

2021-10-06

Another mystery gravestone



Jon Jacobs
Steinitz headstone, 2019

Our new member Jon Jacobs has a historical observation and a question regarding the grave of Steinitz, and hopes the members of the CH&LS, or other interested persons, could help him answer this question:

My research collaborator, IM Yury Lapshun, made an interesting discovery when examining and comparing two widely published photos of Steinitz's grave, and a third photo that we took in 2019 when we visited the grave. The two photos that appear on the CH&LS website ([Steinitz, William](#)) and many other websites (copied below), show apparent differences in both the vertical headstone itself, and the wider, ground-level stone on which the vertical headstone rests.

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Photo taken from *Chessworld* Vol. 1, No. 3, May-June 1964, p.46



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Steinitz biographer Kurt Landsberger at the grave of Steinitz

1. In the left [1st] photo, identified as first published in 1964, the upper, dark, vertical headstone appears damaged at its bottom. That stone has a jagged, sawtoothed pattern at its lower right-hand corner. And just above the bottom where the headstone touches the base stone, the main headstone appears not to be a smooth surface but a wide groove, pointed slightly downward and to the right. These defects are not evident in the middle [2nd] photo, taken in 2019.

2. The ground-level base stone appears considerably shorter in height in the left (older) photo than in the right and middle photos.

The right [3rd] photo bears no date, but must have been taken long after 1964. That is evident from the appearance of Mr. Landsberger, shown standing behind the headstone in the left photo. He would have been 40 years old in 1964. So, the left photo probably dates to sometime in the 1990s. (The middle photo, which I took in 2019, more closely resembles the right one.)

These visual differences indicate that some type of repair or replacement of one or both stones at Steinitz's grave - the ground-level base and the vertical headstone with chessboard at its summit - must have been performed at some point after 1964. We are interested in any information that could shed light on when the replacement or repair was performed, and by whom.

The number assigned to Steinitz's grave within the cemetery also is subject to a discrepancy. A large metal sign placed by Kurt Landsberger along the route reads in part, "*In memory of my ancestor ... Grave Number 5893.*" But that grave number may be incorrect: a few web sources including two separate "find a grave" pages give Steinitz's grave number as 5896. Might that, along with the headstone changes, indicate that the grave and/or headstone was relocated at some point in time?

We would appreciate any information or insight that CH&LS members could shed on these questions.

Jon Jacobs