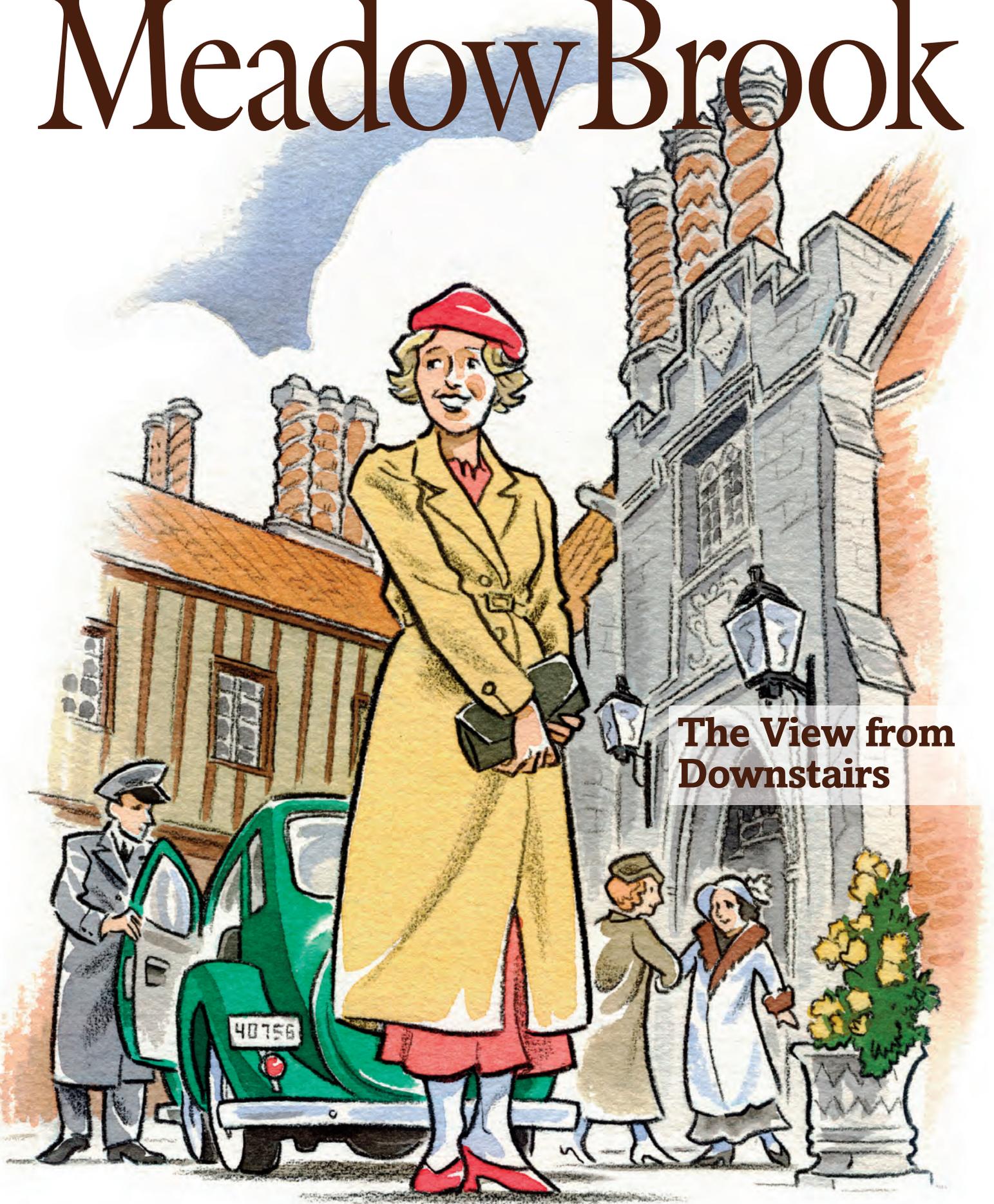


Meadow Brook



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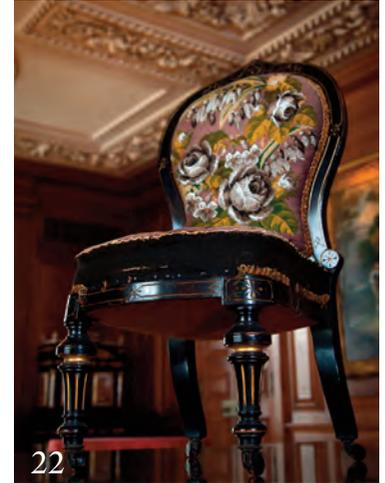
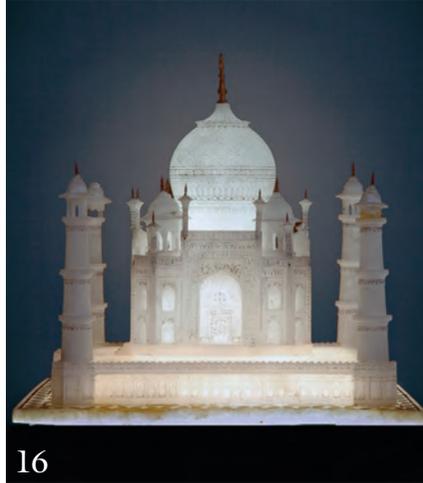
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On the Cover:

Illustration by Tim C. Jones. Readers may recognize Tim's work, which was featured in *Duke and Dolly's Adventure: A Meadow Brook Farms Coloring Book*, available in The Hall's Museum Store (see back cover for contact information).

Meadow Brook

MAGAZINE

Editor & Publisher
Geoffrey C. Upward

Associate Editor
Kimberly Zelinski

Art Direction
Lynn Metzker
Graphic Design

Photography
Rick Smith

Contributing Writers
Lisa Drummond
Madelyn Rzakdowolski

Business Manager
Robin Gardner

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EDITORIAL OFFICES are located at Meadow Brook Hall
480 S. Adams Road
Rochester, MI 48309-4401

HOW TO REACH US
Email: zelinski@oakland.edu
Phone: 248-364-6204
Fax: 248-364-6201

ADDRESS CHANGES
Email: glaza@oakland.edu
Mail: Kelly Lenda
Meadow Brook Hall
480 S. Adams Road
Rochester, MI 48309-4401

MEADOW BROOK

ONE OF AMERICA'S GREATEST ESTATE HOMES, AN ICON OF THE AUTOMOTIVE ARISTOCRACY, AND A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

The former home of Alfred and Matilda Dodge Wilson, founders of Oakland University, Meadow Brook Hall is located on Oakland's 1,400-acre campus. The self-supporting auxiliary of the university serves as an internationally renowned historic house museum and cultural center.

| Editor's Column

Art comes in many forms

When viewed against the backdrop of the country's finest example of Tudor-Revival domestic architecture, The Hall's collections – some 75,000 items – are often overlooked, or more accurately, walked past. These objects can be effective educational tools, as can items more recently acquired to fill in missing pieces of the Meadow Brook story.

On page 28, you can read about a special painting acquired by Alfred and Matilda Wilson in 1926 to hang in their yet-to-be built Meadow Brook Hall living room, "St. John the Baptist with the Lamb," by Spanish artist Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-82). Recognized by the Detroit Institute of Arts curator of European painting, Dr. Salvador Salort-Pons, in early 2013 as an internationally important work, The Hall at his suggestion has loaned the painting to the DIA for five years. In the process, the painting and frame will be conserved and thousands more people will be able to view it, and gain an appreciation for the Wilsons as collectors.

But, sometimes the best objects to supply context are not hanging on walls or placed on side tables. Current presentation of The Hall's history begins generally with its building (1926-29) and occupancy by its owners and family. Missing to a great extent have been both artifacts and stories of Matilda's first husband, John Dodge, and his brother Horace – from their early years as machinists through the founding and operation of their own car company, up until their deaths in 1920.

Meadow Brook's plans to bring the brothers' contributions to light have begun to take shape, as you will see on pages 10 and 11. The 1914/15 Dodge Open Touring Car, generously donated by Mary Anne Petz, the widow of Horace Dodge's great-grandson Robert Petz, was one of the first several hundred cars made by the Dodge Brothers Motor Car Company, the culmination of years of sweat, savvy and swagger by two inseparable brothers. The 1925 depot hack (or "station wagon") illustrates the commercial side of their business that also included military vehicles, trucks and even howitzers for the First World War effort.

Plans to enhance Meadow Brook's interpretation for the enlightenment of visitors will continue in the coming months, notably with the unveiling of the restored

Murillo painting at the DIA and presentation of a major Dodge Brothers exhibit on the Meadow Brook property in 2014 in recognition of the centennial of the founding of their company. Stay tuned.



The good old days...



are back.

Join the Friends of Meadow Brook and experience the best of Americana. Check out all of our membership benefits and activities at

meadowbrookhall.org

Nice to be noticed

Meadow Brook Hall received two preservation awards this year, courtesy of the City of Rochester Hills.

The city's Historic Districts Commission presented the Earl Borden Historic Preservation Leadership Award to Oakland University this spring for its commitment and efforts to preserve The Hall throughout significant fiscal challenges.

