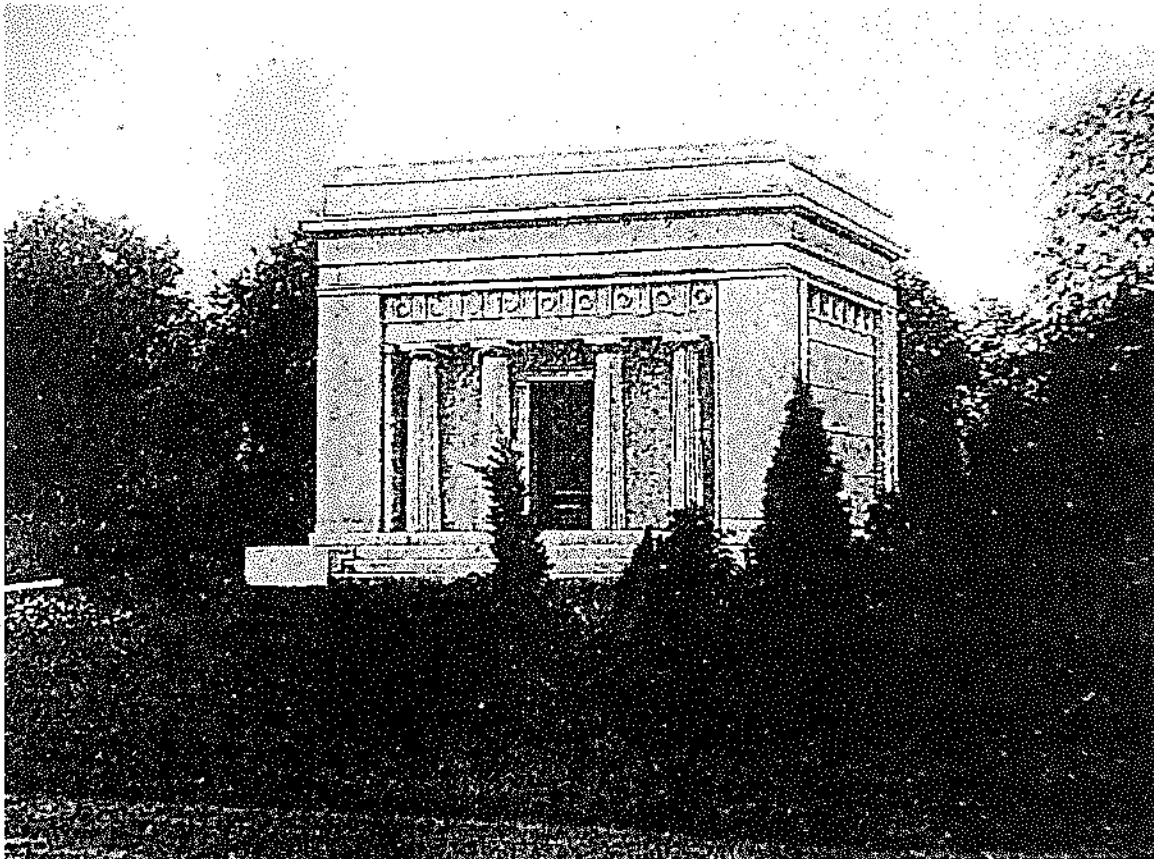


Elyse M. Marks

Studio I - Reading Buildings

Problem 3 - Field Documentation and Formal Analysis

October 18, 2010



Farrington, Gould, and Hoagland Inc. patent license for project design no. 3492; patented 1927.

Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, assessed 10/5/2010

James G. Newcomb Mausoleum and plot

The James G. Newcomb is a large circular lot located on the Myosotis plot in Woodlawn Cemetery. It has been poorly treated, with broken windows and glass all over the floors and sarcophagus inside. Despite its dreary appearance, however, its presence on the landscape is extremely austere. It stands solitary with a considerable expanse of lawn in front of it, exuding an air of timelessness purity within the landscape.

FAMILY HISTORY

The history of how James G. Newcomb came to be a high-ranking executive of Standard Oil actually begins with his brother-in-law, George H. Hopper. Hopper was born in Devonshire, England in 1837 and moved to Cleveland in 1841 during the time of the "Corn Law Troubles" ¹ with his family. He received his education in Cleveland, where developed inventive and mechanical skills. This lead to his eventual employment under John D. Rockefeller and his partner, Samuel J. Andrews (who later married his cousin), working as a contracting manufacturer for the Standard Oil Company in it's formative years. Eventually he sold his factories to Standard Oil and became a stockholder and official for the company, until the time of his retirement, when James G. Newcomb succeeded him as head of the department he founded for the company¹¹.

