

THE MOFFETT'S MAUSOLEUM:
A SHORT STORY OF THE "YANKEE DORIC"

ARCHA 4510:Studio I-Historic Preservation

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The short history of the Moffett family from 1913 until now is a microcosm of America history. It includes a background from the Civil War, the Second World War, the Great Depression until now. "Yankee Doric" is an equivoque used in the novel "Yankee Doric, America Before the Civil War, a novel" by Burton Raffel. As a combination of the linguistic and architectural meanings, "Yankee Doric" itself reflects a significant feature of the American Dream.

1. Context

The contractor for the Moffett mausoleum was the Stone, Gould & Farrington, Inc., which turned into Farrington, Gould & Hoagland, Inc., before 1921. In a 1921 *New York Buyer Manual*, the company was at the top of the "Monuments" category, implying its popularity. Before 1913, the Stone, Gould & Farrington, Inc. was responsible for the construction of the Gates family's mausoleum in Woodlawn, which was regarded as the largest private mausoleum in the U.S. at that time.¹

In April 19, 1913, J.A. Moffett's widow, Katherine I. J. Moffett signed a specification with Stone, Gould & Farrington, Inc., that included blue prints of the Moffett mausoleum which would be built on the Chestnut Plot, facing Chestnut Avenue and the mausoleum of Geo T. Bliss, a baroque building erected in 1901. To the left side of Moffett's tomb was G W. Kavanaugh's, which appeared in 1951.

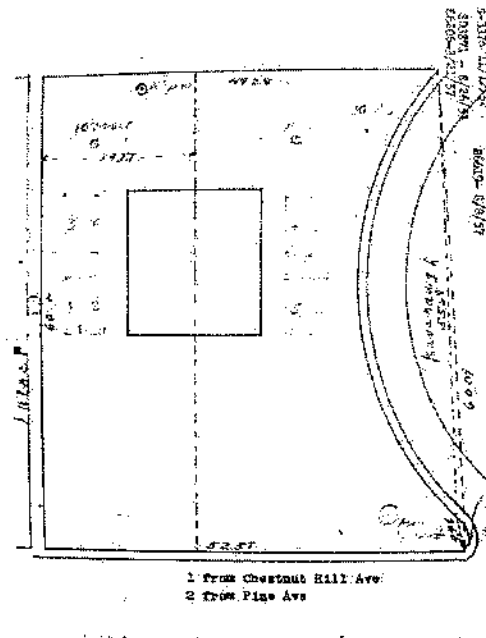


Fig.1, *The lot plan indicating its location and scale, 1957, Woodlawn Archives, Avery library of Columbia University, Major Monument Records, box 12, folder 79.*

In a picture taken before 1927, the newly built mausoleum of Moffett has no planned landscape. As time passed by, dwarf trees have blocked the back of the mausoleum, and shaded part of the facade. The lawn around the Moffett mausoleum were cut regularly, thus it enjoys a nifty appearance as well as a secluded site. Since the Moffett's mausoleum stands at the slope of Chestnut Plot, the east edge of ground is nearly 8 inches higher than the west. It remains a problem from the foundation plan period. In April 24, 1913, the cemetery wrote to Stone, Gould & Farrington, Inc., asked for setting two one-foot-three-inch thick stones of the base course at the right side and rear, and show 2 inches of stone above sod at the east front corner, 10 inches at the west front corner. The special design assured a solid flat foundation at the first decades, however, as time goes, the east front corner was eroded by humid earth, which would also increase the harm of lichen.

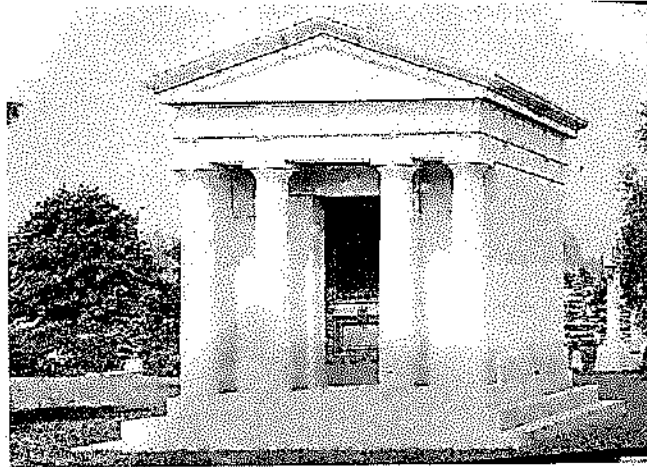


Fig.2. The *Moffett Mausoleum*, 1927,
Farrington Gould Hoagland, Inc., Woodlawn, New York.

