

# Marceau Mausoleum



Nadir Giulio Puccinelli Sannini

9/6/2023

## HP Studio 1

*“Theodore C. Marceau owner of the Marceau Studios and one of the most widely known artistic photographer in the country, was stricken with heart failure while entertaining a party of friends last Thursday night at his home, Premium Point, New Rochelle. He died an hour later.”<sup>1</sup>*

(New York Tribune, Jun 24, 1922)

### **Introduction**

This paper focuses on the life and work of Colonel Theodore Christopher Marceau, one of the important photographers of the late 19th early 20th centuries, with an examination of the Neo-Classical Marceau Mausoleum that he commissioned at Woodlawn Cemetery from the time of its construction until the present day.

### **Biography**

#### **Background**

Col. Marceau was born in Ogdensburg, NY, on May 29th 1862<sup>2</sup> to Canadian parents Andrew T. Marceau and Josephine Marceau and lived there through his infancy together with his sister Lillie Marceau.<sup>3</sup> He was 5’ 10 ½” with brown eyes, a clear complexion and a round face (with a tattoo on his right arm).<sup>4</sup> His legacy lays not in his skills in photography (masterful as

---

<sup>1</sup> "T. C. Marceau, Noted Art Photographer, Dies Entertaining: Owner of...", *New - York Tribune* (1911-1922), Jun 24, 1922 (hereafter cited as Obituary, New York Tribune).

<sup>2</sup> Obituary, New York Tribune

<sup>3</sup> Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, (NARA microfilm publication T9, 1,454 rolls), Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>4</sup> National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; NARA Series: *Passport Applications, January 2, 1906 - March 31, 1925*; Roll #: 1801; Volume #: Roll 1801 - Certificates: 106876-107249, 24 Dec 1921-27 Dec 1921.

they may be) but rather his achievements as an entrepreneur and pioneer of the creation of national chains of photographic studios.<sup>5</sup>

## **Early Life**

Theodore Marceau first appears in the national stage at the age of 22, when he was stationed in Santiago, Chile, serving as the official photographer of the U.S. Government on an expedition recording the transit of Venus. After his return stateside he worked for two governors; Governor Foraker of Ohio and Governor Markham of California.<sup>6</sup>

## **Studio Chains**

After leaving government office in 1885 he developed his business methodology:

“Marceau supplied the capital, built a state-of-the-art studio, made the best practitioner in the city his partner, and waited for one of two things to happen. If the partner had commercial ambitions, he would save and buy Marceau out (R.P. Bellsmith in Cincinnati, for example); Marceau would then take the profits and establish another partnership in another city. If the partner had no such ambitions, and was content to labor for the mutual benefit of the partnership (George F. Basset in Indianapolis, for instance), Marceau benefited as well.”

In 1894 Col. Marceau sued Frederick Bushnell, the former manager of Marceau Gallery in San Francisco, who left the gallery in order to establish a rival business. The pivotal point of the lawsuit regarded negatives of famous patrons that Col. Marceau claimed that Mr. Bushnell had stolen from the gallery to later exhibit the photographs at his own, rival gallery.<sup>7</sup> This

---

<sup>5</sup> David S. Shields, Theodore C. Marceau, *Broadway Photographs*, 1996, [https://broadway.library.sc.edu/content/theodore-c-marceau\\_page\\_1.html](https://broadway.library.sc.edu/content/theodore-c-marceau_page_1.html) (hereafter cited as *Broadway Photographs*).

<sup>6</sup> *Broadway Photographs*

<sup>7</sup>“Sample pictures: artist Bushnell took choice subjects the late manager for Colonel Marceau in a peculiar position.” 1894.*San Francisco Chronicle* (1869-1922), Feb 03, 11.

protracted lawsuit most likely played a role in the Colonel's later work on photography copyright issues.

