

Emily Junker
Studio 1 – Fall 2018
Historic Preservation – Columbia University GSAPP

The Dunkak Mausoleum at Woodlawn Cemetery

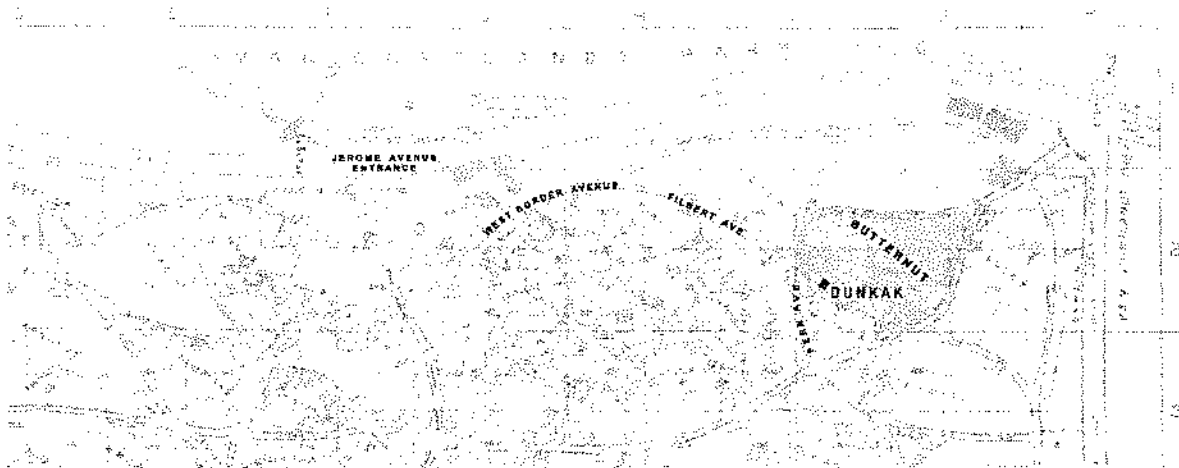


Photo: Emily Junker¹

Location

The Dunkak Mausoleum is located in the north-western corner of Woodlawn Cemetery, in the Butternut Plot. When entering from the Jerome Avenue entrance, turn left and follow West Border Avenue to Filbert Avenue. The Dunkak plot occupies an irregular lot just past the corner of Filbert on Fern Avenue. It borders some more expensive and prominent circular plots on the corner.

¹ All photography and graphics by the author unless otherwise sourced.



Source: "Woodlawn Cemetery Layout." <http://www.uscemeteryproj.com/newyork/bronx/woodlawn/layout.htm>.
With graphic overlay by the author.

Biographical Information

Buried in this mausoleum is Henry Dunkak, his wife Charlotte Higby, their son William H. Dunkak, and his wife Gladys R. Dunkak. Henry Dunkak was the son of Henry and Emilie Dunkak who were immigrants from Hanover, Germany.² Henry was their third child and only son. His three sisters were Adeline, Caroline, and Emma. Their father, Henry, worked in a retail grocery, which may have influenced Henry's later career in the commodities trade. The family lived in midtown at 302 East 51st street, an apartment building that no longer stands.³

Henry first worked as a clerk in his father's store.⁴ After he graduated from the College of the City of New York, he and his partner, Edward Zimmer, established the butter and egg firm of Zimmer & Dunkak in 1885.⁵ The firm was quite successful and had offices at 134-136 Duane Street in lower Manhattan, a district where the dairy and egg industries were concentrated.

² *United States Census, 1880*; Census Place: New York City, New York, New York; Roll: 893; Page: 263B; Enumeration District: 553

³ *United States Census, 1900*; Census Place: Manhattan, New York, New York; Page: 17; Enumeration District: 0594; FHL microfilm: 1241107

⁴ *United States Census, 1880*; Census Place: New York City, New York, New York; Roll: 893; Page: 263B; Enumeration District: 553

⁵ "Henry Dunkak." *The New York Herald Tribune* (New York, N.Y.) May 26, 1926.

In 1907, Henry was elected the president of the New York City Mercantile Exchange.⁶ The NYCMEX started as the Butter Cheese and Egg exchange around 1850 to standardize and reform these trades. It changed its name to the New York City Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) when it incorporated the trade of other goods. At the time, it was located in a building at 6 Harrison Street in lower Manhattan built for its use in 1872. The NYMEX is still traded on the New York Stock Exchange, but now is an extensive liquid energy marketplace owned by CME group⁷.

