**Mausoleums**

Date Published: September, 1929

Original Author: Cecil Bryan

Original Publication: AACS Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Convention

When we grow old and decrepit, honors are thrust upon us many times unsought, honors that in our younger days we coveted and for which we would have given a right arm or something else as desirable. Twenty years ago to address this honorable body was my greatest wish. I was then trying to put over an idea that I thought all cemeteries should be interested in.

But time has tempered my enthusiasm. I find that no organization, institution or collection of men altogether, ever at any time, wish or are interested in the same things. Generally you are lucky if you can command a majority on any subject.

However, sometime in 1912 I conceived the idea of establishing a magazine exclusively for cemeteries; a periodical whose sole interest would be the cemetery; to teach cemeteries better business methods, help them to keep better records, and to eliminate, as far as possible, what I thought was a mistake—the mutually owned cemetery with its generally slip shod methods.

I have always believed that a cemetery was a business enterprise, not a philanthropic institution. Mutually owned companies paying no profit were either a great many times the source of graft if successful, or an expense to some public spirited citizens if unsuccessful. Of course, this was not always true.

I know a great many very wonderful cemeteries maintained on the mutual plan and believe two or three of the very finest cemeteries in the United States are mutual companies, conducted on a strictly honest basis with the best of business judgment.

It was my ambition, however, to see the private corporation established for profit—legitimate profit—take over the cemeteries of the country and conduct them on a business basis, which would have meant beautiful cemeteries properly endowed, efficient and courteous in their services. Profit sharing corporations long ago learned that prosperity and profits accrued only to those who practice such virtues.

Had that been accomplished, I believe that today the majority of our cemeteries would have Community Mausoleums. It is a part of the service that, in my mind, should be furnished by cemeteries.

I am not going back over a lot of ancient history or Mausoleums; all of you know that the name was derived from the tomb erected for King Mausolus, which has long since disappeared. The great pyramids of Egypt were undoubtedly Mausoleums. The early Christians of note were buried in tombs or Mausoleums, many of which, two thousand years later, are still standing. The Chinese and the East Indians built Mausoleums for their noted men and women and some of them built of teakwood ten centuries ago are still standing.

My history, I think records that more than five hundred years after the birth of Christ, the Christians had not practiced ground burial. Some Roman Emperor, I am not sure which—Constantine, I believe—started the practice by ordering that his own body when life had passed should be buried in the ground. Then for several centuries, ground burial was quite generally practiced throughout Europe, though the princes, potentates and great men generally were interred in tombs. For many centuries the noted of England have hoped and wished for the great honor of being entombed in the famous Abbye of Westminster.

The Catacombs being under ground were still tomb and I believed it was estimated more than seven million bodies were placed there. These Catacombs are one of the wonders of the Old World, and are mute reminders that the Christians of the early Romans preferred tombs.

In this country our pioneers had about all they could do to provide for the living, therefore the dead should be cared for in the simplest and most inexpensive way, which was the ground. Three hundred years of practice have hallowed and indorsed this method to many people.

While we grow older, richer, more cultured, refined and sensitive, we wonder if the ground isn't crude, barbaric and cruel; we wonder if some plan cannot be devised that will relieve to a certain extent the anguish and sorrow we feel at parting with our loved ones on that day they cross the Great Divide. Some think cremation, and I am admitting now that cremation sounds better to me than it did twenty years ago, and I believe every cemetery should have a crematory and columbarium. I believe, though, the Mausoleum is the best answer found up to the present time.

\*\*The Community Mausoleum as we know it today, dates from a structure of about one hundred crypts erected by a man named Hood, in Ganges, Ohio, in 1907, just twenty-two years ago. It was crude, cheaply constructed and in outward appearance strongly resembled some of these Ohio and Indiana hog barns, but the idea was born. He took out patents which were un-patentable and being somewhat of an ingenious character, he fell in with some moneyed men, among them F. L. Maytag of Newton, Iowa, who financed his scheme for selling patent rights. Undoubtedly these high powered salesmen sent out to unload these patent rights on the public had much to do with the black eye given the Mausoleum in its early days. On the other hand, purchasers of these patents had to build and establish Mausoleums in order to get their money back and it is justly possible one offset the other. Without the patents few may have conceived the idea and furthermore, it would have taken much longer to develop without this artificial urge.

My own connection dates back to 1911 so that I am probably one of the oldest men in the Mausoleum business today. I have constructed seventy-five or more buildings personally, have supervised still others. The present value of these buildings is probably ten to fifteen million dollars. It is not likely that record will ever be achieved by any one man again.

In recent years I have tried to get out of the construction of Mausoleums and confine my efforts more to the two buildings I have in Pasadena and Long Beach, but for some reason I do not seem to be able to do so, as some one is constantly inveigling me into another contract to build just one more.

