



Travertine Mansion On Undercliff Road

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

THIS HOUSE IS LARGE, although it probably isn't the largest house in Montclair. It may be, however, the most elegant house ever built in Montclair. It sits on an almost 3-acre plot. It was designed by Montclair architects Goodwillie and Moran. The landscape was done by the Olmstead Brothers. It was built in 1929 for William H. "Hardy" Eshbaugh and his wife, Mabel (Chapin) Eshbaugh; both from Montclair. The permit anticipated that the cost of the house would be \$298,000. It has been rumored that the house actually cost more than \$1,000,000 (in 1929). Other stories about the house are that a family of master stone masons was brought over from Italy and worked for a year on the exquisite exterior. It boasts a "Christopher Wren-like" library with carved linen wood panels that evoke the masterful wood carvings of the Anglo-Dutch wood carver, Grinling Gibbons, who was often called the "Michelangelo of Wood Carving". The house has 15th Century imported ceilings and colored marble bathrooms with gold-plated faucets. It is said to remind people of an English manor house on the first floor, but

of an elegant French château on the second floor. The house is called "Stone Eagles" because of the eagles (carved from stone) that perch above the entranceway gate posts.

A scene from 1990's *Reversal of Fortune*, starring Glen Close and Jeremy Irons was filmed in the master bedroom of this house. William H. Eshbaugh had been a clerk at a few insurance companies. He became a lumber dealer and was largely responsible for developing the lumber and pulp business on Anticosti Island at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River in Canada. He was employed by the Menier Brothers, who were branching out from their rather well-known chocolate business in France. The Menier Brothers decided that the lumber business wasn't working out and walked away. Then the bottom dropped out of the paper business during the Depression. William's grandson, William H. Esbaugh III, told me that his grandfather was forced to declare bankruptcy, but that the bank allowed him (and Mabel) to stay in the house. William became a stockbroker in 1926. His fortunes reversed and he retired from a successful career in investments in 1935. He and Mabel moved to Gates Ave. in the 1940s.

The next owner was J. Arthur Kennedy who lived here with his sisters, Lillian and Dorothy. Arthur was the president of the Daniels & Kennedy Trucking Co., which was started by his father, James Kennedy. He bought (and then sold) the John



The photo included in the Featured Home article "Tudor Manor House on Highland Ave." in the October issue was incorrect. This is the home on Highland Avenue that the article referred to.

Grafton Trucking Co. with the express agreement that he was to stay out of the trucking business for 10 years. He founded his own real estate company. After the 10 years ended, he returned to Daniels and Kennedy. He also founded the J. Arthur Kennedy & Son Trucking Co. run by his son, James. Their company became one of the largest transportation businesses on the East Coast. J. Arthur passed away in 1946. Lillian and Dorothy remained in this house. They were joined by another sister, Emily Sniffen, who had recently become a widow, and her daughter, Mildred Sniffen. Mildred married a broker by the name of C. Conrad Carlson. The Carlsons lived here for a while; then moved to Essex Fells. Lillian passed away in 1951 Dorothy remained in the house until the late 1960s.

In 1971 Alexander and Elisabeth Kasser owned the house but never lived in it. For a very brief time this house was occupied by Dr. Robert and Eugenia Miller. Dr. Miller was a linguist who taught all over the world. Eugenia had a masters' degree in library science from Columbia University and usually ran the library wherever Robert taught. They had just finished a stint at the American University in Cairo, Egypt before they moved into the house. They had come to Montclair so he could teach at Montclair State. Eugenia had a world class collection of African art that was put on display by the Montclair Art Museum.

In the 1970s the house passed into the hands of a husband-and-wife law team, Stephen and Mary Mochary. They practiced on Park St. Mary is well known in Montclair circles. Her parents, Alexander and Elisabeth Kasser, lived on Gates Ave. Alexander owned Technopulp a business that supplied chemicals to the pulp industry with headquarters at 26 Park St. In 2002 Mary and her brother, Michael, pledged a great deal of money (\$4MM) to Montclair State University in order to create a theater, The Alexander Kasser Performance Center, to honor their father. Mary was also elected to the town council in 1980, which was in the process of changing from a 5-person commission to a seven-person council. Mary received the most votes and was therefore proclaimed the mayor, the first female mayor in Montclair history.

Mary went to the Bradford School and College High, a specialized high school on the campus of Montclair State. She received her BA from Wellesley and a law degree from the University of Chicago. She counseled couples in family planning for a short while in India but came back to the United States to practice law. She served as mayor of Montclair; then ran unsuccessfully for the US Senate seat from NJ in 1984. Her husband became sick and she scaled back the campaign. She has retired from politics and the law but remains active in philanthropic organizations. She was appointed to the board of the Kennedy Center by President George W. Bush. Steven passed away in 2001. Mary sold this house in 2005. ■

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.

Cozy Up with Good Read

CONTRIBUTED BY ANDREW NG

WITH SHORTER DAYS and colder weather, it's a perfect time to settle in with a cozy book for your reading. Library staff have compiled reading lists for many genres.

Below are three thoughtfully curated lists for fall fiction, and humor.

Visit montclairlibrary.org/borrow/lists for more information, check a title's availability as a book, eBook, or audiobook. All you need is a Montclair Public Library card.

GRAPHIC NOVELS & COMICS

- The Minors* by Paul
- Big Black: Stand at Attica* by Frank Smith
- The Nigger* by Yang
- Black Hole* by Charles Burns
- The Death of Stalin* by Fabien Nury
- Orphan* by Chri
- The Far Side* by Gary Larson
- Praise* by Bern
- Fatale* by Ed Brubaker
- From Hell* by Alan Moore
- Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel

HUMOR

- Anxious* by Fred
- Bossyp* by John
- Cat's C* by John
- A Confe* by John
- Don Qu* by Mig
- The Hit* by Mig
- Galaxy* by Mig
- Hyperb* by Allie
- I Feel B* by Nore
- Is Every* by Nore
- Me?* by Nore
- Lamb: Biff, Ch* by Chri
- The Mis* by Chri
- Black C* by Issa
- The Sot* by John
- Three M* by Jerol
- A Walk* by Bill I
- White 1* by Bill I

HISTORICAL FICTION

- Broken Angels* by Gemma Liviero
- The Forgotten Room* by Karen White
- The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah
- A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles
- Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi
- The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara
- The Last Days of Night* by Graham Moore
- The Lost Apothecary* by Lorna Bennett
- The Marriage of Opposites* by Alice Hoffman

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