Henry married Helen Ottman in 1901 and had one daughter, Marguerite in 1903 (d. 1930). They later divorced and he married Charlotte Zahn around 1918. In the 1920 Census, Henry and Charlotte are living with three children: William H., Charlotte E. and Irene (b. 1919) at 868 West End Avenue on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.⁸

William and Charlotte are from Charlotte's first marriage to hotelier Albert J Kramer—the owner of the Atlantic Garden Beer Hall and Thalia Theater on the Bowery—whom she separated from in 1914 after accusing him of extramarital affairs and having him pay for her and the children's high living standards.⁹ Charlotte Zahn, however was already independently wealthy of her father's Sayles-Zahn Meat and Provisions company. Her children, William and Charlotte are listed with her as William H. Kramer and Charlotte E. Kramer on the 1910 Census and as William H. Dunkak and Charlotte E. Dunkak by the 1920 census.¹⁰

⁶ New York Produce Review and American Creamery. Accessed September 25, 2018.

http://books.google.com/books/about/New_York_Produce_Review_and_American_Cre.html?id=aQMSXlv64aIC.

⁷ "Energy Products - CME Group." <http://www.cmegroup.com/trading/energy/>.

⁸ *United States Census, 1920*; Census Place: Manhattan Assembly District 11, New York, New York; Roll: T625_1204; Page: 118; Enumeration District: 810

⁹ "MRS. LIBBY BURNS, 75, IS NAMED IN DIVORCE: Albert J. Kramer Says His Visit to Restaurateur's Widow Was a Joke. HAD FRIEND PHONE WIFE Gives Mrs. Kramer \$125 a Week and Lives Alone in Room at Back Of Atlantic Garden." *New York Times*. 1915.

AND

"KRAMER'S JOKE ON WIFE.: With Assistance of Friend Endmann He Arranged to Be 'Caught' With Woman of 75 Years." *Boston Daily Globe (1872-1922)*; Boston, Mass. August 6, 1915.

¹⁰ *United States Census, 1910*; Census Place: Manhattan Ward 19, New York, New York; Roll: T624_1042; Page: 28; Enumeration District: 1138; FHL microfilm: 1375055

United States Census, 1920; Census Place: Manhattan Assembly District 11, New York, New York; Roll: T625_1204; Page: 118; Enumeration District: 810

By the time of his Princeton days William identified as the son of his step-father Henry Dunkak, perhaps ashamed of his own father.¹¹ William graduated from Princeton in 1922 with an economics degree.¹² He joined Merrill, Lynch & Co. at 7 Wall Street in 1927 where he created the market analysis department. He became the director of Merrill Lynch research division leading in market analysis and was named a partner in 1944. He remained a top director and Vice President of the company until his retirement in 1967.¹³ He married Gladys Renouard in 1925. She gave birth to their only son, William Henry Dunkak Jr. in 1926 (d. 2008). They lived with Gladys's parents at 469 1st Street in Park Slope¹⁴, Brooklyn until they moved to their own place also in Brooklyn.¹⁵ William died at his home in Vero Beach Florida in 1983¹⁶.

11 "AncestryLibrary.Com - U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-1990." Princeton University, 1922. https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/interactive/1265/40392_B075792-00115/242058327?backurl=https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/family-tree/person/tree/5757804/person/160042097991/facts.

12 "William H. Dunkak." The New York Times, April 10, 1983, sec. Obituaries. <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/04/10/obituaries/william-h-dunkak.html>.

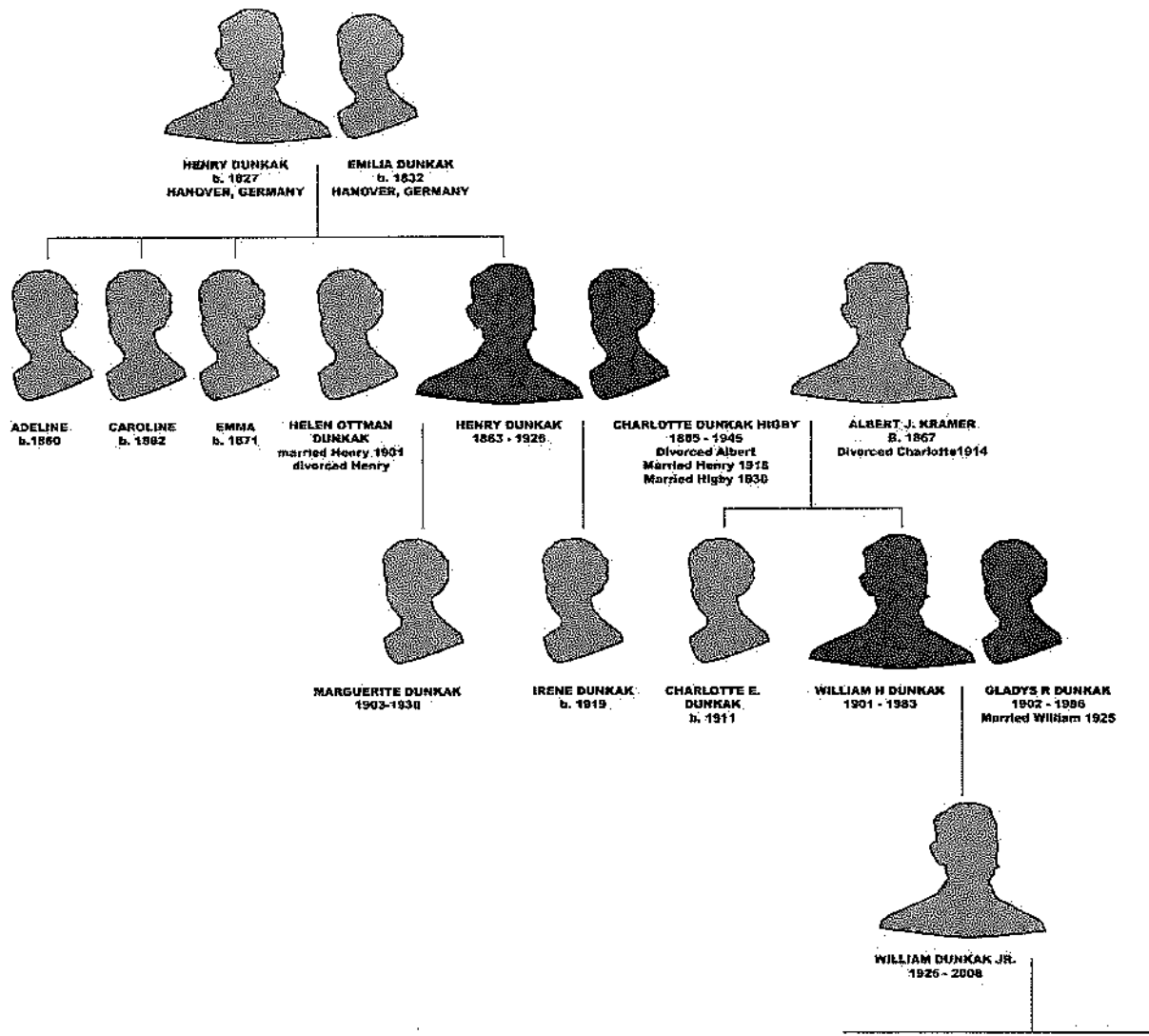
13 "Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated Annual Report - 1967." ANN ARBOR, United States: ProQuest Annual Reports, 1967. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/88198930/citation/77C755B1F58F499EPQ/1>.

