



Brookwood on Stonebridge Road

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

LAST MONTH WE TALKED about Edmund and Jessie Osborne coming to Montclair around 1902 and buying up 80 acres in the South End which became known as Osborne's Woods. We talked about one of the houses built in that cozy neighborhood. This month we will talk about the house they built; originally an 18 room/6 bathroom house that they called "Brookwood", designed by Van Vleck and Goldsmith in 1909. Van Vleck and Goldsmith designed several homes and buildings in Montclair. Joseph Van Vleck Jr., one of the partners, was a Montclair resident himself. The firm had just designed a factory for Osborne in Newark. Brookwood is a Tudor Gothic style home on Stonebridge Road. It was considered "fireproof" because it was constructed of hollow tile reinforced with steel. It was featured in the March 1913 edition of *American Homes and Gardens*.

Edmund Osborne came from Iowa where he and Thomas Murphy started a newspaper, *The Red Oak Independent*, in 1888. By 1891 they were successfully making calendars. They were the first company to include art and advertising on the pages. Osborne and Murphy had different business philosophies.

Murphy agreed to stay out of the calendar business for 5 years and went back to the newspaper. After the 5 years passed, Murphy started his own calendar company. Around 1900 Edmund moved his businesses to New Jersey. In Red Oak, Edmund and Jessie had architect William A. Hardy design a house for them. It is now the Heritage Hill Bed and Breakfast and is on the National Historic Register. In New Jersey Edmund owned three art printing companies: Osborne (Printing) Co., National Colortype and American Three Color. In 1902 he consolidated the last 2 as American Colortype with their main factory in Newark. Edmund was very active in the Progressive Wing of the Republican Party. He served on innumerable committees and was often a delegate at national and local conventions. He ran unsuccessfully for the New Jersey governorship as a Progressive in 1913. He became a state senator and served for 6 years until his death in 1917.

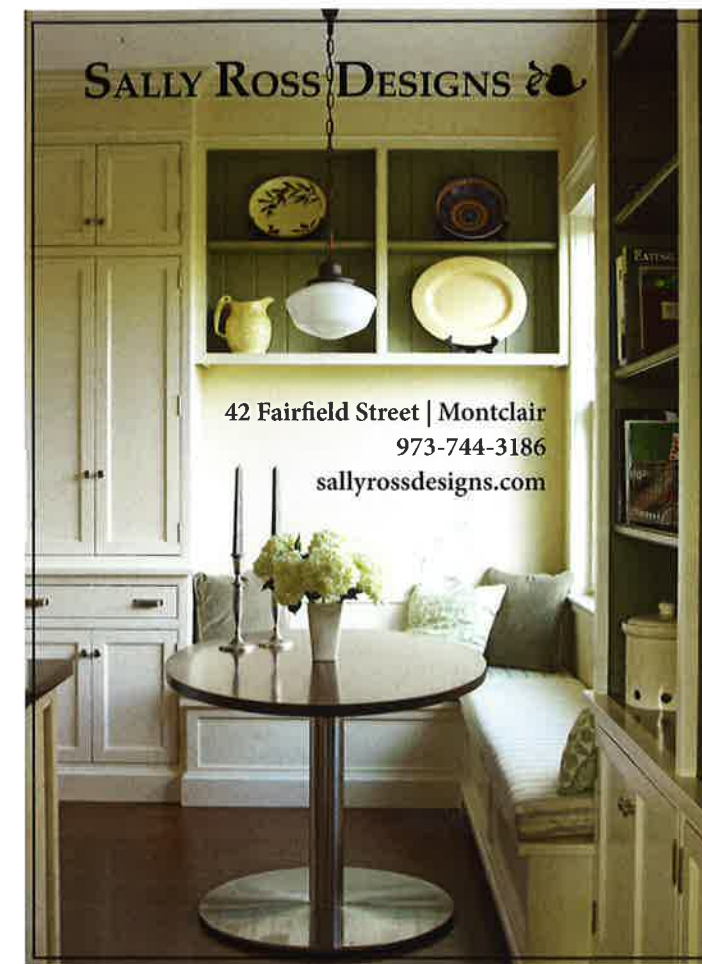
In 1922 Paterson banker and businessman, Henry Bell bought Brookwood for \$135,000. Henry was the president of the Citizens Trust Company of Paterson and the chairman of Paterson Mortgage and Trust.

Henry was widowed when he lived in Montclair. He lived in

Brookwood with his son, James, a cook and 3 maids. There was a chauffeur's house on the property. Henry also lived there with his chauffeur and his chauffeur's family. From the 1940s to about 1980 Brookwood was home to Dr. Arthur Michele and his wife, Rose. Arthur was an orthopedic surgeon in NY. Rose had a law degree from St. John's University Law School and had been admitted to the NY Bar. She didn't practice law during these years but she was incredibly active in the College Women's Club and garden clubs in both Montclair and Verona.

About 1999 Steve and Patty Kushner became the owners of Brookwood. Steve is radio executive and producer. Patty is known professionally as Patty Steele. She has been a radio personality at different radio stations in the New York City area. She has had a longtime association with Scott Shannon at a few stations. They are currently doing a morning show on WCBS. The Kushners offered their house to serve as the Junior League Show House in 2000 and again in 2006. The Junior League of Montclair and Newark is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the community. They are involved in a wide variety of projects meant to promote volunteerism and help women and families. They are particularly concerned with minorities and "at risk" children. The "Show House" is a fundraiser for the Junior League. Every 3 years a generous donor offers them a house. The owners typically move out for a short while. Various decorators and designers redo parts of their home. The house is then open to the public for several months. The public gets to see the latest in home fashion.

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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