

## New Egyptian Pyramid Mausoleum in Mount Hope

by Richard O. Reisem



*The construction of the Egyptian pyramid mausoleum in Range 7 was completed on May 3, 2019. Photo by Richard Reisem.*

In 15 days of April and early May 2019, a remarkable Egyptian Revival pyramid mausoleum was erected in Mount Hope Cemetery. It stands on a triangular lot in Range 7 at the intersection of Adlington and Oak avenues. It is constructed of a rare stone called rainbow granite that was quarried in southwestern Minnesota. The basic form is a pyramid to which an entrance portico is added. Twin columns support the projecting architrave and portico roof. These simple geometric elements and fine stone materials

join to create a striking tomb with space for eight full-burial crypts and numerous cremation urns.

The mausoleum was produced for the family of Clifford McKee Davie, a Rochester, New York entrepreneur who managed a company founded by his father called Interco Systems, Inc., which had its headquarters on University Avenue in the city. The company consisted of an alliance of independent wholesale plumbing and electrical businesses



that could purchase goods as a group, allowing discounts similar to what chain organizations receive from vendors. The company dissolved in 1993.

Clifford Davie grew up in a family of entrepreneurs. His father, John B. Davie, founded and operated a wholesale plumbing and heating company. In 1998, Clifford and his son John Davie started a group-purchasing organization for independent restaurants. It has more than 40,000 members today.

In 2015, a representative from Clifford Davie's current business contacted Woodside Granite Industries Inc. (Brigden Memorials) in Albion, New York, to discuss the purchase of a mausoleum. In the 1960s, Davie had purchased a plot in Mount Hope Cemetery in Range 7, but it wasn't until recently that he decided to put a mausoleum on that site. From the time of purchasing the lot, Davie thought that a pyramid mausoleum would fit the triangular lot nicely.



*Unlike the pyramids of Giza, here, steel framework holds the 3-inch-thick blocks of granite. Photo by Richard Reisem.*

In February 2016, Denise Callara at Brigden Memorials suggested that the mausoleum could be made of rainbow granite; she said that in 2013, Brigden had constructed a rainbow granite mausoleum for the Robert Hurlbut family in Mount Hope. She sent a sample of rainbow granite to Davie, and he approved its use.

Three professional designers at Brigden—David Oakley, Denise Callara, and David Strickland—along with architects at Cold Spring Granite researched Egyptian Revival mausoleum designs and set about creating a pyramid structure in rainbow granite for Clifford Davie.

Rainbow granite is a variegated stone that was formed 3.5 billion years ago and is noted for its dark gray background with a wave pattern of pink, green, black, yellow, red, and brown. It is the oldest rock formation in America and is quarried in Morton, Minnesota, in the southwest part of the state. The quarry is operated by Cold Spring Granite, headquartered in Cold Spring, Minnesota, in the central part of the state. Jason Craft, project



*The interior walls were constructed first, and since these walls are vertical, the pyramid has a lot of unusable space. Photo by Richard Reisem.*





*Although the granite was scored to look like rectangular blocks, the stone was delivered in large slabs in order to maintain the flowing rainbow lines in the granite. Photo by Richard Reisem.*

management supervisor at Cold Spring Granite, became the project manager for the Brigden team in the design and fabrication of Clifford Davie's Egyptian Revival pyramid mausoleum.

Egyptian Revival became a popular architectural style when Napoleon conquered Egypt followed by the British defeating Napoleon in the Battle of the Nile in 1798. This historic event caused the world to notice the motifs and imagery of ancient Egypt and adopt them as an architectural style. During the centuries since, the popularity of Egyptian Revival was revitalized a number of times, especially by the opening of King Tutankhamun's tomb and the exploration of the pyramids at Giza, which were built as tombs for Egyptian pharaohs from 2600 to

1600 BC. The pyramid is one of the oldest forms of funerary entombment that was adopted by humans. So it is eminently fitting to have a pyramidal mausoleum constructed in Mount Hope Cemetery today.

The Davie pyramid appears to be constructed of rectangular blocks of thick granite. But a much more contemporary construction method was actually employed. Although the granite is scored to resemble blocks as in an ancient Egyptian pyramid, the stone is only three inches thick and is supported by a modern framework of steel, as you can see in the progressive photos accompanying this article. Although the stone is incised to resemble rectangular blocks, it is often just superficial scoring, not cutting of individual pieces. This procedure allows the



waves of rainbow colors to be seen directly as flowing from block to block uninterrupted. This meant that large slabs of granite were installed with the assistance of a tall crane to position them on the steel framework. The scoring lines in the granite to resemble blocks and still maintain the color waves in the stone were guided by Jason Craft at Cold Spring Granite.