*see report published since 1941.

14 *United States Census, 1930*; Census Place: Brooklyn, Kings, New York; Roll: 1515; Page: 5A; Enumeration District: 0600; Image: 463.0; FHL microfilm: 2341250

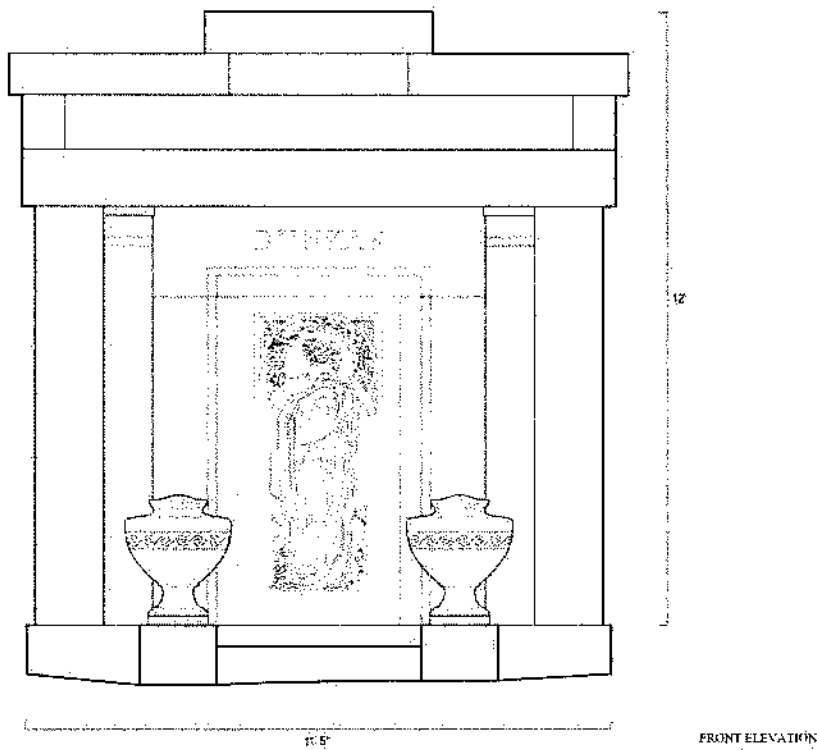
15 *United States Census, 1940*; Census Place: New York, Kings, New York; Roll: T627_2581; Page: 7B; Enumeration District: 24-1336.

16 "William H. Dunkak." The New York Times, April 10, 1983, sec. Obituaries. <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/04/10/obituaries/william-h-dunkak.html>.



The Dunkak Family. Information sourced from the US Census and newspaper articles.