Additionally, Executive Director Geoff Upward received a Regional Arts & Culture Award from the Paint Creek Center for the Arts in June. The award recognized Meadow Brook's contributions to the support of culture and the arts across the region. He was nominated by Rochester Hills Mayor Bryan Barnett.

"We are fortunate that The Hall and dozens of other Meadow Brook Farms

structures are located in Rochester Hills, a city that recognizes the value of its historic resources for both economic development reasons and for enhancing the quality of life of its residents," Upward said.

"And, since The Hall is a self-supporting auxiliary of the university, we are also appreciative of the community's use of the building – whether for touring, attending special events or for corporate and social functions. We hope that the university's efforts to preserve and interpret the estate contribute in a significant way to the understanding of our region's history."

Established in 1989 by the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission, the Borden Award honors Earl Borden, the first Mayor of



Rochester Hills Mayor Bryan Barnett (left) and Executive Director Geoff Upward.

Rochester Hills, who helped to obtain the Van Hoosen farmhouse and property for use as a city-owned museum. Borden was a proponent of protecting local historic heritage through education and preservation.

The mission of Paint Creek Center for the Arts is to enhance life in Oakland and Macomb Counties by promoting, encouraging and creating opportunities to participate in and appreciate the arts. The annual awards recognize achievement in fostering the arts throughout the region.



A legacy of fashion

Conservation is an integral part of the stewardship of Meadow Brook Hall. The "Decades of Dress" Fashion Show, presented in early October by Neiman Marcus and Meadow Brook, raised much needed funds to conserve an evening gown that once belonged to Matilda Dodge Wilson.

"We assembled a prestigious committee who hope to annually support a conservation project," said Kim Zelinski, The Hall's director of museum services. "The dress selected was one of several seriously challenged pieces presented for consideration by our curator, Madelyn Rzadkowolski."

Inspired by Meadow Brook's "Decades of Dresses" exhibit that ran through the summer, the fashion show included a trunk show, costume exhibit and raffle. Featured was Neiman Marcus ready-to-wear fashions and precious jewelry by Verdura.

"The show's success was a direct result of the work and generosity of our volunteer committee, led by longtime Meadow Brook friend Debra Shea, and the community minded spirit of Neiman Marcus," Zelinski said.

Left, the Neiman Marcus fashion show.



1000

DODGE BROTHERS CENTENNIAL 1914-2014



JOIN THE MEADOW BROOK HALL CELEBRATIONS IN 2014

The ingenuity, mechanical genius and work ethic of John and Horace Dodge created a car, a company and a fortune that would make possible the building of one of the automotive aristocracy's great country estates . . . Meadow Brook Farms.

Commemorative events include:

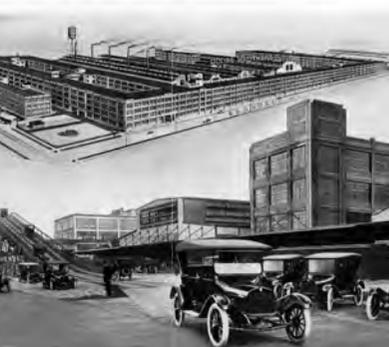
- * Opening of a major Dodge Brothers exhibit
- * Dodge Brothers Club centennial meet and rally, featuring nearly 100 vintage vehicles
- * Dedication of a 1914 Dodge Brothers touring car, donated by Mary Anne Petz in memory of the late Robert Petz, great-grandson of Horace Dodge
- * "Centennial Days" community event with rides, exhibits, entertainment
- * Publication of a new work on the Dodge Brothers by noted automotive historian Charles K. Hyde
- * Dedication of Danny Dodge's restored log cabin



A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Meadow Brook

DODGE BROTHERS WORKS - DETROIT



Speaking louder than words...



Award recipients, Bill Cichowski and Janet Cassise.

“Volunteerism is the voice of people put into action. These actions shape and mold the present into a future of which we can all be proud” – Helen Dyer

than 1,500 hours of exemplary service.

In addressing the guests at the 2012 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, Programs Coordinator Lisa Drummond said, “Tonight is your night. Because without your support, our museum programs and facility rental would simply not be nearly as successful as they are.”

The “A” Team

Recently ranked the #1 Wedding Venue and the #2 museum by voters in the “Click-on-Detroit Vote 4 the Best” competition hosted by WDIV-TV and “Best Venue 2013” by Detroit A List, Meadow Brook is no stranger to accolades.

“Amazing venue and very professional staff. No need for extensive decorations because the mansion is already adorned with such beautiful art . . . Fantastic chef! Beautiful gardens! Breathtaking . . .

Black-tie wedding at Meadow Brook mansion. We felt like we were in a Bond movie . . .”

These are just a sampling of the reviews for Meadow Brook on the Click on Detroit and Detroit A List websites. Nominated by local consumers, these annual online contests determine the best of local businesses, services and locations.

Fitting the Bill

“I was completely surprised. And I am honored to be in the company of the Parkers, Diane Konkle and Irene Connors,” said Bill Cichowski, referring to receiving the 2012 Barb Thorpe Outstanding Volunteer Award. Established in 2009, the award is given to the person who continually goes above and beyond, and embodies Barb’s spirit, boundless enthusiasm and dedication to The Hall. Bill has been a Garden Club member since 2002, has served as past president of the Squires and earned his name badge in 1996.

When nominating Bill for the award, Facilities Operations Manager Nikki Thomas said, “Bill has always been a joy to work with and I know I can always count on him to answer a call for help at The Hall or one of my 2 million questions!”

If what Helen Dyer said is true, then Meadow Brook has a shining future thanks to the amazing corps of volunteers who lend their unending support to the Great Estate. Comprised of people from all walks and life stages, Meadow Brook’s 400-plus volunteers include Garden Club members who tend to The Hall’s picturesque gardens; the Squires, who repair, restore, and generally help keep the grounds and house running; docents and hosts who interpret The Hall for guests; the Curatorial and Archives team, who help preserve Meadow Brook’s history; and the retail Sales and Reception volunteers, who interact with visitors.

Each year The Hall hosts the Volunteer Awards Dinner to acknowledge the service of these dedicated volunteers over the previous 12 months. In August, more than 34 people were celebrated for giving 50 hours or more of service per year over a number of years. Among them was Janet Cassise who received her 30-year award for more



Matilda's classmates

Nearly 60 members of Oakland University's charter class (1963 graduates) gathered at Meadow Brook Hall in September to kick off their 50th reunion weekend, sponsored by the OU Alumni Relations department.

Curator Madelyn Rzadkowolski and Executive Director Geoff Upward delivered a presentation entitled "The Great Estate," covering the history of the property from its beginnings as John and Matilda Dodge's country retreat – Meadow Brook Farms – through its use as a home and estate by the Wilsons, the founding of Oakland University, its designation as a National Historic Landmark and its operation today as a historic house museum and cultural center.

The charter class graduates shared stories of time spent with Alfred and Matilda Wilson, many of which were recorded as oral histories.

Top: Recalling classmates.

Left: Kick-off luncheon in the Ballroom.



First Dodge Sportsman Award presented



The recipient of the first Dodge Sportsman Award, Charlie Mann (right) with Wild Game Dinner & Auction presenting sponsor Jewell Hall of Jewell Media Services, and MBH executive director Geoff Upward.

At its 8th annual Gourmet Wild Game Dinner & Auction in September, Meadow Brook presented Charles (Charlie) Preston Mann, owner of Hunters Creek Club in Metamora, Michigan, with its first Dodge Sportsman Award.

Meadow Brook's Dodge Sportsman Award honors a man, woman or organization who, in the spirit of entrepreneurial American sportsmen John, Horace and Danny Dodge, has demonstrated outstanding contributions to Michigan's outdoor heritage, wildlife and habitat conservation and the promotion of hunting and fishing activities, ethics and education.

In addition to their mechanical genius and success in the automobile manufacturing business, the Dodge brothers and, eventually John's son

Dan, were also great sportsmen – owning hunting and fishing lodges up north and hunting and fishing on the rolling Meadow Brook property – which John had purchased with his young wife Matilda in 1908 as a country retreat.

Mann was honored for his efforts in furthering conservation and hunting and fishing causes and activities in Michigan and his active role as a sportsman in his own right. In addition to his role at Hunters Creek, Mann has been a Michigan Hunter Safety Instructor for 26 years, teaching and graduating more than 2,000 Youth Hunters, a requirement for Michigan youth hunting licensing.

He has sponsored Woods and Water Shed Council fund raisers, Boy Scouts of America annual sporting clay outings, ice fishing derbies for children, fly casting schools and also trained more than 3,000 dogs for field hunting sports. He is also a member of the Michigan Environmental Assurance Organization and a member of the Michigan Woods and Water Shed Council.

The custom plaque that will go to each award recipient, created by Wild Game Dinner organizing committee member Derek Gentile's EEI Global experiential marketing company, features a rendering of the Dodge family crest.

