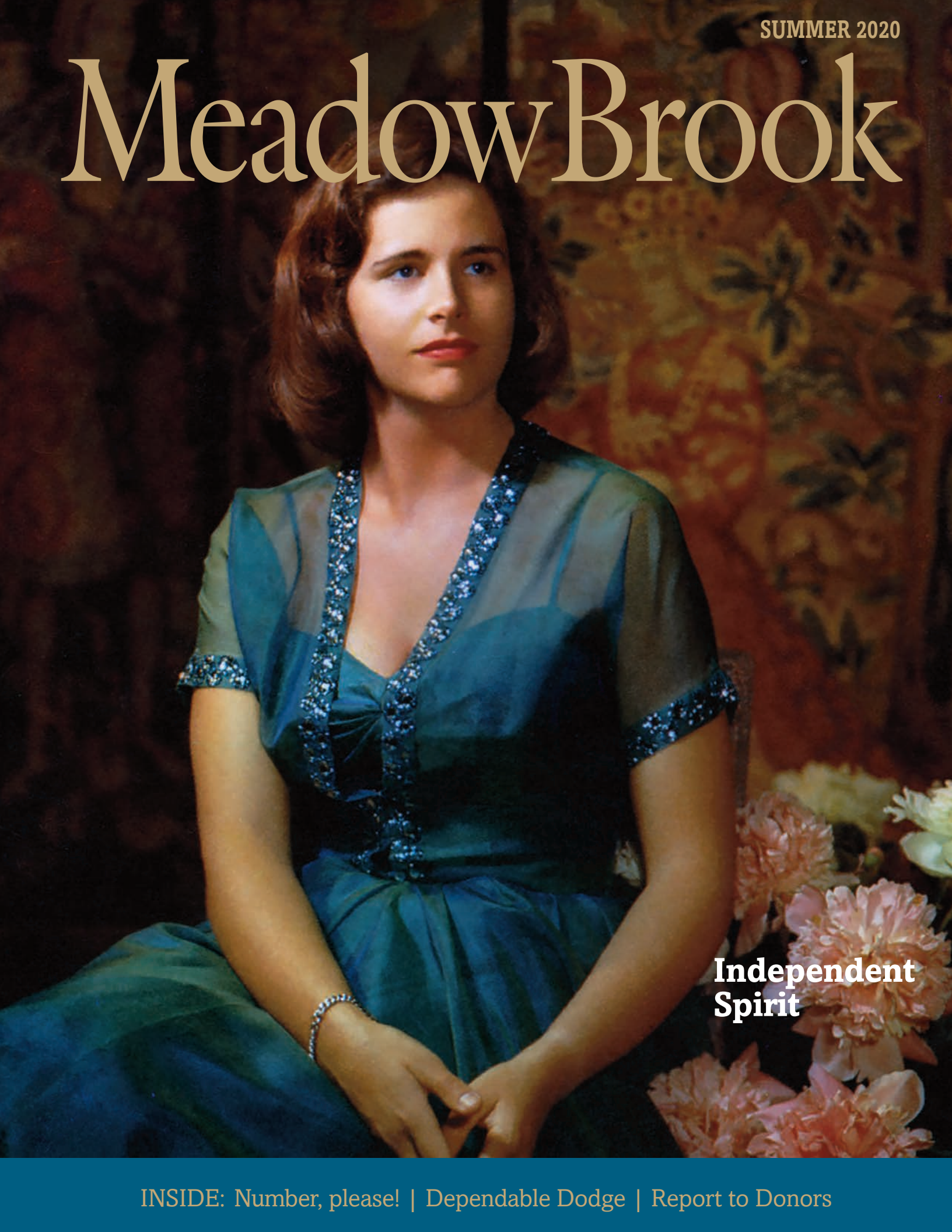


SUMMER 2020

Meadow Brook



**Independent
Spirit**

INSIDE: Number, please! | Dependable Dodge | Report to Donors



DESK DRAWER FUND

OU Credit Union embodies a culture of philanthropy, and we will continue to lead the way in encouraging investment in our community. To further our commitment, we've established the Desk Drawer Fund, a foundation to support the communities we serve.

The Desk Drawer Fund supports various initiatives within five philanthropic pillars:

ARTS &
CULTURE

STABLE
HOUSING

EMPOWERING
YOUTH

FINANCIAL
EDUCATION

FOSTERING
ENTREPRENEURIALISM

Become part of our commitment to the community.
deskdrawerfund.org



DESK DRAWER FUND

A Foundation Supporting the
OU Credit Union Community

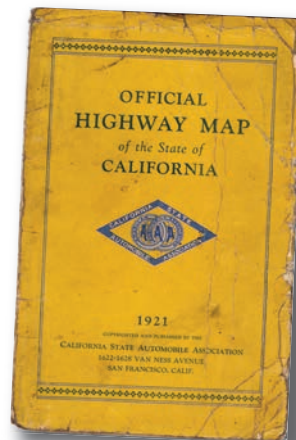




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A picture's worth...

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Fantastic façade!

ON THE COVER: The late Barbara Jean Wilson Eccles shown in the dress sent to the press announcing her society debut in 1950. The back of the colorized photo features an inscription giving the print to her father, Alfred, for Christmas 1952.

10 | Independent Spirit

Barbara Wilson Eccles, the daughter of Matilda and Alfred Wilson, and brother of Richard Wilson, passed away on January 1 at the age of 88. In this look back on her life, a life which so enriched the legacy of Meadow Brook Farms and her Meadow Brook Hall home, Barbara's engaging character and indomitable spirit shine through.

16 | One Ringy-Dingy

New inventions impacting communications in the early 20th Century could often first be found on the country estates of wealthy industrialists. Meadow Brook, beneficiary of the success of automaker John Dodge, was no stranger to these developments. The Hall's rooms and farm buildings were connected by internal phone and staff call services, and even included a switchboard and a staff member whose fulltime job was to make the connections.

20 | West to East

The automobile brought unprecedented freedom to Americans and "auto camping" was their favorite mode of travel in the 1920s, facilitated by new and improved roadways. In this fascinating first-person diary of their year-long 1923-24 road trip across the country in a c. 1920 Dodge Brothers touring car (complete with canvas top and side curtains), Wilson A. Munson and his wife, Bertha, give us a glimpse of the natural beauty of the country and a far simpler time.

32 | 2019 Donor Report

Once again, hundreds of donors stepped up to help The Hall last year through annual and foundation gifts, giving societies, planned gifts and the All-University Fund Drive. And the philanthropic support is making a significant difference in museum operations, collections care and building preservation.

Meadow Brook

MAGAZINE

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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 univer-
sity serves as an internationally renowned
historic house museum and cultural center.*

| Editor's Column

The comfort in looking back

As I write this column in my home office, and you read this issue of the Meadow Brook Magazine online, we can all reflect on how rapidly our world can change. We are bombarded with news from wide-spread sources as we deal with critical issues and daily challenges to our lives and work. The Hall's operation has been no stranger to these forces as we were required to shut down museum and facility rental operations – operations that had been on a successful trajectory for 15 years.

That's when telling stories of the past can bring some measure of certainty and comfort. So, I invite you to take a well-deserved breather from the tough times and lose yourself in this issue.

You can take a cross-country trip in an open Dodge Brothers touring car only 11 short years after the Lincoln Highway was completed, linking Times Square with Lincoln Park in San Francisco, a distance of 3,389 miles. The editor of the diary, Madelyn Rzadkowolski, was struck by the preponderance of entries focusing on the natural beauty of the country.

Or travel back in time with Kim Zelinski to learn about earlier modes of communication on the estate – including switchboards and annunciator systems – during a time in the 1920s and '30s when such conveniences were considered to be, as we would say today, cutting-edge technology.

But the most moving story in this issue is no doubt Madelyn's tribute to Matilda and Alfred Wilson's daughter Barbara, who passed away at age 88 in January. Her story took on more depth through the generous donation from Barbara's family of ephemera and artifacts related primarily to her years on the Meadow Brook estate.

To bring us back to the present and near future, many bright spots either surfaced during the shutdown or were reaffirmed. Chief among them has been the friendship and support of the Meadow Brook community, as evidenced in the Donor Report beginning on page 32, and the revealed strength and resourcefulness of our lean but mighty staff. My hat is off to all of you who have helped make Meadow Brook the educational and entertainment resource it has become. It is a remarkable story and no doubt the seeds of another chapter of progress are even now being sown.

Let us know what you think of this online format. Having cut my teeth as a writer and editor during the print era, I still enjoy such tactile communications as newspapers, magazines and books, as I am sure many of you do. And a printed Meadow Brook Magazine seems even more appropriate given its subject matter and intent. But, as Matilda Wilson said many decades ago, "Knowledge of the past helps face the challenge of the future."





**THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 17
2020**

**FANTASTIC FARE. INSPIRED AUCTIONS.
SUPPORT THAT IS TOTALLY WILD.**



WILD HAPPY HOUR

MEADOW BROOK HALL



**IT'S MORE THAN A UNIQUE NIGHT OUT - IT'S AN
EVENING WITH AN IMPACT**

Take a walk on the culinary wild side with Meadow Brook Hall's biggest annual fundraising experience re-imagined for 2020—the Wild Happy Hour & Auction.