The Mausoleum



Henry was the first to die in May of 1926 at their final home at 35 Elmsmere Road in Mt. Vernon.¹⁷ Charlotte commissioned Presbrey-Leland—the prominent sepulchral monument and mausoleum firm—for the design of the mausoleum in December 1926.¹⁸ Construction began in the Spring of 1927 after weather permitted.¹⁹

The Dunkak Mausoleum is in a style of what Presbrey-Leland refers to as “Rock-faced Mausoleums.”²⁰ In their 1932 publication, *The Book of Presbrey-Leland Mausoleums*, they describe the Winsor Mausoleum, one of four mausoleum’s of the rock-faced style depicted in the catalog; “When done by skilled craftsman, the rock or rustic surface can give interesting texture

¹⁷ “Henry Dunkak.” *The New York Herald, New York Tribune* (1924-1926); New York, N.Y.: May 26, 1926.

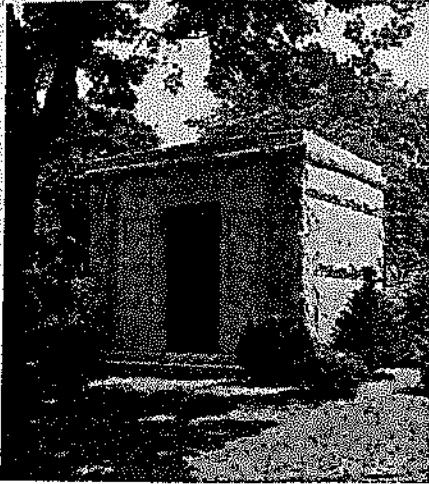
¹⁸ Original Agreement dated December 21, 1926 between Mrs. Charlotte E. Dunkak and Presbrey-Leland Company, Inc. Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, in the Avery Archives, Columbia University New York. Consulted on September 21, 2018

¹⁹ Referring to a letter dated January 4th 1927 from Presbrey-Leland to Woodlawn Cemetery. Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, in the Avery Archives, Columbia University New York. Consulted on September 21, 2018

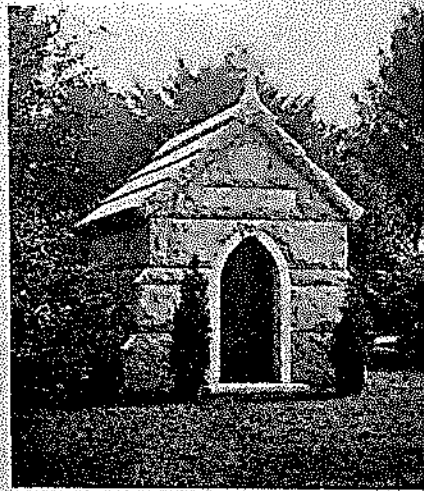
²⁰ Presbrey-Leland, Inc. (New York: *The Book of Presbrey-Leland Memorials*. New York: Presbrey-Leland Studios, c.1932. Pg. 47

to the walls. Here the rough-hewn surface is relieved by giving a finished treatment to the granite around the portal.”²¹

ROCKFACE MAUSOLEUMS



When done by skillful craftsmen, the rock or rustic surface can give interesting texture to the walls. Here the rough-hewn surface is relieved by giving a finished treatment to the granite around the portal. Note the monolithic construction of the roof stone on this mausoleum of moderate cost. PL33070 for Harry O. Winsor, Esq., New York City.



The rock-face surface is particularly appropriate for this quaint and simple adaptation of the Gothic chapel. And it is noteworthy that mausoleums of the Gothic type, with steep roof and buttresses, are better adapted to the rough-hewn surface than buildings of the classic temple form. PL24175 for Mrs. Anton Kliegl, New York City.

Source: Presbrey-Leland, Inc (New York. The Book of Presbrey-Leland Memorials. New York: Presbrey-Leland Studios, c1932. Pg. 47

This description could aptly describe the main façade of the Dunkak Mausoleum. Looking at this façade, we see rough-hewn granite slabs framing a smooth sawn portal surround featuring an incised ribbon detail on 2 pilasters on either side and the name, “DUNKAK” over the door.

²¹ Presbrey-Leland, Inc (New York. The Book of Presbrey-Leland Memorials. New York: Presbrey-Leland Studios, c1932. Pg. 47



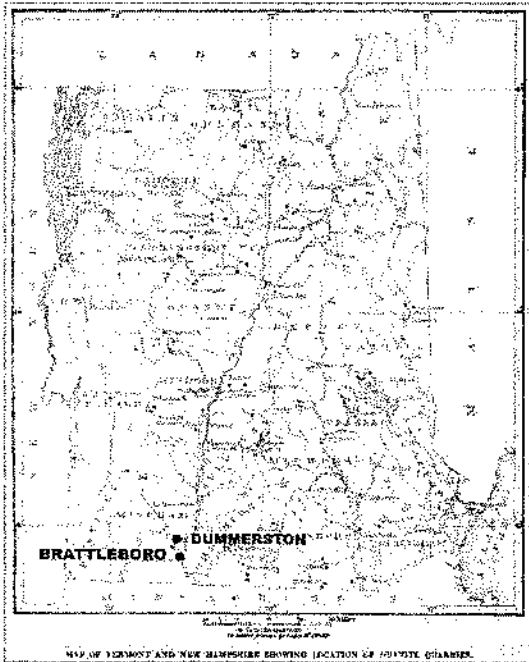
The rear and side facades similarly have the rough rock-faced border pieces of granite surrounding a smooth-sawn piece simply divided into 3 panels, perhaps a reference to the intention of three tombs inside. The side facades are punctured for a single window on each side,

