

**The Monument of M.C.D. Borden at Woodlawn Cemetery**



*Figure 1: M.C.D. Borden's monument site, as viewed from Fairview Avenue<sup>1</sup>*

At the time of his death from pneumonia in May 1912, Matthew Chaloner Durfee Borden owned the American Printing Company in Fall River, Massachusetts, one of the largest cotton mills and cotton printing works in the world. Dubbed the “King of Calico” (a type of woven textile), M.C.D. Borden (as he preferred to be called) was a leading figure in the cloth manufacturing industry. For

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, photographs taken by the author.

his and his family's final resting place, the King of Calico chose Woodlawn Cemetery, in New York City borough of the Bronx.<sup>2</sup>

Situated near the cemetery's Jerome Avenue entrance, M.C.D. Borden's monument is located on Fairview Avenue, just off the main Central Avenue artery. Designed in 1904 by architectural firm Carrère and Hastings, the marble and granite central monument and semicircular arc of tombs rest prominently on a round, raised terrace in the middle of a circular, 15,000 square foot lot (see *Figure 2* for a site plan prepared by Carrère and Hastings). The marble contracting firm of Batterson and Eisele provided the stone work for the monument.

Accessed by a wide path and stairs, the terrace's mosaic floor is paved in a geometric design of pink Milford granite, light gray Knoxville marble, rubbed red Knoxville marble, rubbed bluestone, and polished red granite (see *Figure 3* for view of paving).<sup>3</sup> A large sarcophagus, raised above the terrace, serves as the center point around which the six principal tombs are arranged. The design of this central focal point resembles the sarcophagus of the ancient Roman consul Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus, now found in the Pio-Clementine Museum complex at the Vatican.<sup>4</sup> The design

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<sup>2</sup> Biographic information courtesy of "Matthew Chaloner Durfee Borden", Find a Grave, last accessed September 29, 2017, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8485042>. Information on name preference courtesy of Mary H. Blewett, *Constant Turmoil: The Politics of Industrial Life in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Information on stone used in paving from *Specification of Monument, Tombs, etc. in Woodlawn Cemetery for M.C.D. Borden, Esq.* by Carrère and Hastings, revised July 1, 1904, Woodlawn Cemetery Collection at the Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library (Drawings and Archives).

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Scott Dolkart, "Designing Woodlawn: Buildings and Landscapes," in *Sylvan Cemetery: Architecture, Art & Landscape at Woodlawn*, ed. Charles D. Warren, Carole Ann Fabian and Janet Parks (New York: Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, The Woodlawn Conservancy, 2014), 69.

inspiration may have been an attempt to symbolically tie Borden, a leading businessman, to a Roman leader from classical times.

