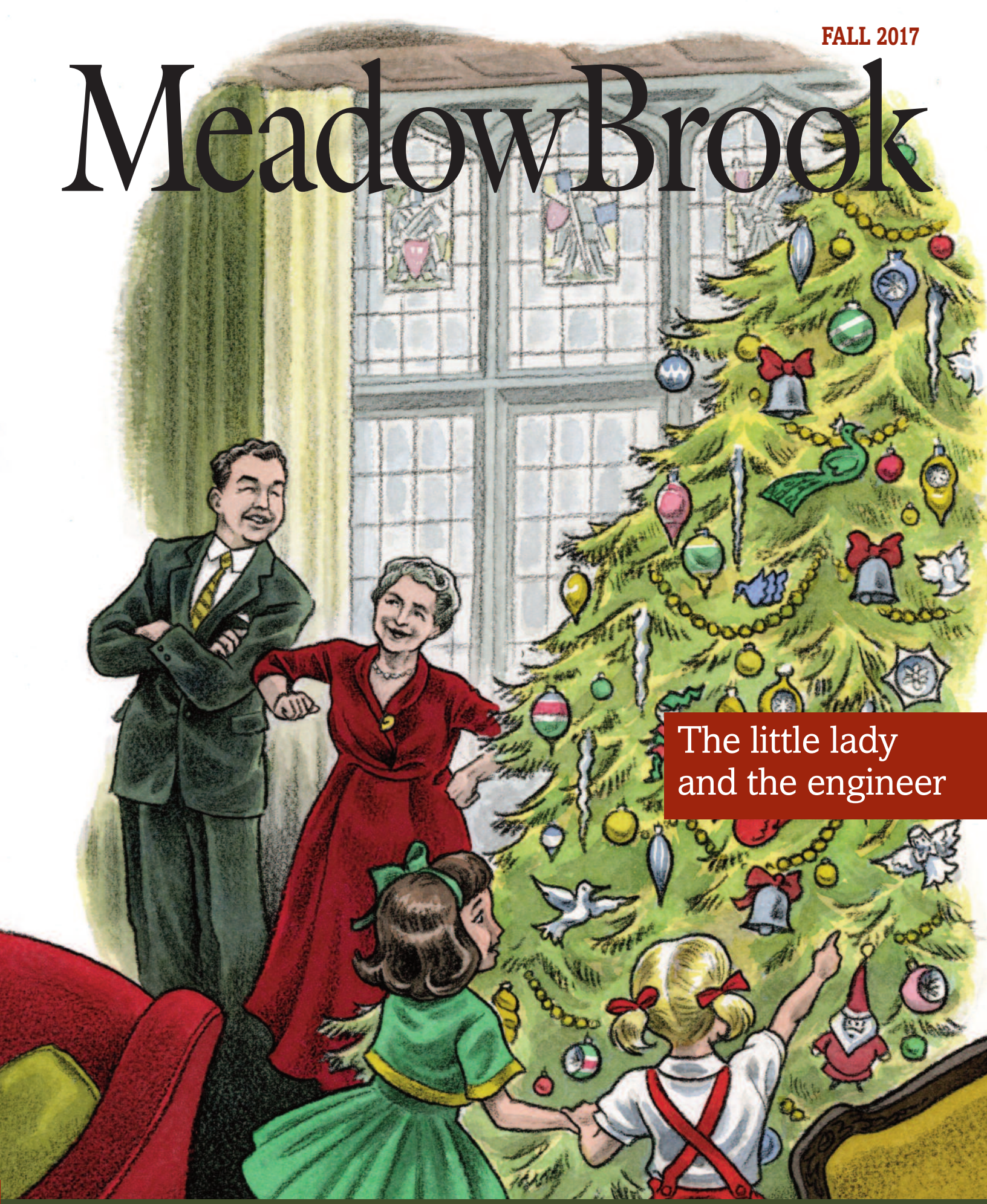
FALL 2017

MeadowBrook



The little lady and the engineer

INSIDE: Homeward Bound | Adopt a Dodge! | Seasides, Sunsets & the Southwest

SHOW YOUR OU PRIDE

And Help OU Credit Union Support Oakland University Programs

When you use your OU Credit Union Platinum Plus Visa Credit Card, you'll earn unlimited 1% cash back on every single purchase, every single time. Whether you're at the grocery store, out for a night on the town, or filling up at the pump, you'll earn cash back while supporting the university you love.

1% CASH BACK

Open your Platinum Plus Visa and start earning CASH BACK today!

oucreditunion.org • 248-364-4708 • 800-766-6828

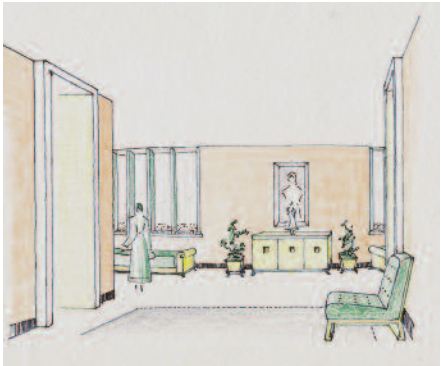
OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
Credit Union

NCUA

Members will earn 1% cash back on all purchases. Cash back is not earned on tax payments, any unauthorized charges or transactions, cash advances, convenience checks, balance transfers, or fees of any kind. Visit oucreditunion.org/rewards for full terms and conditions. Federally insured by NCUA.

Contents

8



20

26

2 | Editor's Column
Practice makes . . .

4 | Around the Estate
Young dogs and old tricks
Box me in!
Volunteer spotlight
Riding on the Edge arrives!
Wheels were turning
All things floral
Adopt-an-Artifact news

32 | Last Page
Hidden letter

BC | Museum Store
Holiday Shopping

8 | Adopt a Dodge!
Be a driving force at Meadow Brook by adopting one of our six available vintage vehicles. You'll realize some great benefits as well as contribute to a worthy cause.

10 | Homeward bound
A variety of fascinating objects that once belonged to the Dodge and Wilson families find their way back to The Hall.

15 | The little lady and the engineer
A Meadow Brook Magazine conversation with the first employee of Michigan State University-Oakland, and the 18th engineer of Meadow Brook Hall, reveals little-known stories of everyday life on the estate…and his abiding respect for "Mrs. Wilson."

20 | Seasides, sunsets and the southwest
Beginning in 1949, Matilda and Alfred Wilson acquired two vacation properties, one on the East Coast and one in Arizona, and built a retirement home on their Meadow Brook estate . . . their golden years were anything but sedentary.

26 | It's a wrap!
The matching preservation grant program set up by the Matilda R. Wilson Fund in 2008 produced some stunning and sorely needed results.

On the Cover:

Original illustration by Tim C. Jones. Readers may recognize Tim's work, which was featured in the Fall 2013 Meadow Brook Magazine and in *Duke and Dolly's Adventure: A Meadow Brook Farms Coloring Book*, available in The Hall's Museum Store or online at www.meadowbrookhall.org/shop or by calling (248) 364-6206.

Meadow Brook
MAGAZINE

Editor & Publisher
Geoffrey C. Upward

Associate Editor
Kimberly Zelinski

Art Direction
Lynn Metzker
Graphic Design

Photography
Rick Smith

Contributing Writer
Elizabeth Eberlein

Meadow Brook Magazine
is published twice a year for friends of Meadow Brook Hall. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. ISSN 2161-2358

Editorial Offices
are located at Meadow Brook Hall
350 Estate Drive
Rochester, MI 48309-4401

How to Reach Us
Email: zelinski@oakland.edu
Phone: 248-364-6204
Fax: 248-364-6201

Address Changes
Email: stobersk@oakland.edu
Mail: Shannon O'Berski
Meadow Brook Hall
350 Estate Drive
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.

Practice makes…well…better

As we seek to better interpret and operate this National Historic Landmark, creative new ideas may never offer perfect solutions. But, they can often offer significant improvements.

With that goal in mind, Meadow Brook Estate's management staff recently embarked on grant-funded best-practices visits to other historic properties to learn about initiatives that might have applications back home. We found a good number that can.

This spring, four of us visited Stan Hywet Hall in Akron, Ohio, and several sites in the Wilmington, Delaware, and Philadelphia area: Winterthur, Nemours Mansion, Longwood Gardens, Cairnwood and its sister property, Glencairn.

In each case, we met with the properties' leadership teams – CEOs, vice presidents and directors – to ask specific operational questions across business, curatorial, marketing, membership, fund raising and facility management disciplines. Discussions focused on their historic property operations and ancillary business activities.

In addition, we took as many public tours as time permitted to learn firsthand what visitors to those sites experience.

What we learned was no less than hugely informative. Examples we think have promise for Meadow Brook include: learning facilities geared to families, such as a children's enchanted forest; captivating grounds and gardens tram tours; the latest in public touring approaches; new trends in museum store merchandising; and innovative community programming with large upside potential.

A walk-in cottage of natural materials in Winterthur's Enchanted Forest.

Ideas that we brought back will inform our strategic business planning as we look to both steward the care of our estate's buildings and offer more valuable experiences and learning opportunities to visitors and the community alike.

And, we learned something else equally as valuable. After comparing operations with some of the country's best, we returned feeling we have taken excellent care of the historic resources in our charge, especially given our lack of a large endowment.

Finally, and possibly most rewarding, we had the occasion this summer and fall to host reciprocal visits by two other historic properties, so they could learn from us. Our readers will be happy to know that there are many others in our profession who feel Meadow Brook is an incredible facility; one which, when coupled with our prudent use of limited resources, can serve as an outstanding example in its own right of the lessons history can teach.

