

In Perpetual Mourning, Fannie (Castleman) Eastin Section A Lot 360

By Anne K. Harlan and Alex Luken

The monument erected by Fannie (Castleman) Eastin to her husband, George B. Eastin, is among the finest examples of Victorian monumental art in Cave Hill Cemetery. The monument portrays a grief-stricken widow leaning on a cross prostrate with grief. The cross bears the inscription “My Darling Husband” with a funerary wreath adorning the base of the cross and an open book at the widow’s feet.



Fannie Castleman Eastin

Both George B. and Fannie (Castleman) Eastin were born in Lexington, KY around 1843. The couple married in St. Louis, Missouri in 1868 and settled in Louisville, where George Eastin practiced law and eventually was appointed a judge on the Court of Appeals. The couple’s only child, George B. Eastin, Jr. passed away at age 9 in 1879 from diphtheria. Grief-stricken, the Eastins spent a great deal of time traveling abroad. In 1896, George Eastin passed away in Rome, shortly after the couple’s arrival. A publication devoted to the granite and marble trade stated that “A Kentucky woman, Mrs. George B. Eastin, will have erected over her grave in Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville, a portrait statue of herself for which she posed in life a number of years ago.” The monument was placed over the grave of George B. Eastin in Cave Hill in 1898.

The Eastin monument erected in Section A Lot 360 is uncannily similar to a monument erected in to the memory of Florentine musician Emilio Koppel in Cimetiere de San Miniato al Monte (Cemetery of St. Minas on the Mountain, a basilica in Florence) in 1893. Koppel’s monument features the figure of his grieving young widow, Leopoldina Koppel, and was completed by Paoli Testi three years before George Eastin’s death.

Paolo Testi (b. 1858 d. 1929) was among the most active Florentine sculptors in the later part of the 19th century. Trained at the renowned *Accademia delle belle Arti (Florence Academy)* in Florence, he won first prize for his sculpture work two years in a row, as well as the greatest prize given by the *Accademia* – known as the *prix de Rome*.

Testi’s early study of portrait painting translated into his outstanding talent as a portrait sculpture. Working in clay, his subjects would sit for hours as he captured the physical characteristics that individualized their appearance. Testi was best known for the creation of portrait busts, often in medallion form, of famous Florentine citizens which are remarkable for their vivacity and fluidness of expression. His stature as a sculptor allowed him to be selective in his subjects for funeral monuments and statuary commissions.

In 1901, Paolo Testi immigrated to the United States. He resided primarily in North Bergen, NJ until his death there in December, 1929.



The Eastin monument (left) 1898 - features a grieving woman leaning on the cross with an open book at the base.

The Koppel monument (right) 1893 - features a grieving woman leaning on the cross with a lyre and sheet music at the base.

The Studio. United Kingdom: National Magazine Company, 1898.

The Reporter, Vol XLV. Page 33, 1912

Granite, Marble, Bronze, Vol. 23, January, 1913

<http://www.palazzospinelli.org/architetture/scheda.asp?offset=1650&ID=2721>

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Jannotta Family Collection, <http://alplm-cdi.com/chroniclingillinois/items/show/21220>