The exterior is made primarily of Dummerston granite from Vermont. The type of granite found in this region was referred to as “white granite” or “quartz monzonite.” It is “very light gray or light bluish-gray shade of even grained medium or medium inclining to fine texture.”²² It was said to be, “rated one of the best in the country, and the mountain at whose base it lies contains an unlimited supply.”²³ Dummerston granite, was increasingly quarried around in the late 1880s after the Vermont central railroad was extended between 1870-1880 to this and other

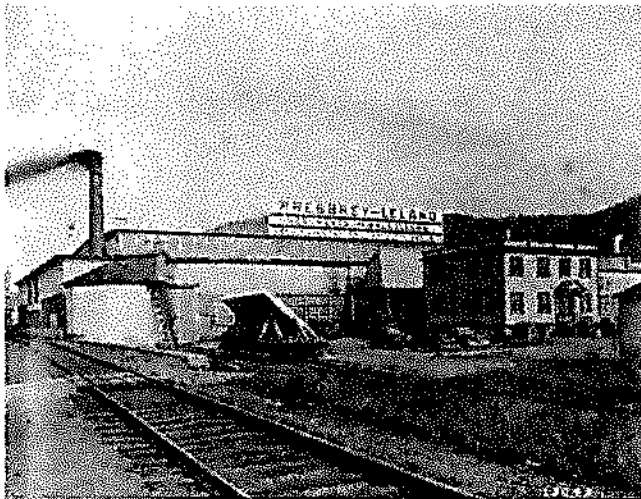
²² Dale, Thomas Nelson, *The Granites of Vermont*, Washington, 1909. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp:39015064434494>.

²³ “Good Prospects at West Dummerston.” *Stone* (1888-1919); Indianapolis 4, no. 28 (September 1, 1907): 282.

Vermont quarries.²⁴ It is less than 10 miles from Dummerston to the Presbrey-Leland workshop in Brattleboro, Vermont.



Source: "Bulletin_738_pl_1.Jpg (890x1112)." Accessed September 30, 2018.
https://quarriesandbeyond.org/articles_and_books/commercial_granites_ne/images/bulletin_738_pl_1.jpg



General Works of Presbrey-Leland Studios in Brattleboro Vermont. Showing proximity of rail connection.
Source: Presbrey-Leland.com

²⁴ (Granite Industry of Vermont; Boston Journal. Stone (1888-1919); Dec 1, 1889; Z, 6; American Periodicals pg. IV)



The entry door is cast bronze. Woodlawn regulated the use of metals on mausoleum features and restricted the use of metals besides bronze for doors.²⁵ Additionally, the green patina gives away the copper content in the bronze and the size and shape of the door confirms it was cast. However, the dull brown shading in certain areas suggest that a coating may have been applied at some point. Richard Pieper, an expert on metals, speculates that the surface was highly polished at some point and the irregular patina and copper color are indicative of this more recent treatment.”²⁶

The figure is a frontal female draped in a sheer garment. Her face is turned to the right and her gaze cast downward. In her left raised hand, she holds a poppy flower, symbolizing eternal rest.²⁷ Her head is surrounded by a wreath of laurel and oak; laurel and oak symbolized victory, prophecy, fame, and eternity, and crowns of laurel or oak were given to victors and poets.²⁸ The leaves may also represent the passage of time as leaves change with seasons, and individual death as leaves fall before winter²⁹.

The door is signed by the artist Oronzio Maldarelli in the bottom right corner near the figure’s proper right foot. While Oronzio Malderelli would go on to become a famous and well-liked “modern classicist” at the time the Dunkak monument was built, he was simply doing small commissions to support himself.³⁰ Having studied at Cooper Union, the National Academy of Design, and the Beaux Art’s institute of New York, Maldarelli was exposed to classical studies in sculpture and art and also would have been introduced to architects. This exposure to

25. Thank you to Susan Olsen of Woodlawn cemetery who provided this information verbally on September 28, 2018.

26. Email from Richard Pieper to the author dated September 27, 2018.

27. Thank you to Susan Olsen of Woodlawn cemetery who suggested on September 28, 2018 this symbolism and inspired my consultation of symbolism dictionaries.