Meadow Brook Hall's 46th annual
Holiday Walk
Landmark in Lights
November 24-December 23
Tours Daily from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. (last admittance is at 4 p.m.)
Special Evening Hours: Tours available until 9 p.m. (last admittance is at 8 p.m.)
Monday, December 11 and Monday, December 18-Saturday, December 23
For more information and ticket prices visit meadowbrookhall.org

Teaching young dogs old tricks

Meadow Brook presented its fifth annual Dodge Sportsman Award to Craig Novotney at the 10th annual Wild Game Dinner & Auction in September.

The Dodge Sportsman Award honors a man, woman or organization who, in the spirit of entrepreneurial American sportsmen John, Horace and Dan 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.

Craig Novotney has bred and trained dogs and guided hunts since he was a teenager.

He started working professionally in 1977 at Hunter's Creek Club in Lapeer, Michigan, where he spent his days afield guiding and training dogs. He hired on at The Huntsman in nearby Dryden in 1990 as the club manager. With much hard work, creativity and patience, Craig helped The Huntsman to become the premiere club that it is today.

As current owner Mary Beth Tebben sees it, "Craig's work ethic and instincts are spot on – from the kennel program to guiding and training to planting the farm, running and maintaining the heavy equipment, up-keeping the fields and outbuildings and managing special projects."

Dodge Sportsman Award winner, Craig Novotney, flanked by Meadow Brook Executive Director Geoff Upward (left) and Wild Game Dinner presenting sponsor Northern Trust's President, Dan Pienta.

"He has an easy way about him and a natural ability to breed and train companion gun dogs," she said. "Between The Huntsman and his own farm, he is up at the crack of dawn and does not stop until the sun sets."

Speaking of dogs, early on Craig became involved in the shoot-to-retrieve circuit, through which he met championship trainer Don Shaw, who sparked his interest in Labrador Retrievers. Craig got his first Lab puppy from Don, named Nicole (Cole), who at 14 months won the U.S. Open Derby under Craig's guidance.

Cole became the baseline of his breeding program. Those who have bought puppies from Craig possess some of the best retriever genes money can buy. In Craig's words, "A dog is a family member year round and a hunting companion for three months."

Thanks to Mary Beth Tebben of The Huntsman newsletter and friend Mark Calvert for their contributions to this article.

Please, box me in!

Stoney Creek Questers #203 has supported the care and treatment of Meadow Brook's collection items for many years, by donations of time and money. In 2017, they were one of only twenty Questers groups in Michigan to receive an annual grant of $800 to support community preservation projects. They then fundraised for an additional $400 and gave the money to Meadow Brook to purchase new archival boxes and tissue to reorganize the hundreds of linens (including tablecloths, napkins, runners, bed sheets, doilies and bedspreads) in the Cedar Closet. The group donated more than 160 hours to inventory and properly store the linens into 62 boxes.

Archival boxes "before" (left) and "after" (right).

Riding on the Edge arrives!

The long-anticipated story of Frances Dodge's journey through the country's equine show rings and racetracks, which included establishing arguably the finest training and breeding facility in the country, has reached store shelves . . . and it is well worth the wait.

Originally scheduled for release in June 2017, the tragic, yet triumphant story of a brave and compassionate woman has been carefully woven into a new publication from the Meadow Brook Press by longtime MEADOW BROOK MAGAZINE contributor Karel Bond Lucander.

The 88-page *Riding on the Edge: Frances Dodge and Dodge Stables,* featuring dozens of original photographs, is being sold through Meadow Brook's Museum Store and online for $11.95 plus tax. Meadow Brook members receive a 10% discount off the retail price. (The pre-publication offer promoted in the Spring MEADOW BROOK MAGAZINE will be honored for those who placed orders by July 31, 2017.)

The book will make a thoughtful and much-treasured holiday gift for that special someone. Visit the Museum Store, order online at www.meadowbrookhall.org/shop or call (248) 364-6206.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

2016 was another great year for Meadow Brook Hall and our volunteers! At this year's annual Volunteer Appreciation and Awards Dinner in August, we recognized two of our own for their achievements and milestones.

This year, we honored Gwen Kirby, who has been a dedicated and invaluable part of the Meadow Brook Hall family for 45 years. Gwen regularly comes in the evenings and on weekends to volunteer during weddings, and can always be counted on to volunteer during The Hall's annual Holiday Walk. She is also an active member of her community and volunteers at many other organizations, and we consider ourselves very lucky that she is a dedicated and valued member of the Meadow Brook Hall family. In order to achieve a milestone such as this, you have to really love and have a passion for where you are and what you are doing, and Gwen most certainly has both.

Each year, the Barbara Thorpe Memorial Award recognizes an individual, or couple, who habitually goes above and beyond the call of duty in service to Meadow Brook Hall. This year's recipient, Sandy Niks, has been a part of the Meadow Brook family for many years as a member of the Garden Club. She was chosen as the recipient of this year's award because of her work in developing the top of the hill at Danny's Cabin into a Monarch Way Station and established of the Michigan Butterfly Network walking path. In addition to her work on the Way Station, she was the driving force behind the newly formed "MB Naturalists" group which began in the winter of 2017 with the mission of caring for the woodland areas of The Hall. Sandy is a wonderful ambassador for both the Garden Club and Meadow Brook Hall, and we are so pleased to have been able to present this award to her this year. – *Liz Eberlein*

Gwen Kirby

Sandy Niks

Wheels were turning

Meadow Brook has long been searching for an Evans & Dodge bicycle, the product of a partnership John and Horace Dodge formed in 1895 with Frederick Evans, the manager at their jobs at Canadian Typography Company in Windsor. The bicycles, created with a four-point ball bearing invented by Horace Dodge, are rare because they were only built between 1895 and 1899.

The Evans and Dodge partnership bore fruit once again when Meadow Brook teamed up with the progeny of Fred Evans to continue the hunt. Cameron J. Evans, great-grandson of Fred Evans, his wife Susan Jezewski Evans and their two children are longtime friends and supporters of Meadow Brook. When two bicycles came up for sale this summer, they purchased them and loaned them to Meadow Brook for a five-year period.

The Evans & Dodge (E&D) Ladies Bicycle, c. 1896, and National Cycle Bicycle, c. 1899, are now on display at Meadow Brook's Dodge Brothers exhibit. The National Cycle was built with some of the E&D parts and at the same factory that John Dodge set up for their company in Hamilton, Ontario, soon after the company was incorporated into "National Cycle." This 1899 bicycle not only represents the changes made to the E&D bicycles, but also the development of the company.

Designed for women, the E&D bicycle includes a special piece fitted over the rear wheel called a skirt guard. Appropriately named, the skirt guard prevents long skirts, dresses or other materials from getting caught in the wheel. Evans & Dodge offered free lessons for those who purchased their bikes, including lessons in private.

The National Cycle bicycle was made by the National Cycle & Automobile Company in Hamilton, Ontario. To compete with the Canadian market, National Cycle formed in 1899 under the supervision of Frederick Evans of Evans & Dodge as the Canadian subsidiary of the American Bicycle Company. John Dodge oversaw the set-up of the company's Hamilton, Ontario factory, which produced both American Bicycle brands and the Evans & Dodge Bicycle. In 1901, the company was acquired by its biggest competitor: Canada Cycle & Motor Company (CCM).

The modern-day Evans family with the c. 1896 Evans & Dodge bicycle they loaned to Meadow Brook. Ancestor Fred Evans can be seen in the background photo, just above the right handlebar grip.

All things floral celebrated

A new community event, Meadow Brook in Bloom, was held this past June as a benefit for the Meadow Brook Garden Club. The week-long event attracted hundreds of garden and floral enthusiasts.

The Hall presented self-guided tours and exhibits that showcased many of its collection items with floral motifs – including pottery, costumes, textiles and tablescapes of fine china. House exhibits were intermixed with floral arrangements provided by Emerald City Designs.

Left to right: Garden Clubbers Betty Lovelady, Ruthann Bajorek, Carol Herbst

The Meadow Brook Garden Club hosted tours of its 16 gardens. Melinda Myers, nationally recognized garden expert, addressed landscape makeovers in a workshop, and Proven Winners professionals Stacy Hirvela and John Gaydos offered tips on Hydrangea care and next year's "hot" plants.

Other highlights included a Children's Garden Scavenger Hunt, an Afternoon in the Garden tea for kids and moms (and a few dads and grandparents!) and a luncheon presentation by world-renowned Hitomi Gilliam, who gave a lively demonstration of cutting-edge floral designs during "The Art of the Bloom" garden gala.

Adopt-An-Artifact

The Next Chapter

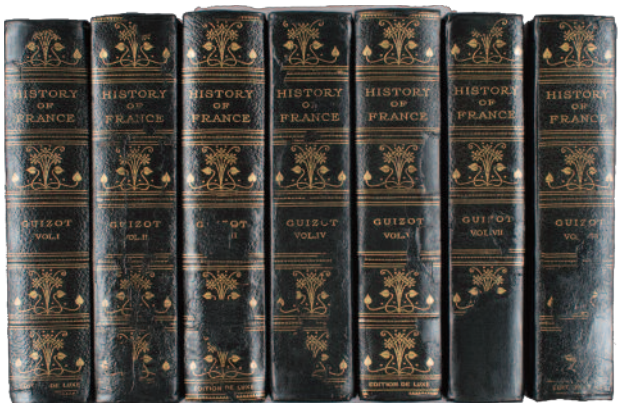
In July, donors to the Adopt-an-Artifact program gathered for a reception to celebrate the newly restored Library, a project undertaken to return the room to its 1929 appearance. This program allows individuals or groups to "adopt" the costs of conservation or restoration of collection items in need.

Since the last reporting on the program in the Library *(see Meadow Brook magazine, Fall 2016)*, generous donations continued to come in and the final total was more than $20,000! Despite the incredible success of the adoptions in 2015-2016, which restored the Breakfast Room and Sun Porch, the response in 2017 was almost three times that of the inaugural year. The gifts allowed Meadow Brook Hall to tackle other much-needed projects in the room, like re-weaving the historic rug and replicating the velvet drapes.