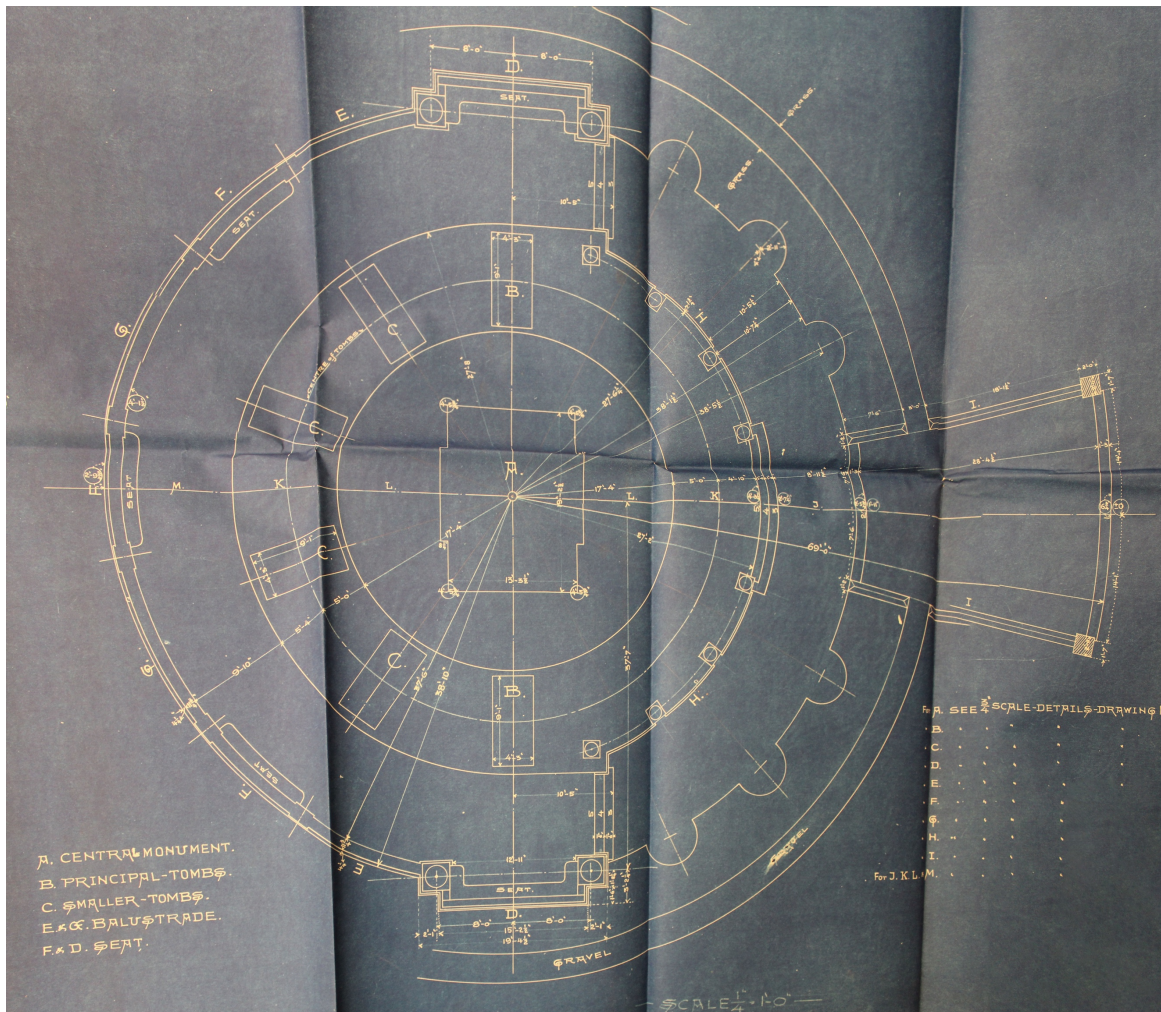


Figure 2: Site plan of M.C.D. Borden's monument by Carrère and Hastings, courtesy of Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library's Woodlawn Cemetery Collection<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Images of plans, maps, and other drawings related to M.C.D. Borden's monument featured throughout were taken as photographs by the author, from documentation held within the Woodlawn Cemetery Collection at the Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library (Drawings and Archives).



*Figure 3: View of mosaic design of paving on terrace, as arrayed around central monument*

Please refer to *Figure 4* for images of both the sarcophagus of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus and the central raised sarcophagus at M.C.D. Borden's monument. The shape is similar in both, but certain details differ. The band of floral elements across Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus's sarcophagus, above the inscription, is omitted from the sarcophagus of M.C.D. Borden's monument. Instead, the family name is prominently featured above the inscription on the north elevation. The floral element from Barbatus's sarcophagus is instead used on Borden's central sarcophagus in place of the scrollwork on top of the sarcophagus's cap; it is also featured on the sides of the two main sarcophagi on the terrace (see *Figures 6* and *8*).



*Figure 4: Sarcophagus of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus (top image) and details of the central raised sarcophagus of M.C.D. Borden's monument (bottom images)<sup>6</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> Image of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus's sarcophagus from Emily Hauser, "#HOCW44: Sarcophagus of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus," last modified January 23, 2017, <http://emilyshauser.weebly.com/hocw100/hocw44-sarcophagus-of-lucius-cornelius-scipio-barbatus-early-to-mid-3rd-century-bce>.

As noted above, the central raised sarcophagus features the family name prominently on its north elevation. Under this, bringing the monument from its classical inspiration to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is a line from Revelation 14:13. Inscribed on the south elevation is a line from John 11:25. This central raised sarcophagus, as well as the principal sarcophagi surrounding it, are composed of closely-grained, light gray Knoxville marble<sup>7</sup>.

These sarcophagi serve as the six principal tombs on the main platform; the two sarcophagi at either end are larger and more elaborately decorated, and contain the remains of M.C.D. Borden and his wife, Harriet Minerva Durfee Borden (see *Figure 5* for a view of the cap of M.C.D. Borden's sarcophagus; some side details of his wife's sarcophagus can be seen in *Figure 8*). Arrayed evenly between these two sarcophagi are the four sarcophagi where their children William Owen, Harry Evarts, Owen Ives, and an unnamed infant female rest (the children's sarcophagi can be seen in *Figures 5 and 6*).

A marble and granite balustrade circles the rear perimeter of the main terrace. This balustrade features seats and tall decorative urns. Smaller urns form the remaining perimeter of the raised platform. Please refer to *Figures 7 and 8* for views of the balustrade, seats, and urns.

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<sup>7</sup> Information on stone used for sarcophagi from *Specification of Monument, Tombs, etc.*, Carrère and Hastings, Woodlawn Cemetery Collection.



*Figure 5: Sarcophagus cap of M.C.D. Borden and the smaller sarcophagi of his four children who predeceased him (to the right in the image)*



*Figure 6: Side view of the sarcophagus for one of M.C.D. Borden's children; his sarcophagus is to the left in the image*