### **First Marriage**

During this same period Col. Marceau had a tumultuous relationship with the widow Amanda Fisk. They married in 1891 and had a son, Theodore C. Marceau Jr., but the marriage was to be fraught with discord. The financial obligations tied to the Fisk properties would drain the cash reserves of Mr. Marceau and the relationship reached a new height in "a late-night raid in 1896" discovering her in "*flagranti delecto*" with gambler John B. Maloney". During this raid the Colonel also took possession of his son, for which he would be sued for kidnapping by Mrs. Marceau. This was when he also initiated legal proceedings for divorce, which began a four-year legal process. The story of him "kidnapping" his son put him in the tabloids on both coasts but he ended up securing both his son and the divorce.<sup>8</sup> Amanda went on to marry Gerald M. Fennell in 1896 a week after her divorce from Col. Marceau.<sup>9</sup> In 1897 she files for divorce again<sup>10</sup> this time from Mr. Fennell.

### **Continued Business and New York**

---

<sup>8</sup> Hoffman house tax complained, of *New York Tribune*, Jul 13, 1900.

<sup>9</sup> "Mrs. Marceau once more at the altar: weds Gerald M. Fennell end of a romance of long standing the groom was once well known in this city--they will reside here." *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov 03, 1896.

<sup>10</sup> "Once more she seeks freedom: Mrs. Amanda Fennell brings suit for divorce ...", *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jul 15, 1897.

The Colonel did not let this stop him in his opening of serial photographic studios and inaugurating his new studio on the top of the Los Angeles Theater building in 1897.<sup>11</sup> He then opened another on 258 Fifth Ave. New York in 1898.<sup>12</sup>

In 1900 Mr. Marceau decided to move his headquarters from San Francisco to New York while both the Bushnell studio empire on the west coast was growing and a vacuum had developed in New York after the death of Napoleon Sarony in 1896. A competing photography studio run by Jonathan Burrow had already bought the Sarony studio but by partnering with Napoleon's son, Otto, and purchasing the rights to his name, the Colonel was able to co-opt the Sarony name. He was thus running two studios in New York for more than a decade; one under the name Otto Saranoy and the other Marceau.

### **Second Marriage and Settled Life**

In 1903, at age 41, Col. Marceau remarried in an impromptu wedding at his New York studio with the 18-year-old singer Miss Grace Marguerite Fulsin.<sup>13</sup>

By the time he acquired the Fifth Ave. and 50<sup>th</sup> st. building and made it his flagship store in 1915, the Marceau and Sarony studios had merged into Marceau Studios, with locations in Philadelphia and Boston. During this period, he also acquired his Premium Point, New Rochelle country mansion. With the inauguration of this upper Fifth Ave. location and his new mansion, in tandem with his sociable nature contrived to make both the Colonel, and Marceau Studios a focal point in New York society. His studio would be responsible for the portraiture of many notable figures including Andrew Carnegie (Fig. 2), Carrie Chapman (Fig. 3), Sarah Bernhardt, and John

---

<sup>11</sup> "Marceau's: magnificent new photograph studio opened yesterday." *Los Angeles Times* (1886-1922), Jun 18, 1897.

<sup>12</sup> The Real Estate Field: Park Avenue Corner in Deal for Upper Broadway ... *New York Times* (1857-1922); Feb 17, 1915.

<sup>13</sup> Hostetler, Joan E., *Directory of Indiana Photographers*. The Indiana Album Inc., 2021, <https://indianaalbum.com/photographers/data/PersonData1-CATNUM-356.html> (hereafter cited as Indiana Album)

F. Fitzgerald to name a few, while also being active in a large number of social clubs. Newly re-discovered, however, was his central role in what has been claimed to be the oldest “selfie” in photographic history (Fig. 4, 5).