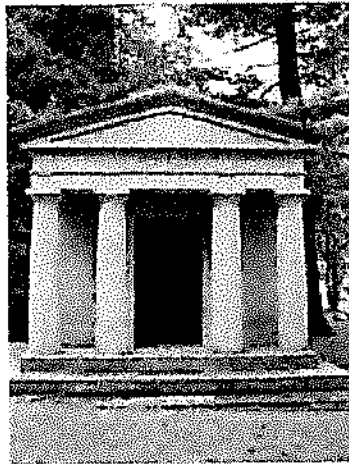


Fig.3. The *Moffett Mausoleum*, 2018, Photographed by Deng Fei, Woodlawn, New York.

2. Design

The Gould & Farrington's company created not only Moffett's mausoleum, which has Doric columns, but also built more than 14 classical mausoleums with Doric columns in Woodlawn before 1927. The most distinctive feature of Moffett's is that it was created following the principles proposed by Vitruvius as strict as possible, compared with other same-period mausoleums. One could find lots of typical classical elements combined harmonically in this single case; from the Doric column body, to the mutule, guttae and echinus on the roof. However, the proportion of the columns

are not so correct. None of other similar mausoleums in Woodlawn designed by the same company has such classical Doric style facade.

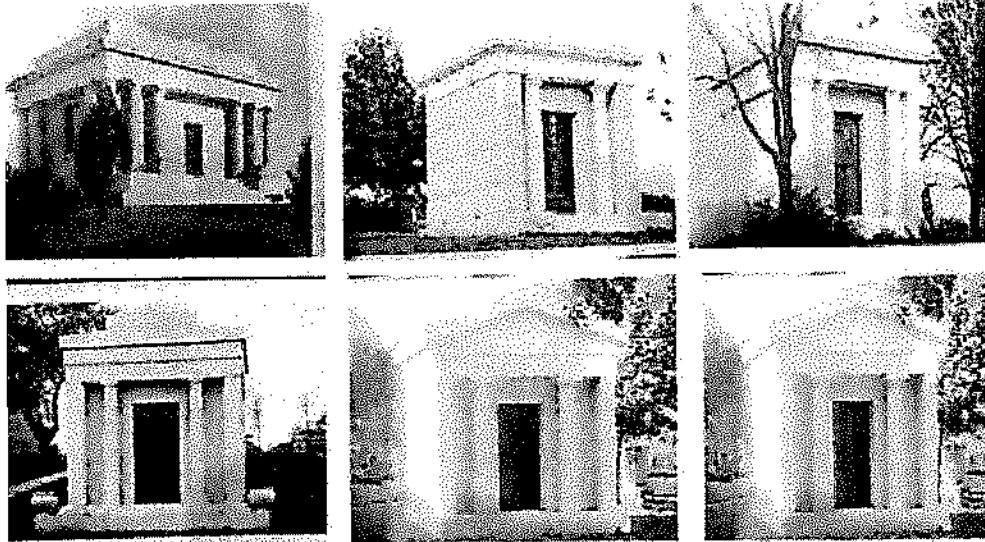


Figure 1: *Farrington Gould and Hoagland, Incorporated* : memorial designers and builders : mausoleums, monuments, statuary, 1927. Farrington Gould Hoagland, Inc.

The material of Moffett's is also luxury. As said in the specification, the mausoleum was constructed by the "lite Barre, Vermont, granite" for exterior wall. The surface of floor was made of polished "Pink Tennessee marble". Each of the catacombs were constructed of "Pennsylvania Ribbon Slates." The double sheet doors with highly decorated rosettes were made of bronze, accompanied with bronze ventilators. A fine painted angle of the stained glass window was set at the end of interior passage, also used as the entrance of light, of which the frame was also made from bronze. ²

3. Family history

² Stone, Gould & Farrington, Inc., *Specifications for the manufacture & complete of the Moffett mausoleum...to be erected in Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City, 258 Broadway, New York City, 1913.*

In the obituary of Mr. James A. Moffett posted on Feb.27, 1913's New York Times, Mr. J A. Moffett was born in 1851, Virginia, has an ancestry of Scotch Irish. When he was 19 years old, he left school and entered oil business, 14 years after he was elected as a member of the manufacturing committee of the Standard Oil Company in Brooklyn, then he became the president of the office of Standard Oil Company. He was recalled to New York in 1883, when in 1907 the company was suited as having violated the Sherman law. In the book *From The Directors of the Standard Oil Company to its Employees and Stockholders* published in Aug 1907, he managed to set aside the 29,000,000 dollars fined by the court on appeal. In the obituary, he was described as "An Ally of John D. Rockefeller in Early Days of Industry."³