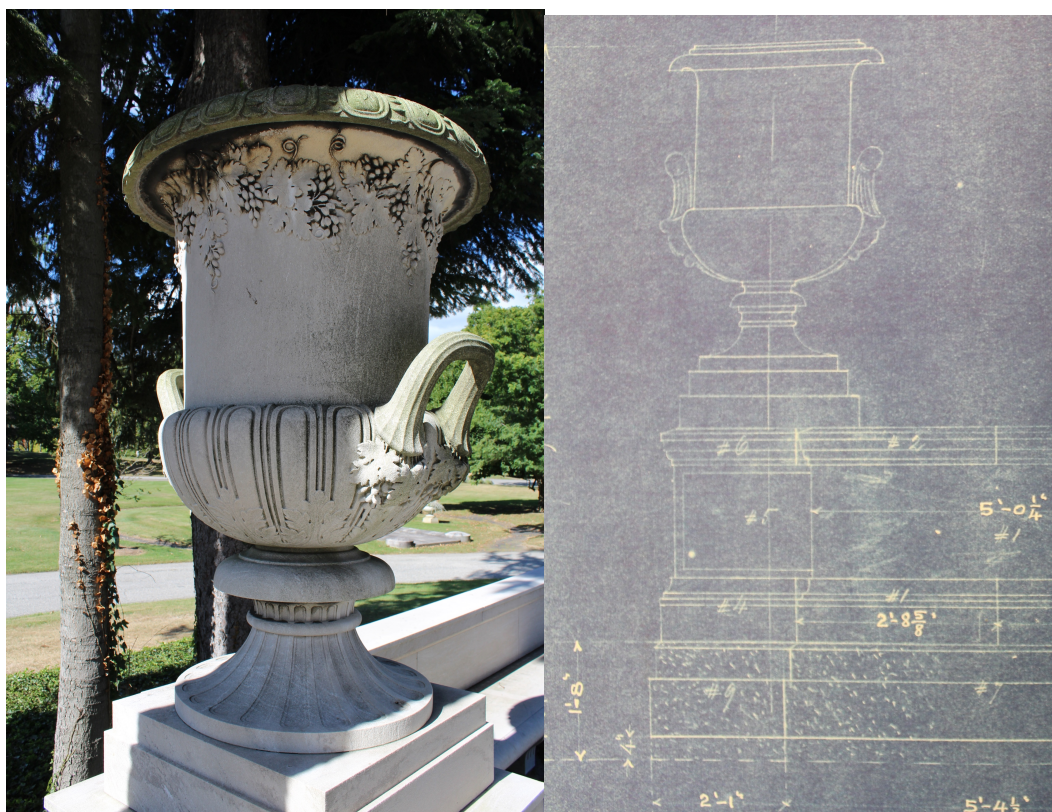


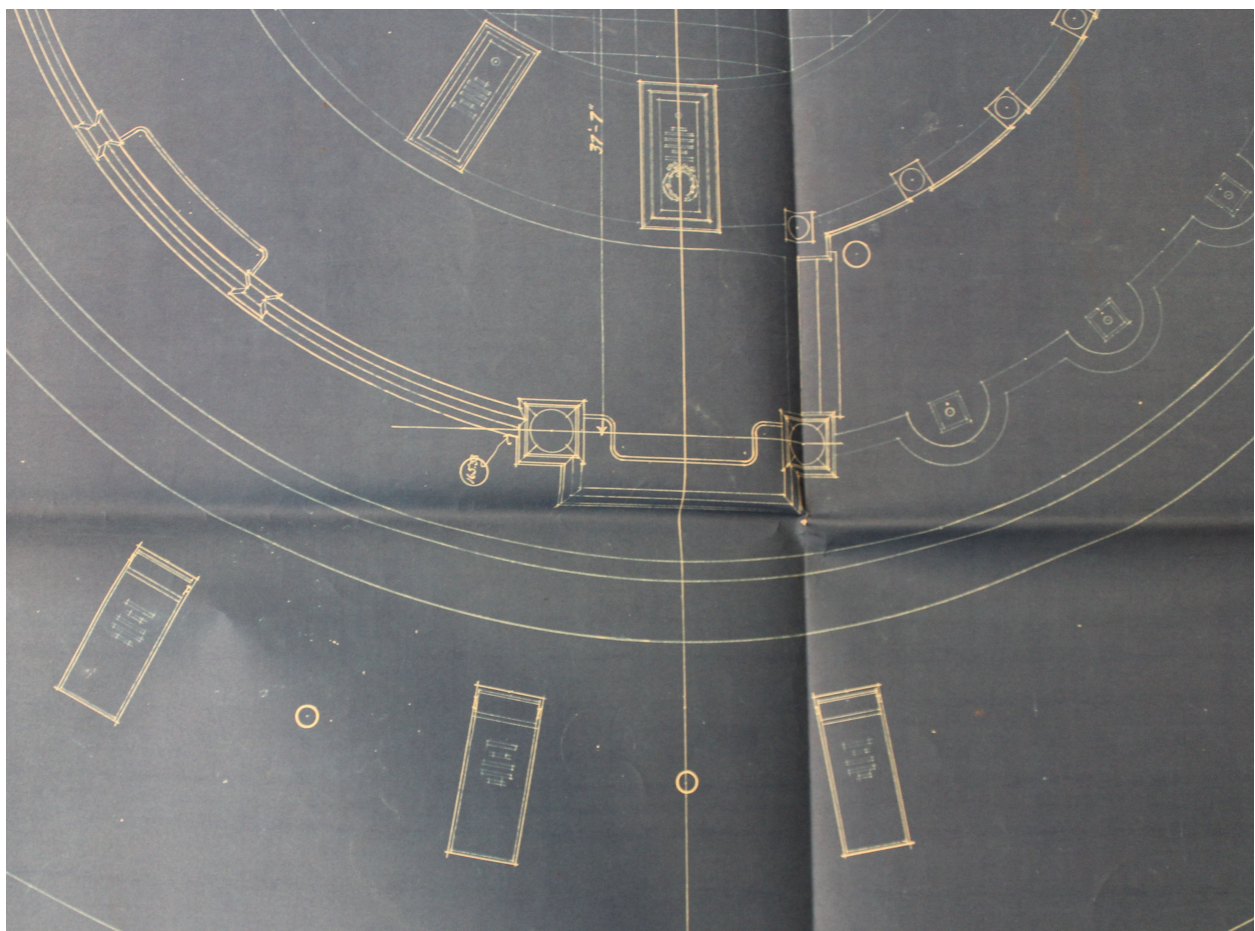
Figure 7: Large urns from balustrade with drawing detail by Carrère and Hastings