There have been a great many patents taken out on Mausoleums. I took out several myself, but generally they were of little actual value. The first, as I have told you, were taken out by Hood. These were thrown out on their first test in the Federal Court in Toledo, but the decision of the trial court was reversed by the appellate court, which while not establishing the patents restored them to their original status before the ruling of the Federal District Court. Mr. Maytag I think on my advice decided to let them go at that and the suit he had filed was dismissed.

After the Hood patents came the American Mausoleum patents exploited by the Hughes Granite Co. at Clyde, Ohio; then the United States Mausoleum patents, the first building I believe being constructed at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There were several other patents, among them my own, but generally all of them fell within the systems of one of these I have mentioned; that is, the various patents all are more or less covered by these three different schemes or plans, each of which has its advocates and advantages.

The Hood patents were built around the idea of preserving the body. The American Mausoleum ventilating the crypt with the idea of drying the body up as quickly as possible. The United States was a modification of the Hood plans, but I have seen that used on the coast here in connection with the American or ventilating plan.

\*I have generally recommended those systems that sealed their crypts as tightly as possible and worked toward preservation, although I have erected buildings of practically every type and some, notably in Indiana, where all systems were barred by law. Frankly, I can't say there is a great deal of difference though, as I stated, I prefer the non-ventilating type.

I do not believe there is a business of any kind that has been exploited by as many peculiar types of individuals as the Mausoleum. Whenever a man has proven himself a failure in everything else, he turns to the Mausoleum. He doesn't take his modesty with him, however. He immediately preens his feathers and begins to tell the world that the Mausoleum business is going to take a turn for the better with his entrance in the business.

He is going to show us old stagers how smart he is. He is going to build the most magnificent structure ever erected to the memory of man. When he gets his building built, purchasers will flock from the four corners of the earth to buy space in his superb building. He figures the rest of us are only putting about $38.98 in our construction and by adding another couple of dollars, he can have a granite building with a dome that will make our National Capitol look like the proverbial thirty cents; then, as it will cost only a little to sell, say, maybe 10 percent, and he is sure he can easily sell his crypts for from $500.00 to $1000.00 per crypt, giving him about 1000 percent profit. Well, he will show the world. He starts on a shoestring, talk a sucker into financing, buys a lot from the cemetery on faith and glib tongue and starts out.

A lot happens, he finds it costs a little more to build than he thought, there is something called overhead, the time element cuts quite a figure, money must be borrowed, interest paid, salesmen must have 15 percent instead of 10 percent and that is only one-third of the selling expense—advertising, sales manager, business managers, janitors and a thousand and one other expenses naturally attached to any business, but this bright promoter never thought of that; in fact, he didn't think it was a business. He thought it was a discovery and he the bright discoverer. Result—another black eye for the Mausoleum.

\*\*The worst of them all is the wholesaler. You cemetery men better take warning for the wholesaler is going to be among you strong. The plums that he can pick are so luscious that it is only a matter of time when he will be working throughout the land. His cheerful and wonderful message is one long sweet song to the sucker. I know what I am talking about because I have watched their operations and have built a number of their buildings.

As a matter of fact, their plan if carried out honestly and fairly is plausible and should redound to the benefit of all and make it possible to build anywhere and finance a building without loss to anyone, but to be fair and honest is too simple and the money doesn't roll in fast enough for these gentlemen. I built one such building for about $70.00 per crypt. It was wholesaled at twice that amount and then marked up on resale to as high as $600.00 per crypt and many of them sold for that. Honest management would have brought success to the original investors. This was too much for the wholesaler; he couldn't stand to see such profits go to the men that put up the money, so he revised his plans and they are grand and glorious for him. From now on the world is his oyster and you better watch out.

The Mausoleum has one thing about it that sets it apart from all other methods of caring for the dead. It is in truth a memorial and its possibilities as such are unlimited. A magnificent structure it can be made—one that no man will be so sacrilegious as to destroy. *Ten centuries from now it may tell the story of our civilization and progress. In fact, it may be the only link between that age and this. Cemeteries, columbarium, stone monuments, all will be removed as they fall in the way of development and progress. Not so the Mausoleum. It will stand properly built throughout the ages as to a great memorial to those who have lived and died during this age. No other one thing has contributed so much to the romance of the past as the tombs of our forefathers.*

What a triumph to the French who, sixty years ago, broke through the jungles of Cambodia and discovered that immense structure—Angkor Ghat!

One more point and I will conclude. The Community Mausoleum is an attempt to popularize the private tomb to make it possible for men and women of moderate means to have above ground entombment or mausoleum burial. Such people can pay from $200.00 and up, and you must recognize this fact and build accordingly. When you put unnecessary expense in your construction and run the cost up, you simply cut out the sale of the crypts that are most in demand. I do not mean to build poorly, but eliminate waste. The greatest waste I have found is in the design of the building. My friend, Frank Hogan, never forgave me for showing him where he had thrown away $30,000.00 in the layout of his building on construction, and lost $50,000.00 in space or a waste of $80,000.00. All he would have had to have done was simply shift his plan around retaining the same size corridors and chapel and practically the same exterior design.

