

## The New Orleans Tomb

PART I

By Leonard V. and Albert R. Huber

*Editor's Note:*

*This is the first of a timely series of articles on the construction of the New Orleans Tombs written exclusively for Design Hints by Leonard V. and Albert R. Huber. The plans of each tomb will be shown in connection with each article, and we believe this series will play a most important part in aiding the dealers to combat the Community Mausoleum menace.*

*The authors of this series have designed and erected many of these tombs in New Orleans, and we believe their willingness to give their ideas and plans to the other members of the craft very commendable.*

*We are indeed fortunate in securing this series for Design Hints.*

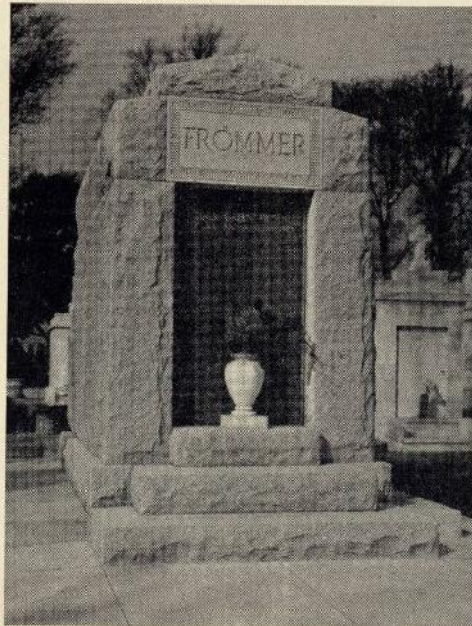
*We know Design Hints is read by many people who are not directly interested in the memorial business. For this reason we think it best to withhold publishing the wholesale and retail prices the authors mention in the third paragraph. We shall be most pleased to furnish these prices if the request is mailed to us on the letter-head of a legitimate retail dealer.*

The need for an inexpensive above ground tomb has been sorely felt for many years in a great many parts of this country, particularly when the prospect has the desire to build above ground but has not the means to build a mausoleum. The so called New Orleans tomb, which is a local product of that city, invented and developed

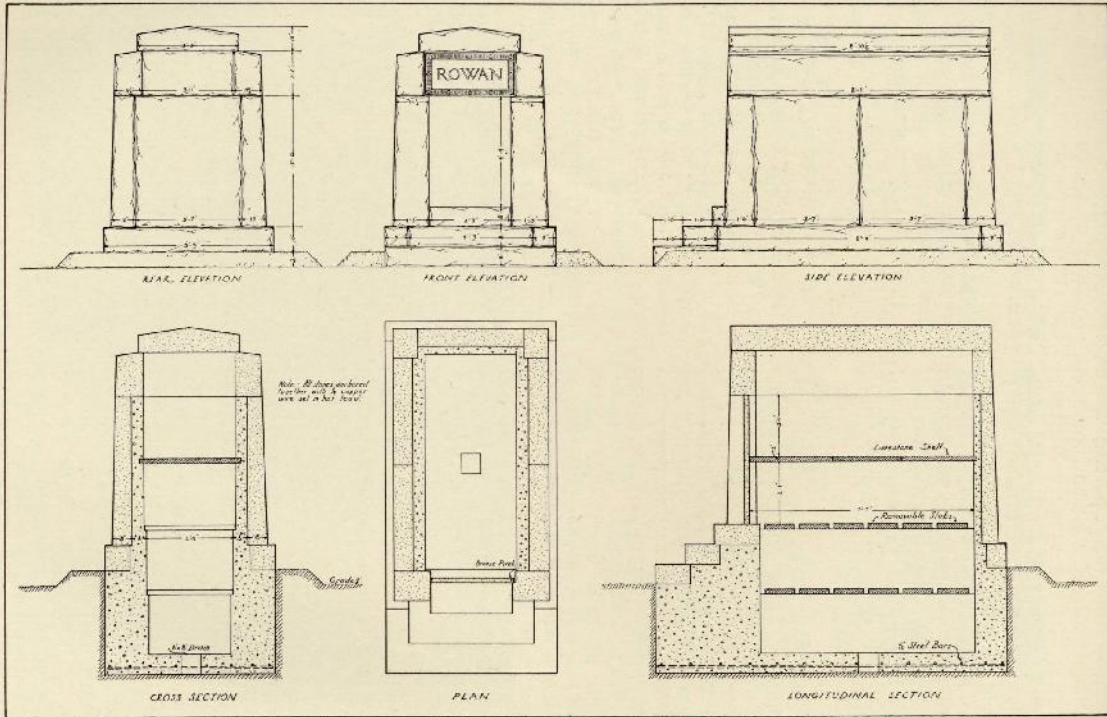
because it was impossible to bury beneath the surface of the earth on account of water, has been advocated by the authors for several years as a weapon to combat the community mausoleum evil and as an article opening up an entirely new field in the memorial business.

