



PROBLEM 3: FIELD DOCUMENTATION AND FORMAL ANALYSIS – BOETTGER MAUSOLEUM

FALL 2012 HP STUDIO I: READING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

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In the year 1867, Henry W. Boettger decided to set sail for Ellis Island, leaving behind his home country of Germany for the dream of securing a new destiny for himself in the United States as a silk finisher.¹ Having already received training in the textile industry in Germany, moving to the United States seemed like the next logical step for a man with an eye for enterprise.² He soon went into a partnership with Adolph Hinze, forming the silk finishing company of Boettger & Hinze in New Jersey.³ These gentlemen were securing a strong foothold in a market that was just starting to materialize in the United States. Besides beginning what would be a very fruitful career, Henry married Pauline Stoppel in 1870.⁴ Pauline was a first generation American living with her Bavarian parents in Union Hill, New Jersey at the time.⁵ The young couple would end up raising nine children together while continuing to split their time between New Jersey and New York City.⁶

In 1898, Henry saw a new potential in the market for "piece dyeing" and formed a separate Piece Dye Works in Lodi, New Jersey.⁷ Between the years of 1895 and 1903, Henry would buy out his partner and form the Boettger Silk Finishing Company.⁸ This was the start of the family business, with Henry giving his three sons, Robert, Theodore, and Henry Jr., the titles of vice-president, treasurer, and secretary respectively.⁹ The two Boettger businesses, the Piece Dye Works and the Boettger Silk Finishing Company, would eventually expand to form the United Piece Dye Works and the Silk Finishing Company of America.¹⁰ Henry continued to build his silk empire across New Jersey and New York until his death in 1913, at which point his son Theodore became president of the United Piece Dye Works, and his other son Henry Jr. became president of the Silk Finishing Co. of America.¹¹

Henry's death in 1913 sparked the commission of a family mausoleum by his wife Pauline in the prestigious Woodlawn Cemetery. Upon picking a circular lot on the corner of Hickory and Golden Rod Avenues, Pauline hired the services of the Harrison Granite Company, Producers of Monumental & Mausoleum Work, to design the funerary structure.¹² Businesses like the Harrison Granite Company

developed to fill the newly-popular mausoleum niche of the funerary world. Thanks to the demand from society's elite to immortalize their names and from the recently opened granite quarries that were sprouting up in the New England states, particularly in Barre, Vermont, families no longer needed to hire professional architects to design their mausoleums.¹³ The Harrison Granite Company, with its quarry conveniently located in Barre, was widely used in Woodlawn Cemetery during the period from 1900-1950, producing 127 mausoleums for grieving families.¹⁴

The design of the Boettger Mausoleum occurred at the very beginnings of the Egyptian Revival style; a style that would become immensely popular during the 1920s in the United States, often referred to as "Tut Mania," referring to the recent discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb.¹⁵ The overall design of the mausoleum is a modification of a catalog design of the "Egyptian style" in order to better fit both the physical and aesthetic needs of Mrs. Boettger as recorded in the many revision notes found on the construction documents (Figure 1). The granite façade exhibits many of the Egyptian details that define the style, including a "columned entrance with lotus leaf capitals, a winged orb hovering over the doorway, and a cavetto cornice," all of which are layered successively in order to draw the viewer in as they approach the corner lot (Figure 2).¹⁶ Although Mrs. Boettger may have been following the social trend of Egyptian Revival for the design of the exterior of the mausoleum, the interior design is the unique product of the significant family decision to choose cremation over traditional caskets, turning the mausoleum into a columbarium. The fact that cremation was just starting to gain momentum in the United States and "was slowly gaining acceptance in late-nineteenth-century society as a result of new attitudes toward religion, a less sentimental notion of death, and greater health consciousness that viewed it as a sanitary method of disposing of the dead" makes the family decision even more monumental.¹⁷ There are only two other single-family columbariums in the Woodlawn Cemetery, with many "mixed" use mausoleums containing both caskets and ashes, but what makes the Boettger Mausoleum exceptionally distinctive is the full display of their urns.¹⁸ Typical columbariums house their


urns in small crypts or niches, but the Boettger family made the decision to place their urns on shelves that line the perimeter of the marble interior of the columbarium (Figure 3). The open display allows the design of the urns to take precedence over the architecture, while providing an economical funerary solution for a large family desiring to remain together even after death. In fact, there are a total of 21 urns inside the columbarium, consisting of Henry and Pauline Boettger, Henry's brother, Pauline's mother, six of their nine children and their spouses, and even five grandchildren. The columbarium is very much still in use with its most recent occupant having passed away in 2004.