Up and running

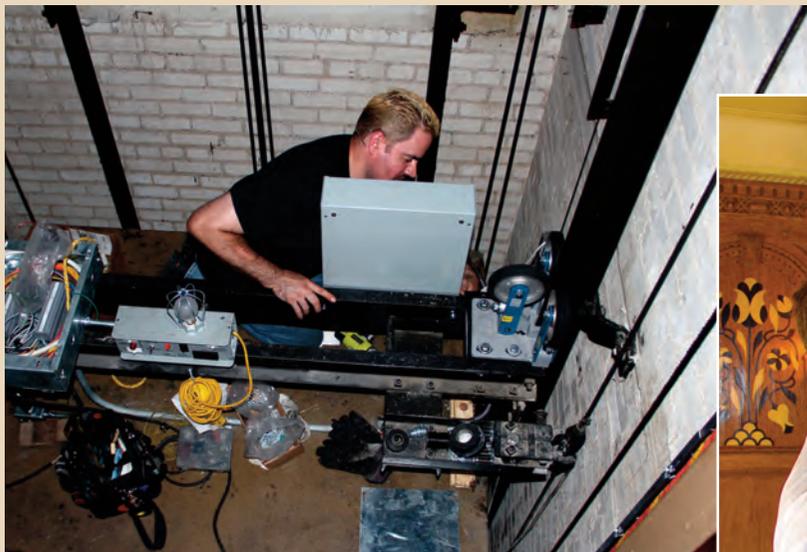
The Hall's 85-year-old Passenger Elevator has been repaired and restored and is "up" and running. The project began in 2012 when bidding, design and ordering of materials got under way.

The elevator was taken off-line nearly three months in 2013 (June-August) as technicians from Detroit Elevator replaced the mechanical components – including the motor, cables, door tracks, locks, rollers and electrical wiring. They also installed a new call panel and switched over the old circuit type to computerized controls. Code improvements included the installation of new fire safety devices.

A wood conservator refurbished the beautiful inlaid paneling of the cab as well as the exterior doors on each of the four floors. Bringing the 85-year-old stain back to its original color proved to be quite challenging.

Small circular lenses, located in the door sill of the cab, that illuminate as the door opens had not worked for years because of deteriorated wiring and the unavailability of the bulbs. Detroit Elevator removed the old fixtures and installed LED lights, restoring an important visual feature of the elevator.

Following on the heels of the restoration of the Passenger Elevator, The Hall geared up for another round of repairs this Fall when the Freight Elevator began its much needed "lift." Completion is expected by Spring 2014.



Above: Detroit Elevator technician Jim Snook; right, Daniel Martin, Martin Painting and Maintenance.



“Nutcracker” at Meadow Brook

For the first time, the Southeastern Michigan Classical Ballet will present the Nutcracker Ballet with historic Meadow Brook Hall as the backdrop.

Join Clara and her guests on their magical journey as they stroll room to room bringing the well-loved ballet to life. This remarkable performance will be staged November 15 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Champagne and chocolate-covered strawberries will be served during intermission. Adult tickets \$75, children \$50. Due to the unique staging of this event, no children under 5 will be permitted. For tickets please contact (734) 362-0880. 



Meadow Brook Hall presents the 42nd annual

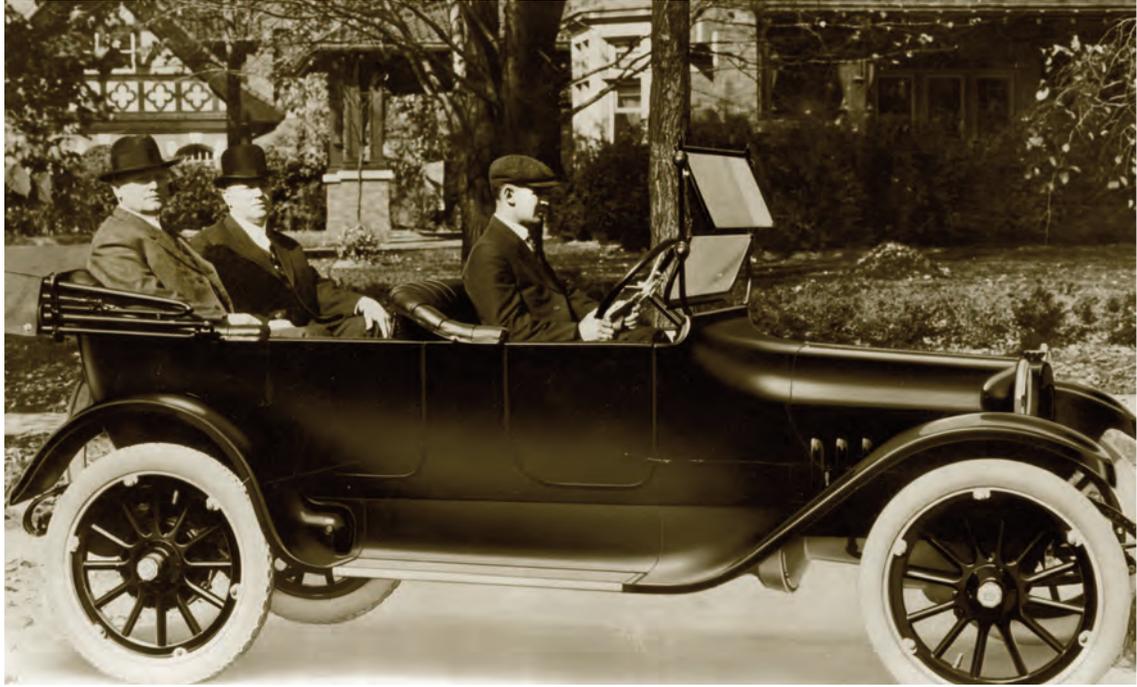
HOLIDAY WALK

November 29-December 23

The golden age of the holidays is aglow at
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Dependable Dodges

Meadow Brook Hall made good mileage this summer as it geared up for its celebration of the centennial of the launch of the Dodge Brothers motor car company in 1914. The building of the National Historic Landmark structure and estate by Matilda Dodge Wilson and her second husband, Alfred Wilson, was made possible to a great degree by her first husband John's financial success with the Dodge Brothers company.

Meadow Brook's plans to better integrate the Dodge Brothers history into the interpretation of the Meadow Brook story include the most instructional three-dimensional artifacts still in existence – the vehicles themselves.

In mid-August, The Hall acquired a 1925 Dodge Depot Hack from a used-car dealer in a Chicago suburb. The 7-passenger (including driver) hack – in its day called a “commercial car” or “station wagon” – was used originally

BY GEOFF UPWARD



to transport travelers between train depots and hotels and other destinations.

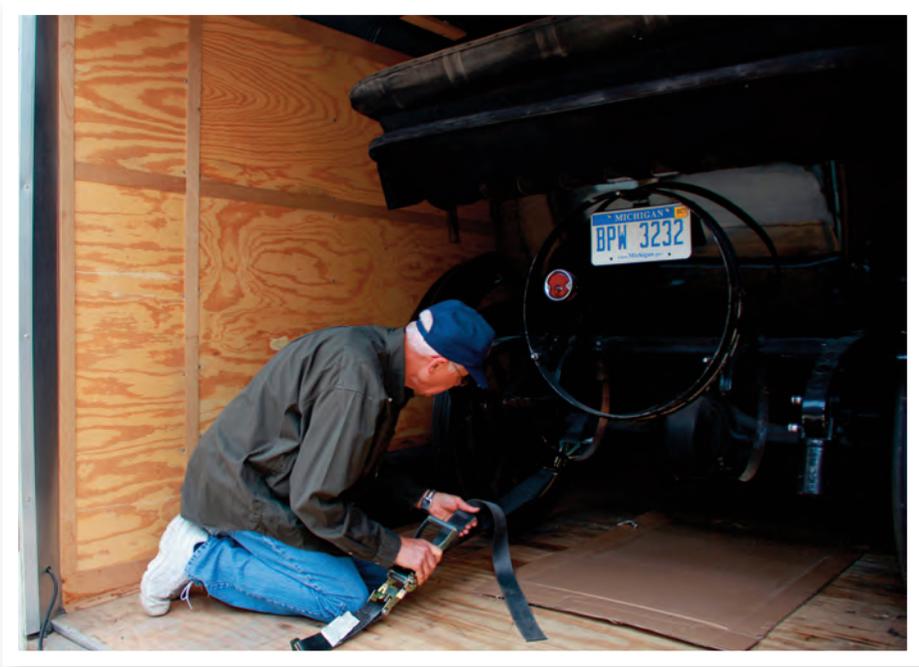
The vehicle had previously been owned by a member of the Dodge Brothers Club, Al Hackett from Hastings, Michigan. Al brought the hack to Meadow Brook for visitor rides as part of The Hall's celebration of its landmark designation in 2012, before sell-

ing it in 2013. Club president Barry Cogan brought the availability of the hack to The Hall's attention in June. Meadow Brook subsequently purchased the vehicle with the support of several friends.

And, in mid-September, Meadow Brook received its most significant donation of an artifact since the actual gift of Meadow Brook Hall and its contents to Oakland University in 1971 – a 1914/15 Dodge Brothers Touring Car. Owned by the late Robert Petz of Grosse Pointe, Michigan, a great-grandson of Horace Dodge, the car was generously donated to Meadow Brook by his widow, Mary Anne Petz.

