



Photo courtesy Mike Farrelly

Victorian Lady On Bellevue Avenue

CONTRIBUTED BY MIKE FARRELLY, MONTCLAIR TOWN HISTORIAN

AN AD IN THE September 11, 2003, Montclair Times called this house a “magnificently restored Victorian Lady on Bellevue Ave.” If you had to choose an architectural style, Queen Anne would probably come the closest. It was built around 1889-90 for William H. and Margaret (Merewether) Power, although they never lived there. William was born in England. He was caught up in the 1850s “Gold Rush” and prospected in Brazil and in Australia. He ended up settling in the United States where he founded the grain brokerage of Power, Son, & Co. He came to Montclair in 1872 and started buying up old properties, eventually building some 40 houses in Upper Montclair. He and Margaret built themselves a mansion called “Woodlands” on Upper Mountain Ave. It has been demolished. It stood about where the “Forstmann” houses are now at the intersection of Upper Mountain and Watchung. The most prominent “Forstmann” house is the magnificent Tudor “castle” with an arch over the driveway. Although there are conflicting stories about what Margaret saw: some say that she saw a child fall out of a window, some say she saw a builder fall off a scaffold, Margaret was clearly distressed by the fact that the nearest hospital was too far away. She became one of the major advocates for a hospital in Montclair.

She was one of the founders of Mountainside Hospital and was its treasurer for 20 years. Two of her sons: Walter and

Henry, became doctors. Dr. Henry Power and his new wife Mary (Clarke) were the first people to live in this house on Bellevue Ave. Unfortunately, they divorced in 1904 and moved on. Henry went West and remarried.

The house sat vacant for a while, until 1909 when Henry M. and Marie (Grube) Oest moved in. Henry was retired by the time he moved to Montclair. He grew up in Germany. He had been married in Germany and had worked there as a mason. His wife passed away before he immigrated to the United States. He lived in Jersey City just before he came here. He met Marie in Jersey City. They married in 1906. Henry passed away in 1910 and Marie continued to live in the house for a couple more years.

The next owners were Lewis and Bertha (Litzan) Pfeiff. Lewis’ mom and family moved to New York where Lewis began his long association with the US Steel Co. He became a senior traffic manager for the company and was promoted to the vice presidency of the Isthmian Steamship Company, which was founded by US Steel to handle their own international trade in 1910. Lewis was also a director of US Steel. Lewis personally took part in the first Telephone-to-Ship experiments aboard the SS America in 1922.

Bertha passed away in 1924. Lewis stayed in the house until his just before his death in 1933.

Around 1932 various members of the Schroder family moved

Homes Sold in Montclair in 2022

SOURCE: GSMLS DATA

Sale Price Range	Number of Properties Sold
\$500,000 - \$599,999	40
\$600,000 - \$699,999	52
\$700,000 - \$799,999	42
\$800,000 - \$899,999	41
\$900,000 - \$999,999	49
\$1,000,000 - \$1,249,999	58
\$1,250,000 - \$1,499,999	52
\$1,500,000 - \$1,749,999	51
\$1,750,000 - \$1,999,999	28
\$2,000,000 - \$2,499,999	28
\$2,500,000 - \$2,999,999	4
\$3,000,000 +	6

Largest Sale **\$3,960,000** 16 Erwin Park (right)



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in. Alice, Elsie, and Lilly Schroder had lived with their mom in Manhattan. They were all teachers, although Alice had also tried her hand at painting. Another sister, Adele, also a teacher, had moved to Boston. The three sisters moved to Montclair when their mom passed away. Alice and Elsie lived in this house. Lilly married Francis George Robinson (F. George Robinson) and lived on Undercliff. Elsie passed away in 1937. Alice passed away in 1939. Lilly and her husband moved into the house and lived there until the 1940s. F. George Robinson is listed in various places as a purchasing agent at a New York engineering firm. It is not clear with which firm. Lilly was an expert bridge player. She competed in and organized Bridge tournaments all over North Jersey. Around 1945 the Robinsons moved to Alabama. They later moved to Oklahoma and wound-up living with their son, Henry, in Illinois.

In 1945 Ellis H. and Mary (Dewar) Martin became the owners. Ellis graduated from Wesleyan University in Middletown, CN, and went to work for the New Jersey Unemployment Agency. He was their senior investigator. Mary graduated from Montclair State Teacher’s College and taught at an elementary school in Little Silver, NJ. Ellis passed away in 1968. Mary continued to live in the house until 1973.

Their son, Charles, sold the house to Fred and Elaine (Kislowski) Gallagher who owned it until 2002. Fred and Elaine were married in 1970. At the time of their wedding, Fred had just been discharged from the Army and was working at the Bloomfield Technical High School. He was studying at Seton Hall University. Elaine received a BA and an MA from Fairleigh Dickenson University, which led to a teaching job at Wayne Valley High School. They sold the house to the Bellevue Ave. Associates with offices on Walnut St. ■

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