The Boettger family was clearly unbound by societal constraints, evident not only in their business ventures but also in their view of death and funerary architecture. Their columbarium is a prime example of the early use of Egyptian Revival with its elegantly restrained use of detailing which predates the full blown replication of the Egyptian temple that would soon follow, such as the Bache Mausoleum that is also located in Woodlawn Cemetery. Their progressive approach to cremation and the display of the subsequent urns provides a unique look into the history of cremation and urn design. Alongside the architecture, the urns add another layer of history that is open to interpretation by reflecting the cultural trends prevalent during each person's time of passing. The Boettger Columbarium has achieved what many mausoleums have failed to accomplish, which is to remain a relevant final resting place for the descendants of the family. In my opinion, Pauline Boettger's bold approach to funerary architecture should be preserved so that future generations of the Boettger family can continue to add to the layers of history.


ENDNOTES

1. "Henry W Boettger," *1900 United States Census*, (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004), Ancestry.com.
2. George Derby and James Terry White, "Henry William Boettger," *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Volume 15* (J.T. White and Company, 1916), <http://books.google.com>.
3. Derby and White, "Henry William Boettger," *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Volume 15*.
4. "Henry W Boettger," *1900 United States Census*.
5. "Anna Stoppel," *1879 United States Census*, (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations In, 2009), Ancestry.com.
6. Derby and White, "Henry William Boettger," *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Volume 15*.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Derby and White, "Henry William Boettger," *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Volume 15*.
11. Ibid.
12. Harrison Granite Company, letter to Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City, 17 November 1913, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Avery Drawings & Archives, Columbia University, New York City.
13. Richard F. Veit, *New Jersey Cemeteries and Tombstones*, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rivergate Books, 2008), 220.
14. Columbia University, New York City, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Avery Drawings & Archives.
15. Douglas Keister, *Going Out In Style: The Architecture of Eternity*, (New York, NY: Facts On File, 1997), 62.
16. Richard F. Veit, *New Jersey Cemeteries and Tombstones*, 224.
17. Ibid, 229.
18. Susan Olsen, e-mail message to Woodlawn Cemetery Director of Historical Services, October 4, 2012.

FIGURES



MAUSOLEUM—Egyptian



MAUSOLEUM, Great Size (Greek Doric)

NEW JERSEY Newark

- *Julius Barthman
- *C. Feiganspan
- Mrs. Chas. Richter
- J. B. Sanford Estate
- Anthony P. Smith
- H. K. S. Williams

New Brunswick

- J. H. Pool
- Samuel Hopper

Nutley

- Mrs. Hannah O'Hanlon

Ocean Grove

- David D. Bellis

Orange

- Edward D. Farmer

Passaic

- A. P. Fisher
- *John Ward Estate

Paterson

- *Nathan Barnert
- *Mrs. John R. Beam
- H. B. Crandall
- Robert Easton
- Robt. Montgomery
- Edw. L. Perry
- D. P. Quackenbush
- Marion W. Weaver
- Jacob Weymer

Plainfield

- *James Clark
- *Jas. W. Jackson
- Bernhard Moeller

Princeton

- Rev. B. B. Warfield

Ridgefield

- Gen. Alex. Shaler

Ridgewood

- Thos. Boyd
- D. D. and J. G. Zabriskie

Salem

- Dr. G. C. Lippincott

Secaucus

- John Grimes

Summit

- Mrs. N. H. Lester

Trenton

- Mrs. E. H. Linburg
- Joseph W. Mackenzie

Up. Montclair

- Mrs. Ida Person

Verona

- H. L. Banks

NEW YORK

Albany

- M. H. Beacham
- Wm. L. Learned

Amityville

- S. P. Hildreth
- John London

Auburn

- *Edwin E. Fay
- Col. E. D. Metcalf
- Mrs. P. J. Hall

Babyon

- Rev. Stuart L. Trason

Bay Shore

- Mrs. M. E. T. Walker

Bridg'ton

- Wm. Pierson Judson

Broadalbin

- Julius Bins

Buffalo

- Chas. W. Goodyear
- Edmond W. Granger
- *Est. Seymour H. Knox
- Wm. L. Du Bois
- John W. Masury
- Mrs. G. H. Watrous
- Joshua T. Jones
- Mrs. E. E. Hewitt
- J. W. Williams

Catskill

- *Mausoleum

C. Moriches

-

Clinton

-

Cold Spring

-

C. Spg. Harbor

-

Corning

-

NEW YORK

Croton Falls

- Mrs. Laura McQuiston

Elizabethtown

- Louise S. Smith

Fairport

- *Victor Holmes Estate

Fayetteville

- H. N. Burbans Estate

Freeport

- Mrs. John Stromberg

Fulton

- *Dr. Chas. R. Lee

Geneva

- *Mrs. L. D. Collins

Glencove

- Mrs. Mary L. Patrick

Goshen

- N. J. Kelsey

Grand View

- Mrs. E. H. Wagstaff

Great Neck

- Chas. C. Gignoux

Greenport

- S. P. Hedges
- Burger-Purdy Estate

Harrison

- Thos. Simpson

Hartdale

- H. C. Rutherford

Herkimer

- Mrs. Sarah F. Jesup

Holley

- Borman Church

Hudson

- Mrs. Harriet F. Moore

Irwington

- *Est. W. K. Harris

Ithaca

- *Franklin C. Cornell
- *Mrs. Chas. S. Abbott

Jamestown

- *Geo. H. Ahrens
- *Wm. Broadhead
- Orchel Cook
- Chas. M. Dow
- Miss M. L. Gifford
- *Humphrey Estate