J. A. Moffett left his wife, Mrs. Katherine Ingersoll Jackson Moffett, with two sons and a daughter. His first son, George. Monroe Moffett, born in 1883, inherited his father's talent in corn production and transportation management. G.M.Moffett was once the Chairman of the Corn Products Refining Co. From 1931 to 1945. As an Bachelor of Arts graduated from Princeton University, he donated and named the professorship in the biology dept. One of his son, the James Andrew Moffett II also graduated from Princeton University, and both Jim and the family-sponsored Whitehall Foundation in Palm Beach were among the donors of the George M. Moffett laboratories.⁴ George. M. Moffett's grandson, inherited the same name of G. M. Moffett, was a famous photographer whose second wife was June Duprez, a English film actress.

The second son of J. A. Moffett was also named James Andrew Moffett, who once worked in the Standard Oil Company as well, was later became the president of the California Oil Company. He was also famous for being friends with the President Roosevelt during the World War II.⁵

³ New York Times, 1913, "James A. Moffett, Dies in Florida," New York.

⁴ Graduate Class of 1929, 1990, "Memorial, James Andrew Moffett II'29," Princeton Alumni Weekly.

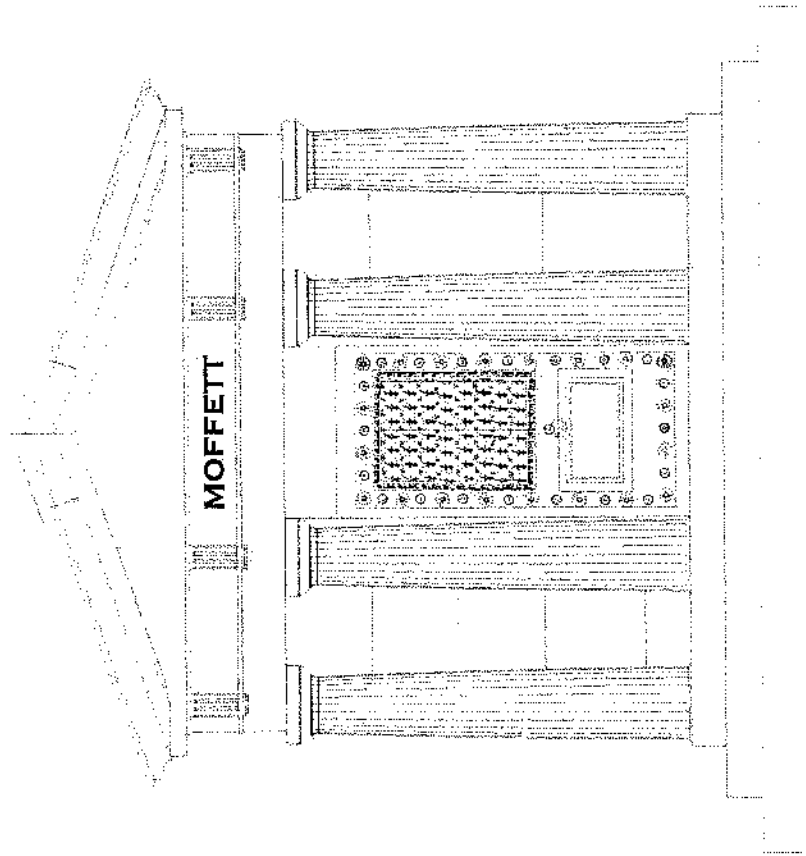
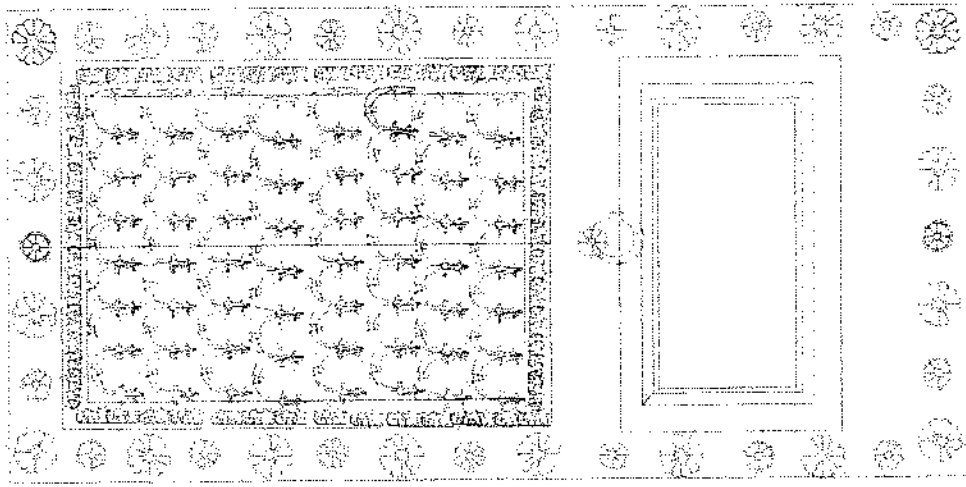
⁵ The Miami News, 1953, "James Moffett Dies at 66; James. A. Moffett, Wored under Roosevelt".