It's an evening you won't soon forget. Sip cocktails, enjoy delectable hors d'oeuvres and bid on a variety of unique live and silent auction items.

Visit our website for more details on health and safety precautions at this event.

**5:30 P.M. | \$80 EACH | REGISTER ONLINE
SPONSORED BY NORTHERN TRUST**



[MEADOWBROOKHALL.ORG/WILDGAMEDINNER](https://meadowbrookhall.org/wildgamedinner)



George Karas, 2017

Remembering George Karas, OU's first employee

In the Fall of 1957, George Karas became the first employee of the yet-to-be-built Michigan State University-Oakland. He was hired personally by university founder Matilda Dodge Wilson and was 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. For 10 of those years, he was an invaluable employee and friend to Matilda Wilson.

George passed away on February 26. He was 94.

He was a great friend to Meadow Brook Hall, and we will greatly miss him, his incredible memory, his entertaining storytelling, his dignity and humility.

For a heartwarming insight into George's life and interaction with Matilda and Meadow Brook, please see the Fall 2017 issue of MEADOW BROOK MAGAZINE.

Memorial contributions in George's honor can be made to the Meadow Brook Garden Club. Please contact Lauren Guzzardo for information at (248) 364-6264 or guzzardo@oakland.edu.



It takes a team

Every day, Meadow Brook Hall's staff works to maintain and elevate the operation and reputation for the National Historic Landmark. Recently the team made two updates to its staff.

Caitlin Bailey has joined the events team as an Event Manager. She brings a wealth of experience in experiential marketing, wedding planning, stadium event planning and even hotel sales, most recently serving as Regional Manager for a national event venue firm. At Meadow Brook, Caitlin will be responsible for planning and executing high-caliber weddings and



events and coordinating with clients, vendors and Meadow Brook staff to deliver a positive experience.

Stephanie Pini-Pratt originally came to Meadow Brook Hall as an Event Planning Intern in 2015. Since then, she has served in several roles, ranging from Museum Assistant to Event Specialist, Scheduling Coordinator and Event Manager. Beginning this year, Stephanie has taken on a new role as Sales Associate. In this position, she will work with new and returning clients on special events and facility rentals – providing a white-glove level of service to ensure that every detail is perfect and every client is happy.



And a fond farewell. . .

Regrettably, we report that one of the most heroic Meadow Brook team members, and likely also one of the most unsung, will shortly be leaving our ranks. **Lori Ginter**, Manager of Sales and Events for the past 10 years, is moving on. During her tenure, Lori has been responsible for selling literally hundreds of events, some as small as group tours and lunches, to extravagant weddings, all the way to navigating the exciting waters of securing the *Antiques Road Show* event! Her efforts and work ethic contributed greatly to Meadow Brook's primary revenue stream – facility rental – and for that, and for her always bright, engaging and positive outlook, we will miss her greatly. We wish her only the best!

The winner is...

In recognition of its premiere wedding services, Meadow Brook Hall has been honored by two of the nation's most popular wedding planning platforms, The Knot and WeddingWire.

Meadow Brook has been selected as a 2020 winner of The Knot Best of Weddings, an accolade representing the highest- and most-rated wedding professionals as reviewed by real couples, their families and wedding guests on The Knot, a leading wedding planning brand and app. This is the second consecutive year the Great Estate been named a winner of The Knot Best of Weddings awards.

Additionally, The Hall is a winner of the 2020 WeddingWire Couples' Choice Awards®, an accolade representing the top wedding professionals across the board in quality, service, responsiveness, and profes-



sionalism reviewed by couples on WeddingWire.

"The entire Meadow Brook team is proud to once again be recognized for our work hosting unique, elegant weddings at the Great Estate," said Shannon O'Berski, director of external relations. "These national awards are a testament to the incredible service, attention to detail and overall experience

that our couples enjoy at Meadow Brook. Not only are their weddings set against the backdrop of the stunning Tudor mansion and gardens, but every couple is treated like royalty."

For more information about weddings at Meadow Brook, call (248) 364-6220 or visit meadowbrookhall.org/weddings.

Tally-Ho

Meadow Brook's Ice House, situated near the Dodge Farmhouse, historically held blocks of ice (cut from the lake across Dodge – now Adams – Road) in its lower level and the family's collection of sleighs and cutters above.

The ice has melted away in history but the building has long been an overfilled storage area, with the family's carriages and wagons joining the mix, as well as crates of specially formed glass: replacement panes for the nearby greenhouse.

Meadow Brook recently moved the extraneous supplies out, giving just enough walking – and crawling – space for carriage historian Jerry Zaetta to evaluate the mighty steeds.



Meadow Brook's Ice House, c. 1935.

A small two-wheeled Irish jaunting car has boxy sides that fold out, allowing passengers to sit sideways behind the driver; Zaetta said the age of the cart would match up with John and Matilda Dodge's visit to Ireland in 1913. A beautiful Canadian cutter with a hinged door and a spring system on its seat is in rough shape but worth restoring, Zaetta said. A deliv-

ery freight wagon sports a brake: an unusual choice in a farm wagon but typical of the Wilsons, who always wanted the most modern and safe equipment on their farm.

When a *Detroit Free Press* columnist came for a sleigh ride on New Year's Day in 1942, she named the article "Own Museum Piece" in

honor of the estate's newest sleigh, purchased by Frances Dodge from the Guggenheim estate. It was "a little jewel all done in maroon. . . it gleams and shines like the museum piece it is." (Sadly, the sleigh no longer resides at Meadow Brook.)

The Ice House, carts and cutters will be cleaned and set up for an exhibit, possibly as early as this summer.

An ode to two great men

One hundred years ago this year, the deaths of John and Horace Dodge irrevocably changed the future of the automotive industry, the country's business and trade practices and the region's capacity for philanthropy. But the loss would also start Matilda and Alfred Wilson on a path towards leadership, charity and forward thinking without which Meadow Brook Hall and Oakland University would not exist.

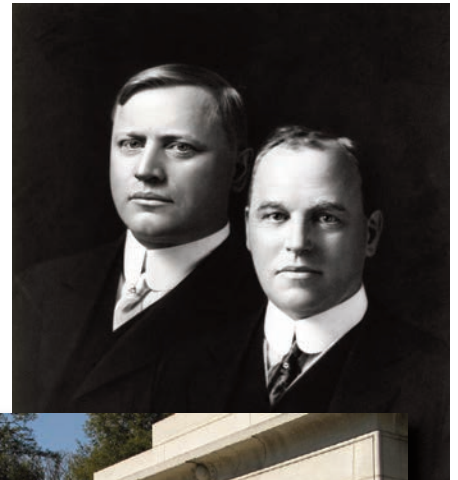
When John Dodge died on January 14, 1920 after contracting the 1918 influenza from his brother, Horace declared he did not know how to go on alone. John was a force, a driver of change, while Horace was focused on his incredible inventions. Detroit's Mayor James Couzens said, "In [John's] death the city of Detroit has sustained a loss which cannot be

estimated... Detroit's industrial leadership is founded in a great part on the indomitable spirit which he helped to inaugurate in our community."

A heartbroken Horace withdrew from Dodge Brothers Motor Car Company, appointing long-time friend and company executive Fred Haynes to take charge.

Sadly, while Horace tried to recover in Florida, he succumbed on December 10, 1920.

Though Haynes and other leaders at Dodge Brothers were inspired by the brothers mixture of ingenuity, smart business and fair and generous treatment of employees, the two men who had intuitively created that perfect blend were gone.



John (left) and Horace, c. 1913, share the Dodge Mausoleum in Detroit's Woodlawn Cemetery.



secondary outbreak of the flu in the winter of 1920, Horace caught it while he, John and the auto industry elite gathered at the international auto show in New York City. John refused to leave his brother's bedside and ended up falling ill. Matilda and her two stepdaughters, Winifred and Isabel, arrived in New York just in time to say goodbye.

The 1918 flu was especially deadly because it was joined by bacterial pneumonia – which is how John died – and because the world, just emerging from wartime austerity, was decades away from improved healthcare methods and education of the general population. Horace remained behind to recover, but Matilda and her daughters accompanied the casket back to Detroit,

taking a private train car along the line. Matilda fell gravely ill with pneumonia after returning, meaning neither John's wife nor his best friend attended his funeral. Both brothers would be well-honored by their family of Dodge Brothers employees, who stood as sentries outside of the homes before their funerals, and lined up in the thousands for a chance to say a final thank you. Their automotive competitors, like Henry and Edsel Ford, joined the ranks of over 100 pallbearers. And the best testament to their legacies and their reach was when service stations, factories and dealerships of all types across the U.S. shut down for the days of the funerals so their brethren could honor these titans of industry.

Parallels to Today

The Covid-19 pandemic is often compared to the 1918 influenza outbreak which killed some 50 million people around the world. During a

W I N T E R WonderLights

COMING SOON

New holiday light show

Join us this winter to spark your family's newest holiday tradition at Meadow Brook Hall's Winter Wonder Lights. We've expanded on our treasured and traditional indoor historic mansion tour to spread the season of cheer across the grounds. The estate will be filled with immersive, animated lightscape environments to see, hear and explore from Nov. 27 through Dec. 30.