AND

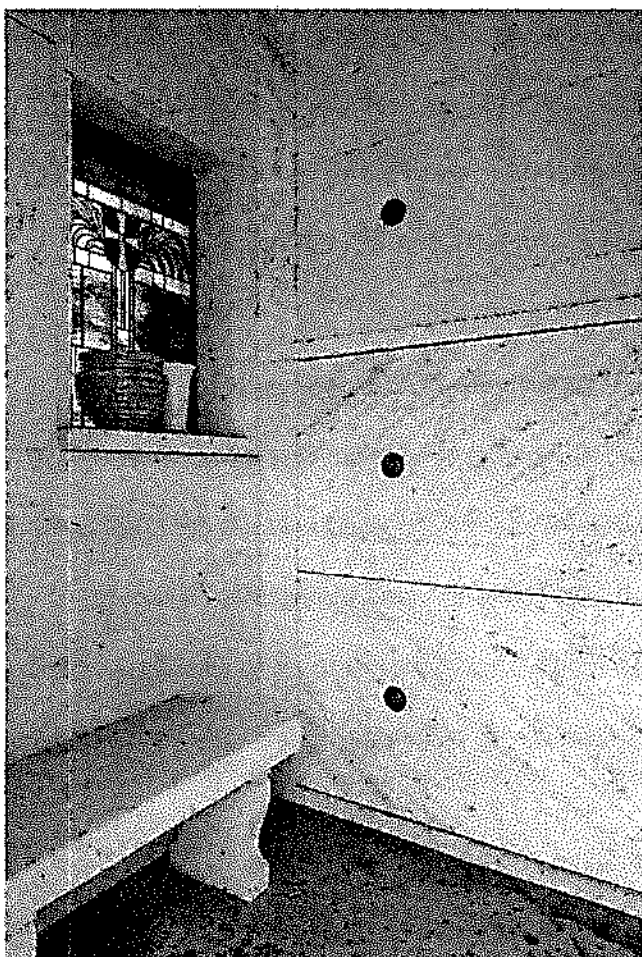
Ferber, Michael. *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316771426>.

28. Ferber, Michael. *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316771426>.

29. Ferber, Michael. *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316771426>.

30. Watson, E.W. “Oronzio Maldarelli, interviewed by E. W. Watson.” *American Artist* 12 (March 1948): 35

architects was considered essential in an early sculptors' career in order to receive commissions to support his livelihood.³¹ In 1931 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship which allowed him focus on his personal work which was primarily composed of marble sculpted female nudes. He was exhibited in Upper East Side fine art galleries and his work was collected by wealthy patrons.³² He also received some famous public commissions, such as the Madonna in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. His work is in the collections of several prime arts institutions in America including the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.³³



After unlocking and pushing open the Maldarelli door, one finds an interior finished with highly polished Italian marble that is white with gray streaks. The floor is a polished granite in a seemingly darker variety than that used on the exterior. The Archive does not specify any distinction between the interior and exterior granite, nor does it specify the source or variety of the Italian marble.³⁴

The four crypts are stacked vertically at the back of the mausoleum. Notable is the difference in marble between the original

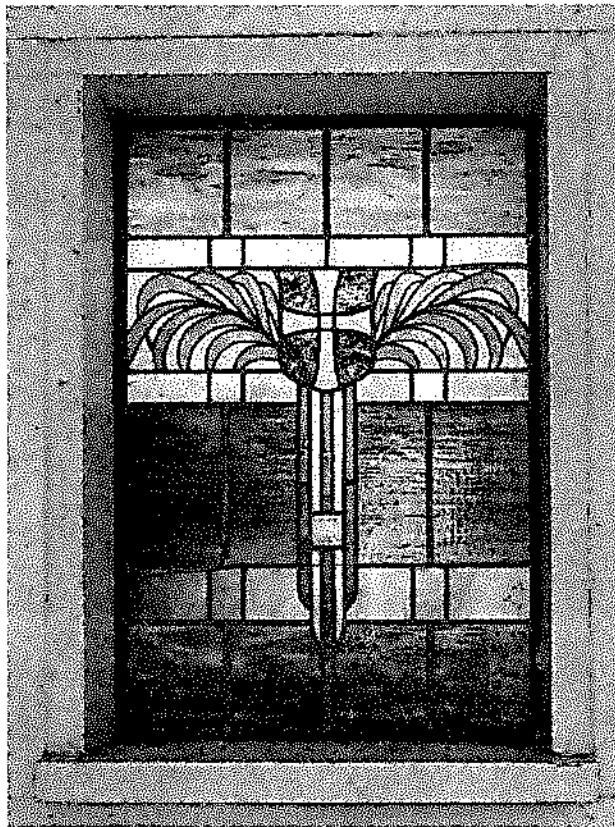
31 Watson, E. W. "Oronzio Maldarelli, Interviewed by E. W. Watson." *American Artist* 12 (March 1948): 35.

32 Co., Paul Rosenberg & Memorial Exhibition of Sculpture by Oronzio Maldarelli, 1892-1933: March 11 to April 6, 1963. New York: Paul Rosenberg and Co., 1963.

33 Co., Paul Rosenberg & Memorial Exhibition of Sculpture by Oronzio Maldarelli, 1892-1933: March 11 to April 6, 1963. New York: Paul Rosenberg and Co., 1963.