It was in this period that he also organized the Professional Photographers Society of New York State, where he served as the first vice president and was instrumental in organizing the copyright league that would lobby to the congress for stronger protections for photographers whose images were being appropriated by newspapers. It was he who suggested the use of the encircled “c” (Fig. 2) by photographers as the claim to copyright protections.<sup>14</sup>

### **Death and will**

Col. Theodore C. Marceau died in 1922 an hour after being afflicted with heart failure while entertaining guests in his home at Premium Point.<sup>15</sup> His estate was estimated at several millions, with its bulk going to his son Theodore C. Marceau, while 20 of his old time employees would be remembered in his will with sums ranging from \$5,000-\$10,000 each as well as \$50,000 assigned to various relatives. His wife Ms. Grace M. Marceau received \$30,000 in cash as well as his art and *bric a brac* collections, while the rest of his properties were divided between his son and wife equally. Theodore received the studios as well as jewelry and automobiles. Furthermore Col. Marceau directed in his will that \$25,000 be spent for the construction of a mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery.<sup>16</sup>

### **Also Interred at the Marceau Mausoleum**

#### **Grace M. Ranney née, Marceau**

---

<sup>14</sup> Broadway Photographs, 1996

<sup>15</sup> Obituary, *New York Tribune*, June 24, 1922.

<sup>16</sup> “Col. Marceau Left Several Millions: Widow and Son Get Bulk of ...” *Special to The New York Times. New York Times* (1857-1922); Aug 31, 1922.

After the death of Colonel Marceau, his second wife married Major A. Elliott Ranney in 1927,<sup>17</sup> with whom she was to remain until his passing in 1938.<sup>18</sup> She herself lived to age of 72, passing away in 1957 before finding her final resting place in the Marceau Mausoleum.

### **Theodore C. Marceau Jr.**

After having inherited the business from his father, Theodore, who was a lawyer that had studied at Yale did not follow in the family business and sold the properties shortly after Col. Marceau's death.<sup>19</sup> He passed away on February 24, 1956.

### **Marceau Mausoleum**

#### **Execution of the estate**

On May 8<sup>th</sup> 1923 Theodore Marceau Jr. sent a correspondence to Woodlawn Cemetery in which he references the blueprints that had already at that date been prepared and charging the Presbrey Leland Company with the construction of the mausoleum.<sup>20</sup> Presbrey Leland, Theodore C. Marceau and the superintendent together laid the stakes for the placement of the mausoleum, and on August 17<sup>th</sup> 1923, work began for the laying of the foundations. The Presbrey Leland Company is a company that was founded at the turn of the century which owned both quarries and a factory in Vermont. The foundations were laid in rubble and concrete by the Woodlawn Cemetery in accordance with its rules and formula at the expense of the constructor.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> "Marriage Announcement 1 -- No Title" *New York Herald Tribune*, Oct 26, 1927.

<sup>18</sup> "Major Ranney War Flyer, 62, Dies in Hospital: Marksman Was Shot Down ..." *New York Herald Tribune*, Jun 22, 1938.

<sup>19</sup> Broadway Photographs, 1996.

<sup>20</sup> Theodore C Marceau, "Communication to the superintendent of Woodlawn Cemetery", Drawer MM 3.1, Folder 22, Series I Major Monuments Folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, 1863-1999, Avery Drawings and Archives Collection, Columbia University Libraries Archival Collection, Columbia University Libraries, Columbia University, 70 Morningside Drive, New York, NY. May 7, 1923.

<sup>21</sup> The Presbrey Leland Company, *General Specifications*, Drawer MM 3.1, Folder 22, Series I Major Monuments Folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, 1863-1999, Avery Drawings and Archives Collection, Columbia University

## **Materials and construction**

The materials used in the construction as per the General Specifications were: Indiana Buff limestone, Dummerston granite from the Presbrey Leland quarries, mortar that was one-part White Atlas cement and two parts clean sharp crystal sand. The crypts were to be formed in Pennsylvania ribbon slate, doors and ventilators in bronze, and the window was to be of an appropriate design to cost no more than \$150. Although initially planned to be made in Indiana Buff limestone, a later correspondence confirms the change to Dummerston granite<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, detailed specifications are given on construction methods such as the clamping and doweling of the slate that forms the crypts to each other and to the granite behind it with bronze dowels and clamps, or the formation of an air chamber for ventilation by keeping the limestone or slate one inch away from the granite floor. Other details can be noted in the plans provided by the Presbrey Leland quarries, such as the decorative ventilator rosette fixture and rod in bronze that supports the ceiling, as well as the drain for expelling liquids from below the mausoleum.