The pinnacle of the pyramid is not the expected piece of granite with sloping sides that meet to a point at the top. Instead, it is a translucent piece of Lexan that allows daylight to enter the mausoleum interior, illuminating a rectangular stained-glass window in the ceiling of the crypt room. The window depicts the Davie family crest.



*Egyptian Revival style capitals incorporate an acanthus-leaf motif. Notice that there is a space between the capital and the portico roof. To ancient Egyptians, this was intended to suggest that the column was not really holding up the roof. It was being held up by the divine power of the Egyptian sun god, Ra. Photo by Richard Reisem.*

The entrance portico is adapted from ancient Greek architecture. Two round columns are left as unpolished rainbow granite in order to have them stand out in front of the polished granite of the entrance walls. The capitals give the columns an Egyptian touch with their acanthus-leafed motif. These columns, one on each side of the entrance, support the architrave and roof. Or do they? If you look carefully at the column capitals, you can see that there is a space between the column capital and the portico roof. This is a deception perpetuated in Egyptian Revival architecture. It is supposed to suggest that these columns

are not necessary to support the roof, because it is the Egyptian sun god, Ra, who really holds up the roof. If you look closely, however, you will see a small square stone, almost hidden, that connects the column to the roof, just in case.

The entrance doors are wrought bronze and were provided by Waukegan Architectural Inc, located in Zion, Illinois. The company's specialty is top quality bronze doors for private mausoleums. Inside the Davie mausoleum, there is a vestibule, which has a granite bench on the left side and a granite altar on the right side. In the crypt room there are three crypt covers on both sides of the room and granite shelves at the end wall that can hold cremation urns or other decorative items. The top crypt on the left bears the following inscription: CLIFFORD MCKEE DAVIE JULY 4, 1942. On the middle crypt cover: JOHN BARCLAY DAVIE FEB 14, 1906—MAY 14, 1961. The bottom crypts



*Two of the crypts have their future occupants identified. There are a total of eight crypts in the mausoleum. Photo by Richard Reisem.*



are double spaces on each side, making a total of eight full burials possible in the mausoleum. The left bottom double crypts will hold Dorothy McKee Davie, July 19, 1911—Sept. 5, 1988 and John Barclay Davie, Jr., Nov. 24, 1936—Nov. 28, 1953. (Reinterments are necessary.)



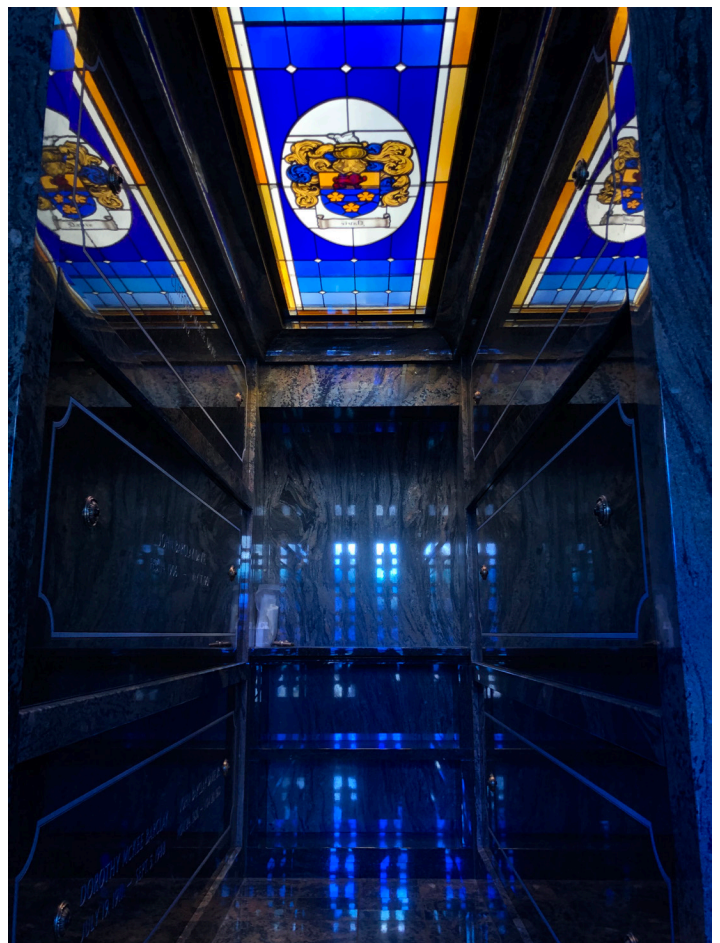
*Three talented craftsmen constructed the mausoleum. From left: Randy Faulk, JP Saucedo, and Allen Kent, owner of A Kent Construction, Kempner, Texas. Photo by Richard Reisem.*

Construction of the Davie mausoleum took 15 days after the foundation and concrete pad and sidewalk were poured. The stone, steel, and other materials were packed in wood crates and delivered to the site by Cold Spring Granite. Each piece of rainbow granite was numbered to ensure proper placement in the structure.