In 1913, as the brothers began planning to split with Henry Ford and manufacture their own car, they designed their first model on John's Meadow Brook Farms property (which he and Matilda had purchased

Opposite page, top: John (left) and Horace Dodge in their first car, "Old Betsy," on November 14, 1914. Bottom: An early Dodge Brothers radiator emblem. Right: Dodge Brothers Club President Barry Cogan loading the 1914/15 touring car for transport from Grosse Pointe to Meadow Brook. Below: The 1925 depot hack on delivery day in August with a welcoming committee of volunteers, student employees and staff.



as a country retreat in 1908).

The brothers introduced their mid-priced touring car on November 14, 1914. The Petz car was one of the first few hundred built, with a February 1915 production date. The car is virtually identical to their "Old Betsy" prototype, in which the brothers can be seen in their iconic photo in front of John's Boston Boulevard home in

Detroit – just two weeks before Matilda gave birth to their first child, Frances Matilda Dodge.

Meadow Brook Hall is planning to ceremonially introduce the two vehicles to the public at centennial celebration events in 2014, which will include

a major Dodge Brothers exhibit and the Dodge Brothers Club national meet in June. The touring car will be almost exclusively used for display purposes, while the depot hack will be both on exhibit and used in limited fashion for visitor rides. 



THE VIEW FROM DOWNSTAIRS



REMINISCENCES OF BEATRICE WHITAKER, MEADOW BROOK'S HEAD MAID

Illustrations by Tim C. Jones

EARLY DAYS

Decided I needed a change of employment. Went to an unfamiliar agency. The manager was out. Her secretary, a young employee, urged me to consider going to one of Michigan's wealthiest estates and living in the home. I replied I had office work in mind and did not think I would like being in a private home. At this point the manager returned. She also thought I might give it a try. I told her I knew a young lady who might be interested. She replied why not both of us as there would be several openings. My friend, Verna, and

I decided we would give it a try, but not as friends, as I might not wish to stay, and possible she would.

I was interviewed by Mrs. Wilson in her office (*in Detroit's Buhl Building*), having no idea she was previously Mrs. John Dodge. She wondered if I would like the country. That was no problem as I had lived on my family's farm for three years. Was asked if I liked pets. "Yes, especially dogs and horses."

On October 18, 1929, John, the new English butler, Verna and I were picked up separately, by a chauffeur. We acknowledged introductions.

We were driven to the estate and admitted at the greenhouse entrance. From there went down the hill to the "Hall." To me – an American for 3-1/2 generations and never having been abroad more than across the river – the Hall was of storybook splendor of a castle. No less than 14 groups of chimneys, with four or five chimneys in each group constructed of brick and joined together, and each of a different design. Later I learned they were of Jacobean architecture. There are at least twenty-five fireplaces in the Hall.

We were greeted by Mrs. Wilson and she herself showed us to our rooms. She explained that mine would be closer to her suite.

A FEW YEARS LATER

The Hall had been closed for a number of years, but now was to be reopened. We would be alone until the family moved back. There would be guards and dogs on duty, and we could hear them check in on their rounds when the time clock was rung beneath my windows and there were phones



connecting all parts of the estate, also flood lights to be used if an emergency arose, also for guests and entertainment.

We took our meals at the Farm House on the hill, which was occupied by the family. This was the original "Dodge Home" on the farm. When the family

and the remainder of the staff moved into the Hall, we were assigned our duties and adjusted.

There were dinners and Sunday night informal suppers given by Frances and her mother. Holiday dinners and of course all birthdays were observed. They were formal and lavish.

Holiday dinners for the employees were outstanding too: The table set with some of Mrs. Wilson's special linens, dishes and of course a center piece from the greenhouse. Wish I could recall some of the brand names of the different dishes which had been loaned to our dining room for these occasions, but there were so many sets and different kinds, much more elaborate than any of us had had the opportunity to dine from I am sure.

Mary, an employee of many years (in fact for Mrs. Dodge before she became Mrs. Wilson) and Mrs. Wilson herself brought all of this service on a teacart and the family elevator from a huge vault for dishes only. They were always trailed by Ming Toy, a champion Pekingese. I believe Ming was



brought over from England. Upon each occasion something appeared that I had not seen before. There were two more very large vaults for silver service and table decorations. One was used regularly by the butler for everyday service. The second was for special occasions.

It took three men about three days or more to inventory and appraise the table settings for insurance. These men were from one of Detroit's prominent china stores. Many of these items could not be replaced. Among the best service of the flatware was a gold dessert service of spoons and forks. These were a gift by Daniel to his mother. Another outstanding service was filigree silver dessert plates. One of the select tablecloths was valued for at least \$25,000.

MRS. WILSON

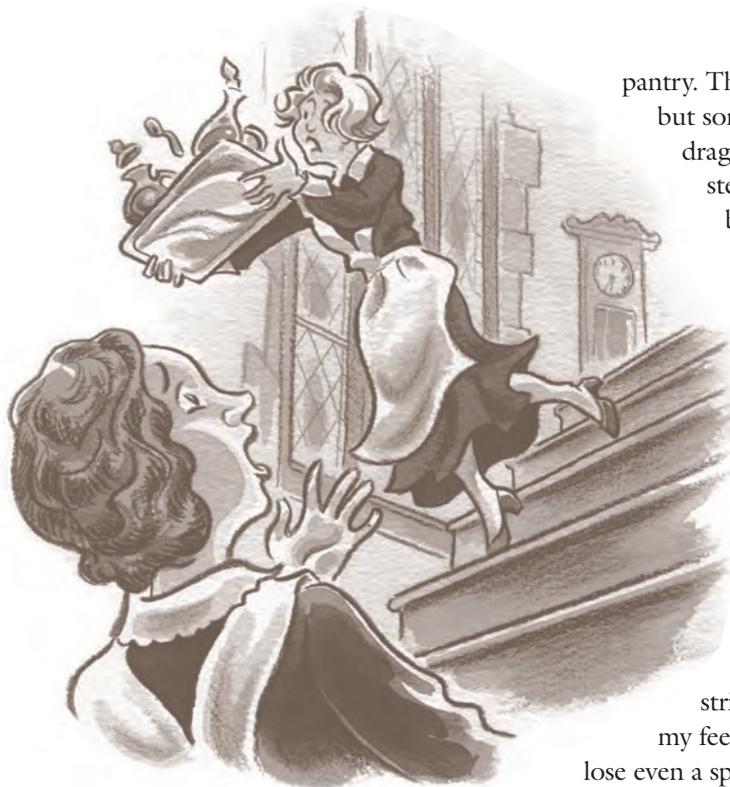
I found Mrs. Wilson to be thoughtful, considerate and kind. But at times one needed to know her to understand her. For instance: If she suddenly discovered something that did not please her or meet with her approval and you happened to be the only one present at the time, a passerby would surely think you were being chastised, when it was not meant for you at all.

Mrs. Wilson was not afraid of work. She was capable of doing anything in the house. One time when we were without a laundress, and in fact short of help throughout the Hall, and the few of us were doing extra work, Mrs. Wilson said: "Beatrice, I am going to do some washing and will do your a.m. uniforms, but you will have to iron them and do your personal laundry."

Another time I saw her scrub the tile floor of the side entrance on her hands and knees. She would not ask the help to do these chores if it was not their regular work.

SUNDAY AT CHURCH

One Sunday that I had off I rode into the city with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson on their way to church. It poured torrents. Mr. Wilson asked my



pantry. The idea was fine, but somehow my heel dragged on the top step and I lost my balance. A friend, Rae, was on the landing on her way up. On this tray for two were heavy articles of silver service and cut glass. Can't explain, but I went down five of those wide strips landing on my feet and did not

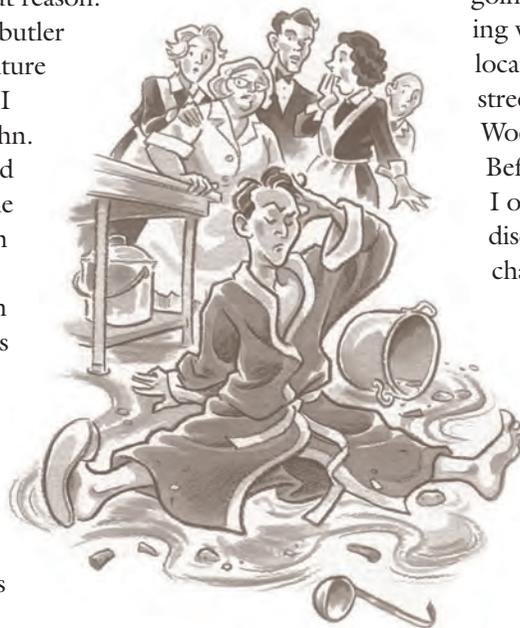
lose even a spoon. I visualized the clatter I would make and people running to see me with my head down and heels up. Rae was as shocked as I.

We sat down on the steps, not knowing if we should laugh or cry. Guess there were wings on my feet.

STEW

One afternoon when the household was completely staffed, the cook and assistant had prepared the dinner. The main dish being a stew. A number of the employees were in the kitchen, without reason.