To my mind, reinforced concrete offers the ideal construction throughout. If you have a large building you might face it with some of the harder marbles or granite. Skylights should be eliminated as far as possible, no more doors than you must have. Ventilation of the corridors is all right in Southern California but almost everywhere else ventilation should only be possible when the building is in use for services.

The foundation should be built upon a solid slab covering the entire area of your building of property reinforced concrete. I think further the building should be well or beautifully designed for it will stand a long, long time and if you have extra money, spend it on the design, though money spent on the chapel and service will pay big dividends.

\*\*\*Build simply but substantially. Do not paint your building as I have seen done; that will wash off and you cannot very well establish a perpetual care fund large enough to keep up such a structure. All expensive upkeep items wherever possible should be eliminated. Ornamental iron work is satisfactory in some cases, but solid bronze is better wherever it is required for doors or gates. Do not use tubing for gates or doors. Imported antique glass is better for your windows, opalescent is somewhat more popular and only about half as expensive but cuts down the light 60 to 70 percent while antique reduces it only from 10 to 25 percent. Tile roof is good, though if your design calls for flat roof, copper or lead should be used. Use high grade marble—Colorado Yule, Alabama, Vermont and some grade of Tennessee. On the coast, Italian can be used; in the middle states it is too expensive.

Larger buildings should have a musical instrument. We have in our Long Beach and Pasadena buildings very fine pipe organs, and in Long Beach a set of Deagan electrical tower chimes. The organ and chimes in Long Beach, including space for installation, represent an expenditure of $100,000.00.

The larger buildings in metropolitan districts may be furnished with draperies and comfortable furniture, but of course the smaller building should not be. Furniture and draperies in any case should be of the very best and of such construction and material that will withstand the ravages of time as much as possible.

\*\*\*\*\*One more thing. Unquestionably the various legislatures should be requested to pass appropriate laws for the governing of Mausoleums before the business falls into the hands of the wrong people. Only six states have legislated on the Mausoleum so far as I know—five of those were attempts of the monument dealer to stifle the Mausoleum business and the sixth one passed a law written by a lawyer who knew nothing of construction and so far as I can see, all it does is impair the permanency of Mausoleum construction and make it cost more.

One thing I noticed particularly in Mr. Eaton's address. All the great memorials he named—every one were built. It is unquestionably the works of man that appeal most to the coming ages. And all the memorials of note that attract unusual attention are buildings, buildings erected by man. There are memorials dedicated for memorial purposes that are natural and of course no human being can build any thing that will equal a natural structure. Just the same, the thrill comes to you when you come and visit these enormous buildings built as memorials.

As Mr. Eaton told you about Forest Lawn, I want to invite all of you to visit Sunnyside. It is only a short distance from the interurban station at Long Beach. We advertise Sunnyside as America's finest Mausoleum. We truly believe it is. There you can, even if in moderate circumstances, find a place in the most beautiful surroundings for above—ground entombment. There you can see the most beautiful and costliest chapel ever built for interment purposes. There you can find the only pipe organ in the world for your final interment service.

There you can find the only electrical Deagan tower chimes to remind you that even though the service is beautiful, that time is fleeting and our stay is short—the only mausoleum in the world with these chimes.

There you can look down beautiful vistas or corridors, three hundred or more feet long, but so constructed and designed that you do not feel they are anything but beautiful vistas.

There you will see the most expensive interior decorations ever put in a mausoleum. There you will find the most beautiful waiting and rest rooms for men and women. You will have elevator service.

There is a complete apartment built right in the building. The reception room and private office have been commented upon by thousands of visitors.

Sunnyside has for its slogan—"Dignified and Sacred Service" and means it.

Its furnishings throughout are of the finest materials that money could purchase. Not many of you could think it possible to spend $25,000 on interior furnishings and curtains, but that is what we have done.

Sunnyside is laid out around a proposed court or patio and when completed will hold more than 17,000 crypts and the whole will show a consistent and evident throughout plan. You can see immediately upon entering that the builders had in mind just what they wanted from the start and never deviated from their plans.

In fact, we have tried to build in a way that you would know when you entered this great structure that it was erected by a mausoleum man, as a memorial to the men and women of today who loved beauty refinement and dignity; who despised sham but loved color, harmony and the serene contentment of a beautiful home. For, after all, it is the final home—one that can be visited by sorrowing relatives and get help instead of further unhappiness.

We give, to our people a very fine vesper service every Sunday afternoon, mostly musical, though we do have a short talk by one of the Long Beach pastors during the service.

We have a very fine crematory, and the most expensively constructed Columbarium ever built.  
  
In fact, we have a complete institution with 4,500 crypts, ranging in price from $200 to $5,000. The cheaper ones are so located as not to interfere with the expensive ones, and yet all so located as to bring up no unfavorable contrasts.

*From the publication:  
AACS - Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Convention  
Los Angeles, CA  
September 3, 4, 5 and 6, 1929*