Hand-woven upholstery fabric was purchased from France; John Dodge's portrait and frame were conserved and its light retrofitted with low-wattage LED bulbs; and Meadow Brook Hall's curatorial team worked in the room alongside conservation experts to repair, clean and identify textiles, furniture and books. Interpretive panels in the library show "before" photos and explain the reasoning – and work – behind the conservation.

The focal point of the Library – its books – received the most attention. 24 were sent to the University of Michigan where a paper conservator painstakingly repaired and protected hinges, spines, headcaps and bindings as well as losses to leather bindings. An intern, whose wages were paid through "adoption," created a comprehensive inventory of all of the Wilson's books, including author, publishing information, location on the shelves, bookmarks and any other inscriptions or marginalia. While checking for marginalia, the intern found a letter to John Dodge and a photo negative hidden in the pages *(see related story on pg. 32)*. The books were also rearranged by subject matter, which is how the Wilson family had them.

Before and after: 24 books were conserved, including seven volumes of the History of France.



Though the curatorial team is now focused on restoring Knole Cottage and the Dodge Brothers vehicles, donations of any denomination are always welcome for ongoing conservation and restoration efforts. Any donation marked "Adopt-an-Artifact" will go toward restoring the Meadow Brook estate to its 1929 appearance, and an adoption certificate and photographs will be sent to the donor. Contact Curator Madelyn Rzadkowolski for more information at rzadkowo@oakland.edu or (248) 364-6253. MB

Be a driving force at Meadow Brook Hall!

Introducing the Adopt-a-Dodge program

Meadow Brook Hall seeks the help of our friends to preserve the historic automobiles in our collection. Your tax-deductible adoption will help us make necessary repairs, provide preventative maintenance and pay insurance for the historic vehicles in our care, ensuring they are here to inspire, educate and "spark" the imaginations of this and future generations.

How it Works: You will adopt the vehicle for a period of one year, beginning November 14, 2017 through November 13, 2018 (November 14 is the anniversary of the day John and Horace Dodge revealed their first car in 1914).

Cost: $750 per Dodge per year of adoption

Benefits:

- Recognition of your adoption displayed by the car and on the Meadow Brook website for one year.
- An invitation to a special event to meet the volunteer team that maintains the cars and to receive a driving lesson (one eligible driver per car adoption).
- Opportunity for a photo shoot for you and family members and/or friends with the car.
- Information and updates on how your car was cared for during the year.

Up for Adoption

From left to right

1919 Graham Brothers Truck

This is a Dodge Brothers chassis with a Graham Brothers truck kit built into it. Being famously dependable and suited to handle tough terrain, Dodge Bros. cars were a popular choice for being modified into trucks, especially after being used by the U.S. Army during WWI. In 1921, new Dodge Brothers president Frederick Haynes collaborated with Graham Brothers to make Dodge Brothers trucks.
On loan from the Dodge Brothers Club.
ADOPTED by Michael and Sheri Lavens.

1927 Dodge Brothers Depot Hack

This superior example of a Depot Hack shows a rare 1927 Cantrell body, restored in 1985. This hack, with its leather seats and screens (for winter travel) would have been used at a sophisticated resort or hotel in the 1920s and '30s.
Gift of the Van Zandt family.

1947 Dodge Truck

The Dodge brand has consistently been recognized for its dependability and trucks are the vehicle most often associated with the name. Built in the heyday of Dodge trucks, this 1947 pickup spent most of its life working on a farm in the state of Washington. The custom Meadow Brook Farms logo applied on both doors was designed to look like the original.
Purchased by a gift from the McMath family trust.

1915 Dodge Brothers Touring Car

This February 1915 touring car is one of the first built by Dodge Brothers. It is identical to "Old Betsy," the car John and Horace Dodge famously drove out of their factory, Dodge Main, on November 14, 1914.
Gift of the family of Robert J. Petz, Jr., great-grandson of Horace Dodge.
ADOPTED by Mr. Greydon Hyde and Mrs. Christine Burnard.

1925 Dodge Brothers Depot Hack

Depot Hackneys were designed to transport travelers and luggage from train stations to area hotels. Several companies made the wooden bodies, which would be installed on the chassis of different brands of cars.
ADOPTED by Jeanne Gartner in memory of her grandfather, Lewis Reed, who founded Reed Brothers Dodge in Rockville, Maryland in 1915.

A Perfect Holiday Gift!
If you would like to adopt a Dodge as a gift for someone, we can help you prepare the materials that will make the gift special. Contact us!

1964 Dodge Truck

"Few engines can truly claim the status of legend, but the Slant Six, used in Dodge vehicles from 1960 to 1987, is one of them." – Dodge promotional literature.

This D200 Dodge pickup with a Slant Six engine was restored by the donor and is used at Meadow Brook to haul everything from landscaping materials to the holiday gifts collected for the Salvation Army toy drop *(below)*. Painted in iconic Desert Turquoise and camper-ready, this truck is equally at home at work or on a road trip down Route 66.
Gift of Scott Kunselman.

Interested? Contact Madelyn Rzadkowolski, Director of Curatorial Services, by phone at 248-364-6253; by email at rzadkowo@oakland.edu; or by U.S. Mail at 350 Estate Drive, Rochester, MI 48309.

Homeward Bound

By Madelyn Rzadkowolski

Matilda Wilson's Underwood typewriter, a gift from Richard Welsh (see page 13), is back in place on the spring-loaded pull-out typewriter stand hidden in her study's wall paneling.

Objects that once belonged to the Dodge and Wilson families sometimes find their way back home to The Hall. Their stories offer a unique insight into Meadow Brook's past, reveal history that has long been forgotten and demonstrate the shifting focus of museum storytelling.

After Matilda Dodge Wilson's death in 1967, her executor staged two major auctions of some of the finest and most valuable objects in her estate, relieving high insurance costs and security concerns that univerity administrators had before taking on management of Meadow Brook Hall. Once Oakland University took control in 1971, administrators staged a third sale of items deemed insignificant. Some of these items – like cameras, a manicurist's table and tools – are highly desired today by museum staff to help with the research and interpretation of life for the family and staff on the estate. We are happy to report that the "ordinary" artifacts on the following pages are now back home.

More information on these sales and purchased items are always welcome. Meadow Brook's acquisitions policy (a guide for determining which objects make sense to accept as donations or purchases) covers the estate buildings, historical contents and other items related to the Dodge and Wilson families.

Meadow Brook Farms dresser set

When Whitney Hough Luckett's father accepted a position as a faculty member at the newly minted Oakland University in 1963, he had no idea his family's future would become intertwined with the school's past. The family purchased several pieces at the third university sale that are now valued heirlooms. The ivory and celluloid dresser set *(right)*, embossed with "Meadow Brook Farms" and also purchased at the sale, was a wedding gift to Whitney (both she and her brother were married at Meadow Brook) from one of her father's colleagues. It's possible this fine dresser set was used by Matilda's mother, who helped manage the farm.

Though detailed inventories of the objects for sale from The Hall were retained, that was not the case for other historic buildings on the estate, including the farmhouse and farm buildings, the clubhouse, Dan's cabin and Sunset Terrace. This donation is one of the first indications that items from those properties were also sold.

Gift of Whitney and Marc Luckett

Sterling child's dish set

This sterling silver child's dish set was a first Mother's Day gift for Frances Dodge from Alfred Wilson's mother Eliza. Engraved on the bottom is Frances' daughter's name, "Judith Frances Johnson." The exciting bonus of this gift came with the packaging: old suitcases. The two suitcases, monogrammed for "M.R.W. of Rochester, Mich.," are the first original family suitcases to return to Meadow Brook since it became a museum. The family's trunks and suitcases – which had accompanied them by car, boat, train and plane on their many travels – were among the things that were sold as they were not deemed necessary for Meadow Brook's early function as a university conference center.

Gift of Judy Lavendar, daughter of Frances Dodge

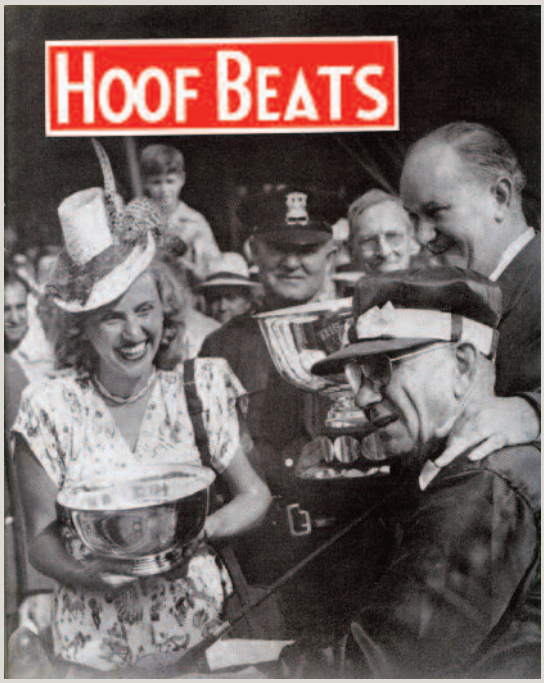
Sailing book owned by Horace Dodge

In 1893, *Around the World in the Yacht Sunbeam, Our Home on the Ocean for Eleven Months* was given to Horace Dodge by Mr. & Mrs. Woodard. Their relationship is unknown, but Horace signed the inside cover and noted the receipt of the gift.

This bestselling autobiography by Mrs. Brassey told of the travels and experiences she, her husband and their five children had while sailing around the world on their luxury yacht. Although Horace already had an interest in boating, this book may have influenced the eight cruisers and yachts he would build from 1899 to 1920.

Purchased through a gift from Brenda Fuelle, Meadow Brook volunteer, for her mother Norma

Top: Horace Dodge, brother John and friends gather on Horace's beloved yacht, the Nokomis, 1917.