Questers support couch, costumes

A tattered silk sofa in the living room of Meadow Brook will receive a much-needed facelift due to a grant obtained by Stoney Creek Questers



From left in the linen cedar closet, some of the members who participated: Janice Caloia, Annie Williams, friend Colleen Beattie, Jeanette Cooper, Diane Gurzick and Marianne Raffin.

#203. The local chapter has pledged additional donations on top of the \$2,000 grant from the international Questers organization. This is the sixth time Meadow Brook has been a recipient.

The original red silk brocade on the back and sides of the sofa was removed in the 1970s and reupholstered with a gold fabric, which has become damaged by sun and touch in the intervening years. This will be replaced with a red satin silk brocade which is remarkably similar to the original fabric, and sourced from a fabric company the Wilsons used when decorating The Hall in 1929.

To fulfill a condition of the grant, the local chapter donated time to a volunteer project, spending 105 hours examining and properly repacking the historic costumes in the cedar closets.

Meadow Brook is forever grateful for the Questers' steadfast support of collections care.

Major grant announced

The Matilda R. Wilson Fund has awarded Oakland University a \$1 million matching grant to support long-term preservation of the buildings, collections and grounds at Meadow Brook Estate. The grant will be spread over five years, beginning in July 2020.

Specifically, the funds will be directed at preservation, preventative maintenance and restoration of Meadow Brook Hall and adjacent structures, collections conservation; and interpretation of the Dodge/Wilson story. The first year of the grant will support operational challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The grant continues the Wilson Fund's generous support of The Hall over the past 50 years, including major restoration and preservation projects over 2004-08 and 2008-17," said Geoff Upward, executive director of the Meadow Brook Estate.

"We are immensely grateful for the confidence the Fund trustees have shown in our preservation and educational goals – and in our staff, volunteer and donor efforts to accomplish them," said university president Dr. Ora Hirsch Pescovitz. "The entire community will benefit from the Fund's steadfast support of our National Historic Landmark and the legacy of the Dodge and Wilson families."

Matilda Wilson established her charitable foundation in 1944. 





Summer & Fall Calendar Up Next

A Safe Return to Meadow Brook

Reopening The Great Estate following the COVID-19 Shutdown

Meadow Brook Hall is closely monitoring developments and best practices related to COVID-19. Following the guidance of Michigan's Safe Start Plan and Oakland University's safe reopening guidelines, we safely reopened The Great Estate for self-guided touring of the house, gardens and grounds on Fridays through Tuesdays this summer, on June 19.

The tours will feature a number of special activities and visitor experiences — all comfortably within new physical distancing and safety measures. We will continue to prioritize guest safety as we welcome the community back to Meadow Brook. **For more information about our health and safety measures, along with up-to-date details on visiting the Great Estate, visit meadowbrookhall.org/covid19.**

Public Touring & Visitation

PLAN YOUR SUMMER 2020 VISIT:

- Open to the public for visitation and touring on Fridays through Tuesdays, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., with last admittance at 3 p.m.
- Exclusive hours for vulnerable populations are Sundays and Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to noon.
- Indoors: Self guided touring available on all three levels of the house. Special insight and historic anecdotes are available in an all-new visitor app featuring the house and grounds.
- Outdoors: Explore our 16 gardens, enjoy a picnic on the lawn and play lawn games in the Rock Garden. Meadow Brook's garages will be open to display The Hall's unique collection of vintage Dodge cars.

Guests must wear a face covering in enclosed spaces

2020 EVENT LINEUP HIGHLIGHTS

Safe Family, Fun, and Returning Favorites

Meadow Brook Hall is once more delivering an engaging lineup of events to delight and inspire the community. This year, the focus is on building traditions with families, friends and people of all ages to enjoy some of The Hall's favorite events year after year.

Celebrate summer and fall at the Great Estate by attending one or more of the delightful and whimsical events set in the house and grounds of this National Historic Landmark.



Yoga in the Garden | 9-10 a.m., Sunday, Aug. 9

Namaste! Take a breath of fresh air and experience Yoga in the Rock Garden at Meadow Brook this summer. All levels are welcome to join in the class, which will focus on stretching and strengthening the body to release stress and rejuvenate. **Walk-in tickets are \$15 or \$13.50 per member per session. Members-Only offer: Bring a friend for free.**

Summer Concert Series

7-9:30 p.m., Thursdays, July 30 and Aug. 6

Look forward to a vibrant evening at Meadow Brook's beloved Summer Concert Series. Each of the three concerts will

feature live music by one of Detroit's best, including **Kimmie Horne** and **Ben Sharkey**.

Enjoy a full cash bar and take the opportunity to stroll the lush gardens before the concert. Reservations are \$30 per person or \$27 for members for each concert.

Members-Only offer: Attend both concerts for \$49.



Art in the Elements Preview Evening

Thursday, Sept. 10 | 6-9 p.m.

Pairing the best of the Great Estate's beautiful grounds and the talent of floral artists from around the country, Art in the Elements will delight nature and art lovers of all ages. Stroll through the woodland paths of The Great Estate and meet the artists at an exclusive preview of the exhibition that features dozens of large-scale floral art sculptures and displays. Cash bar. \$20 per person or Free for members.

**“Thank you for providing our
community with first-class
entertainment in our own backyard!”**
– Summer concert attendee



meadowbrookhall.org @meadowbrookhall

Art in the Elements Tour

Friday-Sunday, September 11-13
10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Fri. & Sat.
10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Sunday

Explore Meadow Brook's unique floral art exhibition in a limited-run tour throughout The Great Estate's woodland paths. The tour features

high-impact floral art sculptures and displays created by renowned floral artists from around the country. **\$20 per person or Free for members.**



Wild Happy Hour & Auction

Thursday, September 17
5:30-7:30 p.m.

Fantastic fare. Inspired auctions. Support that is totally wild.

Take a walk on the culinary wild side with Meadow Brook's biggest annual fundraising event—the Wild Happy Hour—a spin-off of the annual Wild Game Dinner that will accommodate pandemic safety protocols. Enjoy delectable wild and mild hors d'oeuvres, along with a full bar and a beautiful setting that is unmatched. The silent auction is set along the loggia terrace as the sun sets and offers dozens of choices, from jewelry to travel experiences, unique packages and more. The evening continues with a live auction.

Reservations are \$80 per person.



Dinner and a Movie

Thursdays, Oct. 1, Oct. 8 | 7-10 p.m.

Feel the thrill that only Hitchcock can provide this fall with a unique dining experience inside Meadow Brook's Ballroom. It's the perfect date night when you pair the gothic-inspired setting with a casual three-course dinner, cash bar and a classic film noir thriller. Watch "Strangers on a Train" on Oct. 1 and "Shadow of a Doubt" on Oct. 8.

Reservations are \$45 each or \$40.50 for members.

Meadow Brook Masquerade Ball

Friday, October 30 | 6-10 p.m.

Put an elegant twist on Halloween at the Meadow Brook Masquerade Ball. Elaborate gowns, tuxedos and Venetian masks are encouraged for this spectacular event. Live music from Kimmie Horne, dancing, strolling dinner, an open bar, and self-guided touring of the Tudor-revival mansion will make the Masquerade Ball a night to remember. **Reservations are \$100 each or \$90 for members.**



Mystery Dinner

Thursdays, October 22 and 29

Amateur sleuths will enjoy an engaging evening of murder, mystery and mayhem. This interactive event includes a three-course meal in either the Christopher Wren Dining Room or the Ballroom, cocktails and a chance to solve the mystery, "Of Sound Mind and Dead Body."

Reservations are \$90 each or \$81 for members.

Safety Protocols

Attendance may be limited due to State distancing guidelines. Call early!

All community programs listed require reservations in advance (with the exception of Yoga in the Garden). To make reservations, please call Jill at (248) 364-6252 or visit meadowbrookhall.org/programs.

Member Benefits

Become a Meadow Brook Member! Membership entitles you to a 10% discount on all community programs and museum store merchandise, plus exclusive perks. For more information, call Lauren at (248) 364-6264 or visit meadowbrookhall.org/support.

Independent Spirit

BY MADELYN RZADKOWOLSKI



A look back at the life of
Barbara Jean Wilson

Barbara Jean Wilson was born May 15, 1931 and spent her first months at the Cradle Orphanage in Chicago. She was adopted by Matilda and Alfred Wilson and brought home to Meadow Brook Hall, where older siblings Frances and Daniel Dodge and Richard Wilson (adopted from the Cradle a year earlier) quickly became enamored with the happy blonde and blue-eyed girl. For Alfred, it was love at first sight when he saw her at The Cradle, setting off a lifetime of a special father-daughter relationship.