Figure 8: Balustrade with benches and large and small urns; Harriet's sarcophagus to the right



Around the edge of the terrace proper is a significant amount of open space, wherein the graves for other family members and future generations were to be placed at even intervals, as originally designed by Carrère and Hastings, as seen in the site plan shown as *Figure 9*. However, later changes by the family have resulted in closer groupings of gravesites, as seen in *Figure 10*.



*Figure 9: Site plan by Carrère and Hastings showing original configuration for outside graves*

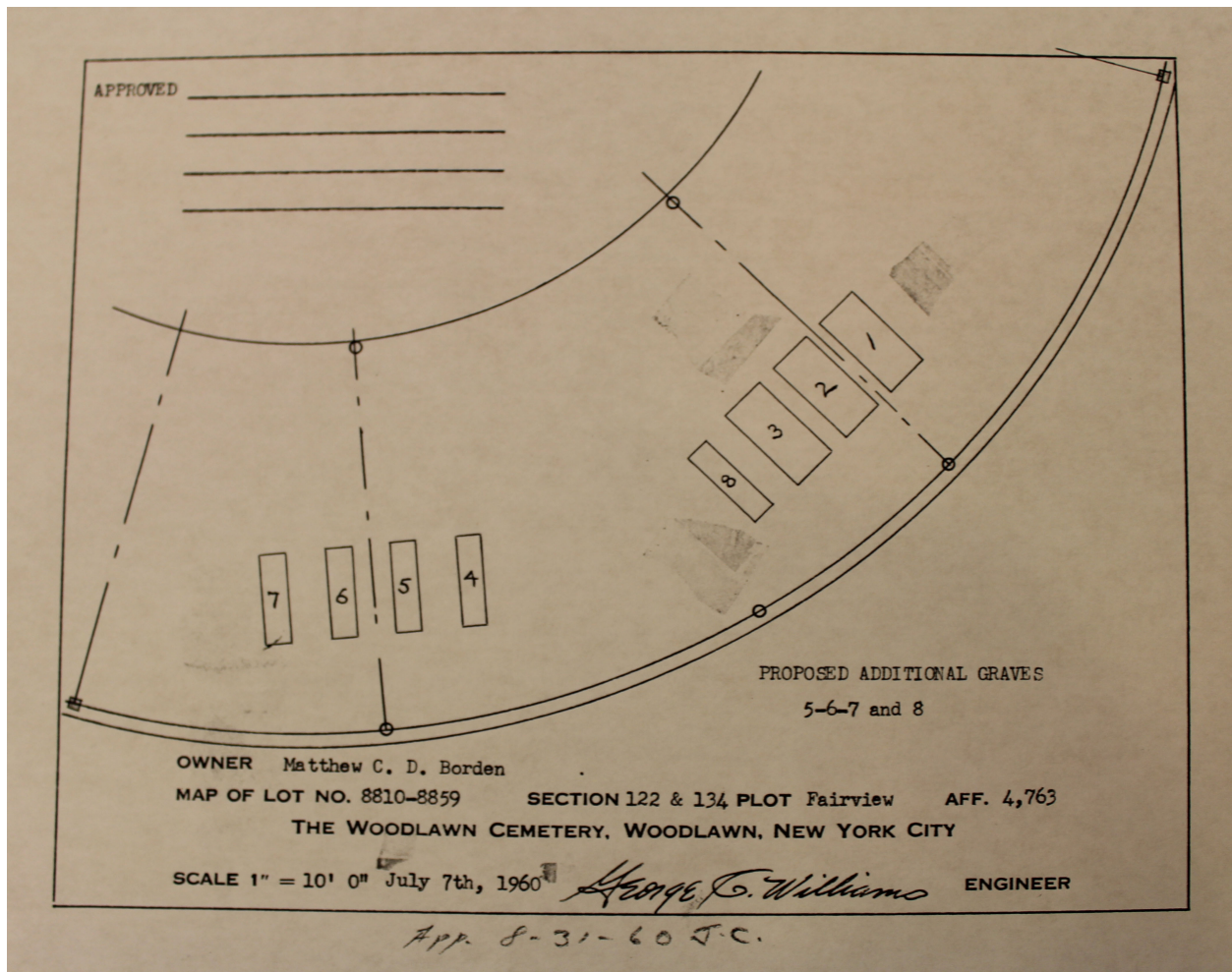


Figure 10: Current layout of gravesites on lawn

Currently two groups of graves, comprising three markers each, are present around the central terrace. One grouping is for M.C.D. Borden’s son Howard Seymour Borden, his wife, and daughter (see *figure 11*). The other grouping is for Howard’s son John Chaloner and his wife, Judith. Within this second grouping, there is a single gravestone for John C. Borden’s son, John C. Borden, Junior, and his wife, Gloria Jones (see *Figure 12*).