1947 Hambletonian Stakes trophy

This owner's trophy was presented to Frances and Jimmy Johnson in 1947 when their horse *Hoot Mon* won the legendary Hambletonian Stakes harness race. Dodge Stables trainer Sep Palin and Frances had long been trying to win this race, and *Hoot Mon's* record-setting time of 2:00 for the mile made victory even sweeter. Dodge Stables would win the Hambletonian again in 1958 and 1963.

Gift of Judy Lavendar, daughter of Frances Dodge

From left: Frances holding the donated trophy, Sep Palin, and Jimmy Johnson. Published in Hoof Beats *magazine, August, 1947.*

Collection purchased at a Meadow Brook estate sale

This incredible collection found its way home after a late night phone call, some unseemly begging and five people's love for history and preservation.

When his mother volunteered to work at the estate sale at Meadow Brook in 1974, 18-year old Richard Welsh jumped at the chance to help. He thought it important to note about the sales items: "People should not get the idea they were selling off Tiffany lamps or the Wilsons' finest silver. The selection included cases of monogrammed cribbage pads, odd numbers of monogrammed napkins, chipped crystal, worn bed linens, stained table cloths…." He and his mother purchased some things from the sale, including: a 1926 travel typewriter believed to have gone to England with Matilda and Alfred when they were looking at homes for inspiration before designing Meadow Brook Hall; suitcases belonging to Matilda, Alfred and Barbara Wilson; embroidered hand towels, damask table linens, handkerchiefs and sheets embroidered "Meadow Brook Farms;" a leather and brass pencil sharpener; a bridge card; a wire waste basket, and more.

Richard volunteered at Meadow Brook Hall for a couple more years, as a host at the first Holiday Walk and a tuxedoed doorman at the first Gatsby Weekend *(right)*.

In 1995, Richard constructed a full size replica of the Drayton Plains (Michigan) Depot building, built in 1908 and demolished in 1965. Later a volunteer at the Waterford Township Historic Village, Richard moved the train depot there in 2001 and outfitted its lobby, office and loading dock with antiques, including the typewriter and suitcases he'd purchased from Meadow Brook.

Meadow Brook volunteer Steven Lindsey noticed the suitcase inscriptions in the Waterford exhibit, setting into motion the curator's frenetic phone call to Waterford Historical Society President Sally Strait (who responded wonderfully), a subsequent visit to the Village and a generous donation of all of the objects from Richard. The care Richard took of these objects and the preservation of their provenance for 43 years are invaluable. As tides have changed and house museum visitors become more interested in the everyday artifacts that were used by family and staff, the return of these objects and their stories helps museums provide a more well-rounded interpretation of daily life.

Gift of Richard Welsh

From top right: Meadow Brook Curator Madelyn Rzadkowolski and Waterford (Michigan) Historical Society President Sally Strait with the donations. Middle: Richard Welsh at The Hall's "Gatsby Weekend" fundraiser, 1974. Bottom: The Drayton Plains Depot today.

Ruby Watson's photos show the spotless hall of individual kennels and Pekingese sunning in the backyard.

Photo negatives taken by the kennel manager

Meadow Brook's larger-than-life kennel manager, G. Ruby Watson, was an amateur photographer who captured many important moments like Frances' wedding, Matilda and Alfred's grandchildren playing around the estate, farm and house staff at work and play and, of course, her beloved dogs. These negatives include rare interior shots of the kennel.

Shared by the Vanderworp family

Photographs of Meadow Brook Hall, 1960-1972

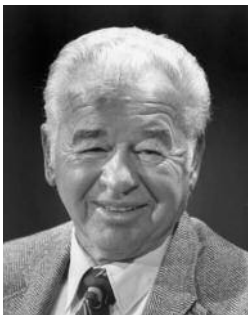
Surprisingly, there are not many photos of the interiors of Meadow Brook when the family lived there. That changed in 2013, when two different collections of color photographs were shared by early Oakland University graduates who took wonderful photos at the events Matilda Wilson hosted for the students. Tom McCallister, Charter Class '63, shared his photos during the 50th anniversary of the Charter Class graduation, and Dr. Larry Carey '64 shared his (and his mentee Stephen Wahoski's) after a chance meeting with volunteer Gwen Kirby *(see pg. 5 for story on Gwen)*. These views, coupled with other visual resources, made the Adopt-an-Artifact program possible by revealing historic room settings.

A few of Tom McAllister's shots from Oakland's Charter Class prom in 1963 of the Living Room, Library and Fountain Room. MB

The little lady and the engineer

Sixty years ago, in the Fall of 1957, George Karas became the first employee of the yet-to-be-built Michigan State University-Oakland and the 18th engineer to work at Meadow Brook Hall. With a background in civil engineering and construction, George was a steady influence on the development of Oakland University's campus for 30 years, and for 10 of those years an invaluable employee of, and friend to, Matilda Wilson.

George then...



... and George today

MEADOW BROOK MAGAZINE interviewed George in August on a number of topics, but we primarily focused on his relationship with Matilda. What we were struck by, and what we hope comes through in the question-and-answer content that follows, was his gracious and endearing personality ... and his still obvious respect for, and loyalty toward, "Mrs. Wilson." – *ed.*

MBM: How did you end up at Michigan State University-Oakland or MSU-O?

GK: I was working at Michigan State University in their physical plant and I received a call in the Fall of 1957 asking if my wife and I could attend a meeting at the Kellogg Center with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Vice President Woody Varner and President John Hannah. When you're being interviewed by one the richest ladies in the world you are a bit anxious …… but she was wonderful. One thing I remember from the conversation was Mr. Wilson's disappointment that I wasn't a Presbyterian.

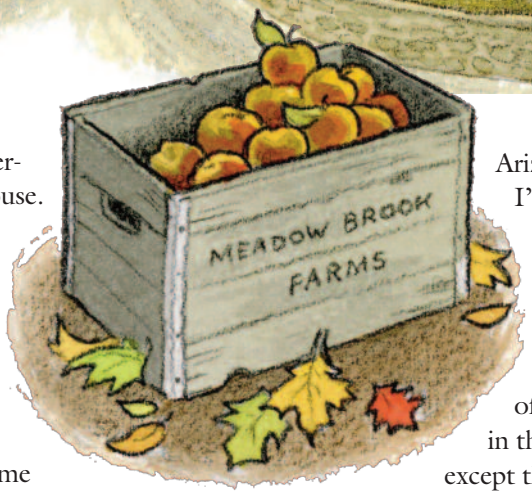
MBM: Did you always refer to them as Mr. or Mrs. Wilson?

GK: Yes, always Mrs. Wilson and Mr. Wilson.

MBH: What was your first impression of Meadow Brook?

GK: After the interview, my wife Trudy and I drove down to become acquainted with the area. We stopped at the estate's entrance on Adams Road and Mr. Siewert, the head gardener, was selling apples. We bought a dozen apples and then drove around a bit. The estate was very beautiful and well-maintained. I remember thinking, "Gee, this is nice country."

Some weeks later, I got a call to meet with Mrs. Wilson so she could show me Meadow Brook Hall. I arrived early and from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. we covered literally every room in the house. We broke for lunch at noon and I will never forget what was served – four massive lamb chops. Well, I was so nervous, I ate only one. Later, Mrs. Wilson confided in me that she thought I didn't like them, but I explained that I was just too nervous to eat.



At the end of day, to my surprise, she handed me the master key to The Hall and told me, "George, I'm leaving, we are going to our place in Scottsdale, Arizona, but I'll be back." This master key gave me access to most all of the rooms in the building except the vaults.

A couple of months later, she returned and asked me how everything went and I was happy to report that there were no problems. Mrs. Wilson was pleased with the news and then asked me for the master key back *[chuckles]*.

MBM: What were your responsibilities…was there a job description?

GK: In the beginning, my charge was very simple – to make Mrs. Wilson happy and relieve her of any engineering problems. She needed someone to learn how to operate Meadow Brook Hall along with other buildings on the estate, including the farmhouse, horse stables, farm buildings and 16 residences. I brought an employee from MSU with me and he handled the day-to-day maintenance tasks. Eventually, as the construction of the University progressed, I assumed the engineering responsibilities of the campus including utilities, roads, water and sewer and so forth.

MBM: When you moved to Meadow Brook, it was still a working farm and estate… some 1,500 acres. What was it like?

GK: It was nice. I lived in one of the tenant houses on Adams Road for the first five years, rent-free. My neighbors were the Wilsons' farm manager, chauffeur, head of security and Mr. Siewert.

We entered the estate – logged-in and logged-out – at the guard shack near the Greenhouse. Mr. Siewert ran the Greenhouse, growing flowers for the estate. There was an outdoor pool and an indoor pool. It wasn't unusual on a nice sunny day to find Mrs. Wilson sitting in a chair doing some reading, next to the trickling fountain at the outdoor pool. She enjoyed this area very, very much.

The most prominent buildings on the estate were the Dodge and Wilson Stables. There were Hackney and Shetland ponies roaming the pastures. Across the road from the stables was Danny's Cabin. This was a facility that Mrs. Wilson's son, Danny Dodge, had used as a workshop. After he passed away [1938] the building was locked for many years, and I was reportedly

the first person that was allowed to go into the building.

The Wilsons operated a poultry farm at the corner of Adams and Butler roads and I can remember going over there and buying eggs. There was also a deer park, which was a great joy. I was privileged to feed them on the weekends when staff weren't around.

The west section of the property were the groups of dairy and beef cattle, sheep, pigs and the Belgian horses. Mrs. Wilson loved animals. She had said to me more than once that animals like you for what you are, and not for what you have.

MBM: How did you learn your way around?