J.G. Newcomb was born in Cleveland, Ohio in about 1848¹¹¹. His parents, James L. and Margaret Newcomb, were working class, probably farmers. Before inheriting Mr. Hopper's position, J.G. worked as his assistant in the barrel-preparing department of Standard Oil. He worked in various locations under Standard Oil, beginning in the Cleveland, Ohio branch in 1872 and eventually Brooklyn, NY, and New Jersey beginning in 1877. For a time, he also worked for the Atlantic Refining Company in Philadelphia. As it is described by him, his main job was "seeing that oil barrels were properly glued...[and] managing the assembly line workers"

iv. J.G. featured prominently in New York society in his later years, after the death of his first wife Marie L. (Hopper) Newcomb, and after his marriage to Anna Clute Newcomb. He was a director of the National Reserve Bank and the Casualty Company of America. He was also a member of the Ohio Society of New York, the New York Chamber of Commerce, Sons of the American Revolution, Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Natural History, to name only a few.

James Newcomb died in Pasadena, California on February 1, 1935 at the age of 87 v. His second wife survived him until 1959.

FORMAL ANALYSIS - MAUSOLEUM and SITE

The mausoleum's design influence is clearly classic Greek design, with a front tetrastyle of Doric columns and a classic Greek frieze above across the front, sides, and back. On the side and back façade, the Greek frieze is framed by an accouplement of pilasters on either side. The classic Greek elements are framed by a massive blocking of granite, which forms an encasement liked to funerary monuments seen in ancient Roman architecture. It consists of a flattening of the stylized aspects of Greek design so that the monument takes on a more stoic, purely functional appearance. This massiveness conveys a primitive permanence that can be compared to the ancient Roman mausoleums - they suggest a sense of ancient eternalness that is solidly everlasting. It's pure white stone construction, all Barre Granite from quarries of Barre, Vermont vi adds to its hard and unyielding ambiance.

The design of the mausoleum, despite its' complexity, was actually a standard "stock" design patented by Farrington, Gould, and Hoagland Inc., the architects for this project vii. An exact replica of the Newcomb design, the Wheeler family mausoleum, exists elsewhere in Woodlawn Cemetery as a testament to this fact. It is situated on a circular corner lot, a spot commonly considered to be of higher value and thus reserved for more prestigious families with considerable wealth. One is able to approach the

mausoleum from several different angles because the building itself is situated at an angle on the site, providing visitors with a favorable view from every angle. The mausoleum is also accessible via 4 different roads that all converge in front of the lot. The building is also set back a considerable distance from the road, as is common with Greek-inspired classical design, which provides the visitor with a grand approach from the street.

It is clear from records kept by Woodlawn Cemetery that J.G. Newcomb was particularly interested in the landscape design of his land and how well it correlated with the unique shape and position of his lot. As one can see from letters recorded by Woodlawn, Newcomb commissioned a landscape architecture firm, Samuel Cockburn and Sons, to handle planting and landscaping for the lot several years before his death^{viii}. The plant layout as originally sketched by the landscape architect depicts a rich and varied assortment of small and large decorative bushes, trees, and border plants artfully arranged throughout the lot. Over the years, sadly, due to mismanagement of the estate, most of those trees and bushes have been removed due to lack of care^{ix}.

Because of the unique position of the mausoleum on the lot, as well as the situation of the remaining trees and bushes, the exterior → interior circulation is distinctive. One can approach the building from practically any angle; however, once the front steps are ascended, there is a clearly delineated approach to either the sarcophagus inside, or the mourning benches situated at either end of the interior space. The organization of the main exterior façade also conveys a specific movement – the boxed-in tetrastyle Doric columns are spaced asymmetrically from the center, so that the center bay is slightly larger than the flanking bays. This creates a clear entrance point for the visitor.

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- ⁱ Upton, Harriet Taylor., and H. G. Cutler. *History of the Western Reserve Volume II*. Chicago, NY: Lewis Pub., 1910. *E-Books Read*. Web. <www.ebooksread.com>.
- ⁱⁱ Upton, Harriet Taylor., and H. G. Cutler. *History of the Western Reserve Volume II*. Chicago, NY: Lewis Pub., 1910. *E-Books Read*. Web. <www.ebooksread.com>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ United States Federal Census, year 1860 population schedule. Cleveland Ward 5, Cuyahoga, Ohio; Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009.
- ^{iv} *Edward W. Leggett vs. The Standard Oil Company*, Record, Case No. 13,832; October, 1892 Supreme Court of the United States
- ^v *Obituary of James G. Newcomb*, New York Times Feb. 2, 1935; Proquest Historical Newspapers New York Times (1851-2007), pg. 13
- ^{vi} Horenstein, Sidney. Interview with Susan Olsen. *Cemetery Science*. Scientific American, www.scientificamerican.com Oct. 30, 2008. Accessed Oct. 7, 2010 <http://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/episode.cfm?id=cemetery-science-the-geology-of-mau-08-10-30>
- ^{vii} Farrington, Gould, and Hoagland patent for project design no. 3492; patented 1927. *Woodlawn Cemetery Records*, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, assessed 10/5/2010
- ^{viii} *Woodlawn Cemetery Records*, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, assessed 10/10/2010.
- ^{ix} Glick, Edward J. *Re: James G. Newcomb Mausoleum*, May 17, 1948; *Woodlawn Cemetery Records*, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, assessed 10/5/2010