Katonah

- Mrs. K. L. Nelson

Kingston

- Mrs. Carrie Hood
- *David Kennedy
- *A. S. and S. S. Staples
- Mrs. E. L. Thomas

Lake Mahopac

- Miss Emma L. Senior

Larchmont

- Mrs. A. B. Monroe

Linlithgo

- Mrs. Della Washburn

Little Falls

- Mrs. Lucy G. Bucklin
- D. H. Barrcll
- Henry Grigg

Lockport

- B. S. W. Clark

Malone

- Mrs. C. A. Spader

Mamaroneck

- E. H. Floyd-Jones

Massapequa

- Quackenbush Estate

Munsey

- Wm. Hillman

Mt. Vernon

- Jas. L. Reynolds
- Mrs. Emelle Thompson
- Henry French

N. Hartford

- Mrs. E. Lyman Bill

N. Rochelle

- J. J. Crennan
- Mrs. A. M. Kreidler
- Mrs. Elizabeth B. McKean
- Mrs. Frances Rogers

Niagara Falls

- Chas. M. Hall

Nyack

- J. F. Hazard

Oakdale

- Mrs. L. K. Ballard

Oneida

- H. H. Douglas

Oswego

- M. Barry, M. R. V. P.
- *Jas. Egginton

***Mausoleum**

Figure 1-Harrison Granite Co. Clientele List and Monument Catalog (<http://quarriesandbeyond.org/>)

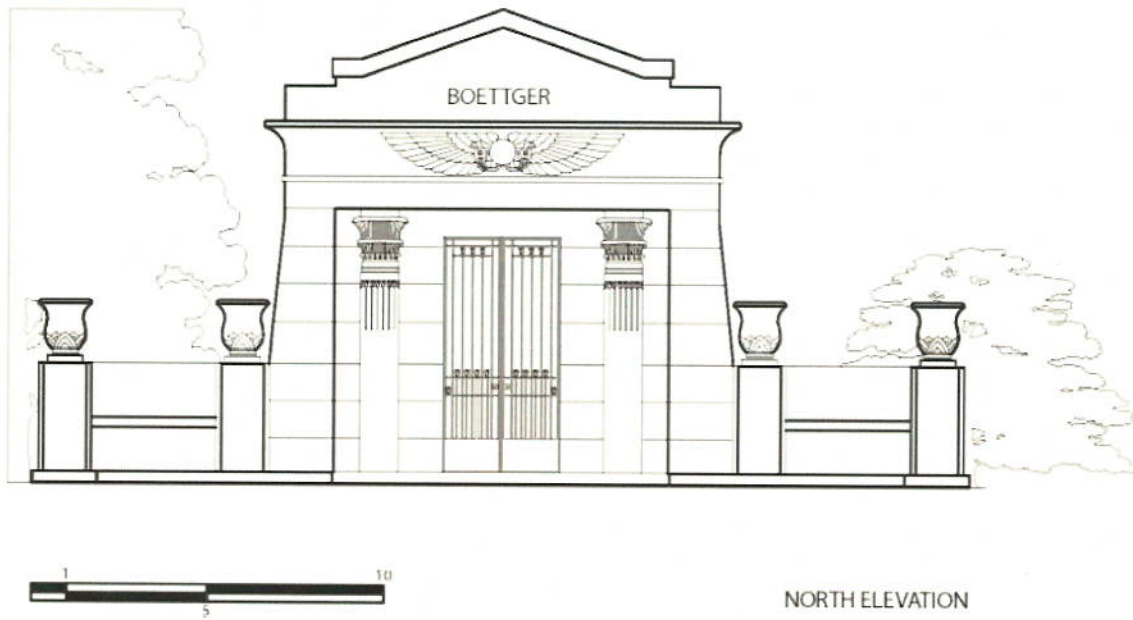


Figure 2-Front Façade with Egyptian Detailing



Figure 3-Interior Shelf for the Urns

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "Anna Stoppel." *1879 United States Census*. Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2009. Ancestry.com.
- Derby, George and James Terry White. "Henry William Boettger." *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Volume 15*. J.T. White and Company, 1916. <http://books.google.com>.
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Woodlawn Cemetery Records. Avery Drawings & Archives. Columbia University, New York City.
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