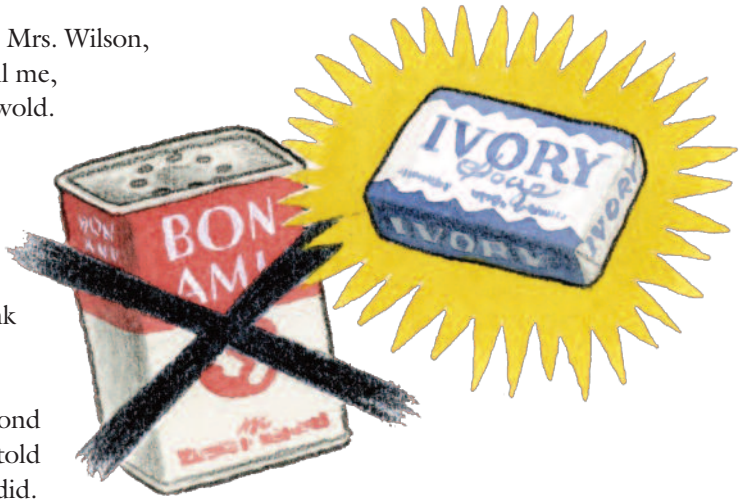
GK: I learned a lot from Mrs. Wilson, but what she couldn't tell me, I learned from Frank Rewold. He was Mrs. Wilson's personal contractor and became my mentor. He showed me a lot of things, well, except for one thing. One day, Frank and I came upon a door inside The Hall that was locked. It was on the second or third floor and Frank told me to turn around, so I did. In a matter of seconds, he had unlocked the door without a key, but he never told me how he did it. Mrs. Wilson relied on Frank probably more than any other person that I knew; he was her right-hand man.

MBM: Are the stories of Matilda's protectiveness of her keys true or urban legend?

GK: In my exuberance to make Mrs. Wilson's life easier, I thought I was knowledgeable enough of the lock system, so I proposed to change all of the locks in Meadow Brook Hall. Mrs. Wilson didn't say "no," but told me "I would rather you wouldn't do that." She pointed out that I was her eighteenth engineer and if there were a nineteenth engineer she needed to know about the lock system so she could tell the next engineer. So I got the warning.

MBM: She ran a tight ship, didn't she?

GK: Mrs. Wilson was meticulous about this house. It was her house and she wanted to know about everything that was going on. If you needed common things – soap, towels, light bulbs – we turned in a weekly request. Early on, I turned in a request for Bon Ami soap and it was rejected by Mrs. Wilson. She explained that the only soap we use in this house was Ivory. Ivory didn't do much when your hands were real dirty, but I learned the reason: a



harsh soap could damage the gold-plated fixtures. She had a reason for everything.

One time, with great pride, I reported to Mr. Wilson that I had taken it upon myself to repair a deficiency in [France Dodge's] Dodge Stables. I was quickly advised that my duties were in the riding ring and Mrs. Wilson's stables and I was not to provide any service for the Dodge Stables unless we were reimbursed. It was my first experience in learning the division of the financial responsibilities.

MBM: Did your approach to dealing with contractors mirror hers?

GK: Mrs. Wilson had a fear, or concern, that people would take advantage of her such as overcharging or pre-billing. I had some service done for the boilers and discovered that the contractor charged for some parts that I knew had not been installed. When I confronted him, he shrugged it off saying, "She can afford it." So her fears were valid; that contractor never returned.

On another occasion I was buying oil for my own house and was paying around 5 to 10 cents a gallon and learned that Mrs. Wilson was paying three to four times that amount. I asked her if I could get bids for her two 10,000 gallon tanks. I did, and was able to save her thousands of dollars. After that campus people referred to me as "the oil king."

MBM: Were you and university leadership eventually able to run your own show?

GK: Well, not really, Mrs. Wilson had her pulse on things. There were plans drawn up by the Road Commission to improve a section of Adams Road that would have required modifying the hillside at the Dodge Farmhouse. We were ready to do it, with the money and plans available, and went in and talked to Mrs. Wilson and she told us she would "prefer" that the trees and the walls were not taken down while she was still around. And so we did not change Adams Road.

MBM: Was that just a subtle suggestion?

GK: I think it was loud and clear: "Thou shalt not take down the wall or trees."

MBM: What were some of your favorite interactions with Mrs. Wilson?

GK: She never ever lost her patience with me, and there were some trying times, but she was so kind to everyone and didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings.

In one of our walk-throughs, it was around Christmas, she showed me her collection of [porcelain] birds and I said to her, "Gee they're nice. Are there any birds that are missing, you know, that you would like to have?" I'm thinking big, that I'm going to buy her a bird. She answered, "No, I don't think so." And, then she shared the value of the birds – each $1,500 – which exceeded my annual salary. She said, "Those things are something that I buy because I like them," and then added, "A card will do."

I remember another instance when

I was driving on the estate, maybe 500 yards from Sunset Terrace, when one of their dogs, Sunday, ran out in front of me. He tumbled a bit and I didn't know whether he hit the wheel and bounced back or what. I drove up to Sunset Terrace a little bit scared and went into the breakfast room where Mrs. Wilson was sitting. She greeted me with, "Sunday is all right, George." I could never figure out how in a matter of seconds they got the word to her that the dog was hurt, let alone okay. She had a great sense of humor.

MBM: Was she generous to her employees?

GK: Oh, yes. She was such a nice lady. At Christmas she always sent a gift basket to our house, and every Christmas I would bring our daughters over to each pick an ornament off her massive Christmas tree. Because they were little girls, I got the nerve once to ask Mrs. Wilson whether she kept the better ornaments higher. She gave my shoulder a quick cuff and said, "George, you know me better than that!"

MBM: After Alfred Wilson's death in 1962, Matilda moved from Sunset Terrace back to The Hall, right?

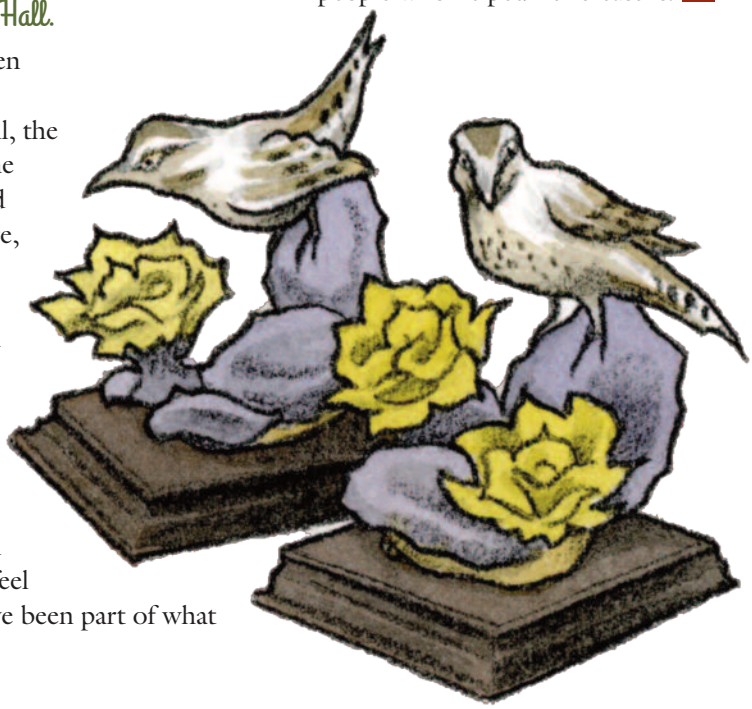
GK: Yes, that's right. I would check in with her weekly… a little less as time went on … and we would walk through Meadow Brook Hall and discuss any problems. After Mr. Wilson passed, she was in The Hall alone on the weekends. I spent a lot of Saturdays and Sundays checking on things that didn't need checking on just to make sure she was okay. I was worried, given the age of the elevators, that she could have gotten stuck. I asked her if I could put a telephone in the cabs, but she declined. She was a tough little old lady and very strong.

MBM: You must have fond memories of Mrs. Wilson, especially the years at Meadow Brook Hall.