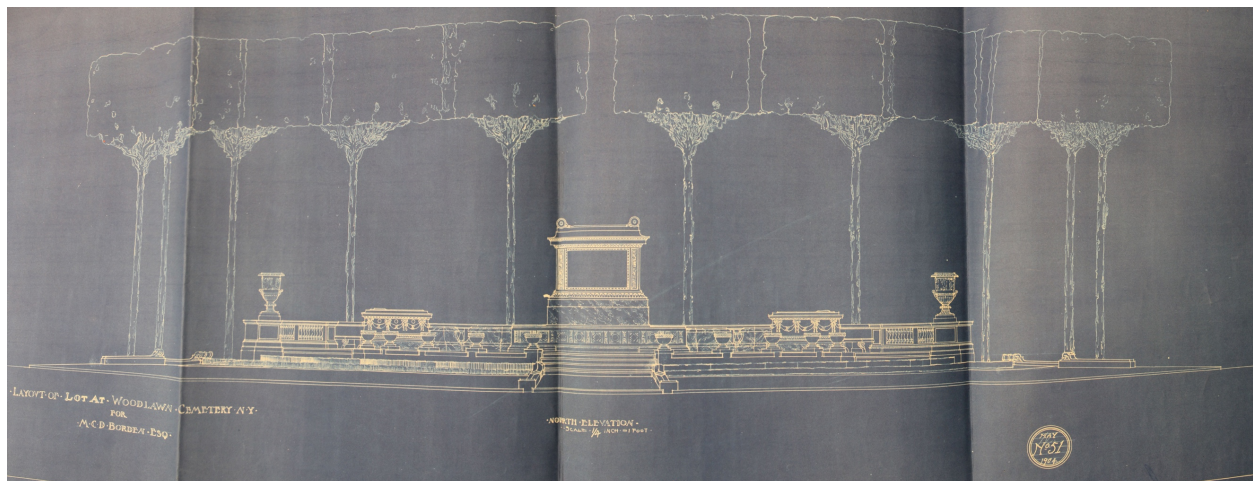


*Figure 11: Graves of Howard S. Borden and his wife and daughter*



*Figure 12: Graves of John C. Borden and his family (joint gravestone for son and his wife are to the left of the image)*

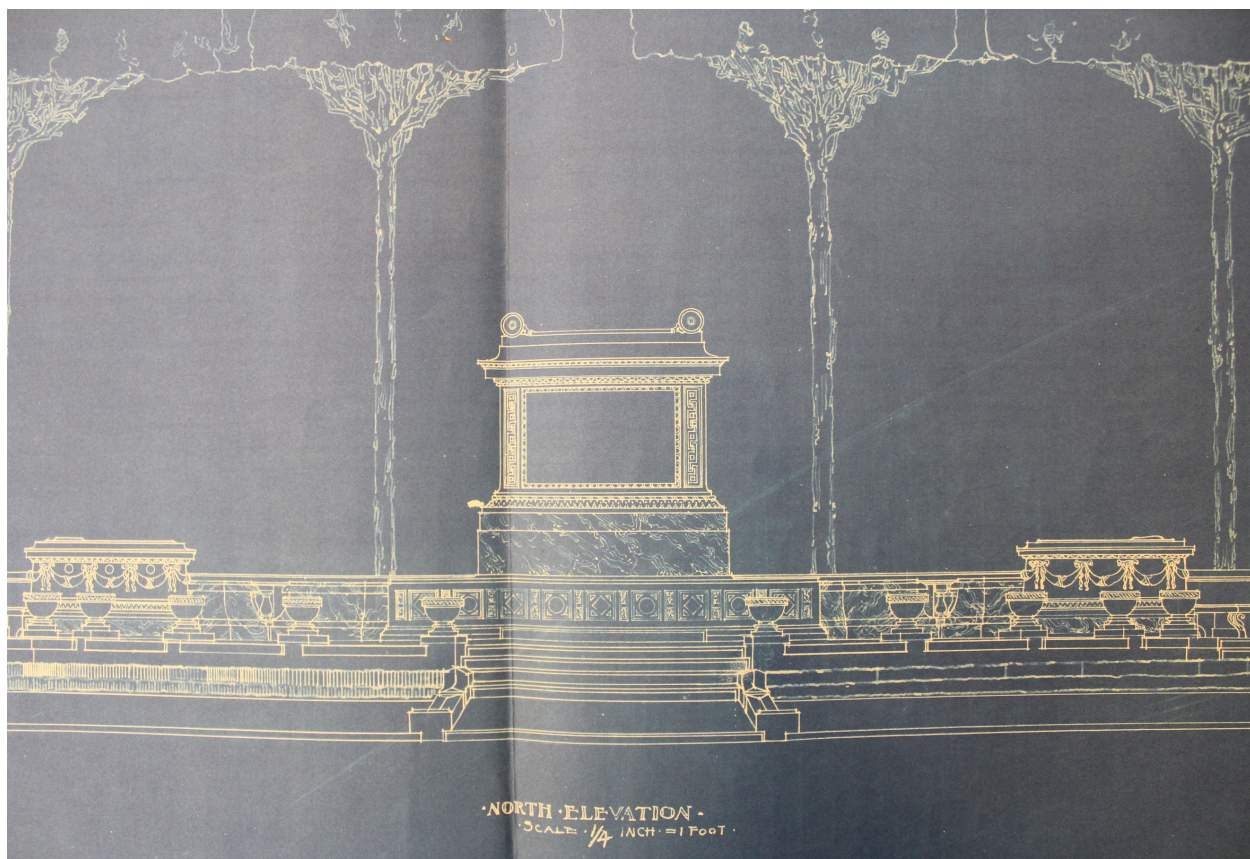
The arrangement of the outside graves is not the only change that has been made to the original design of Carrère and Hastings. In perhaps the earliest example of incorporating landscape architecture into lot design at Woodlawn, original drawings show a bordering arc of pleached trees, designed to mark the extent of the lot and to focus the viewer's attention inward (see *Figures 13* and *14* for views of the original drawing by Carrère and Hastings). Internal notes from correspondence maintained at the Avery Library's Woodlawn Collection indicate that these trees may have been intended to be sycamore. However, conifers were used for the final planting, likely due to the expense and effort associated with maintaining the carefully shaped and manicured arboreal shapes as originally designed.<sup>8</sup>



