

Bethinking of 9-8-86 Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian



Exceptional Entrance

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The photo shown here this week is the second in a series of "Exceptional Entrances" to be found in Orleans County. A poster entitled "Exceptional Entrances" which depicts eight extraordinary doorways in this country is now on sale at the Swan Library in Albion and the Cobblestone Museum Complex in Childs. The purpose of the poster is to celebrate 1986 as Architectural Heritage Year by drawing to your attention some superb historical architectural work in our midst.

The Beach Mausoleum at Boxwood Cemetery near Medina is one of eight illustrations from the architectural poster published by the Orleans County Department of History. This particular mausoleum is one of fine classical proportions and beauty. Built in the earlier part of this century it is Colonial Revival in style. In fact, it appears to be quite Greek in its design elements and mood. The tapered sides, low pitched roof, symmetry and Doric columns all bespeak the Greek influence. The mausoleum is built of granite with cast bronze doors.

Following our country's centennial in 1876 there arose great interest in our colonial heritage. This interest was very well expressed first by late 19th Century architects who began to emulate colonial and ancient classical forms as opposed to the more ornate and fanciful styles made popular during the Victorian Age.

Beyond the architectural stylistic analysis of the mausoleum, there is much more to read and glean from the sheer symbolism it depicts. In the gable is a delicately carved winged globe which is symbolic of immortality. The garland bouquets on both pilasters are also rich in meaning. The flowers in each are lilies which stand for purity and resurrection, a rose for passion and a daisy for innocence. The ribbons above each bouquet are suggestive of mourning as well as the fact that they hang down rather than right side up. Wreaths decorate the upper part of each door which symbolizes memory, rejoicing, victory, beauty and life. In the lower panel of each door is found an upside-down-torch, symbolic of death. It is interesting that during the late 19th Century and early part of this century pagan architecture forms were frequently used as Christian memorials. The classical attire of this mausoleum emits an unmistakable feeling of dignity which I can see as viewed by its creators, was an appropriate facade for death.