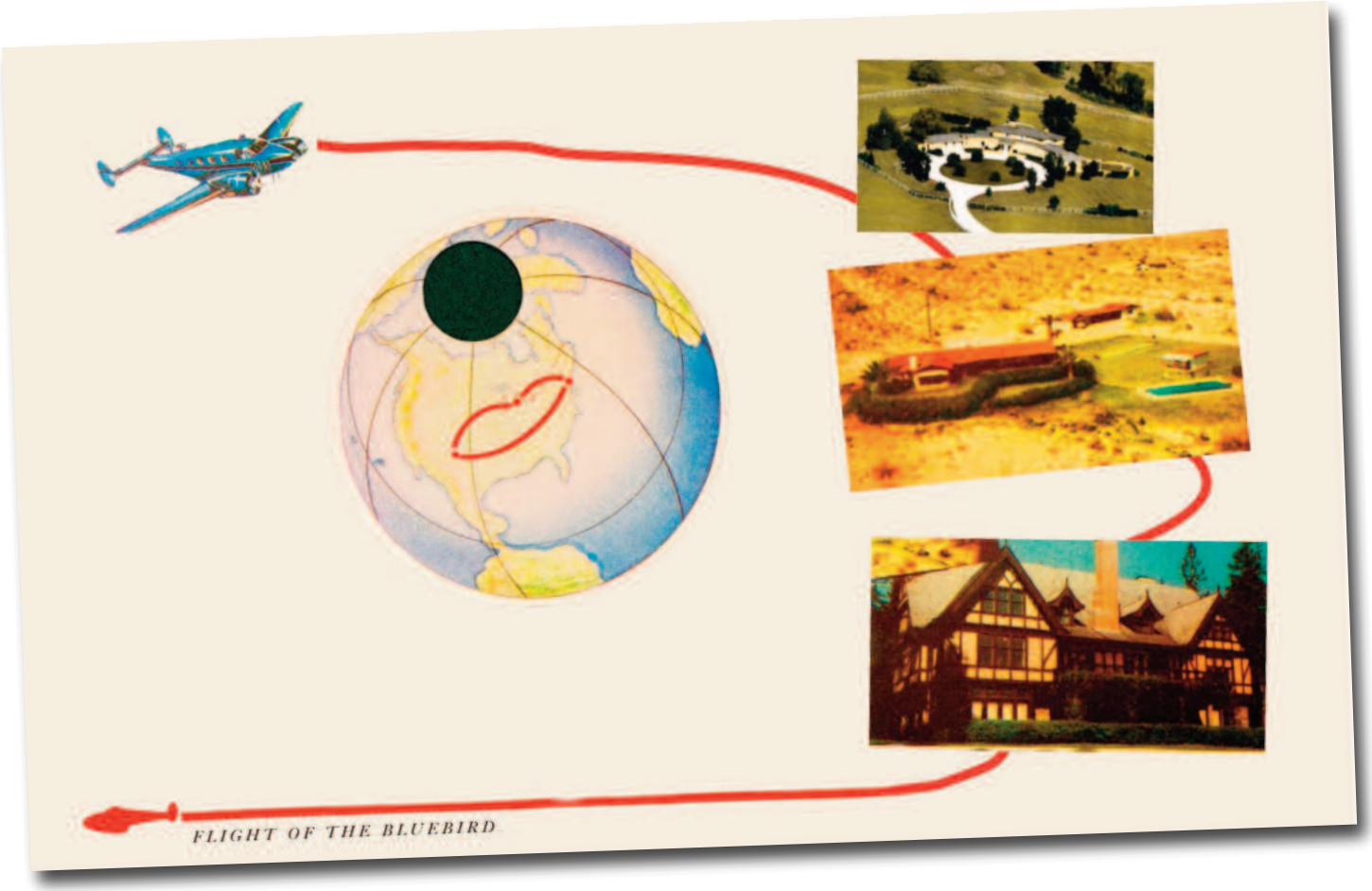
GK: I guess when it comes to Mrs. Wilson, The Hall, the operation and the people who lived and worked there, you come to appreciate that it was an era and way of life that we will never see again. I don't know, coming from a steel mill back in Pennsylvania, I feel privileged to have been part of what is here today.

I think everyone who sees Meadow Brook Hall or has been associated with it – particularly my own experience with the contractors and those who were employed here – worked a little bit harder than they did in any other place. I think it's something that we're proud of.

It was nice to be associated with something that's successful. Although my late wife and I have visited a few other mansions, perhaps as grand as this one, Meadow Brook Hall is different. I think it's the lady who built it. I think it's Mrs. Wilson's love of the place and her devotion to all the people who helped her create it. MB



Seasides, Sunsets and the Southwest



By Kim Zelinski

"The best laid plans will go amiss, but variety they say, is the spice of life... but sometimes I think we get too much spice."

At the desk in her vacation home in Bar Harbor, Maine, Matilda Wilson typed these words in a letter that encapsulated the eventful life she and her husband, Alfred Wilson, were living in the summer of 1955.→

The letter, like many others exchanged with her staff, addressed household matters needing attention. And, household matters there were. In addition to activities at their Meadow Brook Farms estate, the Wilsons also faced untold numbers of details as they purchased, constructed, renovated, decorated, landscaped and maintained two new vacation getaways and a retirement residence.

Beginning in 1949-50, these three properties offered a new way of living for the Wilsons that revolved around a cyclical schedule of traveling to destinations from the Southwest to the Midwest to the Northeast. Aboard Bluebird, their twin-engine Beechcraft, Matilda and Alfred would fly away in January from the Midwestern winters to their ranch in the sunny desert of Scottsdale, Arizona. In July, they enjoyed the cool ocean breezes in their cottage located in Bar Harbor, Maine. Spring and Fall were reserved for Michigan with its milder climates and spectacular views of the sun setting over their "modern" retirement home at Meadow Brook Farms.

From coastal cottage to desert ranch to mid-century modern, each of these residences offered unique and varied living experiences. Matilda wrote that "vacations are not always a rest, but they are a change, and a time to do different things." Breakwater, Mira-Monte and Sunset Terrace provided the Wilsons with that balance and even a little "spice."

Mira-Monte Scottsdale, Arizona

Nestled atop Mummy Mountain in Scottsdale's Paradise Valley, "Mira-Monte," a single-story sprawling ranch of nearly 3,800 square feet, was the first new property the Wilsons acquired. Its Spanish name, which translates to "mountain look" was selected, as were the names of their other residences, because of its surroundings… in this case, a 240-degree mountain view.

Purchased in 1949 and then renovated ten years later, Mira-Monte appeared to be the ideal vacation choice for the Wilsons, especially since Matilda disliked Florida. Around this time, Scottsdale leaders began to promote the town with an Old West identity to attract tourists and residents. It was officially proclaimed the "West's Most Western Town," and its rustic charm transformed it into an urban oasis whose population grew rapidly in the 1950s from 2,000 to 10,000 in an area of just five square miles.

Mira-Monte was situated on a three-acre site outside Scottsdale and included an outdoor pool, cabana/bungalow, several patios, shuffleboard court, orange and grapefruit grove and a small dog run for their two Miniature Pinschers, Honey and Baby. Located nearby was a caretaker's home and stables, which the Wilsons constructed in 1959.

The nine-room home included three bedrooms, living room, study, breakfast and dining rooms, pantry, modern kitchen and built-in cabinets for Matilda's china and collection of bird figurines.

Their social life included dinner parties, attending plays, going to the movies, playing cards with neighbors

Mira-Monte entrance, c. 1959.

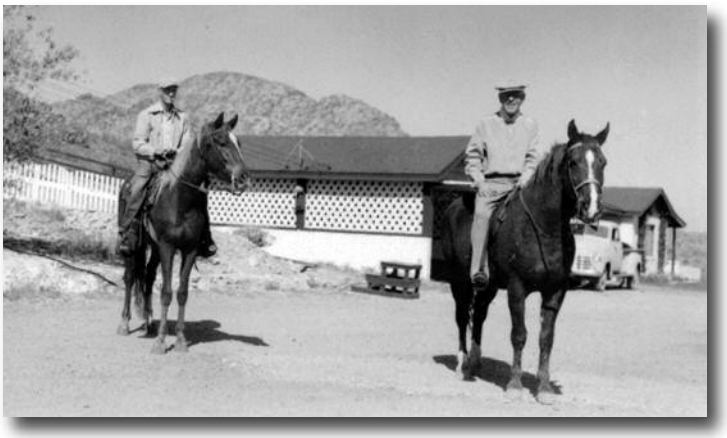
(usually Canasta or Zamba) and finding antique auctions. Outdoors, they swam in the pool and played golf at the Paradise Valley Country Club, where Alfred was a founding member. Alone in the evenings, they enjoyed playing shuffleboard. Alfred usually won.

The Wilsons also boarded two horses in their stable. In Scottsdale, saddling up was a way of life. Morning rides included meeting up with other wealthy residents for some socializing. Barbara Wilson, Matilda and Alfred's daughter, recalls riding to a favorite dining spot, the El Chorro Lodge. Alfred and Judy Johnson, the Wilson's granddaughter, once rode into town for breakfast only to discover the restaurants were closed. They did, however, find a bubble gum machine to tide them over. Judy recalls that after the seven-mile round trip, Alfred could barely walk the next day.

Matilda assumed most of the household duties, including washing, ironing and cooking. And while their days were often busy with various activities, the couple usually set aside time for an afternoon nap.

Sadly on April 6, 1962, Alfred Wilson died of a heart attack while in Scottsdale. Matilda kept the home for the remainder of her life, and her sister, Amelia Kline, often accompanied her on trips out there. After Matilda's death in 1967, the property was sold and the new owners kept it until 2009, when it was again sold and the buildings torn down. Today the former Mira-Monte property awaits new development.

Top: Judy Johnson, age 12, c. 1952. Below: Alfred Wilson (right) and friend, c. 1952.



In Scottsdale saddling up was a way of life. Morning rides included meeting up with other wealthy residents for some socializing. Barbara Wilson, Matilda and Alfred's daughter, recalls riding to a favorite dining spot, the El Chorro Lodge.

Breakwater
Bar Harbor, Maine

In contrast to the desert landscape of Scottsdale, Bar Harbor offered rugged cliffs, coastal waters and lush mountain views. Located on Mount Desert Island, "Breakwater," a 13,500-square-foot, two-and-a-half story Tudor-revival styled home was constructed during Bar Harbor's gilded age (1850 to 1950).

The house was built in 1903 for John Innes Kane, great-grandson of businessman and real estate investor, John Jacob Astor. It was later inherited by Kane's nephew, diplomat Peter A. Jay, and then purchased by the Wilsons in 1950 from his widow, Washington socialite Susan A. Jay. Mrs. Jay wrote a personal note to Matilda expressing her relief in knowing the home would at last breathe new life and informed her that the town was most anxious to meet her and Alfred. The Wilsons nearest neighbors included the widow of Campbell's Soup founder John T. Dorrance and renowned landscape designer Beatrix Farrand.

Soon after purchasing Breakwater, Matilda hired an interior designer to help her redecorate the home and hired a landscape firm to spruce up the four-acre property, including adding several new flower gardens.

The L-shaped floor plan included a great hall, library, living room, small parlor, five bedrooms, a complex staircase that was 20 feet wide, and a west wing that boasted eight bedrooms for servants. A carriage house and caretaker's house were located nearby.

The Wilsons often dined on the piazza terrace where they could observe the sun rising across Frenchman's Bay, view the Porcupine Islands and watch lobster fishermen gathering their catch of the day. The lower edge of Breakwater's lawn accessed Shore Path, a popular walking path that ran in front of the sprawling cottages along Frenchman's Bay to town.