Barbara was welcomed into the family after a suggestion from Frances, who felt her youngest brother, Richard (then two), would need a playmate. It was a thoughtful move, as the loneliness and isolation of the farm was exacerbated by the safety concerns stemming from the wealth and status of the young children's adoptive family. In 1932, security on Meadow Brook's estate intensified with the breaking news of the kidnapping of famous pilot Charles Lindbergh's son, Charles Lindbergh, Jr. Despite paying a ransom, the toddler would be found dead, cementing the Wilsons' fears as well as Barbara and Richard's fate: they would be even more heavily guarded than their older siblings had been. While Frances and Dan often played with Bloomfield Hills classmates and children on neighboring farms, Barbara and Dick rarely saw even the children whose families lived and worked at Meadow Brook Farm.

They had each other, though, and the recreational opportunities offered on the estate. Barbara grew up riding horses (and competing in horse shows), swimming in the indoor and outdoor pools, sledding and ice skating. She spent summers at Camp Huntingdon in northern Michigan (Dick next door at the male Camp Sherwood), taking the train up with a gaggle of girlfriends, many of them



whose families were members of the Detroit Athletic Club. When she was eight, she told the *Detroit Free Press* she would be concentrating on canoeing, dancing and crafts.

Barbara and Richard attended elementary and some of middle school at Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills until World War II broke out. Fuel rationing from the war necessitated an end to the daily chauffeured rides to and from school, and so the children were sent to boarding school. Barbara attended Tenacre in Massachusetts, then Walker in Connecticut until graduating from Miss Gill's in New Jersey in 1950. After returning

home, she celebrated her debut with two parties at The Hall that totaled 1,400 guests. The daytime party featured a quartet and many of her parents' friends, while the evening do rocked out with the Dick Jurgens' orchestra, 350 yellow orchids, 17 security guards and 25 cases of champagne.

At Miss Gill's, Barbara – or “Wils” as she was called – played varsity field hockey and basketball, was co-head of the social committee and sang in Glee Club, even performing in the school performance of the operetta *Mikado* in 1949. She became close friends with Lois Eccles, whose family lived



just an hour away in Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. Instead of going back to Rochester during short school breaks, Barbara became a fixture at



From top: At The Hall, 1931; playing in the sandbox with Alfred, Richard and Dan, c. 1932; with Alfred and Richard, c. 1936. Opposite: Barbara at a horse show, 1938.



the Eccles' household. The family, wealthy but nowhere near the level of the Wilsons, was warm and friendly, particularly Lois' older brother, Tom....

Barbara and Tom took to writing each other while at their respective schools. The letters became especially serious when Tom was deployed to Korea during that conflict. The couple became quietly engaged and Matilda and Alfred flew to New Jersey to meet their daughter's future in-laws. Matilda wrote Barbara that the Eccles loved her as much as they did.

In 1952, Barbara earned a two-year Home Economics degree at Garland Jr. College in Massachusetts. Her parents booked her on the Queen Elizabeth for a trip to Europe with her close friend Paula Gerber (yes, that Gerber). Tragedy struck on June 27,



Barbara's debut portrait, 1950. Opposite: The daytime debut party (top) featured a luncheon and string music in the Breakfast Garden but at night, the family changed into gowns and tuxedos and Barbara and Richard welcomed friends for dancing.



Barbara married Thomas S. Eccles at The Hall on June 27, 1953. After the reception, the couple changed into traveling clothes before being sent off on their honeymoon to Hawaii. Outside of Barbara's bedroom, Alfred wishes her a "bon voyage."

Opposite: The Eccles family at their Scottsdale home, 1964; Matilda, Frances, Barbara and Richard at Matilda's 80th birthday party, 1963; Barbara Wilson Eccles at The Hall for her 80th birthday party, 2011.

1952 when Tom was injured in a missile attack on the front lines. The Eccles forwarded the news to Barbara, but it was days before anyone knew how seriously he was injured. They knew he was stable when they received news he'd been transferred to a hospital in Japan, but that also meant his injury was severe enough to remove him from combat. Tom would spend the next six months in the hospital, returning to active duty December 10. He spent Christmas of 1952 on leave, and on December 28, Lt. Thomas S. Eccles and Barbara J. Wilson made their engagement public at a party at Meadow Brook Hall.

Barbara and Tom were married in The Hall's living room on June 27, 1953 and spent their honeymoon in Hawaii. Upon returning, they moved to San Francisco for a couple years to finish Tom's service before settling into a home in Bloomfield Hills (chosen by Alfred Wilson) where young Tom set to prove himself in real estate and automotive business ventures.

While in California, Tom had earned his commercial pilot's license. When a pilot friend blacked out while flying with his wife, who had to land the plane, Barbara convinced Tom to teach her to fly. She had all of her flight hours but never got her license; her only concern was ensuring the safety of her family while up in the air.

The couple's five children mostly grew up in Scottsdale, Arizona, where the family moved around 1960. The children fondly recalled special Christmas traditions (many of them following what Barbara had experienced growing up at Meadow Brook) and how their mother made their favorite dinners and cakes for their birthdays. During the hot month of August, their mother drove them to California for a couple weeks, while Christmas break was spent in the canyons and pine forests of Sedona. The children also recalled a famous babysitter in Scottsdale, a young John Denver.

After Alfred died in 1962, Tom and Barbara used her inheritance to buy a



folk nightclub in downtown Scottsdale, renaming it The Lumber Mill in honor of her father, the lumber broker. It became the hotspot for local and visiting musicians, including Waylon Jennings and Dolan Ellis. John Denver was discovered while playing there the summer of 1965 and wrote “For Baby” about a girl he met there. Barb enjoyed the anonymity she found at the club, as well as being able to spend the days with her children and go to work at night. Barbara needed this time at home, because she had custody of the children after she and Tom separated,

before divorcing in 1968. Society was still somewhat unfair to independent women, and Barb found the bank less than willing to open a bank account in her name without the permission of a father or husband. Luckily, the women’s movement was on the rise and they conceded.

Barbara spent the next several decades working, taking family vacations to visit her friends and siblings and remaining best friends with her brother Richard. In her sunset years, she was a frequent and favorite visitor at the restaurants and country bars of old Scottsdale, where the staffs knew

nothing of her background but considered her a beloved, saucy and hilarious matriarch of a time gone by. Barbara’s children recalled she had a treasured bond with each of them, but nearly everyone who got to know her that felt that special connection that can only be made by a truly remarkable woman.

Barbara W. Eccles passed away on January 1, 2020, but her love and her legacy live on with her family, friends and all who appreciate Meadow Brook’s place in history. **MB**



One ringy-dingy

BY KIM ZELINSKI



Ringers, bells and buzzers could be heard throughout Meadow

Brook Farms from various telephones, door bells and call buttons and these state-of-the-art devices played a large role in the evolving communication practices of the estate.

America of the early 20th Century was a nation in love with machines and gadgets. Wealthy American industrialists had no qualms about investing capital into labor-saving machinery and modern technology – both in their factories and in their residences. High expectations for comfort, convenience and efficiency paralleled those found in luxury hotels. And country estates were not left behind, incorporating the latest technology in telephones and servant call systems. Owners made often costly investments for the benefit of estate operating efficiency, personal and family enjoyment and to attract and retain sought-after domestic staff.



Western Electric phones in Meadow Brook Hall, c. 1929. Opposite: Nursery Kitchen wall phone; above, Frances Dodge's bedside phone; upper right, French Room guest phone; right, Matilda Wilson's Morning Room desk phone, c. 1937.



Operator please

Within months of commencement of the construction of Meadow Brook Hall in 1926, the important task of installing thousands of feet of wire through conduit to power the telephone service, door bells and annunciation system was underway. In January of 1927, options for telephone service were presented to Matilda and Alfred Wilson in a two-page letter from Meadow Brook Hall construction supervisor C.E. Murray of architects Smith, Hinchman & Grylls. The letter first reassured Matilda that her concern over the telephone line failure that had occurred at the William Scripps estate



(in nearby Lake Orion, Michigan) due to an electric storm, was not likely to occur at Meadow Brook with the installation of lightning arrestors. Murray suggested two options for Meadow Brook's telephone service: a private branch exchange provided by Michigan Bell Telephone or a private automatic exchange (P.A.X.) manufactured by Automatic Electric Inc. of Chicago, noting the latter had been installed at the Henry Ford estate (Fairlane) in Dearborn.

After reviewing an array of operational options for each system as well as the investment costs and annual fees, the Wilsons ultimately decided on the Michigan Bell Telephone system. Service was planned for 37 telephones, 25 of which were to be installed in the main home and the balance in outbuildings such as the children's playhouses, the farmhouse, Gate Lodge and Dodge clubhouse. Annual lease cost for the equipment and phones were estimated at \$1,000, not including monthly calling charges.

The network of phones included various types of rotary styles including candlestick, desktop, wall-mounted and a few "special" hidden phones. Each extension was connected to a manual switchboard, which happened to be the same device that had been installed in the Grosse Pointe mansion Matilda and John Dodge were building in 1919 (just prior to his death in 1920).

The switchboard, located in a room in Meadow Brook's servants wing, was attended – Monday through

Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – by an operator the Wilsons employed. From this strategically situated room, the operator could not only manage the phone system, but visually monitor guests at the main entrance and if necessary tend in person to the comings and goings of family members at the

mid-stair entrance. In the evening or on Sundays and holidays, the switchboard was typically turned off and calls routed to the butler's phone in the service wing corridor and to the watchman's house (Gate Lodge). The telephone in Alfred's den could also connect to an outside line should the family need external service.