## **Description of the Mausoleum**

The Marceau Mausoleum is of a Neoclassical design resembling a small-scale Greek temple-like structure. The façade is composed of three steps flanked by roughhewn granite balustrades. From

---

Libraries Archival Collection, Columbia University Libraries, Columbia University, 70 Morningside Drive, New York, NY. May 7, 1923 (hereafter cited as General Specifications, 1923)

<sup>22</sup> Woodlawn Cemetery, “*Communication to Theodore C. Marceau*”, Drawer MM 3.1, Folder 22, Series I Major Monuments Folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, 1863-1999, Avery Drawings and Archives Collection, Columbia University Libraries Archival Collection, Columbia University Libraries, Columbia University, 70 Morningside Drive, New York, NY. June 22nd, 1923.

here two central columns and two lateral pilasters that support a cornice with the name “Marceau” engraved with a v indentation. Above this sits a pediment upon which rest the three slabs of granite that make up the roof. All exterior surfaces are made of granite blocks except for the bronze double door that has a decorative curlicue motif in front of the class, as well as an inverted torch over a laurel wreath signifying triumph over death and the stained-glass window at the back. The interior of the mausoleum is laminated with a smooth limestone finish with bronze sockets and rosettes for the tablets. The altar beneath the window is also made from limestone but has a 5” red limestone band with three Greek crosses above which sits a limestone Latin cross. Below the red band is a 2” rectangular mosaic band in gold, green, and brown glass tesserae that are arranged in a vine pattern. In the middle of the rectangle are engraved the letters “IHS”. Every crypt has two bronze rosettes but only the middle and bottom ones respectively have the names of Theodore C. Marceau and Grace M Ranney.

### **Deterioration**

The Mausoleum is in almost excellent shape considering it has been at Woodlawn Cemetery for over one hundred years. There is no material loss from the stonework, however the exterior of the building is covered in a thin layer of soot and particulate matter. Furthermore, areas where there is more water retention due to the positioning of the mausoleum as well as the shape of the stones used, are beginning to show signs of organic growth. The bronze door is still in reasonably good shape with no loss of material, however there is a layer of oxidation over its entirety as well as more prominent patches of oxidation where the different pieces of bronze are welded or bolted together. The interior of the mausoleum is similarly well preserved with minor streaks of calcium carbonate that has obviously been deposited where the water enters during

prolonged periods of rain. Finally, the stained-glass window shows signs of warping although all of the glass panels are intact and it would seem that there are no loose joints.

### **Final Thoughts**

The research and observations that were made during this project allow us to gain a novel appreciation for the monumental receptacle that is the Marceau Mausoleum both from a technical perspective as well as a deeper appreciation of the ways of the time, the pleasure of discovery well as bringing together the life and accomplishments of Col. Theodore C. Marceau.

Figures:



Fig.1 Colonel Theodore C. Marceau<sup>23</sup>

Fig. 2 Andrew Carnegie with copyright symbol.<sup>24</sup>



Fig. 3 Carrie Chapman<sup>25</sup>

Fig.4 How the selfie was taken<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Theodore Marceau, *Willard Stimson*, ca. 1898, California State Library, Sacramento, CA, USA.

<sup>24</sup> Marceau, Theodore C, photographer. *Andrew Carnegie, three-quarter length portrait, standing, facing front / Marceau, New York.* , ca. 1913. April 5. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001697068/>.

<sup>25</sup> Theodore Marceau, Carrie Chapman Catt, ca. 1901, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, gift of University Women's Club, Inc., Washington, DC, USA. Detail.