Barbara Wilson and Judy Johnson also visited Bar Harbor where they enjoyed picnics, fishing off the rocks, playing croquet, exploring Acadia National Park and horseback riding. On the days when heavy fog rolled in or it rained, the family enjoyed playing Canasta, reading books, doing puzzles and making model airplanes.

Top: Breakwater, c. 1903. Middle: picnicking at Breakwater, right to left, Matilda Wilson, Mabel Wilson, Alfred Wilson and unidentified friends of the Wilsons. Bottom: postcard of the Bar Harbor Club, c. 1955.

The Wilsons' nearest neighbors included the widow of Campbell's Soup founder John T. Dorrance and renowned landscape designer Beatrix Farrand...Judy recalls playing tennis and lounging on the pool deck sitting directly across from Nelson Rockefeller.

Socially, the Wilsons hosted dinner parties, attended the theatre and belonged to two private clubs, the Kebo Valley Club, where Alfred played golf, and the Bar Harbor Club, an exclusive leisure club with dining, tennis courts and an ocean-front swimming pool. Judy recalls playing tennis and lounging on the pool deck sitting directly across from Nelson Rockefeller.

The Wilsons' summer visits to Breakwater continued throughout the 1950s, up to Alfred's death in 1962, when it was sold. The house was purchased by an oil heir who experienced financial problems and the home went into disrepair. The current owner restored the home in 1998 and it remains one of the last cottages to have survived from Bar Harbor's Gilded Era. Breakwater was listed in the National Register of Historic places in 1992.

Sunset Terrace Meadow Brook Farms

At the same time the Wilsons purchased Breakwater, they also decided to build a new home on the Meadow Brook Farms estate. While Meadow Brook Hall would still be used for special occasions, this new home, Sunset Terrace, was built as their retirement home…modern, less formal and more manageable as they aged.

Matilda and Alfred commissioned Meadow Brook Hall architect William Kapp to create a residence they hoped to be the "house of the future." Its design was inspired by the Prairie-style houses created by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Characteristics of this style included low-pitched roofs with broad overhanging eaves, strong horizontal lines, ribbons of windows, a prominent central chimney and the wide use of natural materials to take advantage of the site and surroundings.

Sunset Terrace was built on a knoll and angled in a westerly direction so Matilda could view her Meadow Brook Hall Rose Garden down the hill and, more importantly, capture a view of the sun setting over the horizon. During construction, Matilda stopped referring to the home as "the little house" and named it Sunset Terrace.

The house was constructed by Frank Rewold and his son, Roy. Frank had also built most of the farming and recreational buildings on the estate. The long, narrow, curvilinear shape of the 12,587-square-foot house framed 20 rooms, including four bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, den, several storage rooms, a Farms office, and its most interesting feature, the circular 40-foot-in-diameter living room with floor-to-ceiling windows facing the west.

From the start, visualizing a mid-century modern design was challenging for the Wilsons. However, one directive was clear: They wanted to "get away from anything which might remind us of The Hall."

Contrasted with the home's rather neutral glass windows, slate floors, wood-paneled and brick walls and marble fireplace, an accent color palette included such new colors as turquoise and coral. Many of the latest products on the market made their way inside, including Formica countertops, linoleum tile floors, modern appliances and white, metal cabinets supplied by the top-rung department store, J.L. Hudson's.

Sunset Terrace was built on a knoll and angled in a westerly direction so Matilda could view her Meadow Brook Hall Rose Garden down the hill and, more importantly, capture a view of the sun setting over the horizon.

The house was furnished with high-end mid-century-styled furniture and the living room ceiling fixture was fabricated in a streamline design because Matilda did not want a "dizzy, dangling affair" hanging in the room. The open staircase leading to the second floor featured glass panels mounted to the aluminum rail. Etched into the panels, were depictions of some of the Wilsons' favorite horses and dogs and their plane, Bluebird.

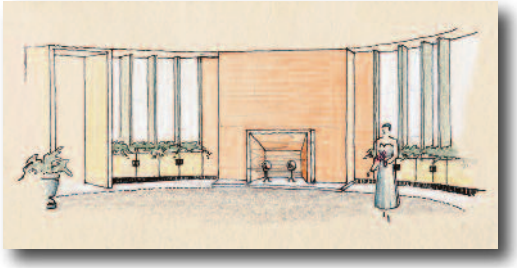
The Den was a special room where the Wilsons read books, played cards and enjoyed both the radio and television. The outdoor spaces included a terrace and patio for entertaining, a fenced backyard for their dogs and a shuffleboard court.

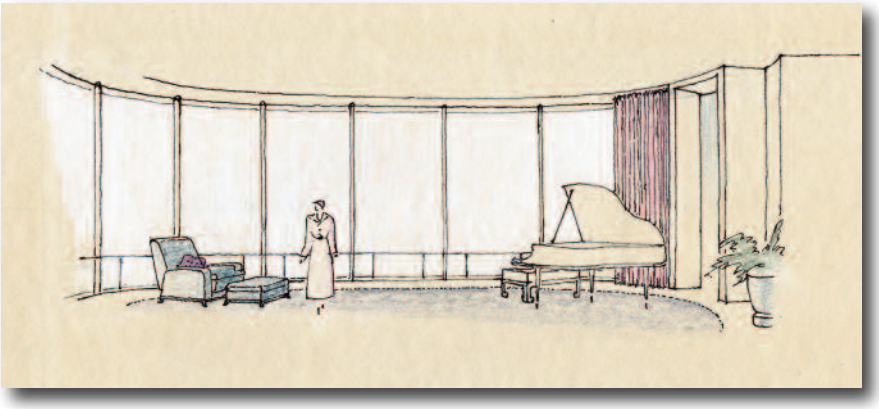
Sunset Terrace was home for the Wilsons until Alfred's death in 1962. Matilda never quite felt at home in the modern space, and soon moved back to Meadow Brook Hall.

As early as 1963, Oakland University's presidents utilized Sunset Terrace for entertaining and, in more recent years, as a private residence. Continuing with this tradition, the university's seventh president, Dr. Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, will move in after the completion of much-needed infrastructure repairs.

With the growth of the university's enrollment and physical plant over the past decade, the skyline view of the sun setting over its buildings is ever more impressive and a sight that no doubt would have pleased Matilda and Alfred Wilson. MB

Photographs below and opposite page: Sunset Terrace, early 1960s. Conceptual renderings, c. 1952.





It's a Wrap

The matching grant program set up by the Matilda R. Wilson Fund in 2008 produced some stunning and much-needed results.

By Kim Zelinski

The panoramic view of Meadow Brook Hall's façade from the restored Entrance Bridge offers a snapshot of significant preservation work over the past decade.

The Hall's first obligation in responsible stewardship of the National Historic Landmark is to preserve and maintain the property, including buildings, grounds and collections. Since 1971, funding for this worthy challenge has been greatly aided by the steadfast support of the visionary and dedicated trustees of the Matilda R. Wilson Fund, whose contributions now total nearly $16 million dollars.

The Wilson Fund, was established by Matilda Wilson in 1944 to support her various charitable causes. Still in existence today, The Fund focuses its philanthropic support on institutions that were important to Matilda, including her beloved Meadow Brook Hall.

The Fund's latest gift to The Hall, awarded in 2008, came in the form of a $3.3 million challenge grant, which was phased over nine years. The Fund matched gifts and grants raised by The Hall dollar for dollar. From 2009 to 2017, the grant funded critical building needs, including some 20 projects of various sizes, scope and cost. A team of professionals that included preservation architects, engineers (electrical, mechanical and structural) construction managers, subcontractors, craftsmen and art conservators assisted Meadow Brook Hall and Oakland University facilities staff in implementing the projects.

The phased approach of the grant, allocated in yearly installments of $366,000, allowed The Hall to conduct assessments, prioritize needs, determine scope and budgets and schedule projects with flexibility and minimal interruption to its operation as both a museum and facility rental business.

The complexities of building preservation are fundamentally challenging, invariably taking longer than planned and at higher costs than anticipated. Discovering hidden or unknown problems in an old building, retrofitting the new with the old, obtaining scarcely available materials and working in conditions that are sometimes either extremely hot or cold are always contributing factors. Yet, the sense of pride in workmanship and dedication to The Hall's mission by architects, engineers, conservators and tradesmen ensured successful completion of all projects.

Those involved in Hall projects often commented "they don't make them like they used to." However, this oft-used phrase powerfully supports The Hall's mission to preserve the enduring qualities of this unique building and continue to precisely re-make or restore it "the way they used to."

Project Overview

Building Preservation

- Kitchen Renovation
- Elevator Renovation
- Timber Restoration
- Chimney Restoration
- Masonry Repairs
- Bridge Restoration
- Exterior Lighting Installation
- Wood Floor Restoration
- Interior Repairs (windows and walls)
- Mechanical Upgrades
- Preventative Maintenance

Collections Conservation & Interpretation

- Curatorial Support
- Interpretation (exhibits)
- Painting Conservation

Fundraising Support

- Fundraising program support

Timber, Chimney, Bridge and Masonry Restoration

Conditions assessments, restoration/replacement of wood half-timbers, fabrication of 1,500 bricks, tuck pointing, stone cap repairs, structural repairs to concrete/steel support beams, wood railing restoration.

Wood Floor Restoration
Replace damaged wood, sanding, refinishing (stain and polyurethane).

Elevator Renovation
Mechanical modifications and upgrades,
restoration of door and inlaid paneling in cab.

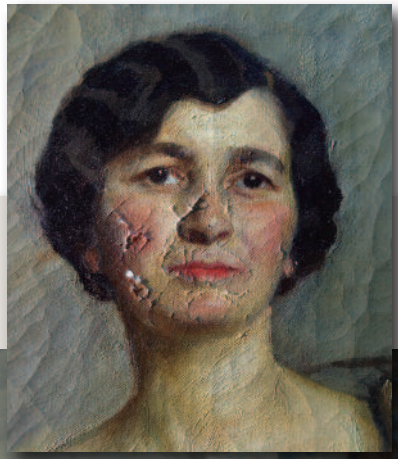
Exterior Lighting

Installation of 70 new LED fixtures, restoration of original lanterns.

