



Lawton Mausoleum

History

George Field Lawton was born in Lowell in 1845. His father was the superintendent of a cotton mill. During the Civil War, George served in the Sixth Massachusetts Infantry. He graduated from Williams College and returned to Lowell to be a teacher. He served on the school committee in 1875-76, became a lawyer in 1877, served as City Solicitor from 1880 to 1887, and was Superintendent of Schools from 1887 until 1892 when he became a judge of the Superior Court. George's brother Frederick also became a lawyer and then a Probate Court judge. In 1877, George married Ida Anna Hill. They had two children, Harold and Helen.

Judge Lawton died in 1925 at age 80 when he drowned while swimming in a pond in Eastham, Mass. He was visiting his daughter who looked on from the shore and was unable to help him as he struggled in the water.

Art and Architecture

The Lawton mausoleum is in the Greek Revival style. A pair of Doric columns mark the entrance. These columns are plain and are square at the top. They have a gentle convex swelling to their profile, which prevents an optical illusion of concavity. These Doric columns can be compared to the fluted, more decorative Ionic columns at the Ewart mausoleum. The walls of the structure extend to meet the columns and set the entrance deep into space. The architectural term is antae, meaning side walls extending to be in line with façade columns. The same design is used in the Wiggin mausoleum, but with Corinthian columns. The entablature is used to display the deceased's full name: George Field Lawton. Other mausoleums display only the last name and include decorations. The pediment is outlined by a triangle. The plain, strong look here is more in keeping with the Doric design.

The interior stained-glass window design repeats the exterior's paired Doric columns at the mausoleum's entrance. Floating in between the columns is a partially unrolled scroll with the biblical quote from the *Book of Revelation* 21: 4 (chapter 21, verse 4):

"And God shall wipe away
all tears from their eyes;
and there shall be no more death,
neither sorrow, nor crying,
neither shall there be any more pain;
for the former things
are passed away."

The gold and peach colors used for the window's scroll and architectural elements are balanced by the climbing ivy and the two rectangular green panels. The panels suggest a window within the window and further extend the recession into blue sky and the heavens. This window design is similar to the "picture window" approach used by the Tiffany Co. in the Moses Greeley Parker mausoleum.

Buried In the mausoleum are:

- Judge George Field Lawton – died July 17, 1925
- Helen L. Lawton – (daughter) age 72 – born July 4, 1882; died Feb 6, 1955
- Belle Cynthia Hill (sister-in-law) – born April 12, 1846; died Feb 7, 1927
- Ida Anna Lawton (spouse) – died June 19, 1924

Family obituaries:

Ida Lawton (spouse)

June 21, 1924 Sun (Saturday) p.3:

LAWTON - Mrs. Ida A. Lawton, wife of Judge George F. Lawton of the Middlesex probate court, died Thursday at her home, 24 Maple Avenue, Cambridge. Mrs. Lawton was the daughter of the late Benjamin Converse Hill and Cynthia (Collier) Hill of Lowell. Mrs. Lawton was born in Lowell December 20, 1848 and before her marriage to Judge Lawton was a teacher in the Green School in this city and prominent in educational circles. She was of old New England ancestry, a descendant of several of the Mayflower passengers and of many of the early colonial officers. She is survived by her husband, a

son, a daughter and a sister, Miss Belle C. Hill of Lowell, who was for many years an assistant in the office of the city clerk. Burial will be in this city Sunday afternoon.

June 23, 1924 Sun (Monday) p.3.

The body of Mrs. Ida A. Lawton, wife of Judge George F. Lawton of the Middlesex probate court, was buried in the Lowell Cemetery yesterday afternoon at 4 o'clock after a funeral service had been held at her late home in Cambridge. The bearers in this city were Judge Thomas Enright of the Lowell district court, Judge John C. Leggatt of the Middlesex probate court, Judge Frederick Lawton of the superior court and City Councilor Frank A. Stearns.

Judge Lawton:

July 18, 1925 - Saturday - p.26:

JUDGE LAWTON DROWNED. Middlesex County Jurist, Aged 80 Years, Meets Death in Eastham Pond. While swimming in Heron pond, Eastham, Mass., last evening (July 17, 1925), Judge George Field Lawton of the Middlesex superior court, a native of this city, was overcome and drowned. He was 80 years old, and met death while his daughter, Ida, stood on shore unable to render or summon assistance.

Hon. George F. Lawton was born here in 1815. After graduation from Williams College, he became identified with Lowell politics, serving as a member of the school committee in 1875-76, and holding the office of city solicitor from 1880 to 1887, when he became superintendent of schools until 1892.

He was admitted to the bar in 1877, having previously studied law in the office of D.S. and C.F. Richardson. He later formed a partnership with the late Hon. Charles W. Howe and his own brother, Hon. Frederick Lawton, and became an associate justice of the superior court of Middlesex County.

In 1919, Judge Lawton's son, Harold, former principal of the Peabody School in Cambridge, disappeared, and has never been accounted for.

Deceased was a past master of Kilwinning Lodge, A.F. and A.M. of this city, a past chancellor and charter member of Chevalier Lodge, K of P of this city and a member of Centralville lodge, I O O F (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) and Post 120, G A R.

Information about a provision in Helen Lawton's will appeared in the *Lowell Sun* on February 15, 1955:

Get Money If They Remain Unmarried. Cambridge. The Misses Bernice D. Moore and Jane E. McKearn in today were assured of financial independence, if they remain unmarried. Under the terms of the will of their aunt, Miss Helen L. Lawton, they were left the bulk of her \$120,000 estate if they remain single.