*Figure 13: North elevation showing original design of pleached trees*

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<sup>8</sup> Information on landscape architecture at Woodlawn and potential reasoning behind final choice on trees from Dolkart, "Designing Woodlawn," 75-76.



*Figure 14: Close up of the central raised sarcophagus, framed as originally intended by pleached trees*

This incorporation of landscape architecture into the overall lot design would later be used again by Carrère and Hastings in the firm’s design drawings in 1909 for Henry T. Sloan’s circular lot at Woodlawn (now the site of the Kavanaugh Mausoleum).<sup>9</sup> Please refer to *Figure 15* for the site plan of this lot.

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<sup>9</sup> Dolkart, “Designing Woodlawn,” 88.

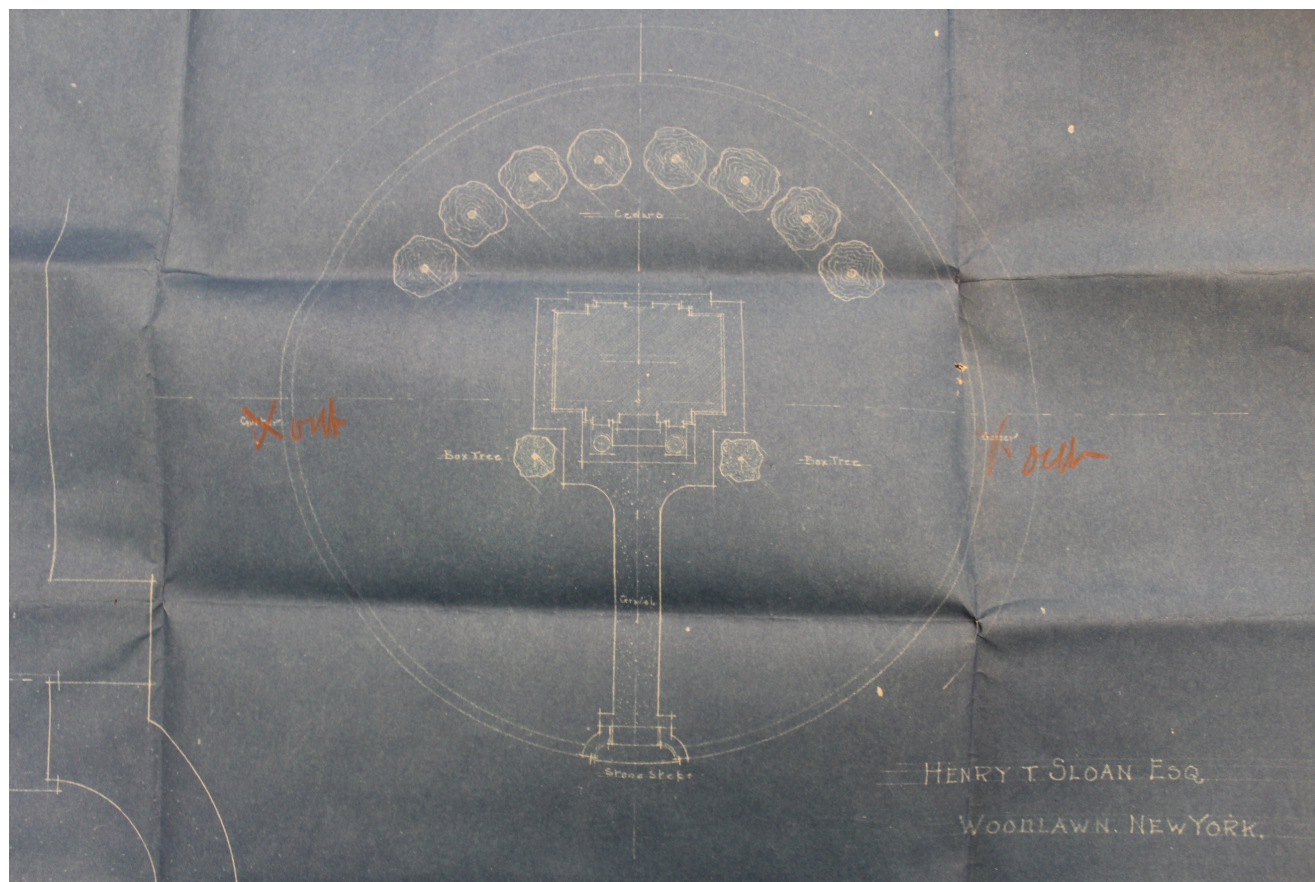


Figure 15: Use of landscape design by Carrère and Hastings for the H.T. Sloan Mausoleum

Regardless of the final landscaping utilized for the Borden monument, the site's size and placement in relation to the Jerome Avenue entrance command attention from passersby. When M.C.D. Borden purchased this lot for \$45,000 on November 6, 1895, the Woodlawn Cemetery was still in the process of extending west to the Jerome Avenue border. Please refer to *Figure 16* for a view of Woodlawn Cemetery six years prior to M.C.D. Borden's purchase; his lot is in Sections 134 and 122, which are to the middle left of the image.

