THE ARCHITECTURE OF MOUNT HOPE MAUSOLEUMS
by Richard O. Reisem

When King Mausolos of Caria (now Turkey) died in 353 B.C., his wife Artemisia built a tomb for him that, 140 feet high with 36 columns and topped by a four-horse chariot of marble, became one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

And although a devastating earthquake between the 11th and 15th century A.D. destroyed the splendid tomb, Artemisia started something that continues to this day — the mausoleum.

Probably the most ambitious mausoleum since King Mausolos is the Taj Mahal in India built in 1631. There are also creditable examples of this type of burial structure in Mount Hope Cemetery — 82 of them, in fact.

To the builders of these Mount Hope mausoleums, burial six feet underground perhaps was anathema or perhaps an inadequate after-death statement. Whatever the reasons for occupants of these visible tombs to commission them, these mausoleums are today a fascinating study in architectural styles and tastes over the 154-year history of Mount Hope Cemetery.

One of the first mausoleums to be constructed in the cemetery was commissioned by Jacob Gould. This is particularly interesting because General Gould had been a loud voice against the selection of this particular site for a Rochester municipal cemetery. He was outspoken in his condemnation of paying $100 an acre for land that was “all uphill and down dale” and with a gully at its entrance at that.

“That committee deserve execration,” barked General Gould to his friend, the newspaper publisher Henry O'Reilly. “Why that ground isn’t fit for pasturing rabbits,” said Gould. The cheery response was, “But we are not going to pasture rabbits.”

However unreconciled he was to this project, General Gould bought land and built his conspicuous family vault right in the west hillside of that gully entrance he so condemned.
Egyptian Style

Evidently, Egyptian culture caught the imagination of General Gould, because he built his mausoleum in the Egyptian style. Above the entrance is a winged orb, a symbol of the sun god, Re. Here, it is symbolic of the power that can recreate and means, "God, Lord over all, Creator."

The mausoleum is topped by an Egyptian obelisk, another sacred symbol of Re. Obelisks are upright four-sided pillars, gradually tapering as they rise, and cut off at the top in the form of a pyramid. Egyptians would often cover this pyramid tip with gold so that it would catch the first rays of the rising sun and signal to the people even while the ground around them was still in shadow that Re had created another day.
prison for six months before the Union negotiated his release.

His elegant mausoleum is like a miniature Greek temple. Ely's columns have Ionic capitals, which are a more delicate and ornate convention than the Doric order in the Stein mausoleum.

With their curvilinear details, Ionic capitals smack of the organic, recalling leaf and plant forms. Also, the columns themselves are taller and thinner by comparison to the Doric order, and they rest on elegantly molded bases.

Those architectural authorities who seek sexual connotations to things refer to the Doric order as "manly beauty, naked and unadorned," while Ionic is the feminine order.

**Greek Style**

Nathan Stein (1823-1908), founder of Stein-Bloch Clothes, built the largest mausoleum in Mount Hope Cemetery. It sleeps 20 permanent residents, and there is ample room left over for a lively party.

Here is a mausoleum in the gutsy, unadorned style of the Greek Doric order. The four columns supporting the architrave sit directly on the floor without any pedestal bases; they are tapered with a slightly convex profile. The Greeks discovered that straight lines tend to look as if they sag, whereas curved lines look straight to the naked eye. The Greeks fluted their columns to express the compression implied by the load-bearing function of the columns and also to distinguish the columns from the background masonry.

Alfred Ely (1815-1892) was a U.S. Congressman from Rochester during the Civil War. He had an embarrassing escapade in the early days of the war when in 1861 he packed a picnic lunch and rode his carriage out from Washington, D.C., to witness what he considered to be a frolic that would end in an ignominious retreat for the Confederacy. However, it turned out to be the Battle of Bull Run, a resounding Confederate victory, and unfortunately, Congressman Ely was captured by the Confederates and ended up languishing in a Richmond prison.
Roman Style

Romans were preoccupied with the curve. What the post-and-lintel was to the Egyptians, and the colonnade to the Greeks, the arch was to the Romans.

Frederick Cook's mausoleum displays a Roman arched entrance. The arch rests on squat pilasters, which are column forms that are not freestanding.

When you spin it 360 degrees, the arch becomes a dome. And Cook's mausoleum sports a handsome colonnaded dome.

Frederick Cook (1834-1905) probably deserves such a prominent mausoleum. He owned and operated the famous Cook's Opera House, formerly on the site of the Rochester Convention Center; he was a major investor in the Pullman railroad car, and he was also a commissioner of the cemetery.

Gothic Style

Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) is considered the father of the science of anthropology. This attribution comes from his seminal studies of the culture of the Seneca Indians.

His mausoleum would be classified as High Victorian Gothic. It is constructed of Medina sandstone, which is living up to its name — it is turning to sand. The erosion only adds to the spookiness of this shadowy vault in the hillside along Ravine Avenue.

The practically universal feature of Gothic architecture, of course, is the pointed arch — here seen in the fenestrations at the top of the two steeples. The steep, pointed gables and the elaborately pierced balustrade are also Gothic-inspired.
Modernistic Style

When we use the term "modernistic," we mean the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. To some young people, these dates may seem antediluvian rather than modern. In architectural styles, however, the Modernistic period was a period of rejection of the elaborate ornamentation of previous styles.

Modernistic ornament is predominantly rectilinear. And rectangles over rectangles define the facade of the Gustav Erbe (1852-1931) mausoleum. Even the stone planters in front of the mausoleum have square tops.

In the Ray Hylan (1906-1983) mausoleum, there are rectangles plus two simple circular columns. The facade is all basic geometrical shapes. But the addition of propeller-driven commercial airplanes cut into the stone entablature add a personal touch and reflect the occupant's pioneering accomplishments in his profession.
MUNICIPAL TREE CONFERENCE

The Friends of Mt. Hope Cemetery and several other organizations are co-sponsoring the Monroe County Tree Commission conference to focus public attention on park trees and street trees in the Rochester area. It will be held Friday evening, October 2, starting at 7:30 p.m., and all day Saturday, October 3, at Colgate Rochester Divinity School.

There will be workshops, lectures, and hikes designed around the theme of recovery from the March '91 ice storm. Some events are designed for those interested in gardening and the environment, while others are for more specialized audiences, including some adult-with-child workshops and hikes.

The keynote speaker of the conference will be Bill Flemer, a nationally known arborist and president of Princeton Nurseries. He has served on the White House Grounds Committee. Flemer is on the advisory council of the United States Arboretum, a past president of the American Association of Nurserymen, a recipient of the Garden Club of America's Medal of Honor, and the author of numerous articles and three books.

For more information about the conference and registration, please call 256-1740.

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