

The Little House In The Rose Garden

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



LOUIS VAUGHN Hubbard and his wife, Edith Duff Gray Hubbard, came to Montclair in 1907. They built a lovely house which they called "Bonnie Brae" on a double lot at the corner of Park Street and Wildwood Ave. Bonnie Brae is still there, facing Park St. They planted a rose garden in the empty lot, which was closest to the corner. They were very proud of their house and their rose garden. They were a very social couple, who entertained frequently. Because they had space they could handle large affairs. They invited 500 guests to their daughter, Eleanor's, debutante party on December 23, 1921. They had an agreement that when one died the other would build a little house in the rose garden. Louis died first in 1929.

It should be noted that they were pretty well off. Louis graduated from New York Law School in 1899. He entered the law firm of Perkins, Jackson and Noble. He became a partner and the firm changed its name to Noble, Jackson and Hubbard. He was also a manufacturer. He was president of Taft - Pierce Co. which made tools, dies and measuring instruments. He remained a lawyer and a businessman when he came to Montclair, but he also went into banking. He became the vice president of the 1st National Bank of Montclair on Valley Road. Edith, Mrs. Hubbard, was extremely active. She was the president of the Upper Montclair

Women's Club, the president of the New Jersey Federation of Women's Clubs and a director on the national board of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. During her term as president of the NJ Federation, women became very concerned that the quarrying industry was going to blast the Palisades along the

Hudson River to pieces. Through intensive lobbying they were able to stop the blasting, create a preserve and build a watch-tower in Alpine, NJ to commemorate their efforts. Edith hired noted Montclair architect, Francis A. Nelson, to design the little house that was to stand in the former Hubbard rose garden. It was to be called "The Anchorage". Nelson also designed the Women's Club of Upper Montclair, the Upper Montclair Post Office, and the Bellevue Ave. branch of the Public Library along with several other Montclair landmarks. Edith applied for the permit in January 1930. In November of the same year, she moved into The Anchorage, which was a replica of the Byrd Mansion, "Westover" in Jamestown, Virginia. It is smaller in scale than the original, but it is hardly "little". It faces Wildwood Ave. It boasts James River bricks, a hand-wrought iron gate, and an imported slate roof. Edith had world famous landscape architect, Ralph Hancock, design a new garden for her. It was sometimes hard to see because it was placed behind a ten foot high brick wall. Hancock had just designed a garden for Princess Victoria, eldest daughter of Queen Victoria. He would go on to design the Rockefeller Gardens at Rockefeller Center. Edith died in 1934. The next occupants were Charles P. and Irene Montgomery. Charles was an executive vice president of Nabisco and Irene was the president of the College Women's Club of Montclair.

In the 1950s Robert Lape Smith and his wife, Grace, lived at The Anchorage. He was the president of the Ban-Cad Corp. of America, a printing firm based in Little Falls. She was a teacher at MKA. It was their daughter, Roberta, who grabbed national headlines in 1954 when she became the "Good Hands"

(equestrian) Champion after winning the National Horse Show Equitation Championship at Madison Square Garden. She rode a 4-year-old chestnut mare named "Miss Laurel". The year before, she won the National Horse Show Association's Saddle Seat Horsemanship Championship. During her short life she won over 200 equestrian awards. Unfortunately, she passed away in 1956 at the age of 18.

In the 1960s The Anchorage became the home of Dr. Sidney H. Joffe. It is not clear whether his wife, Gussie, a New York lawyer, moved in with him. They were in the middle of a divorce. He had been married and divorced before. Dr. Joffe had a twin brother, Philip, who was also a doctor. They joined the Medical Corps together in 1942. They both stayed in the service until the end of WWII. Sidney rose to the rank of major, Philip became a captain. They practiced medicine together at an office on 28th Street in Paterson. Their joint claim to fame was the development of a chemical solution meant to preserve flowers. Philip filed for the patent.

More recently William Farlie Jr. and his wife, Barbara lived in The Anchorage. William was mayor of Montclair from 1996 to 2000. The finalization of NJ Transit's "Montclair Connection" and the creation of the Montclair Community Pre-K were major events during his administration. ■

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