Three craftsmen from A Kent Construction in Kempner, Texas constituted the construction crew. Allen Kent, the founder of the company, led the team that included two other craftsmen, Randy Faulk and John Paul (JP) Saucedo. I visited the building site about every two days and noticed the special care exercised by this team on every detail of the mausoleum erection. The workmen consulted the working drawings frequently to ensure accurate assembly of the hundreds of parts, all of which had to be carefully mortared into place. The workmanship was meticulous and the workmen were especially friendly to the cluster of onlookers during construction.

Landscaping of the pyramid site and replacement of roadway stone curbing is planned for later this summer.

Before construction began, a trust fund was set up to maintain this mausoleum into perpetuity. New York State law requires that the trust fund must be equal to 15 percent of the overall cost of the project. That trust fund is managed by the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery and is held by the Rochester Area Community Foundation where it can earn interest from dividends from a mixture of stock and bond fund investments. Including the amount of the maintenance trust fund, the mausoleum costs closely approach a million dollars.



*A Lexan window on the peak of the pyramid allows daylight to enter through a stained-glass window in the ceiling of the crypt room. The design is the Davie family crest, which is mirrored in the adjacent polished stone walls. Photo by Chris Grooms.*



# Undertakers, Wakes, & Tears:

## *Mourning Rituals in 19th Century America*

by Deb Coffey



*Osafine Zeit, Osafine Zeit, wie Siegest Du Fern, wie Siegest Du Weit*

"The grim reaper was replaced by cherubs and optimistic symbols of love and hope." Sculptor Alphonse Kolb made this bronze plaque for his wife, Elfrieda, who died in 1945. Photo by Richard Reisem.

**D**eath shadowed daily life in 19th century America. A high child mortality rate, poor sanitation, disease, lack of modern medical science, and war destined Americans to become preoccupied with the rituals of death and mourning.

During this time, attitudes towards dying and death began to change. There was a shift away from the medieval and colonial beliefs of death, often represented by skull-and-crossbones motif on headstones. The idea of impending doom was replaced by a more romantic and



gentle approach to death. The grim reaper was replaced by cherubs and optimistic symbols of love and hope. Sin and damnation gave way to forgiveness and redemption. This shift in attitude led to the belief that the soul would experience a rebirth and that death was a gateway to everlasting life.

Rural garden cemeteries emerged from this new attitude about death. The idea of public, park-like cemeteries spread quickly and provided the serene environment with walking paths, water features, trees, and gardens that mourners found soothing to visit departed love ones. Victorians would often picnic near the gravesite of family

America, engulfed and preoccupied by the Civil War, adopted Queen Victoria's example. It became the socially expected style of noble and respectful mourning. It was the job of the living to prepare the dead for the next leg of the journey. The ritual of mourning was done out of respect.

Paying tribute to the dead became a way of life in 19th century America. People, coping with their sorrow and loss, channeled their grief into forms of artistic expression, wore traditional mourning garb and weeping veils, often black, for prescribed periods, and followed the standards of mourning as dictated by etiquette. Death keepsakes, memorial art, music, and even post-mortem photography

## LOVE'S SYMPHONY

WHEN HEARTS AND EYES HAVE SPOKEN, LIPS CONFEST  
THEN COMES JOY SOFTLY AS THE VAGRANT BREEZE;  
WHEN LOVE GUIDES LIFE THEN IS LIFE TRULY BLEST  
AND EARTH IS FILLED WITH HEAVEN'S SYMPHONIES.

members. Monuments and headstones became ornate, often depicting florals, weeping willows, urns and other gentle symbols of love and hope to remind that death would reunite people with their love ones.

With the death of her husband Albert in 1861, Queen Victoria fashioned what would become the Victorian-style of mourning. The Prince's death sent Queen Victoria and the entire court into immediate mourning. The Queen donned a widow's cap and black mourning attire, while portraits of Albert were displayed covered with black mourning ribbon and crepe. Precise rituals and practices were implemented to highlight their sorrow and to pay tribute to Albert. Queen Victoria made the ritual of mourning socially acceptable.

became an important part of mourning rituals and customs. *Undertakers, Wakes, & Tears: Mourning Rituals in 19th Century America* explores the Victorians' view of death and their expressions of grief through socially expected rituals and customs. The presentation also highlights the Victorian concept of the "good death," wakes & funerals, mourning etiquette & clothing, gravestone symbolism, and epitaphs. Take the tour on Saturday, August 17, at 11 a.m. Meet at the North Gatehouse opposite Robinson Drive.

Gone but not forgotten.







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