Over the years, several switchboard operators held this position, the longest tenured being Thelma Banta, who began her employment in 1940. She was among the most valued employees on the estate, particularly by Barbara Wilson. Barbara recalls being fascinated with the phone system and learned how to operate it from Thelma. She also remembered (fondly) that Thelma called her a pest because she was always popping in to say hello. For Barbara, Meadow Brook could sometimes be a lonely place to live and Thelma was someone she could talk to...in person.



Top: The Great Hall's phone was hidden behind a carved panel; above, The Drawing Room's concealed table phone; right, the butler's annunciator panel.



The Holzer-Cabot Electric Company





At your service...

Highly dependent on their domestic staff for daily assistance, the Wilsons' installation of an electric service call system was designed to be an efficient labor-saving device. Meadow Brook Hall's annunciator system, manufactured by Holtzer-Cabot in Boston, incorporated some 44 call buttons installed throughout the house and at exterior door entrances. When pushed, the call button would send an electrical current to certain annunciator panels, activating a buzzer and small light bulb that corresponded to a specific room.



Each of the three panels in the service wing – one near the Butler's Pantry (next to the kitchen), a maid's panel near the servants dining room and another maids panel outside their bedroom quarters, had an adjustable tone buzzer to differentiate the sound of who was being called. Additional buzzer devices were installed in specific rooms in the servants wing.

Particularly in the larger rooms such as the living room, ballroom and the bedroom suites, multiple call buttons were placed. The dining room and breakfast room also had call buttons on the floor under tables so one didn't need to get up to summon assistance.

Routing assignments from call buttons to annunciator panel were designated by responsibilities and gender. The maids generally responded to



calls from the second-floor bedrooms and main floor powder room. The call buttons on the lower level, main floor and Alfred's bedroom suite were routed to the butler's annunciator panel. Daniel Dodge's bedroom suite was wired to both panels so as he matured (he was 12 when The Hall opened) he would transition

Above: Switchboard operator Thelma Banta, c. 1945 (courtesy Jean Kemler Larkum); left, Meadow Brook's switchboard, c. 1919 model.

from the maid's panel to the butler's. Some areas such as the ballroom and elevators and exterior door call buttons were routed to all panels.

While the annunciation system operated well throughout the years of family occupancy (up until Matilda's death in 1967), The Hall's telephone system required the addition of extensions as the estate grew, including various farm groups, stables and kennels. In later years, as the estate began to wind down, the Wilsons employed a much smaller staff and many staff positions were no longer needed. Eventually, the telephone operator, butler and chamber maid would join the ranks of other fading positions, such as the milkman, pin setter, elevator operator and clock winder.

Meadow Brook Hall's communication devices were most certainly the technological ancestors of today's cell phone and other wireless systems. One could only imagine how The Hall would have operated with today's technology – the Wilsons giving voice commands to an Alexa to play music or set the temperature in a room. Or, Matilda texting the stable manager to ready their horses for a ride around the estate. Current communication technology will no doubt be looked at as "ancient" as Meadow Brook's once were.



A closer look at some of Meadow Brook Hall's remaining original telephones reveals an imprinted number on a card beneath the dial with the telephone exchange name: OL-1-9511. The letters corresponded to the name of the exchange, which was OLIVE, as well as numbers. In this case the "O" was the number 6 and the "L" the number 5, thus making the number: 651-9511. Eventually, area codes were added. In 1947 the Rochester area code was 313, in 1993 it was changed to

810 and in 1997 changed to 248. Meadow Brook Hall's original number was eventually dropped as the system was integrated into Oakland University's telephone system. **MB**

West to East

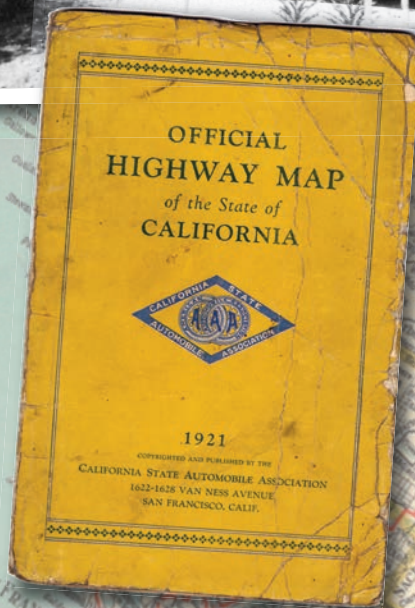
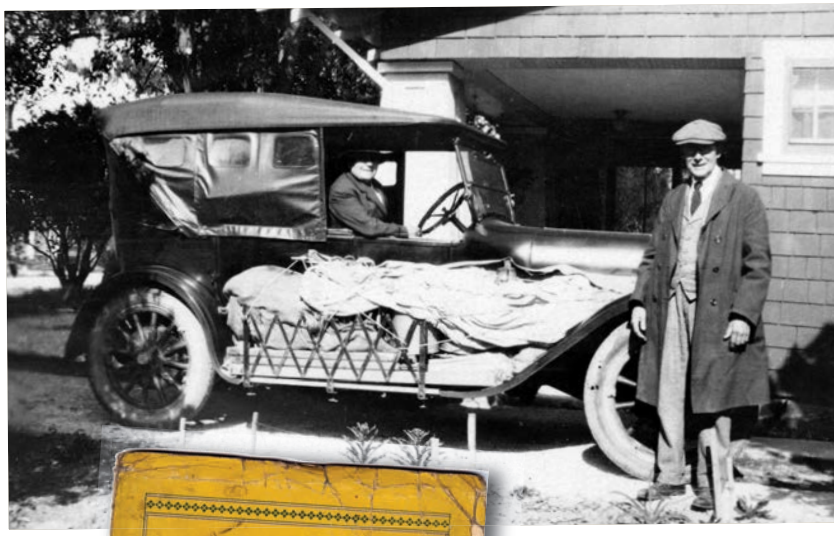
BY MADELYN RZADKOWOLSKI

Wilson A. Munson and his wife, Bertha, began a year-long road trip in their c. 1920 Dodge Brothers touring car (complete with canvas top and side curtains) in 1923. The Munsons, who lived in Huntington, Massachusetts, “mothballed” their farm and drove cross-country to California and back. Mr. Munson was 59 and Mrs. Munson was 58

years old. Mr. Munson detailed their journey in a diary*, providing an incredibly thorough and historically important description of the sights, mileage, automotive issues, the weather and much more. This half of the diary starts in California in February 1924 and ends in New York in July 1924. At times, Mrs. Munson writes the entries. An accompanying map depicted their eastern and western routes. Another couple, the Fiskes, were along for the trip and drove an REO [Initials of Ransom E. Olds, who founded this automotive company after founding Oldsmobile].

Portions of the Munson’s route were on the Lincoln Highway of 1913, the first transcontinental roadway in the US, traversing from New York City to San Francisco. The automobile brought unprecedented freedom to Americans and “auto camping” was their favorite mode of travel in the 1920s, facilitated by new and improved roadways. Campgrounds and service stations sprung up along these routes but accommodations were rustic and sporadic, meaning drivers had to have the skills and supplies to maintain or repair their cars and to sleep under the stars, no matter the weather. The Munsons often slept in a waxed canvas tent next to their car.

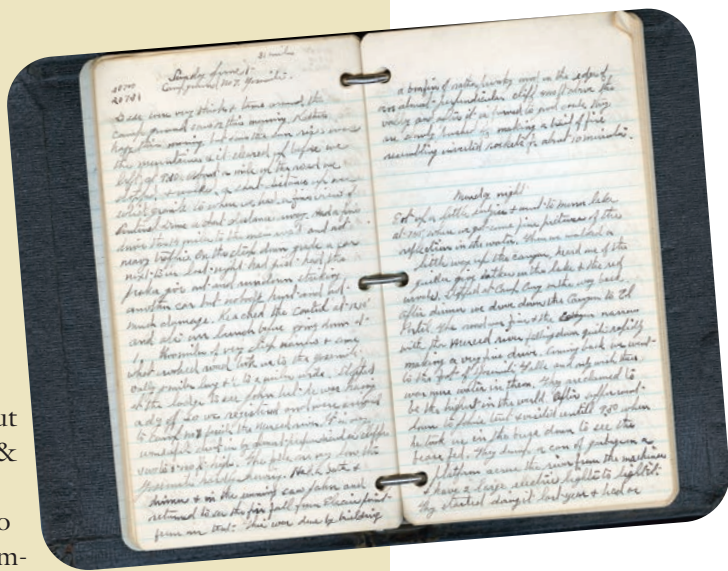
Automobiles themselves were void of modern luxuries like seatbelts, heat, air conditioning and glass windows. Though Dodge Brothers built the first all-steel bodied car in 1914, like most touring cars it had an open body with a canvas roof. The Munsons used detachable canvas and plastic sides to keep out rain and cold.