The English butler was small of stature and very prim. I will call him John. All were amazed to see him come into the kitchen not dressed for duty but clad in the 2nd butler's bathrobe, many sizes too large. He gave the impression of being irritable which was



unusual. He went to the house phone and thought he had called the American Embassy. He asked them to bring a ship up into the front lawn. What we did not know was that he had been drinking. He certainly was not himself.

At that point, the stew which was in a very hot container was removed from the stove and placed on the top of a stainless steel counter. John came to the container of stew and, complaining about the food, attempted to pick up the pan which was much too hot to handle. He dropped it back on the table and gave it a shove.

Our dinner was quickly scattered across the floor. John turned and shuffled through the stew. That was not good enough. His feet went up and the other end down, then he slid across the kitchen on his own in the stew. He brushed his hair back, leaving a variety of carrots, potatoes etc. We were so amazed and it all happened so fast that it did not appear funny at the time. "Not John."

The next morning he was so embarrassed that he left early without saying "Goodbye." He would have been pardoned I am sure as he was an excellent butler and well liked.

STRANDED

It happened that I was the only passenger to Detroit. Instead of

going to the Fisher Building where the offices were located, I usually took the street car at the loop on Woodward at Six Mile. Before my destination, I opened my purse to discover no money. In changing purses I had neglected to transfer any money. I voiced my surprise.

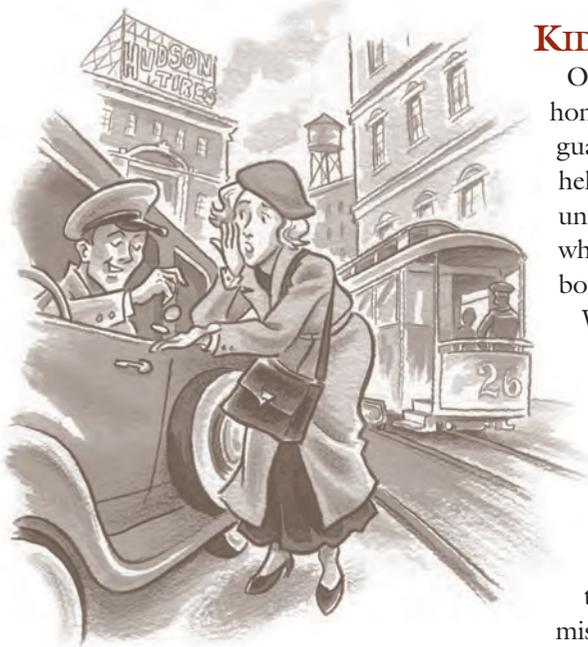
(I'll call the chauffeur "John"). John, realizing my predicament and my day ruined, asked

destination, thinking it might be on their way and they could give me a lift. It so happened their plans were in the same direction. It was suggested and accepted that I attend church with them and they would take me on my way.

When we entered, I thought they might wish to sit with someone they had in mind. So I started to take a different seat. Mrs. Wilson said, "Oh! Beatrice, you sit with us." It happened, I sat between them. Can you guess what the sermon was? The rich man will find it harder to enter the kingdom of Heaven than the camel through the eye of a needle. You know, I was most uncomfortable. But guess what? My next pay I received a nice raise.

MY DOWNFALL

Preparations were made for a surprise birthday party for Mr. Wilson. Some of the guests were secretly ushered into the English Guest Room temporarily and served tea. After the guests went downstairs to join the party and knowing how busy the butler would be, I thought I would help by taking the service down to the



how much I needed.

Thinking aloud (I was going to look for a dress, not sure I would buy. . . then to my cousin's to visit an aunt from California), I outlined my plans. He handed me a bill, asking if that would do. It was just a \$100 bill. I guess he was thinking I was Mrs. Wilson!

I exclaimed "Oh, I don't need that much and could not accept it. He assured me it was O.K. Not having a check with me, I said I would give him an I.O.U. He would not hear if it. I explained if anything happened to me no one would believe him. But he insisted.

I got out of the car to realize I could not get on a street car with only a one-hundred dollar bill. I didn't even have a dime to call my cousin. There were no police in the area so I had to ask John for change. He gave me fifty cents more. That alone would have handled the situation.

My Aunt thought the story was most amusing.



KIDNAP THREAT

One evening a friend drove me home to Meadow Brook Hall. The guard at the greenhouse entrance held us up and could not admit us until he checked with the Hall, which was most unusual as he knew both of us. Finally it was O.K.

When I arrived at the side entrance there were about five or seven cars parked which was a surprise. Mr. Wilson admitted me though it was usually Mrs. Wilson. When the cars drove away the guests were all men. I did wonder what the meeting was, but soon dismissed my thoughts.

The following morning I heard there had been a threat of kidnapping. "Judy?" I asked. "No, Mrs. Wilson." How the threat came I do not know. Years later, I heard Mrs. Wilson was quite uneasy about the kidnapping.

CHARLIE MCCARTHY

I had been given a Charlie McCarthy, actual size and copy. No one knew I had him. One by one, he was set up in another girl's bed, including the governess. The different reactions were amusing as we watched.

Dick and Barbara were quite young at that time. They heard about the joke and wanted to play the trick on someone else. But all employees had been included. So that left only Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. I felt I could not be so audacious. But Barbie and Dick were so eager, I decided to loan them Charlie and let them play the trick if they wished to do it that way. They decided it would be Mr. Wilson.

The next morning the three had their breakfast together. When Mr. Wilson entered the breakfast room, he said in a gruff voice, "Who was the strange character I found in my bed last night?" Dick said "Beatrice put him there." Nothing more was said, but I felt chagrined.

A day or so later I heard Mr. Wilson telling a guest what Barbara and Dick had done with Charlie. So I decided it was O.K.

MEMOIRS

When I first joined forces at Meadow Brook Hall I was lonely. To occupy my idle time I started a biography on the Hall. It was meant to be personal. I thought it was hidden under my rug.

When the houseman, Burt, was general cleaning, he realized there was something under the rug and investigated. He found my secret. He told me he found it. It was perfectly o.k. as there was really nothing of importance or purpose. I don't know but I have been inclined to think he told Mrs. Wilson, which too was all right.

Quite some time later Mrs. Wilson suggested I write memoirs of Meadow Brook Hall. Now, I know I should have eagerly grasped the opportunity. But somehow I thought there would be only descriptions, and without a purpose. How was I to know so much would happen? **MB**



Excerpted from the memoirs of Beatrice Whitaker.



Bon Voyage!

BY KIM ZELINSKI

On April 23, 1913, exactly one year and eleven days after the ill-fated *Titanic* sank, Matilda and John Dodge, along with his son John Duval Dodge and Matilda's sister Amelia Rausch, boarded the *R.M.S. Mauretania*, a 32,000-ton cruise ship, aptly described as the "monarch of the sea," for a two-month vacation abroad. And, on that very day a telegram delivered to John aboard the ship from his brother Horace Dodge, recited his bon voyage wish: "Have one on me . . . cheer up . . . and come back safe."

Whether the message implied that John was not "cheery" about his impending journey or whether it expressed Horace's genuine concern for John's safety is uncertain. But the telegram, sent by a beloved brother, is a treasured keepsake and reminder of one of our most cherished pastimes – family travels.

Displayed throughout the various rooms at Meadow Brook are hundreds of souvenirs of every type, size and monetary value. Whether purchased from a fancy boutique in Paris or an obscure market on the streets of Madagascar, they represent the artistic handiwork of distant cultures explored by the Dodge and Wilson families on their worldly travels.

A Motoring Tour Abroad: 1913

Vacations in the early 20th Century, particularly trips abroad, were primarily reserved for the elite, and the Dodges were relative newcomers to that social class. Their journey across the Atlantic in 1913 was undoubtedly planned with an itinerary agreeable to both the Dodge men and the Rausch sisters with destinations that included both of their ancestral homelands – England and Germany. From the ship's landing in Fishguard, Wales, they traveled by motoring car through England, Ireland, Scotland and Germany.

Also accompanying them on the journey were three American flags, a present from Horace and his wife Anna Dodge with the instruction to “keep one at the hotel and two for your auto so when you look upon their wave, you would think of us at home.”

Numerous souvenirs were purchased during their tour, including a snuff box from Ireland, a musical stein and pocket knife from the Schloss Hotel in Heidelberg and an interesting letter opener that coincidentally bears a remarkable resemblance to John Dodge.



Clockwise from left: German steins, 1913; Amelia Rausch, John Dodge, Matilda Dodge in Ireland, 1913; German letter openers c.1913; German castle postcard, 1913.



The Extended Stay in Europe: 1922-1923

The 1913 trip was the first of many sails aboard luxury cruise ships and vacations abroad that Matilda Dodge Wilson would experience in her lifetime. In 1922, the widowed Matilda Dodge and her children, Frances, Danny and Anna Margaret, journeyed to Europe for an extended stay primarily on the French Riviera. The family was joined by Matilda's mother and sister, Margaret and Amelia Rausch, a friend, Doris Haynes, and a staff of two maids, a nurse and French governess.

Sailing from New York to Cherbourg, France the family boarded the *Aquitania*, the "aristocrat of the sea" named for its lavish interior design that included eight luxury suites. The suites were themed with original masters paintings, including Rembrandt, Reynolds, Gainsborough and Matilda's choice of suite – the Van Dyke.