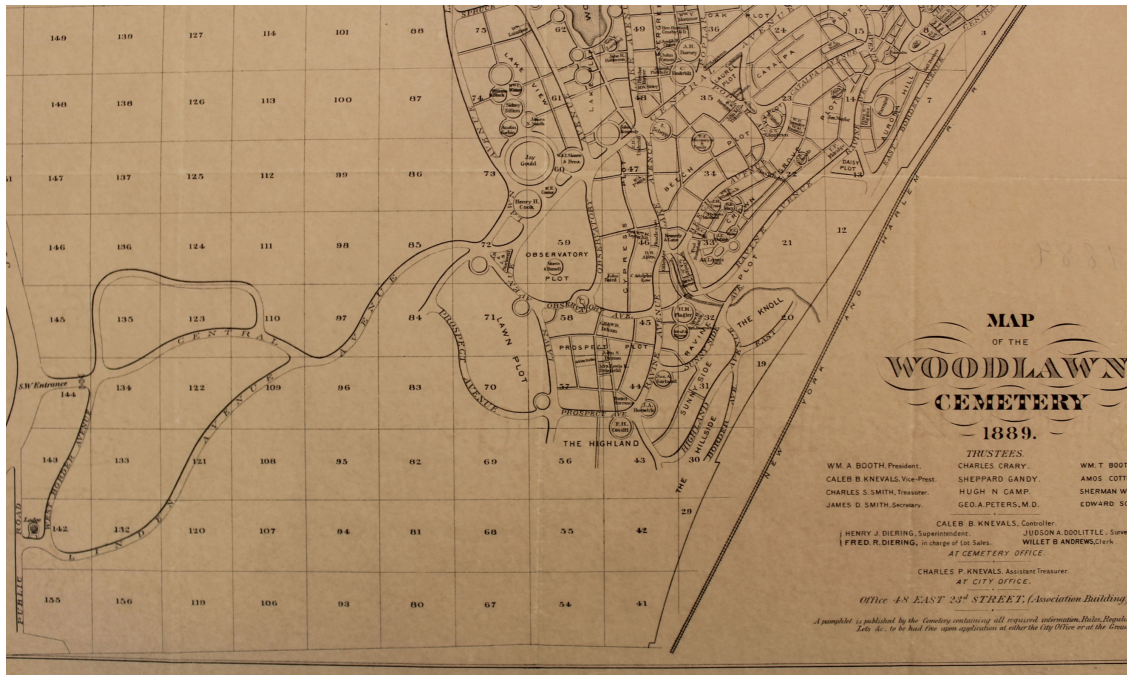


Figure 16: Map showing layout of Woodlawn in 1889 and the vacant space in the western area



Figure 17: View of Borden's lot (center) and surrounding lots

As seen in *Figure 17*, M.C.D. Borden's large circular lot is surrounded by several smaller circular lots. These smaller lots were purchased after Borden secured his lot in 1895. The dates of acquisition for some of these lots are as follows: Mason in 1896, Ziegler and Cammeyer in 1898, and Wyckoff in 1899. Accordingly, Borden's lot was one of the early purchases in this western portion, before increasing purchasing and construction activity raised the visibility of the area.

At a size of 15,000 square feet, Borden's lot finds itself among some of larger circular properties in the cemetery, which include Jay Gould's 30,000 square foot lot (purchased in 1882), William Seward Webb's 15,000 square foot lot (purchased in 1891), Henry Taylor's 20,000 square foot lot (purchased in 1900), and the Paterno Circle of 18,333 square feet (purchased in 1911). Borden's lot, with its size and location, serves as an enduring memorial to him and his family, and at the time of purchase represented a very permanent change of address for the M.C.D. Borden family, which we can see if we take a closer look at his life.

