



Brick Georgian on South Mountain

CONTRIBUTED BY MIKE FARRELLY,
MONTCLAIR TOWN HISTORIAN,
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW WANDER

THIS FEDERAL REVIVAL GEORGIAN on the west side of South Mountain Ave. was designed by Montclair architect, Frank E. Wallis around 1901 for New York banker Harry Adams Kahler and his wife, Beulah (Pace) Kahler. Wallis was a recognized expert on the Federal Revival style. This house boasts a spectacular, elaborately detailed Palladian window over the oval porch. The north and south wings are not original. They were designed by Roland Markwith and added about 1931.

Harry Kahler was involved with several New York banks as well as the 1st National Bank of Palm Beach. He was quite wealthy. He started his own financial firm in Dallas. He came to New York and became president of the NY Title and Mortgage Co., which became part of the American Trust Co. with Kahler as president. While with the Trust Company he became a director of the Manhattan Bank which became the major shareholder of the Trust Co. There was a bit of a scandal when the Trust Co. failed during the Depression, in 1934. There were some questionable transfers from the Trust Co. to

the Manhattan Bank. The New York State Insurance Commission sued the bank and the Trust Co. for \$22,000,000. The plaintiffs settled for \$1,475,000 in 1936. Kahler had to pay part of the settlement; so did future New York governor, Averill Harriman.

Perhaps the most interesting of the Kahler's children was Woodland Kahler. Granted, he only lived in Montclair for 10 years, or so; he graduated from the Montclair Military Academy and went to Yale. After college Woodland served in the Army Air Corps during WWI; then went to work in New York with his father. In the 1920s he moved to Paris to become an author. He wrote several semi-well-known novels and hundreds of essays on world peace. He met Olga Mourra in Paris, where they were part of French high society. Olga was from a minor Russian aristocratic family who fled Russia during the Revolution. Woodland was president of the World Vegetarian Society. He and Olga became interested in Jainism, an ancient Indian religious movement based on non-violence, including a strict prohibition on the killing of any living thing; thus, extreme vegetarians, who would never kill a plant, or any animal life associated with it. Woodland and Olga moved to the foothills of the Himalayas when he became the associate editor of Ahimsa, an English language Jainist magazine. He was nominated for the Noble Peace Prize in 1964. He didn't win; Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

deservedly won. In 1960, when Woodland was in his sixties, Woodland and Olga were adopted by an elderly French noblewoman who had no heirs and wanted to continue the family name. The French high court upheld the adoption; Woodland and Olga became legitimate nobility: the Marquis and Marquise de St. Innocent. Woodland remarried in 1977. He married Amy McKay the widow of an old friend. They lived in Maine and wintered in Palm Beach. Just plain old "Woody" died in Bangor, Maine in 1981.

Harry and Beulah Kahler sold the Federal Revival masterpiece to Winifred B. Campbell, the widow of Frederick Campbell, in 1911. Frederick had been the president of United Engineering and Foundering Co. of Pittsburgh. Winifred was the sister of Hamden E. Tener, who lived a few houses away on South Mountain. She lived in the Federal Revival for a few years; then moved in with her brother.

The next owners of the Federal Revival were T. Holt and Mary Louise Hayward. Thomas "T." Holt Hayward was a manager of a division of Frederick Vietor and Achelis, the dry goods and textile giant, with a large establishment at Church and Leonard St. in NYC. After a few years T. Holt and Mary Louise moved to North Carolina.

From the early 1930s to 1950 William D. and Pauline (Morrison) O'Gorman lived in this house. William served in the Army Air Corps during WWI. He completed active duty as a major. He became a lieutenant colonel in the reserves after the war. William joined the firm of O'Gorman and Young, an insurance company



The house was built around 1901 for New York banker Harry Adams Kahler

founded by his uncle in Newark. He eventually became the vice president. Pauline played piano and had a contralto voice. She sang locally with the Montclair Music Club and with the Scola Cantorum in New York. She was a life-long member of the Montclair Art Museum and a member of the Montclair Women's Club. She volunteered at the United Way and at Mountainside Hospital. This house is hardly a "Mother/Daughter", but William's mother, Elizabeth, married Robert Jennings, a steel magnate, in later life, and lived next door. William's mother and sister lived next door for many years.

The last owners that we are going to talk about today bought the house in the 1950s, after William O'Gorman passed away and Pauline

had moved to Gates Ave. The new owners held it until the 1960s. They were Robert Ely and Catherine (Madorie) Cooper. Robert was president, then CEO, of the Cooper Jarrett trucking firm. He was a member of the Montclair Rotary and on the board of Kessler Rehabilitation in West Orange. Catherine graduated from Kansas University. She married Robert in 1928 and had 4 children. They maintained houses in Montclair, Verona, Sea Girt and Florida. She passed away in Naples, FL in 1977. ■

If you'd like to see more images of Montclair homes, they are featured in the book, *Stately Homes of Montclair*, which can be found at Montclair Booksellers, several local libraries and the [Stately Homes of Montclair Facebook page](#).

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