This tomb, which is an above-ground structure of two or more vaults without vestibule, has been so successfully used in New Orleans that there are over 5,000 of them in the cemeteries of the city, and the demand is growing despite the fact that improved drainage makes ground burial possible. They fill a popular need. The best features of this

type of sepulcher are their utility and their price. In the series of design articles which are to follow this one there will be given plans for tombs which can be sold for as low as \$900; others which can be sold for \$1,300, \$1,600, \$2,000, \$2,800 and \$5,000.



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The tomb furnishing the subject of this article and for which a plan is given, is one which can be erected for about (*prices furnished upon request*) and sold for about(—)although it will easily be possible to obtain more in a field not highly competitive. It is constructed of only twenty pieces of granite, not including the door, and the design is one that is monolithic in tendency, thus giving the effect of great strength. It contains, as can be readily seen from the section, two crypts and a receptacle which has an additional crypt-shelf which may be built at the option of the customer. The receptacle is really a hollow part of the foundation made accessible by making the lower shelf in several pieces and removable. The upper shelf is to be built into the concrete lining. Crypt shelves are composed of 2' -thick limestone which is very successfully used in New Orleans and is much less expensive than slate. By making the lower crypt-shelf removable, former interments can be easily moved, if occasion requires, from the upper crypts to the receptacle.

In New Orleans it is a strong custom to use the tombs over and over again—when the caskets of those buried many years ago have disintegrated, the vault is reopened, (usually on the occasion of another funeral) and the remains removed into the receptacle, thus clearing the top vaults for new interments. This may sound a trifle complicated but it can be easily accomplished and is an everyday occurrence in New Orleans cemeteries. It is almost needless to add that tombs may

be built large enough for four and six interments, (\$2,000 and \$2,800 respectively) with an ingenious arrangement to be explained in a later article which allows each casket its own space without the necessity of removal, until the tomb is entirely filled to its constructed capacity.

The foundation and how to construct it will now be briefly described. An excavation should be dug to a depth of no less than three feet, deeper if more capacity is wanted in the receptacle. The bottom of the excavation should be leveled. Next a mat or slab of concrete 10" thick is cast in this excavation, which covers the entire space to be occupied by the tomb. This mat is reinforced with  $\frac{1}{2}$ " steel bars, laid both ways one foot on centers. Wood forms for the chain wall which rests on the mat are next put in place and braced. These should be constructed in advance and so nailed that their removal will present no difficulties. Proper height of foundation should be calculated and marked on forming and then the casting is done. Concrete should be machine mixed in 1-3-5 proportion, but a 1-2-4 mix is more satisfactory from a standpoint of durability. Chain wall does not need steel reinforcing bars.

Next day the forms should be gently removed, particularly from the inside of the foundation to prevent cracking due to swelling boards, and the foundation should be left to settle for a period of thirty days before stone is set. If the foundation is built in this way rather than merely constructing a chain wall, as is the common custom in mausoleum work, two advantages are gained.

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## Slogan Contest

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Pennsylvania. Byard Samuel Feaster, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Miss Inez West, Charlotte, North Carolina. Harry L. Ogborn Charlotte, North Carolina. Wilbur G. Burton, Waterville, Connecticut. C. H. Grunewald, Seattle, Washington. Raymond Allison, Troy, Missouri. Miss Eppie Jennings, Troy, Missouri. Cyrus Batchelder, North Haverhill, New Hampshire. Jane Burton, Waterville, Connecticut. B. C. Holland, Gadsden, Alabama. Roy Young, Brooklyn, New York. Miss F. Jeanette Pixley, Adrian, Michigan. Will. T. Hooper, Fort Dodge, Iowa. William Toohy, Rising Sun, Indiana. R. E. MacKellar, Ashland, Ohio.

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One is that the weight of the structure is evenly divided and if there is a tendency toward settlement the tomb will settle *as a unit* and not one portion settle and another hold. In other words, it is possible to construct a very elaborate house of cards on a solid table top, but construct even a one story card house on something not so stable, (such as the palm of the hand) and see what happens! Another reason for this type of foundation is that it provides the nucleus of the receptacle or cellar of the tomb, which like cellars in houses for the living, are sometimes rather useful.

It will be noticed from the section and plan that an 8"x8" aperture is left in the bottom matte. This is left there to drain off condensed moisture which

sometimes accumulates in small quantities in the lower part of the tomb. An optional method of construction is to mix Truscon or other waterproofing paste in the foundation concrete to make it resist moisture but practical experience has shown that the aperture is the safest to use.

(Next month, granite work, setting and door will be gone into.)

## More About Sales Letters

(Continued from page 12)

PLATE V could be something like this:

(for the left flap)

"Life's greatest sentiment is often expressed in the reverence and respect we show for those who have meant so much to us."

(for the right flap)

"To live so that others may say, 'There is a life well spent with helpful service cheerfully given' is as great a compliment as any man can be given."

It would be well to secure a special size envelope (6"x9") and send this particular letter folded only once. This prevents wrinkling by reducing the number of folds and has considerable interest value as well. Folks who receive a different size envelope are curious to open it up and see what's inside.

(In the next issue we will offer additional sales letters and ideas for their presentation.)

It is a curious fact that the more of others' burdens we bear, the greater becomes our strength to carry our own.

Trying to climb upwards by the heads of others is an insecure way. Some day the other fellow may step out from under.