M.C.D. Borden was born on July 18, 1842 in Fall River, Massachusetts, and was the third son of Colonel Richard Borden. In 1825, Colonel Borden had cofounded the Fall River Iron Works with Major Bradford Durfee. Following its incorporation, the Iron Works gained a reputation for producing fine-quality nails. With the growing success of the Iron Works, Colonel Borden branched out into other businesses, including steamship and railroad service between Boston and New York (via Fall River) and textile milling (with the construction of the Metacomet Mill in 1847). Colonel Borden's business interests extended to the dealings of other members of the Borden family, who were similarly successful. Two such notable relations with whom Colonel



Borden was involved were Holder Borden and Jefferson Borden, who founded and expanded the American Print Works in Fall River, respectively. Colonel Borden served as director and president of the Print Works. (Another family member would become notable, but for reasons other than business; this was the infamous Lizzie Andrew Borden. Lizzie's and M.C.D.'s great-grandfathers were brothers.)<sup>10</sup>

M.C.D. Borden attended preparatory school at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and then matriculated at Yale University, graduating in 1864. His time at Yale provided him with important social and business contacts, especially with prominent figures with whom he would partner later in life. On September 5, 1865, M.C.D. Borden married Harriet Durfee, a relative of his father's business partner and M.C.D.'s own distant relative through his mother, Abby Durfee Borden.<sup>11</sup>

M.C.D. Borden's rise to prominence in the cloth manufacturing industry started slowly, as he took a position as a dry goods clerk in New York City shortly after graduation. Within three years he became a partner in a New York City firm representing the interests of the Borden family's American Print Works in the city. In 1874, Colonel Borden passed away. Upon his father's death, M.C.D. Borden inherited the shares that his father held in Holder and Jefferson Borden's Print Works. The Print Works would ultimately fail in 1879, as it could not keep up with uninsured losses from an 1867 fire that ravaged a factory building, which had been only newly constructed at the time of the fire.

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<sup>10</sup> Blewett, *Constant Turmoil*, 308.

<sup>11</sup> Information on the Borden family tree from Blewett, *Constant Turmoil*, 20-21.

The following year, in 1880, M.C.D. and his brothers reorganized the remains of the Print Works business into the American Printing Company. Then, in 1886, M.C.D. bought his brothers' shares in the company. As sole owner, M.C.D. razed existing structures which had been built under the guidance of Jefferson Borden, and in their place built new cloth-producing mills. By supplying his own cloth for his printing mills, M.C.D. Borden removed his American Printing Company from market forces. This allowed him to provide wage raises to workers in times of depression, most notably in the fall of 1901, when he provided a wage increase of 10 percent.<sup>12</sup>

Relying upon his important connections among the dry goods and banking circles in New York City, “[b]y 1901 Borden was setting the price of grey goods [goods, in this case fabric/cloth, sold by an individual or entity other than the original manufacturer, usually having been purchased abroad and sold more cheaply] and printed cloth.”<sup>13</sup> His hold on the print cloth market continued until his death, and his connections in New York City grew with memberships to exclusive clubs, such as the Merchants Club of New York, the New York Yacht Club, and the Republican Club of New York, among others. M.C.D. Borden also served prominently in the New York City Parks Commission, functioning as Treasurer in 1888 and President in 1889.

While his business boomed, he did experience tragedy in his domestic life. Per her death record, the Borden's only daughter survived only fifteen hours before passing away on September 9, 1883. Two of his sons lived barely beyond one year: William Owen (July 12, 1867-March 4, 1868) and

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<sup>12</sup> “M.C.D. Borden Dead,” *The New York Times*, May 28, 1912, 11.

<sup>13</sup> Blewett, *Constant Turmoil*, 308.

Harry Evarts (December 19, 1870-January 1, 1872). One other son would predecease his father: Owen Ives passed away at age 18 (November 25, 1867-June 2, 1899). Three sons would survive longer than their father: Bertram (1868-1956), Matthew (1872-1914), and Howard (1876-1950). Borden's wife, Harriet, would also pass away before him on February 17, 1902.



*Figure 18: Detail from Harriet's sarcophagus*

Harriet and Owen would remain in Woodlawn's receiving tomb until their interment in the family lot in January 1906. At that time, they were joined by William, Harry, and the infant daughter, who were moved from their previous resting place in Oak Grove Cemetery in Springfield, Massachusetts.

While M.C.D. Borden's main factories were located in Fall River and the Borden family's principal home had been on North Main Street, M.C.D. himself would maintain another residence for himself, his wife, and children at 25 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City. This facilitated his business ties and dealings there. M.C.D. Borden also maintained a summer residence along West River Road in Oceanic, New Jersey (an unincorporated community within Rumson, New Jersey), where M.C.D. Borden could engage his love of sailing (his luxury yacht, the *Sovereign*, was launched in 1911 and would later be purchased by the U.S. Navy). It was at this estate in Oceanic that M.C.D. Borden would pass away on May 27, 1912. Upon his death, he was interred at his plot in Woodlawn alongside his wife and William, Harry, Owen, and his infant daughter.

The Borden monument served as a permanent change of address for the family of M.C.D. Borden, uprooting them from their ties to Fall River, Massachusetts, and claiming New York City as their home and final resting place. With its prominent location and monolithic design and massing, the monument is a significant part of Woodlawn and a notable site to visit.

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