The youngest daughter of J. A. Moffett was Helen Seeley Moffett Barker, who graduated from Princeton and married with Harold Oakley Barker, was buried with her husband, father, mother and brothers together in the Moffett's family tomb in Woodlawn in 1972.

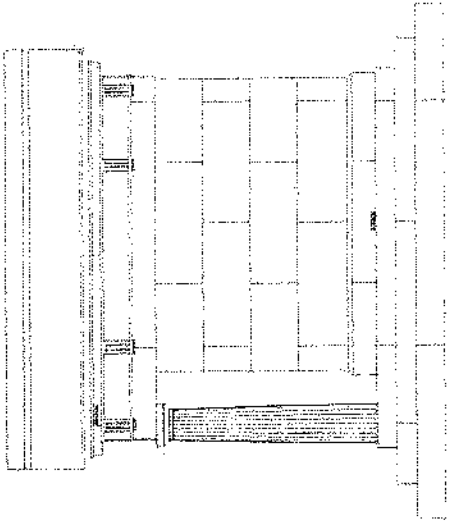
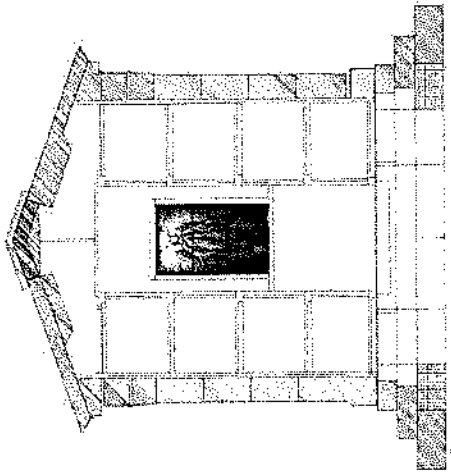
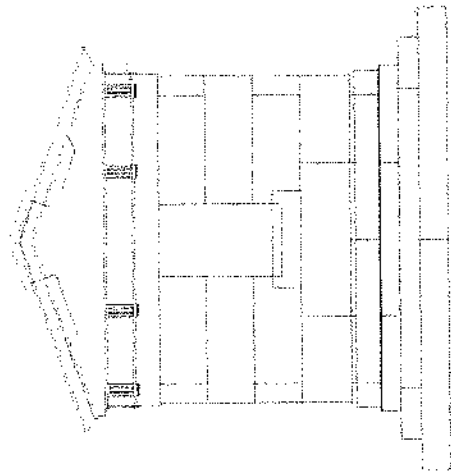
Reference:

1. Sample, O. H. *Monument dealer's manual*. Allied Arts Pub. Co., 1919
2. Standard Oil Company. *From the directors of the Standard oil company to its employeas and stockholders*. New York, Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford co., 1907
3. Farrington Gould Hoagland, Inc., *Farrington Gould and Hoagland, Incorporated : memorial designers and builders : mausoleums, monuments, statuary*. New York : Farrington Gould & Hoagland, Inc., 1927
4. Stone, Gould & Farrington, Inc., *Specifications for the manufacture & complete of the Moffett mausoleum...to be erected in Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City, 258 Broadway, New York City*. 1913
5. New York Times, "James A. Moffett, Dies in Florida," New York, 1913
6. Graduate Class of 1929, "Memorial, James Andrew Moffett II '29," Princeton Alumni Weekly, 1990.
7. The Miami News, "James Moffett Dies at 66: James. A. Moffett, Wored under Roosevelt", 1953.

facade & bronze door
Woodlawn Cemetery



Section, Behind and Side
Moffett Mausoleum



1

Section 2; Doric Column
Moffett Mausoleum