34 Notes and drawings within Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, in the Avery Archives, Columbia University New York, Consulted on September 21, 2018

two crypts for Henry and Charlotte and the later crypt additions for William and Gladys. While they may be the same type of marble, Henry and Charlotte's feature a more speckled pattern and are a duller color which may just be due to age. William and Gladys' crypts are a brighter white and feature long gray streaks. They appear to be book-matched pieces that line up and reflect one another.



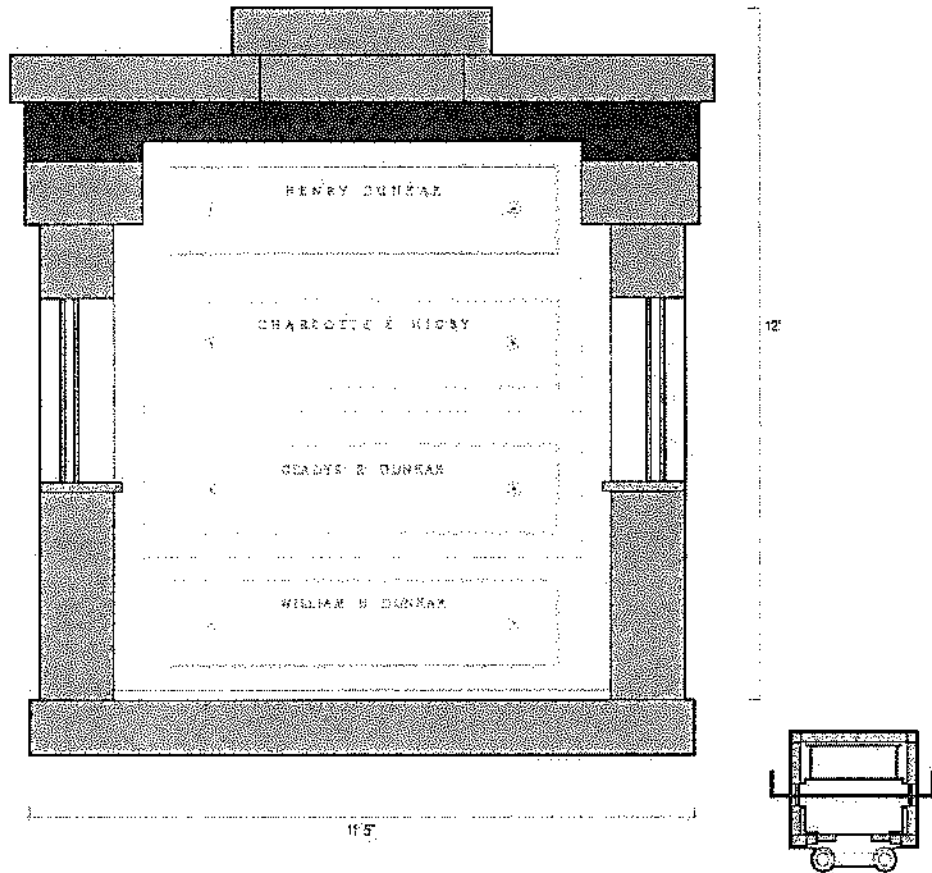
Identical stained-glass windows are on either side and were included in the price of the contract signed with Presbrey-Leland in 1926.³⁵ They feature a simple art-nouveau geometric pattern of a heraldic yellow cross on a blue shield with palm fronds on either side—suggestive of either biblical lands³⁶—all set on a field of green glass panes. The windows are protected by an outer layer of thick glass and appear to be in good condition. No cracks or gaps are visible

in the frames of any layer of the glass.

³⁵ Original Agreement dated December 21, 1926 between Mrs. Charlotte E. Dunkak and Presbrey-Leland Company, Inc. Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, in the Avery Archives, Columbia University New York. Consulted on September 21, 2018

³⁶ Ferber, Michael. *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316771426>.

In 1968 William recommissioned Presbrey-Leland to make alterations to the mausoleum.³⁷ This entailed raising the height of the interior in order to accommodate a fourth Crypt, engravings on the two new marble crypts, and endowment for the mausoleum.³⁸ The physical modification of the exterior is visible in the addition of a one foot rough-hewn granite slab above the similar stone already in place. William also chose to move his parents' crypts from the bottom two positions up to the top two positions. Gladys and his crypts were placed below them. The men are positioned on the outer positions protectively framing the woman in the more prominent center positions.