Top: In 1923, Wilson (standing) & Bertha (inside car) Munson packed their c. 1920 Dodge Brothers touring car and set off for a coast-to-coast road trip. The back of photo reads: “The best travelers Calif. ever saw.” Bottom and background: Official Highway map of California, 1921, Munson collection.

Sunday, February 24, 1924

Left at 8:45 for San Diego to visit the Fiskes who have taken an apartment there. Wind blowing gusts hard & has all night. The whole county shows the effects of no rain. Thousands of acres of wheat are turning yellow and will not make a crop even if we should have rain come now. At Escondido we turned off to Ramona and had two grades which were very scenic through canyons covered with large live oaks. There were many cars through here with the folks having lunch. Arrived at 4:45 and found the Fiskes out and waited ½ hours for them. They have two rooms & use of both. We have a room next [to] them at [\$]1 per day and paid [\$]1.50 for garage for week. Went to the Presbyterian Church tonight and there were a number of boys from the Navy training station.



...Rained very hard for 2 hours and when we came home some of the streets were perfect rivers...

Friday March 7

Fine sunshiny day, left at 8:15 with the Allens for Camp Baldy. Went through Ontario & Upland and then up through the San Antonio canyon about 8 miles to Camp Baldy. There is quite a good sized hotel like and lot of summer campers. Then about 3 miles up the Horse Canyon which was as far as the road went. It was rather picturesque ride up a narrow wash like and at one point we saw 4 deer & took a picture of them. They were not very wild. This country is all in the Los Angeles National Forest & hunting is prohibited.



Wednesday, March 26, 1924

Raining this morning and kept it up most of the day. Had the car gone over this morning. This afternoon drove out to the Allens & played 500. Rained very hard for 2 hours and when we came home some of the streets were perfect rivers and at some of the street crossings in the center of the city planks were put over the gutters so people could cross.

The foot & mouth disease has been discovered in Los Angeles and San Francisco, Los Angeles, Contra Costa, Merced, Alameda, Mariposa and parts of Napa & Solano are under strict quarantine. Deputy Sheriffs are patrolling the highways to prevent the movement of stock. Dogs & cats are ordered off the streets. 10,000 to 15,000 head of stock have already been killed. There is a great deal of anxiety among the stock men as Southern California usually ships 250,000 head of spring lamb to market and it is almost time for shipments to begin.



From top: The Munsons recorded the highlights of their road trip in a small leather-bound journal; Postcard view of Mt. Baldy, Los Angeles, c. 1920; Automobile inspection site for hoof-and-mouth disease, c. 1924, courtesy California Historical Society.

Postcards courtesy Newberry Library Archives, Chicago, unless otherwise noted.



Thursday, March 27

Worked at packing & putting preservative on roof of car & curtains. In afternoon took pictures of the house & family. Then drive out and got some orange honey & did some errands.

Friday March 28, 1924

Cloudy nearly all day and storming in the mountains. Some of those who left their cars in the mountains have made unsuccessful attempts to get them. The foot & mouth disease has broken out in a new place & quarantine is very strict. Washed & polished the car & packed some in the morning.

Tuesday April 1

Fine day and we left at 8:10. At Ontario found the Fiskes all loaded & we left there a little after 1 o'clock. Went through Upland to the Foothill Boulevard which we followed to Pasadena, Eagle Rock & Elindale where we followed the Inland Route through Burbank & San Fernando to Sawyer where we turned off & went through a narrow valley to Ventura on the Coast Route.

About 3 o'clock at Santa Paula it quite unexpectedly began to rain & continued nearly all the way to Santa Barbara which we reached about 6 o'clock. Some of the way it rained very hard & it was quite slippery and slow driving. We had expected to camp tonight but as it rained we were in a hotel. The drive today was very pretty the flowers being quite plenty and the roses fine.

San Francisco Saturday April 5

About 8 o'clock went over to the park and saw the Big Trees again. They are trying to have the State take it over and hope they will soon. The ride up over the Santa Cruz Mountains was very fine and grand. Had lunch at Los Gatos. The best we had had for 40¢. 17,829-17,877 5gal.



Thursday night April 24

In camp in the mountains 15 miles south of the Oregon line. Left camp at 8 o'clock & crossed the ferry (75 cents) up through a very crooked narrow way and sun struck the redwoods. We had 8 miles of bad road through them but they were very interesting. Had about 18 miles of fairly good road nearly 10 miles high up on a mountain side over the ocean which was very scenic. Then Crescent City, which has a beach which is described as the most beautiful racing beach in the world. We didn't drive on it but went across it nearly a ¼ mile to the water. We got our supplies and struck into the mountains. We have come about 25 miles through them over very rough crooked and narrow roads with some long heavy grades most of the time in second speed and we were about 4 hours going the 25

miles. The first half of the way was through heavy redwoods & then around high up on the almost bare mountain. We are on a flat flare in the mountainside in view of 3 snowcapped mountains [possibly El Capitan, Copper Mountain & Preston Peak] in Oregon. They are building a new road through the country we have come, we have seen several gangs at work. They are putting it through here down on the stream and we passed the supply station a little ways back where the stuff is brought to by truck and then packed down on mule back. Fiske cut a tire when running into camp tonight. 17,877 17,922 2[gallons]



From top: Los Angeles guidebook, 1914, Munson collection; Old Mission, Santa Barbara postcard, MBH Archives; Overlook on the Pacific Highway, northern California, c. 1925.



... At the line we were stopped, told to step into a tub of formaldehyde, had our cars sprayed and a sticker put in the windshield...

Friday night April 25

In camp 25 miles south of Grants Pass, Oregon. Left camp at 9:40 being held up by Fiske mending his tire. Wind blew quite hard the last of the night & this morning so we had the stove & table in the tent. The 15 miles to the Oregon line was the same very crooked narrow & rough roads up and down over the mountains nearly all the time in second speed. At the line we were stopped, told to step into a tub of formaldehyde, had our cars sprayed and a sticker put in the windshield which was said to pass us to the Washington line. The next 6 miles were the roughest-going. We had had over the same kind of country but we only met 2 machines and there where there were turn outs. At Kirby we struck a graded road with fair running and we are about 5 miles from there beside a little stream where we bathed our feet tonight and the frogs are tuning up in good shape. We stopped at 4 o'clock. At Waldo saw where they were mining gold by washing down the gravel & mud with a 6 inch stream of water therein with great force.

735—OSWEGO LAKE, OREGON, NEAR PORTLAND, MT. HOOD IN THE DISTANCE



The Munsons traveled along the coast from California to reach Oregon; at the state line, all cars were sanitized to protect against the spread of hoof-and-mouth disease. It would be another four days of rough roads and mountain passes before they reached Portland.



... Cleaned off the car of dust which was very thick after our ride over the redwood highway...



Sunday night April 27, 1924

Staid at the camp lodge cleaned off the car of dust which was very thick after our ride over the redwood highway, which was dirt road & very dry. Ladies did their washing and at 11:30 we drove up the highway 5 miles to a new bridge just finished over the South Umpqua River where they were to have dedication exercises which were very interesting.

Tuesday night on Municipal Campground at Portland

Left camp at 9 o'clock and went through McMinnville. We had about 20 miles of rather rough road and the rest very fine pavement. It sprinkled some through the day and at 4 began to rain. We got our mail at the Post Office as we came through the city the campground being out about 3 miles. Fiske had a flat tire just before we stopped but blew it up so he reached camp. We stopped at

2:45. Large campground. Spent the evening in the recreation room and it was very amusing.

April 30, Wednesday night in camp just above Kalama Wash.

Left camp at 9 o'clock & drove out to the Columbia River Bridge & put our things into the fumigating house where they were kept 4 hours. Fiske made quite a fuss & would have liked to turn back. 12 cars were there when we got our things a little after 2 o'clock.



From top: Fresno County map, 1923, courtesy Library of Congress; When the Munsons left Massachusetts in 1923, they may not have imagined the dust that would fly through the open windows and settle on their exterior-packed luggage, especially on the "Redwood Highway" (right), a 200-mile long stretch of road in northern California.

Sunday May 4

Rained during night & showery all day. Washed car just before dinner as it looked as if it had cleared off. When greasing car afterwards my left knee, which had been bothering me for 2 days, gave out and could hardly walk. A little way from the city they had quite a severe lightning, thunder & hail-storm. It was very black off that way.

...Coming home found a new machine on its side having run up the bank & turned over. 5 nurses were in it one of them driving who had an arm broken & was cut quite a bit...

Monday night Pinecamp at Seattle

Knee was quite bad so staid in during xx treating it. Fiske left at just before 11 for Vancouver. In afternoon as knee was better, we drove to the zoo where we saw 2 baby monkeys; 1 only 4 days old. Quite a lot of bears etc.

Friday night May 16 In camp at Weed

Left camp about 8:30, went through Medford, Ashland & Yreka to Weed, a lumber town where we were camped about a mile beyond the town right beside a small stream of very clear water. Drive from Grants Pass up the Rogue River valley was very pretty, fine forming land & in good shape. Picked up our mail at Ashland & visited the park where they have 3 fountains of mineral water: soda, Lithia & Sulphur. [natural lithium oxide deposits in the spring were touted as a health tonic discovered there in 1911 but more of a bad tasting oddity today.]

