarence W Hillyer, in the 1940 United States Federal Census.
- [9] List of United States Citizens (For the Immigration Authorities), Sailing from Southampton, 21st, July, 1928. Arriving at Port New York, 27th, July, 1928.
- [10] UK and Ireland, Outward Passenger Lists, 1890-1960 for Clarence Hillyer.
- [11] New York Times (1923-); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y.]. 20 Dec 1949: 31.
- [12] New Jersey, U.S., State Census, 1905 for Clarence Hillyer.
- [13] New York Times (1923-); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y.]. 16 July 1933: RE1.
- [14] Princeton Alumni Weekly, Volume 49, Sept. 17th, 1948. No.1.

- [15] Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Dr 2.2 Folder 32, Office of William Neil Smith to Clarence Winants Hillyer letter. Avery Library, Columbia University.
- [16] Woodlawn Archive, Major Monuments Box 9 Folder 4, The plan of the mausoleum for Clarence Hillyer by Woodlawn Cemetery. Avery Library, Columbia University.
- [17] Woodlawn Archive, Mausoleum Owners Correspondence Box 7 Folder 74. Avery Library, Columbia University.
- [18] Harrison Granite Company Clientele Catalog (& Monuments), Jan. 1st, 1918.

Overall Views:



1.



2.



3.

Elevations:



4. East Elevation (Front)



5. West Elevation



6. South Elevation



7. North Elevation

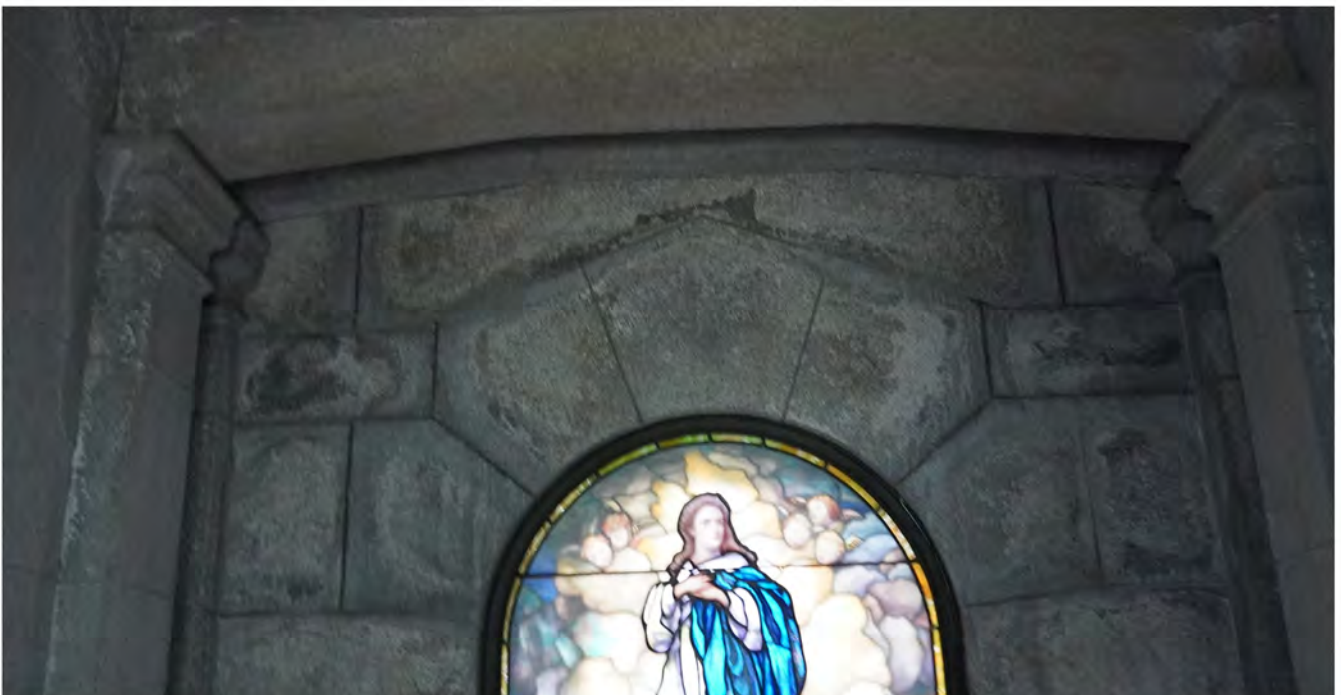
Material Conditions:



8. Gaps between step stones

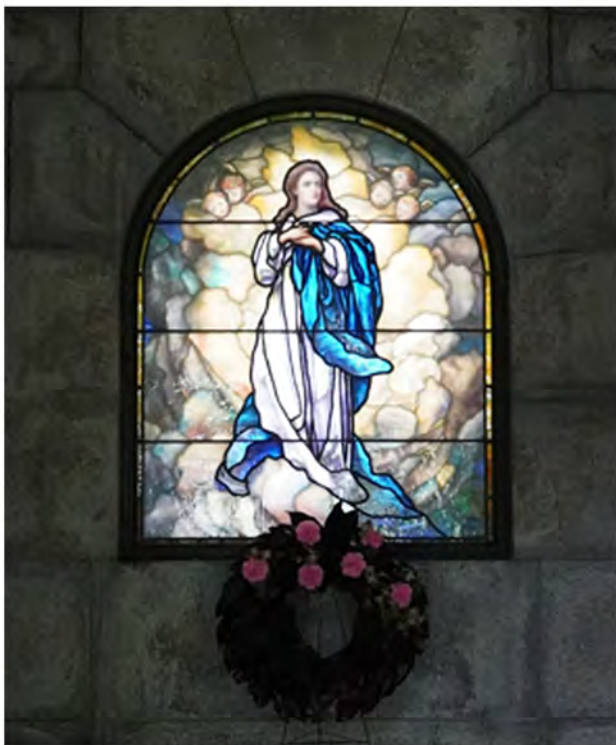


9. Interior stone salt damage1

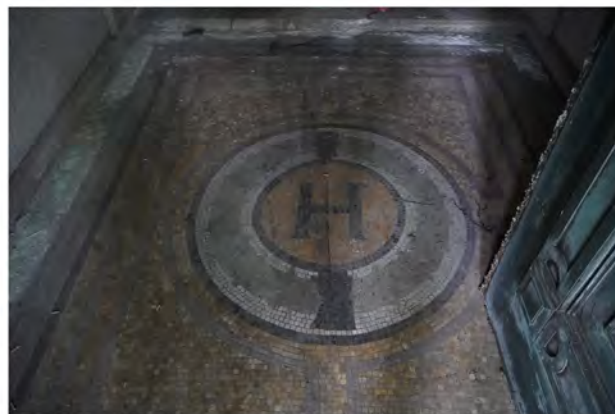


10. Interior stone salt damage2

Details:



11. Interior lead glass window



12. Stone mosaic floor



13. The pediment