Kitchen Renovation & Restoration

New hood exhaust and make-up air system, plumbing repairs, electrical upgrades, wood cabinetry restoration, upgraded fire safety system, new food service equipment, new "historic" flooring and restored lighting scheme.

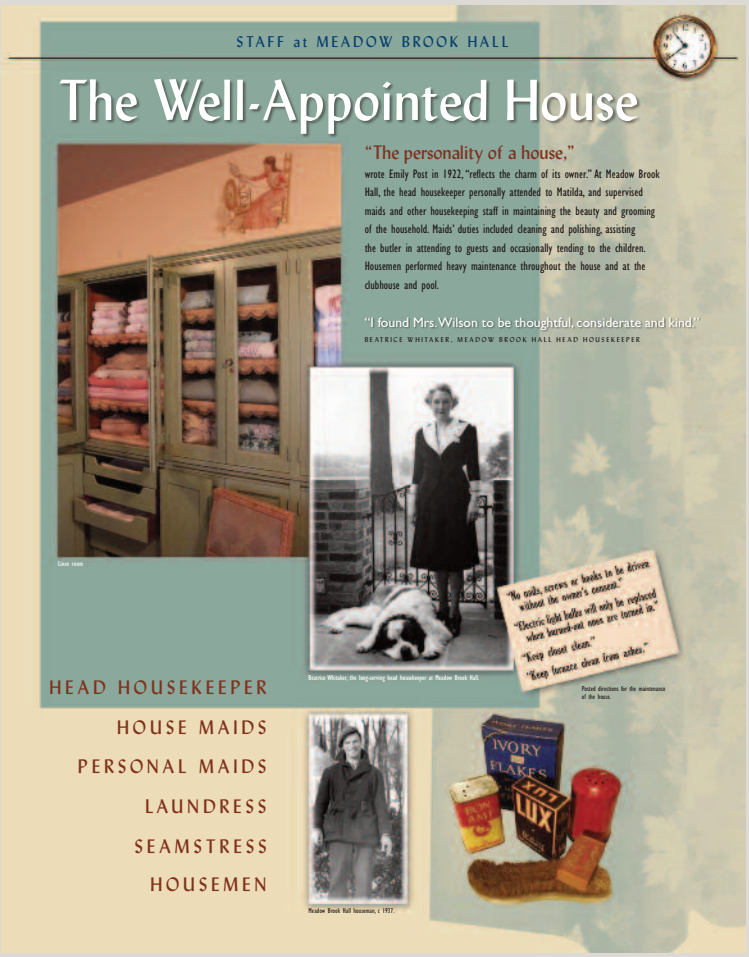
Above: The kitchen stove and hood before renovation and after (left).

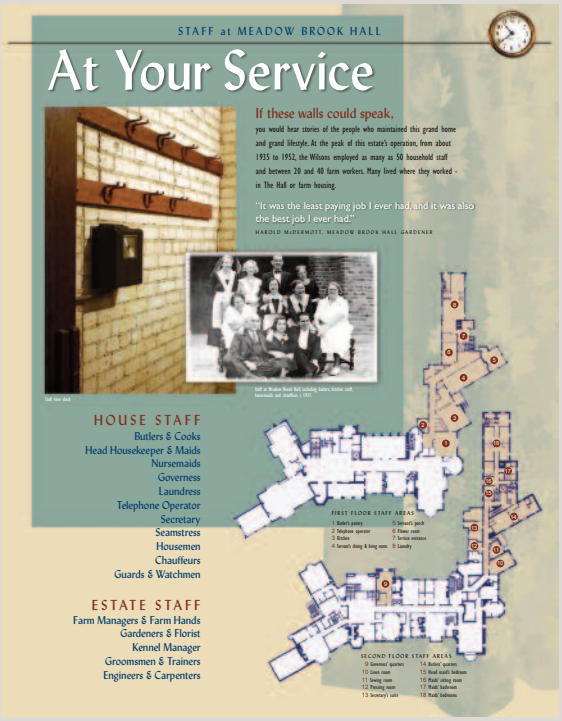


Painting Conservation

Consolidation of insecure paint, cleaning, lining, remounting, new varnish and frame cleaning of the two large Louis Betts paintings in the Dining Room.

Top: A detail of the painting before conservation and the conserved paintings (below).



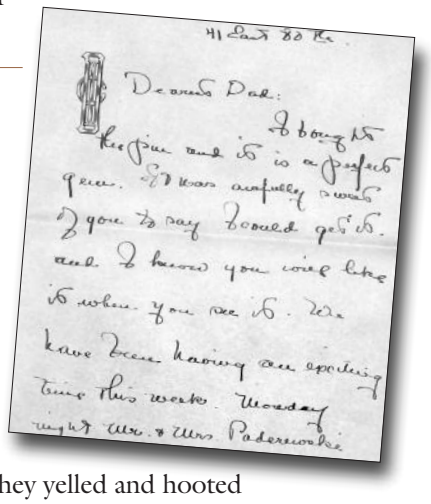


Servants Hall, Dining and Sitting Rooms Restoration

Removal of non-original components, restoration of woodwork and stonework, upgrading HVAC and electrical, restoring original lighting scheme, restoration of textiles, acquisition of period furnishings, installation of interpretive panels in the main service hallway. MB

Hidden letter

On April 4, during an Adopt-an-Artifact exercise to look for marginalia and any loose items in each of the Library's thousands of books *(see related story, page 7)*, curatorial intern Sam Lawrence struck pay dirt. In Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, she found an original letter from Isabel Dodge to her father, John, written during the period of Isabel's attendance at the Elinor Comstock Music School in New York City, training under pianist and composer Ignacy Paderewski. The John Dodges were living on Detroit's Boston Boulevard at this time, but had also been enjoying Meadow Brook Farms for some seven years. Curator Madelyn Rzadkowolski translated Isabel's elaborate script to share with readers a touching communication between daughter and father, where she relates among other things her attendance at a New York play, *Chin Chin,* and her desire to escape the city heat by renting a "machine," an early term for automobile, and her desire to play golf on the course John was building on the farm. – ED

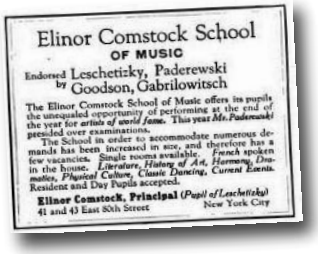


41 East 80th

Dearest Dad:

I bought the pin and it is a perfect gem. It was awfully sweet of you to say I could get it and I know you will like it when you see it. We have been having an exciting time this week. Monday night Mr. & Mrs. Paderewski, Mr. Joseph Hofman and four other people (not so) famous came to dinner. There were twenty four at the table making it pretty thrilling. Paderewski is splendid but I think I like Hofman better.

You remember in Chin Chin how Stone imitated him (Paderewski I mean). Well he himself went to see it Wednesday night and we all enjoyed the excitement. Stone was so fused after that he wouldn't come out and now the house nearly went mad. They yelled and hooted but still no Stone. Montgomery came out and tried to pacify them but Paderewski in his box was too much for them. I really enjoyed Chin Chin more the second time and laughed much harder than before.



Elinor Comstock School
OF MUSIC
Endorsed by Leschetizky, Paderewski Goodson, Gabrilowitsch

The Elinor Comstock School of Music offers its pupils the unequaled opportunity of performing at the end of the year for *artists of world fame.* This year *Mr. Paderewski* presided over examinations.

The School in order to accommodate numerous demands has been increased in size, and therefore has a few vacancies. Single rooms available. French spoken in the house. *Literature, History of Art, Harmony, Dramatics, Physical Culture, Classic Dancing, Current Events.* Resident and Day Pupils accepted.

Elinor Comstock, Principal *(Pupil of Leschetizky)*
41 and 43 East 80th Street New York City

I have never felt such a day as today. I believe it is far hotter than Jamaica. Of course here we can't get cool by wearing thin clothes. I tried to get the girls to hire a machine so we could get out in the country but no they all declared it was too expensive. Of course the price is enormous but I was crazy to get out of the city.

I have played tennis quite a bit lately but the courts are poor and the really good ones are so far away that it takes a half an hour to reach them and we all look so silly appearing on a bus with tennis clothes but such is life that they will have to put up with it.

How is the golf course coming? I want to learn as soon as I get home. Have you heard from John *[her brother, John Duval Dodge]* lately? I never hear. He is worse at writing than I am. I hope you manage to read my scrawl but my pen is bad and I don't seem to be able to make my head work right.

Devotedly, Isabel

Sunday, April Twenty Fifth [1915] MB

Weddings at The Great Estate

Theresa Finck Photography

TIMELESS ✦ ELEGANT ✦ PERFECT

www.meadowbrookhall.org

A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Join us for our FREE monthly bridal open houses. Visit our website for details.

A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Meadow Brook

350 Estate Drive
Rochester, MI 48309-4401

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 17
ROCHESTER, MI

Museum Store

Shop the Holiday Store

You may have seen and admired the beautiful still-life painting by French artist Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer (1636-1699) that hangs in the Christopher Wren Dining Room *(right)*. Enjoy a piece of Meadow Brook in your own home with our new line of products featuring this brilliant piece of art.

Available now in the Meadow Brook Hall Museum Store, which is full of unique holiday gift-giving ideas at reasonable prices.

Journal / $18.95 / $17.06 MBH members
Bookmark / $1.95 / $1.76 MBH members
8 x 10 Matted Print / $7.95 / $7.16 MBH members
Notecard & envelope / $3.95 / $3.56 MBH members
Magnet / $4.95 / $4.46 MBH members

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