Monday night May 19

Unloaded car in morning. In afternoon had batteries attended to & oil in crankcase changed. Then drove out to beach & park a little while. Fine in morning but raw & cool with strong wind in afternoon.

Wed. night May 21

Got car from garage after dinner and at 3:30 started for the Harrimans at San Jose. Started out Skyline Boulevard but wind blew so hard we went down the main highway.

Friday night May 23

Called at the Currys in the morning and after lunch started for S.F. stopped at Woodside a few minutes to call on old Mr. Keystone. Coming home found a new machine on its side having run up the bank & turned over. 5 nurses were in it one of them driving who had an arm broken & was cut quite a bit. She had been taken to San Mateo to hospital & we took 2 of the others. And another machine taking the others reached home about 4 o'clock.

Saturday

Washed & polished the car & went over the top with harness soap. Packed some packages to ship. 20,579 20,658

Friday night May 30 In camp at Mariposa Grove of Big Trees

Left camp about 9 o'clock. Sorry after leaving town we went through what were claimed to be the largest redwood & apricot orchards in the world. The Del-Monte belonging to the California Packing Co. rows almost as long as you could see, peach one side of road & apricot the other. 20,658 20,700



The diary marvels at the wonders of the country, including the great redwoods of Yosemite and the sight of thousands of apricots drying in the California sun. Postcard of the Grizzly Giant, c. 1930, MBH Archives.



The Munsons spent their first night in Yosemite camping at 7,000 ft. elevation at Glacier Point before they and their car descended into the valley to see sights like Mirror Lake; MBH Archives.

Sat. night in camp at Glacier Point

Left camp about 9 o'clock & went up through the grove again past the trees we saw last night to the Wawona tree where we took a picture of the car first coming out of the tree. Then up to Wawona Point about 7,000 ft. where we had a wonderful view of the surrounding country with Wawona in the valley at our feet. Through the California tree on our way back. Left the grove at 10 o'clock & had the same kind of mountain driving to Chinquapin [Falls] where we turned off for Glacier Point. First 1 ½ miles was low speed all the way & warmed the car up so we had to stop once in a while. Most of the rest of the 14 miles was first & second speed 2 ½ hours in the 14 miles at one place 8,000 ft. elevation 7,200 at Glacier Point. Camped about ½ mile from the Point where we had a wonderful view of the high Sierras but little snow on them. Walked down to the point after supper & saw the sunset over the mountains and Yosemite Valley at our feet—a sheer drop of over 4,000 feet & through the glasses could see the machines.

20700 20,731

...On the steep down grade a car had the brakes give out and rundown striking another car...

Sunday June 1 Campground No. 7 Yosemite

Deer were very thick & tame around the campground. Saw 12 this morning. Rather foggy this morning but saw the sun rise over the mountains & it cleared up before we left at 9:30. About a mile up the road we stopped & walked a short distance up over solid granite to where we had a fine view of Sentinel Dome a short distance away. Had a fine drive the 14 miles to the main road and not heavy traffic. On the steep down grade a car next to us last night had just had the brakes give out and rundown striking another car but nobody hurt and not much damage. Reached the control at 12:15 and ate our lunch before going down at 1. Two miles of very steep narrow & some what crooked road took us to the Yosemite Valley. 21,997-22,064

Monday night June 16 In camp at Pocatello, Idahoe [sp] put on new tire

Left camp at 8 o'clock & went in town so we could get supplies. Sent 1 6 order & getting away at 9. Went 16 miles over the mountains to Cache Valley 10 miles of it through construction work which was very rough & hard. Here we struck cement pavement for 30 miles.

22,064-22,199

Tuesday night June 17 In camp among the spruce about 40 miles from Yellowstone Park

Left camp at 8:15 & had brakes adjusted & left at 9 on the road. 22,199-22,273

Wed. night June 18 In camp at Old Faithful.

It was a very cloudy cold morning & just before we started at 8 o'clock sprinkled a little & we looked for a rainy day. 30 miles to the Montana line & the Continental Divide was very good road over almost a level country, the first of it mostly covered with small spruce. Then we came out into an open country with ranches. From the Montana line to West Yellowstone was rather poor road but not much grade. Here we entered Yellowstone Park at 10:15. 22,273-22,324

Thursday night June 19

In camp at Canyon Junction. Woke up this morning to find an inch of snow on the ground but the sun came out and it disappeared by 9 o'clock. However by 11 o'clock, we had quite a squall of sleet and off and on all day we had snow & sleet-- a regular March day.... Took a picture of Old Faithful at 10 & then started. Climbed to the Continental Divide again at 8,345. Going down from here we met a black bear in the road & he came & sat up 4 ft. from the car to have his picture taken.... Six miles after leaving Lake Junction, we saw the Mud Geyser, a large pool of boiling mud, another one boiling up about 3 ft. all the time. Dragon's Mouth Springs, where a large boiling discharge comes out from under the mountains. We followed the Yellowstone River, a large stream for a long distance. This part of the road had several bad mud spots where the frost had just come out. Helped one car dig out, we being the only ones with a shovel. Have the poorest camp sight [site] we have seen in the Park and snowing most of the time, a black bear in around the camp all the time. About 6 o'clock a young man from a nearby tent asked if we could use a couple of trout. Of course we could. They would weigh about 1 lb. each & they caught 18. We are going down to the community room, as it is quite cold.

22,324-22,363

...We met a black bear in the road & he came & sat up 4 ft. from the car to have his picture taken...

Friday night June 20 In camp at Mammoth Hot Springs.

Woke up this morning to find about 1 ½ in. snow and rather cloudy, dreary morning. Bear were around camp most of the time 2 cinnamon & 2 black at one time. Got packed up & left at 9:20 for the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, a miniature Grand Canyon of the Colorado...At a ranger's station, saw 2 young deer 12 days old, very endearing. One of the campers put their food box under their car, they had a given a bear some pieces of bacon & he wanted some more, so he came & put his paw under the car, pushed off the cover, took out a loaf of bread & a big lot of bacon, two women sitting in the car & they were scared stiff.

22,705-22,899

Tuesday night June 24 In camp at Casper, Wyo.

Left camp at 8:45 & went over the Big Horn River to the Big Horn Hot Springs, said to be the largest in America. They were boiling up in a pool about 25 ft. in diameter at a temperature of 136. There are several levels below & then if flows into the river there are several hotels & the water is claimed to be a cure for rheumatism. 20 miles from town we entered the Wind River Canyon which is 11 miles long, very narrow & crooked, with the mountains on each side sometimes rising to a height of 2,000 ft. and at the upper end it was so narrow there were 5 tunnels on the highway & 4 on the railroad. There was road construction more than halfway & very poor road. Halfway through a tire went down with a tack in it. Had more than 50 miles of desolate country, no buildings or stock.

22,849-23,006

Wed. night June 25 In camp at Chugwater, Wyo.

Left camp at 8:45 & had batteries looked at & gas & tires so it was 9:30 when we left the city. While eating supper, a thunder & hail storm came up & we put



Old Faithful and too-friendly bears were among the sights of Yellowstone; MBH Archives.



the fly up. Lots of the shower were 1 ½ inches in diameter solid ice & very heavy. They came easily so did no damage. The cloud effect afterwards was the most wonderful we ever saw. 23,144-23,194

...While eating supper, a thunder & hail storm came up & we put the fly up...

Friday night June 27 In camp at Denver, Col.

Left camp at 9 o'clock & had pavement most of way to Denver. Stopped at Post Office which was a fine building of Colorado marble occupying an entire block. Came out to camp and put up tent & had lunch. Very warm today some said over 90 degrees but cool tonight. 23,194-23,276

Saturday night June 28 In camp at Colorado Springs, Col.

Left camp at 9:30 went to motor vehicle department at Capitol where I got a guest plate for the machine. At 11 o'clock took a sight seeing trip around, taking in city of Chrisman Peaks, best residential section & some of the business section. Had lunch at a

fine cafeteria, the first meal we have taken out since leaving S.F. [San Francisco] At 2:30 left for Colorado Springs. 23,281-23,312



Hairpin turn outside of Colorado Springs, 1923, and one of the sandstone formations of the wondrous Garden of the Gods, images from Library of Congress.

Monday night June 30 In camp at Colorado Springs.

Cloudy cool morning. Found that a tire which had been bothering had a tack in it, so had it fixed. Left camp about 9:30 & drove up around town very wide straight streets & fine stores. Went out to Manitou & then to the Garden of the Gods where the formations were quite wonderful. Had lunch on top of one of the ridges. Came back & visited the world famous Van Briggles Art Pottery where we saw the process of making the finest pottery we have ever seen. [Oldest continuous operating art pottery, established in 1901. He was a leading figure in Art Nouveau style, researching and refining matte glazes. Closed in 2012. Van Briggles Memorial Pottery was modernized after 1920 fire.] Getting ready to leave for the East in the morning. In the Garden of the Gods, a

sight seeing bus stopped where we were and a lady came up & wanted to know if it wasn't Mr. Munson from Huntington. She was in high school with me 40 years ago & hadn't seen me since but recognized me. Mrs. Sanford Martin. 24,403

Sunday night July 13 In camp at DeKalb, Ill.