Their 1922 travel itinerary featured sight-seeing in Paris and around the countryside, boutique shopping and an automobile trip to WWI battlefields, where Matilda snapped a photo of a French 75m howitzer, the recoil mechanism for which was manufactured by the Dodge Brothers.

For the remaining stay, the family rented a villa in Nice, France, the jumping off point for excursions to Italy, Switzerland and Germany. In Switzerland, Matilda hosted a dinner dance for Madame Clara Guthrie d'Arcis, President of the World Union of Women for International Concord. In Italy the family enjoyed the sights of Venice, including a gondola ride through its canals and in Bavaria they attended The Passion Play and stayed in the chalet of actor and pottery craftsman, Anton Lang.

Matilda collected numerous mementoes from her travels to those countries such as couture from Paris, Lalique glass, Sevres porcelain, Venetian glass and perhaps her most cherished souvenir, a pair of silk banners commemorating their placing first in the Battelle le Fleur, Nice's annual carnival and competition of glamorous floats.



Top to bottom: Italian gondola c.1922; Danny, Frances and Matilda, Italy, 1922; winning float with Anna Margaret Dodge, friend Doris Haynes, Matilda, Frances and Danny, Nice, France, 1923.



Golden Age of the Steamship: 1925-1930

Two days following Matilda and Alfred Wilson's wedding, the couple on July 1, 1925, boarded the *Aquitania* for a four-week honeymoon in Europe. When interviewed about their honeymoon plans, Alfred would tell the newspaper that "Europe will all be new to me, although Mrs. Dodge has covered much of it." He further commented that their travel arrangements would be smooth and that they would enjoy the trip with "as little attention from the public as possible." By all accounts, it was just that.

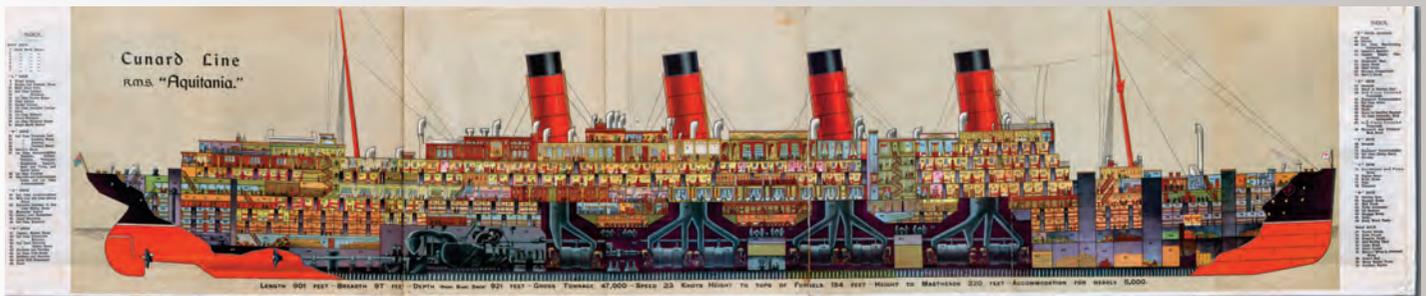
They toured southern France and Venice, seeking the towns and districts that Matilda had not seen. On their return from Venice, they took in Paris, London and a brief stop in the Alps, where they visited Matilda's friend, Madame Clara Guthrie d' Arcis, who gave them a wedding gift – a Swiss music box from which a small bird emerges, twirling and flapping his wings to the musical notes.

Over the next few years, the family toured Europe several more times. On a 1927 trip, Alfred, Matilda, Frances and Danny were accompanied by their architect William Kapp of the Detroit firm Smith, Hinchman & Grylls.

As they traversed the countryside of England, Kapp gathered design plans for the interiors of Meadow Brook Hall per the Wilsons' instructions.



Top: Alfred and Matilda aboard the "Aquitania" cruise ship on honeymoon.
 Left: Swiss music box, c.1925;
 Bottom: profile of "Aquitania," c.1925.



Frances Hunts a Sheik: 1934

A pageant of the Occident and Orient... a masterpiece of cruises...by far the most exotic of the family travels: all are accurate descriptions of the six-month, Southern Hemisphere trip that Frances Dodge treated Matilda and Alfred Wilson to in 1934.

With 15 suitcases and 7 trunks in tow, the threesome departed on January 20th from New York with only Danny and a family friend at the dock to bid them bon voyage. They boarded the *SS Conte Di Savoia*, sailing to Gibraltar, Spain, the first of 58 cities they would visit while covering a total of 33,048 miles.

The first few days on land featured a chauffeured automobile tour of Spain with sightseeing to cathedrals, Moorish Palaces and one of the country's largest bull rings. From Spain, they journeyed through North Africa before heading to the Holy Land. In Bethlehem, Matilda purchased *Bibles* and several intricately carved shells depicting scenes of the Last Supper. Frances bought a unique bracelet and ring ensemble set with diamonds, believed to be hundreds of years old.

In Cairo, Egypt, the family visited the Pyramids and tombs, some of which were viewed from the backs of camels and donkeys. Frances, in particular, took a liking to donkeys, purchasing four of them that were shipped back to Meadow Brook Farms. The long-eared small animals were appropriately named Cleopatra, Queen Nefertiti, King Tut and Ramses.

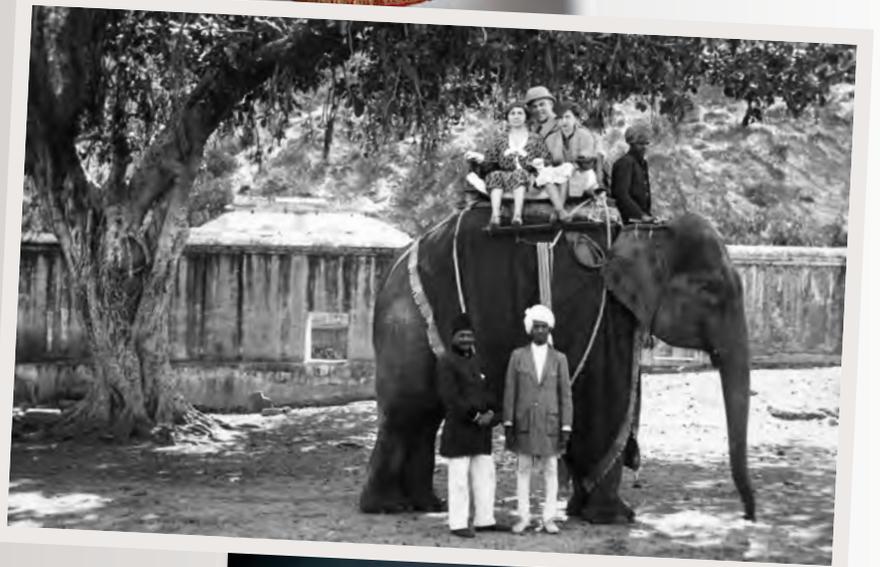
From Egypt, their next destination was Bombay, India. Matilda wrote of the city as "the gateway by where we enter the fantastic orient." Matilda also noted the country's many excellent shops and was fascinated with their ivories, brass, embroideries and jewels. Outside of Jaipur, they were transported to the ruins of Amber on an elephant and in Agra they were amused by a snake charmer who sat about the hotel waiting for a few cents.

Of the Taj Mahal, Matilda wrote of its beauty "Its detail is beyond description." One of their last city visits in India was Darjeeling, where they drank their morning coffee watching the sunrise over Mr. Everest in nearby Nepal.

The last leg of the Southern Hemisphere tour was South Africa. On the island of Ceylon they purchased precious stones and two unique chests no doubt to ship their abundance of souvenirs (including a present for Danny, a Lions pelt) back home. Frances also shipped a live zebra she named Tiger Rag and a turtle called Pete, which lived at Meadow Brook for years.



*Top: Frances, Matilda and Alfred in Egypt, 1934.
Left: Moroccan robe, c.1934;
below: Matilda, Alfred and Frances in India, 1934;
ivory carved elephant, c.1934.*



The Sunset Years of Travel: 1948-1967



While luxury cruise ships were the family's primary mode of transportation abroad in the earlier years, the last few travel destinations were reached by airplane. In 1948, Matilda and Alfred Wilson flew to Acapulco, Mexico. In a photo of the trip, Alfred is shown standing proudly next to a marlin, obviously his catch of the day and a souvenir that did not make it back to Meadow Brook.

Matilda Dodge Wilson's last destination was Belgium, a trip intended for business more than pleasure. Not satisfied with the recent performance of her prized Belgian horses, Matilda traveled with her trainer, Ray Clark, to Brussels to purchase new horses. There she suffered a heart attack and died in a Brussels hospital on September 19, 1967. She spent her last days enjoying two of her most cherished pastimes – travel and horses.

From the inaugural voyage in 1913 through the years of exotic expeditions, to Matilda's final trip in 1967, the Dodge and Wilson families visited some of the most interesting places in the world. Yet, they frequently said that there really was "no place like home." That sentiment was understandable when their home was their own castle and within those castle walls

sat hundreds of tokens, treasures and trinkets that served as daily reminders of their journeys. **MB**



Top to bottom: Alfred, Acapulco Mexico, 1947; Matilda and Alfred, Mexico, 1947; Belgian horse market, Belgium, 1967; Mexican vase, c.1947.