<sup>26</sup> Byron Company, Side view of Byron Co. photographers posing together for a photograph on the roof of Marceau's Studio, 1920. Museum of the City of New York, 93.1.4.18.



Fig. 5. The first selfie in photographic history (Marceau at center)<sup>27</sup>

### **Bibliography:**

Byron Company, Side view of Byron Co. photographers posing together for a photograph on the roof of Marceau's Studio, 1920. Museum of the City of New York, 93.1.4.18.

Byron Company, Uncle Joe Byron, Pirie MacDonald, Colonel Marceau, Pop Core, Ben Falk – New York, 1920. Museum of the City of New York, 93.1.4.18.

“Col. Marceau Left Several Millions: Widow and Son Get Bulk of ...”, *New York Times*, Aug 31, 1922.

“Hoffman house tax complained of...” *New York Tribune*, Jul 13, 1900.

"Mrs. Marceau once more at the altar: weds Gerald M. Fennell end of a romance of long standing the groom was once well known in this city--they will reside here." *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov 03, 1896.

“Major Ranney War Flyer, 62, Dies in Hospital: Marksman Was Shot Down ...” *New York Herald Tribune*, Jun 22, 1938.

---

<sup>27</sup> Byron Company, Uncle Joe Byron, Pirie MacDonald, Colonel Marceau, Pop Core, Ben Falk – New York, 1920. Museum of the City of New York, 93.1.4.18.

"Marceau's: magnificent new photograph studio opened yesterday." *Los Angeles Times*, Jun 18, 1897.

Marceau, Theodore C., "*Communication to the superintendent of Woodlawn Cemetery*", Drawer MM 3.1, Folder 22, Series I Major Monuments Folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, 1863-1999, Avery Drawings and Archives Collection, Columbia University Libraries Archival Collection, Columbia University Libraries, Columbia University, 70 Morningside Drive, New York, NY, May 7, 1923.

"Marriage Announcement 1 -- No Title" *New York Herald Tribune*, Oct 26, 1927.

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; NARA Series: *Passport Applications, January 2, 1906 - March 31, 1925*; Roll #: 1801; Volume #: *Roll 1801 - Certificates: 106876-107249, 24 Dec 1921-27 Dec 1921*.

"Once more she seeks freedom: Mrs. Amanda Fennell brings suit for ...", *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jul 15, 1897.

The Presbrey Leland Company, *General Specifications*, Drawer MM 3.1, Folder 22, Series I Major Monuments Folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, 1863-1999, Avery Drawings and Archives Collection, Columbia University Libraries Archival Collection, Columbia University Libraries, Columbia University, 70 Morningside Drive, New York, NY, May 7, 1923.

"The Real Estate Field: Park Avenue Corner in Deal for Upper Broadway ...", *New York Times*, Feb 17, 1915.

"Sample pictures: artist Bushnell took choice subjects the late manager for Colonel Marceau in a peculiar position.", *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb 03, 1911.

Shields, David S., Theodore C. Marceau, *Broadway Photographs*, 1996, [https://broadway.library.sc.edu/content/theodore-c-marceau\\_page\\_1.html](https://broadway.library.sc.edu/content/theodore-c-marceau_page_1.html).

"T. C. Marceau, Noted Art Photographer, Dies Entertaining: Owner of Studios Bearing His Name Stricken with Heart Failure at Home; Honored by Governments." *New York Tribune*, Jun 24, 1922.

Tenth Census of the United States, (NARA microfilm publication T9, 1,454 rolls), Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29., National Archives, Washington, D.C., 1880.

"Theodore C. Marceau Obituary", *New York Times*, June 24, 1922.

Woodlawn Cemetery, "*Communication to Theodore C. Marceau*", Drawer MM 3.1, Folder 22, Series I Major Monuments Folder, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, 1863-1999, Avery Drawings and Archives Collection, Columbia University Libraries Archival Collection, Columbia

University Libraries, Columbia University, 70 Morningside Drive, New York, NY. June 22nd, 1923.