Left camp at 9:45. Nice morning, 20 miles of pavement to Clinton. Crossed the Mississippi at Fulton on a toll bridge marked "the Eastern gateway to Western

hospitality". Came through Sterling, Dixon, Ashton & Rochelle. Quite pretty places, especially Sterling with its wide clean streets shaded with fine elms & large fine houses set well back from the street where we came in. Pavement was fine & straight most of the way. *About 150 m*

Wed. July 16 At Ligonier, Ind. About 780 into Albany.

Had breakfast at the house & left about 8 o'clock. Had rather slow work getting up around the city to Gary, Michigan city & then around through the edge of Michigan to South Bend, Ind & on here. Roads were very good most of the time & weather fine. Speedometer gave out just outside Chicago, so we can't tell how fast we run.

Friday night July 18 In camp at Ashtabula.

Left camp at 8:30. Quite cold this morning & very cool all day. Went to Sandusky & followed the lake shore through Lorain to Cleveland. Lorain was a very sorry sight – lots of the buildings entirely destroyed, others off their foundation & cracked beyond repair. State troops are aiding the police. A good many army tents are set up around there & the streets are passable. [The deadliest tornado in Ohio history struck Lorain and Sandusky on June 28, 1924.] Quite pretty all along the lake with cottage & summer resorts a good deal of the way. At Cleveland had the speedometer repaired. *62/204*

...Lorain was a very sorry sight lots of the buildings entirely destroyed, others off their foundation & cracked beyond repair...

Sat. night July 19 In camp 10 miles north of Buffalo.

Left camp at 9 o'clock cool, bright morning. Went thru Conneaut, Erie, Pa. into Ripley NY, Westfield, Brocton, Fredonia, Silver Creek & Lackawanna to Buffalo. Roads were fine, mostly brick in Ohio & Pa., cement in N.Y.

Sunday July 20. In camp bathing & resting.

Quite warm in the day but quite cold at night.
204/282

Monday night July 21 [1924] In camp at Medina.

Left camp at 9 o'clock. Fine sunny morning but cold last night. Good brick road 16 miles into Niagara Falls camping spots all along the road. Went down to the foot of the American Falls but as the mist was heavy, we could not see much. Drive was on to Goat Island and around it. Then over the toll bridge to the Canadian side & down by the whirlpool rapids to just beyond the whirlpool. Ate our lunch at the Aerial Bridge over the rapids. Then up above the upper rapids. The view of both falls & the rapids is much better from the Canadian side. Left at 2 o'clock & went through Medina [New York], where we struck the Million Dollar Highway & are camped here at Medina.

End of excerpt. See following page for map and editor's note.



Top: The Munsons were in Lorain, Ohio just three weeks after the state's deadliest tornado hit on June 28, 1924, courtesy Ohio History. Below: They viewed Niagara Falls from both New York and Canada, MBH Archives.





Start



Left: Wilson Munson used a green crayon to map his route home on his 1921 Rand McNally map of the United States [Route digitally enhanced for better viewing]. Top: Wilson and Bertha stand outside their c. 1920 Dodge Brothers touring car. Grandson Charles Blackman recalled his grandfather was a “dedicated Dodge owner until his last in 1941.” Bottom: View of auto camp in Los Angeles, c. 1925, courtesy California Historical Society.

** Editor’s Note: The “1924 Dodge Road Trip Diary” was donated to the Dodge Collection at Meadow Brook Hall by Charles Blackman, grandson of Wilson and Bertha Munson, in 2018, along with an accompanying collection of maps and photographs. This heavily abridged excerpt of the west-to-east diary (there was also an east-to-west document) was transcribed from the original, but retained spelling errors and crossed-out lines. Modern notes amplifying the events are shown in brackets. Some illegible words remained and are depicted with xx. MB*



This 1919 Dodge Brothers Wrecker is a great example of how the public converted vehicles to better suit their needs in the early days of auto manufacturing, with its back replaced by a truck bed and towing mechanism. It is one of two historic vehicles donated by Al Hackett to The Hall in 2019.

2019 MEADOW BROOK ESTATE DONOR REPORT

(GIFTS RECEIVED JANUARY 1-DECEMBER 31, 2019)

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TUDOR CIRCLE
\$10,000 AND HIGHER

Theodor and Diana Cunningham
Albert Hackett

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Beverly Rewold

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Longtime supporters of Meadow Brook Hall and the Concours d'Elegance classic car show, Donna and Jon Block (shown here with Executive Director Geoff Upward), made a significant estate gift in 2019 to establish the Donna Marie A. F. Block and Jon W. Block Endowment to support the preservation of Meadow Brook Hall, including its furnishing, artifacts, and the automotive collection (see page 7).

HERITAGE SOCIETY

(Supporters who have chosen to remember The Hall in their estate plans)

Edwin and Gretchen Adler
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Dr. and Mrs. Lowell Eklund*
William M. Fox*
Jewell Hall
Charlene Handleman

William H. and Story John
Gary W.* and Ann M. Laidlaw
William Mitzelfeld
Norma A. Oberhauser*
Debra* and William Shea

*Deceased



Thanks to a lead gift in 2019 from steadfast Meadow Brook Hall supporter Beverly Rewold, the Family Garage will be adaptively re-purposed as a Welcome Center, housing estate orientation information and historic and preservation exhibits as well as an estate store. The Rewold family, through their construction company, built many of the estate's buildings and structures, dating back to their founding in 1918.

\$100-\$249

David Archbold+
Jurgita Bendtsen
Jane Bingham+
Benjamin Bokoch
Katherine Borg+
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The final project in the Matilda R. Wilson Fund matching grant (2008-20017) was completed last year, as construction crews made critical masonry repairs on the exterior of The Hall. The Wilson Fund has once again stepped up to support Meadow Brook's ongoing preservation needs with a new matching grant (see page 7).



Portrait of Miss Susannah Brown, *Thomas Gainsborough, c. 1780s. Replicated for the dining room from the original, now at the University of Kentucky Art Museum, as part of the "Lost Painting" fundraising project to return The Hall to its appearance in 1929.*

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\$10,000-\$49,999

Michigan State University Federal
Credit Union

\$1,000-\$9,999

Aurum Design Jewelry
Merrill Lynch
Northern Trust Bank
Piston Automotive LLC
Stoney Creek Questers #203
Szott M-59 Dodge Ram
YourCause LLC – Wells Fargo Community
Support Program

\$250-\$999

Dillman & Upton
Flying Fish Studios
Hopkins Burns Design Studio
Mathworks, Inc.
NOMM, Inc.
PR Haig Jewelers, Inc.

\$100-\$249

Community Foundation
of Greater Rochester
McLaren Macomb Professional Medicine
Troy Garden Club

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Gina DeMartis	Jill Moran	Ann Voorheis-Sargent
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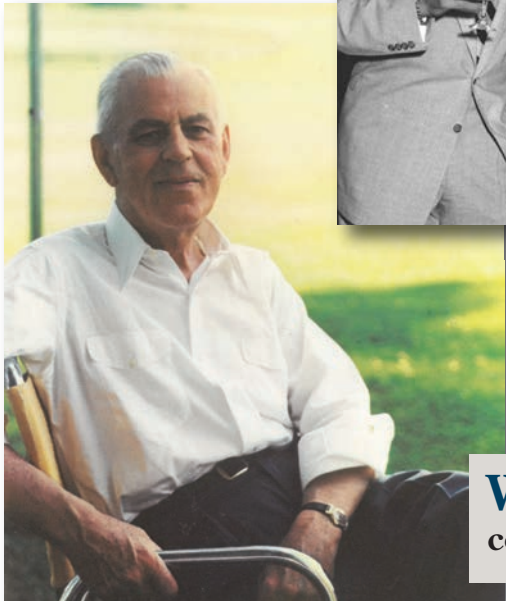


Stoney Creek Questers #203 received a grant from the national organization in 2019 to restore 12 antique dolls in The Hall collection. The group supplemented the grant by providing 250 volunteer hours to index and organize the historic doll clothes that once belonged to young Frances and Barbara. See pg. 7 for this year's project.

A picture's worth...

Meadow Brook was honored to receive a treasured collection from Barbara Wilson Eccles' estate, generously donated by her family. Among the clothes, letters and trophies she had cherished were hundreds of photos, most of them never seen outside of the family.

Barbara and Richard riding horses. . . Barbara laughing with friends at her debut while Dick Jurgens and his big band swing away on a lit stage set up in the Rock Garden. . . Barb's brand-new husband, Tom, quietly sharing martinis with his father and Alfred before the newly married couple depart on their honeymoon. . . These photographs say far more than words. **MB**



Clockwise from top: Barbara, Pointe aux Barques, Michigan, 1932; from left, Tom Eccles, Alfred and Tom's father, Thomas, in Meadow Brook's Secretary's Suite; Alfred in Arizona, c. 1960.

Watch for an exhibit of the new collection highlights this summer.

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