Have a Seat

BY MADELYN RZADKOWOLSKI

There is an item in every home that is simultaneously disregarded and stunningly significant. It has played a role in political and social history and every era of design has one as its iconic symbol. From the Windsor chair to the club chair, from the throne to the corduroy La-Z-Boy recliner of your grandpa's living room, chairs have a distinct purpose of comfort, ceremony and function. Chairs are expected to be in every waiting room, dining area, theatre and form of transportation, but little thought is given to their presence and to the hundreds of years of design and manufacture that led to it.

Chairs took our ancestors off the ground and into modern society, and in fact, the height and size of a chair was a direct representation of the amount of power a person had. During the medieval period, only the very wealthy could afford chairs (instead of stools or benches), and only members of the monarchy or the high clergy sat in them. A person's wealth was further reflected by the height of the chair back, its ornamentation, whether it had arms, and its position in the room. Even today, the most important person in a meeting or at a dinner party sits at the head of the table, and no one sits in the presence of Queen Elizabeth II without special permission.

There are 197 original chairs on exhibit at Meadow Brook Hall, each one specifically chosen, each one with an important history.

This hand-carved chair is an example of what the aristocracy would have sat on in England during the Renaissance. With its spiral posts topped with acanthus leaves, the soft velvet seat, and the carved faces, it has everything you would find in a 400-year-old chair. This chair, however, is only 85 years old. Matilda and Alfred Wilson learned about architectural and interior design styles on their trips abroad, and afterwards they chose furniture companies that would create new pieces that looked old. These pieces added to the mystique of the Tudor Revival home while being durable enough to accommodate a growing family.

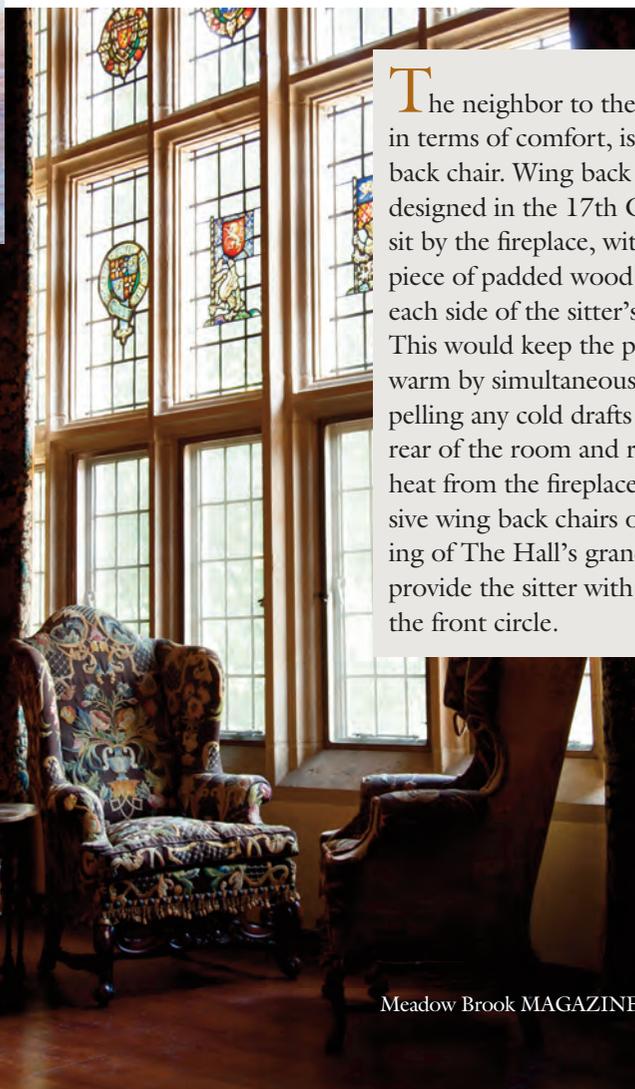




By the early Victorian era, the Industrial Revolution had made chairs more affordable, and most families could purchase a dining set with enough chairs for everyone to sit down to dinner. After 1900, the furniture business was largely decentralized and furniture companies emerged to offer the discerning customer options. The Victorians bought the same models as their neighbors, but the 1920s family was able to choose from a wide variety of both modern and historically inspired styles. The lacquered dining chairs in the Breakfast Room were designed by Arden Studios of New York, which also designed the marble flooring and painted walls. The resulting theme is the only non-Western room in the house; it is Chinoiserie, which is a Western interpretation of a Chinese or Japanese style.



Another chair with Chinese origins is the carved rosewood dragon chair that was given to John Dodge around 1910. The fact that it is a chair, when most of the Chinese people were sitting on cushions or stools, as well as the highly stylized design, suggests it was made for the Western market. It was in the foyer of John and Matilda's home on Boston Boulevard in Detroit and later in the Great Hall of Meadow Brook. It is easy to see why Matilda would want this decorative and unique chair greeting her guests.



The neighbor to the club chair, in terms of comfort, is the wing back chair. Wing back chairs were designed in the 17th Century to sit by the fireplace, with an extra piece of padded wood built to each side of the sitter's head. This would keep the person warm by simultaneously dissipating any cold drafts from the rear of the room and retaining heat from the fireplace. The massive wing back chairs on the landing of The Hall's grand staircase provide the sitter with a view of the front circle.

While Matilda and Alfred had much of their furniture designed by Arden Studios and Hampton Shops, also of New York, they also brought furniture and decorative arts from their previous homes. This combination of design with family heirlooms helped make Meadow Brook a home. The pair of club chairs in The Hall's drawing room were first used by Horace and John Dodge at John's Boston Boulevard home to relax in during their lunch hour away from the factory. The club chair was an invention for the 19th-Century gentleman, which was really one of the first times the comfort of a chair was considered. These are the most important chairs at Meadow Brook, and one can imagine the incredibly important Dodge brothers sitting in these chairs, designing a company and car that would rock the automotive world.



There are large chairs at Meadow Brook, but there are also small ones, and even miniature ones. The three pictured are in the style of French baroque, but are miniature for different reasons. The center one is from Matilda's dressing room and the other two are child-sized replicas from the French and Venetian guest rooms. Matilda could sit at her dressing table to apply perfume or jewelry. The Wilsons bought child-sized replicas from Century Furniture Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, that were made to match the colors and styles of the guest bedrooms. Century had a brilliant marketing ploy in which they partnered with museums to replicate their antique objects; they went so far as to over-stain chair rails to suggest dirt and to mix light threads in with dark ones to mimic wear patterns on the seats. Because Century Furniture Company made everything custom, these children's chairs would have been quite expensive, which makes them an even more important part of Meadow Brook's history – a hint at the love of the Wilsons for their children.

This Savonarola-styled chair was purchased by the Wilsons in 1934 in Morocco. These x-shaped folding chairs were popular in medieval Italy, but were first created centuries before that. This Moroccan example is inset with rare woods, ebony and ivory. The back and seat are delicately tooled and dyed pieces of leather.