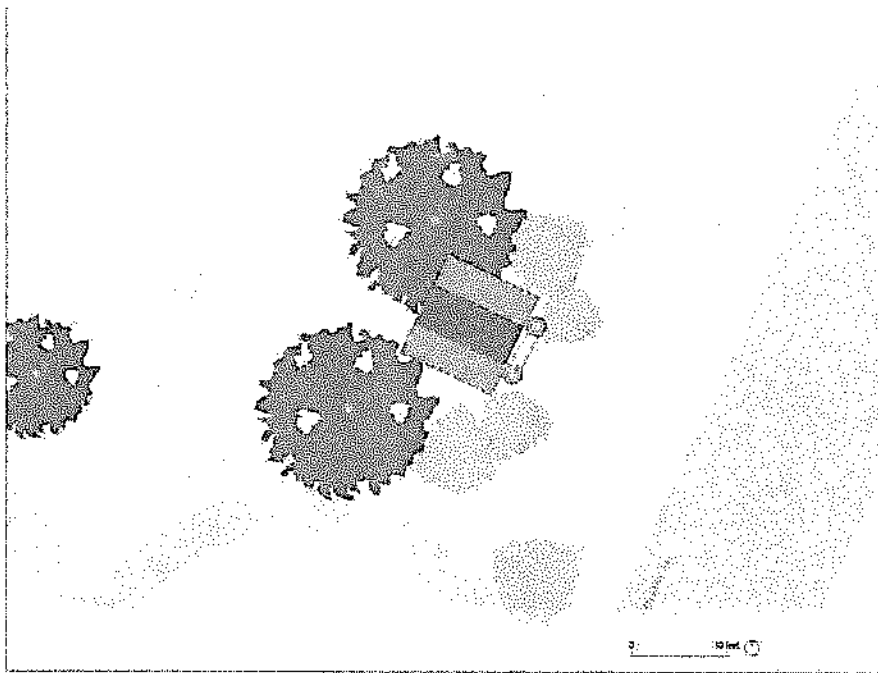


SECTION. Highlighted in red is the stone added in the alteration of 1968.

37. Letter from Presbrey-Leland Inc. to Woodlawn Cemetery enclosing plans for the alterations. Dated August 19, 1968. Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, in the Avery Archives, Columbia University, New York. Consulted on September 21, 2018

38. Notes and drawings within Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, in the Avery Archives, Columbia University, New York. Consulted on September 21, 2018

It should be noted that the plot seems to have a landscape design. There is a symmetrical placement of bushes and trees near the Mausoleum. However, there is no record of a landscape designer. Two evergreen trees are placed on either side towards the back of the mausoleum while lower bushes frame the structure in the foreground. A vine picturesquely grows up the southeast corner and over the top of the Mausoleum giving it a grotto feel.



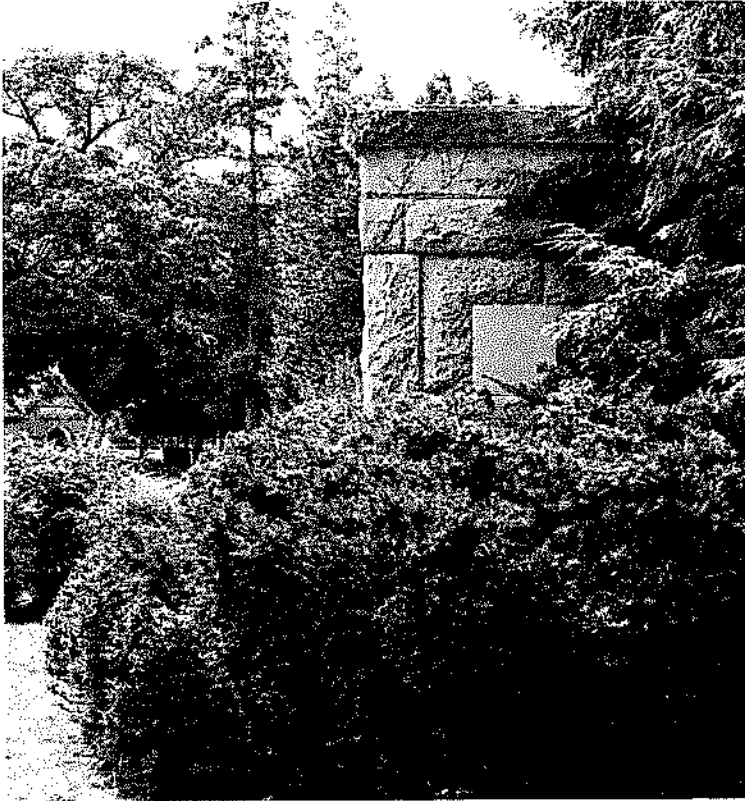
SITE PLAN

Present Conditions

Today the landscape is encroaching on the Mausoleum and could present issues to its maintenance. A barbed vine prevents access to the surface of the Mausoleum on the southeast corner while the bushes on the northeast corner have tightly grown up against its walls which could cause moisture to be retained up against the stone and cause discoloration, biological growth, and eventual deterioration or leaks to the interior. Some biological growth is present beneath the two granite urns that frame the front and in the shadowed areas on the side and back facades. The

granite surfaces on the exterior nevertheless are bright and clean and the structure seems solid.

Inside, the crypts appear in good condition with no cracking, warping or evidence of moisture.³⁹



On the interior, there is some insect infestation which is most apparent in the remains of shells in the crease of the door from which something seems to have hatched. The interior floor is also littered with some dry remains of these shells and dry leaves. This could simply be scraped off of the door and swept from the floor to deal with the present issue, and the mausoleum can be monitored for future infestations.



³⁹ Observations made on September 19, 2018