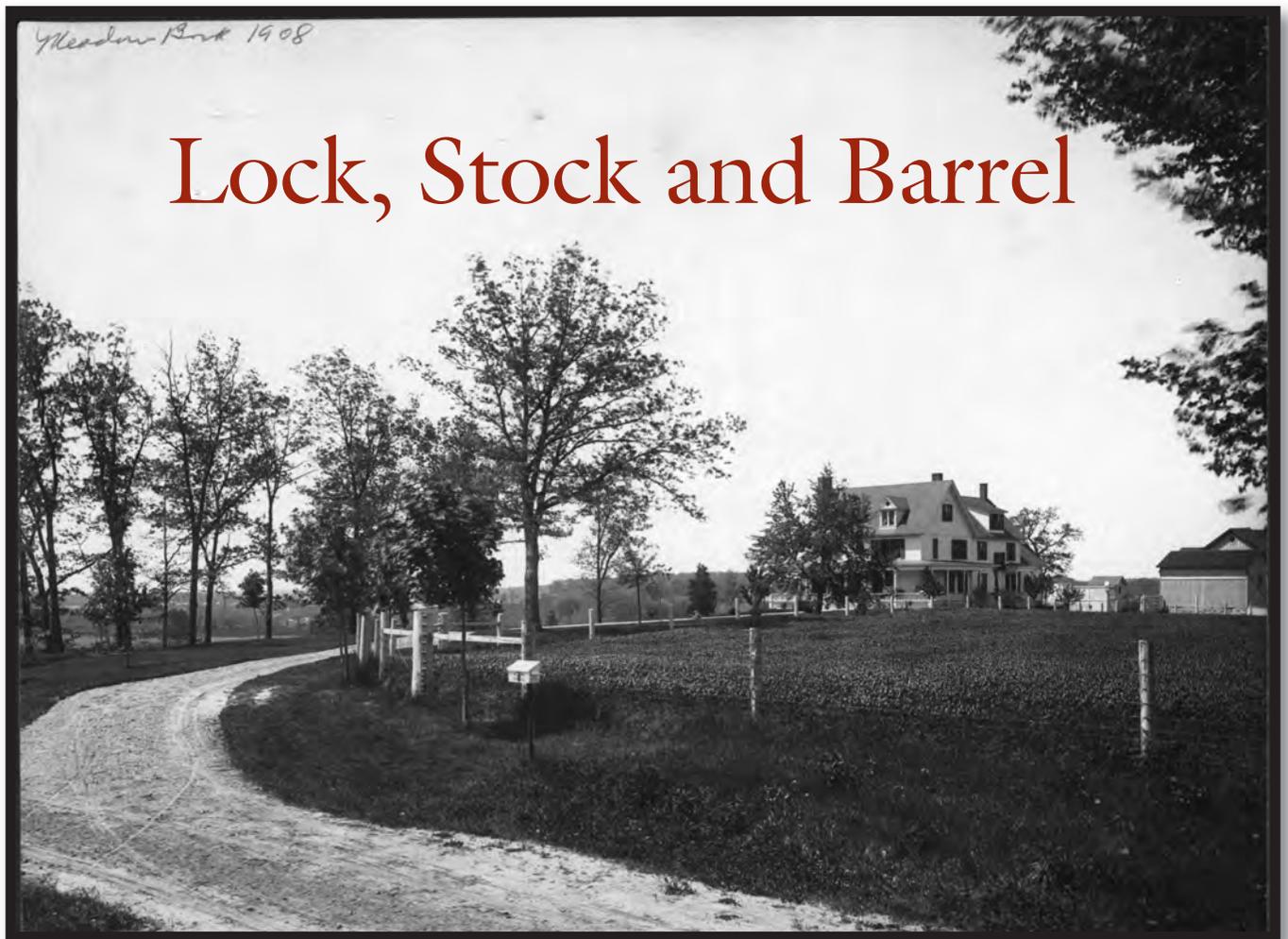


In 1929, Matilda and Alfred Wilson ordered 14 dining room chairs from Hampton Shops in New York City. Like Arden Studios and Century Furniture Company, Hampton Shops specialized in designing furniture for period interiors, so the chairs perfectly fit the neoclassical style of the room. The style descends from one of the more interesting periods in furniture history. By the 18th Century, furniture makers had perfected the process of designing chairs to be lightweight and delicate. They were intended to be carried and rearranged often. When a wealthy family was hosting a party, the chairs could be relegated to the perimeter of the room, leaving plenty of room for dancing. Servants would stand in the room, ready to move a chair into the room, closer to the fire, or back onto the wall.

By the 19th Century in England, however, the relationship between downstairs and upstairs life had changed. With the Industrial Revolution, working in a country home was no longer the best job a person could get, and there were a couple landmark court cases where a former servant told secrets overheard about the noble family he served. Anyone who follows the 1910s television drama *Downton Abbey* can surmise the types of conversations the aristocracy didn't want their staff to overhear. And as a result, interior design changed. Separate wings were built for staff so that they no longer lived in the same area as the family. Furniture became larger, and permanently placed, so that no servant had to sit in a room (listening to gossip) in case a chair needed to be moved. Though the Wilsons bought these chairs for aesthetic reasons, rather than as a symbol of social history, they are wonderful examples of how life in a manor home had changed. **MB**



Madelyn Rzadkowolski is Meadow Brook Hall's curator.



Lock, Stock and Barrel

BY MADELYN RZADKOWOLSKI

Legend has it . . .

It was a sunny day when John Dodge and his wife of one year Matilda took a Sunday drive out to Avon Township, escaping the noise and bustle of Detroit. They saw a lovely white farmhouse on top of a hill; it was surrounded by rolling farmland, stands of tall oaks, and a brook teeming with trout. Matilda visualized the idyllic 320-acre farm as a sanctuary for her three stepchildren, and for any other children who came along. This could be their country retreat, a place to farm, to fish, and to play. A school house was less than half a mile away (at the SE corner of what is now University and Adams). John and Matilda knew they must own this farm.

John Dodge walked up to the farmhouse, knocked on the door, and told the owner he would buy his property. Not recognizing the man, and not wanting to sell, James Higgins spit out a ridiculously high price. John Dodge calmly drew out his checkbook, and wrote a check for the requested \$50,000.

Or, that's how the story goes.

The rest of the story ...

The legends of any family are marked with unreliable memories and good-spirited exaggeration. The legends of Meadow Brook are no exception, especially as they are heightened with the words that add exoticism and excitement to any story – words like “Africa,” “Henry Ford,” and “a lock, stock, and barrel purchase.” But it was with some trepidation that I approached the story of the start of Meadow Brook Farms. It was relayed to Meadow Brook decades ago by farm staff and the bold act fits John Dodge’s character. I never expected to find any information that would confirm or discredit this bit of 1908 folklore.

I was in the Meadow Brook Archives conducting research on another topic when I stumbled across an invoice that listed the Higgins farm at \$40,000, not \$50,000 as the story goes. It wasn’t much, but it encouraged me to dig deeper.

Detroit insurance agent James L. Higgins bought a 320-acre farm near Rochester from Jay A. Hubbell in 1896. Higgins built new barns, remodeled old ones, and expanded the 1880 farmhouse into 14 beautiful rooms. By 1908, he was 65 years old and his wife of two years had died. (He had remarried late in life, perhaps wishing for a companion, perhaps wishing for children.) The property he had turned into a first-class stock farm may have lost its appeal. Higgins lived his remaining 30 years back in Detroit, which supports the theory he was either ready or willing to sell the farm.

Documents in the archives show that John Dodge purchased the farm in two

MEADOW BROOK FARMS			
April 8th, 1926.			
✓ J. L. HIGGINS FARM	320 acres -		
April 20, 1908		\$ 1,000.00	
April 23, 1908		39,000.00	\$ 40,000.00

transactions, a down payment of \$1,000 on April 20, 1908 and the balance of \$39,000 on April 23. So he assuredly didn’t purchase the farm “lock, stock, and barrel” on that Sunday drive.

Some other things give room for pause. The Model T was released in 1908 with a top speed of 40-45 mph. Roads to Rochester were bad (John Dodge donated money to the Oakland County Road Commission for improvements), so it seemed unlikely the Dodges would drive several hours to purchase a farm without first asking a real estate agent for some options. A document in Meadow Brook’s archives suggests that John Dodge dealt with Max Brook, a Detroit real estate agent developer who owned the Arden Park-East Boston neighborhood in Detroit which housed Matilda and John’s first home.

The last of the discoveries revealed that John Dodge did not name the property “Meadow Brook Farms.”

By 1897, the 320-acre farm with newly remodeled farmhouse was already known as such in the community. *Beautiful Rochester: A Sketch of a Lively Town* was published in 1897 and describes the “completely overhauled” estate with a trout-filled Meadow Brook running through it, and “some of the best breeds of horses, cattle and sheep.” The commentary on the Higgins farm also notes that he owned a ranch in California and properties in Detroit and Minneapolis.

The legend of Meadow Brook Farms remains a compelling one, and snippets of it could be true. John and Matilda did seem to fall in love with the property at first sight. And they may have decided to buy it on the first day they saw it. The Dodges treated other acquisitions similarly, offering the owners large settlements for their properties. But the big white farmhouse on top of the hill would remain the country home the family loved, and that part, at least, will never change. **MB**



Opposite page: The farm as it looked after the Dodge purchase. Top: A section of a property inventory. Left: John Dodge (left) and a friend enjoying an afternoon on the porch.





In September, the painting was removed from the wall in Meadow Brook's Living Room, carefully packed and driven by F.A.S.T. (Fine Arts Security Transport of Detroit) to the DIA conservation labs.

A picture is worth...

Meadow Brook Hall recently loaned a 17th-Century painting in its collection by Spanish artist Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-82), "Saint John the Baptist and Lamb," to the Detroit Institute of Arts. The painting, believed to be an extremely important work internationally, was recently highlighted in a catalog published by The Wallace Collection in London, England.

The DIA will conserve both the painting and frame in their extensive labs, after which it will be on exhibit in their permanent galleries for five years with a Meadow Brook credit line on the label copy.

Up to 15 Oakland University students in Art & Art History and related fields will be allowed to view the conservation process at several key stages, study the painting and learn about other conservation techniques. The entire project will be videotaped for Meadow Brook, OU and DIA websites and educational use.

The inspiration of Dr. Salvador Salort-Pons, the DIA's curator of European painting and executive director of Collection Strategies and Information, the collaboration will include the development of programming around the painting and conservation, including lectures at the DIA and Meadow Brook, exhibit previews and likely K-12 and adult presentations and tours of both properties.

Weddings at The Great Estate

Theresa Finck Photography

TIMELESS ♦ ELEGANT ♦ PERFECT

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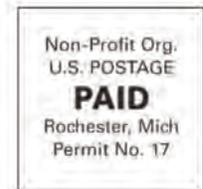
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Multi-Tool/\$11.95/\$10.75 members
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Museum Store

Be sure to also stop by the Museum Store in The Hall to check out dozens of other Meadow Brook-inspired items, vintage holiday gifts and private-label foods and wines.



Visit the Museum Store, order online at www.meadowbrookhall.org/shop or call (248) 364-6206.