

THE LEGACY

Exploring the history of the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion

2019

GARRETT-JACOBS MANSION ENDOWMENT FUND, INC.

Mary Frick Garrett Jacobs and the Robert Garrett Hospital for Children

Mrs. Garrett's Mission

Most people familiar with Mary Frick Garrett Jacobs know her as the creator of the beautiful urban mansion now home of The Engineers Club at 11 West Mount Vernon Place – and as the socially preeminent woman known as “Baltimore’s Mrs. Astor.” However, Mary Frick may have considered the Robert Garrett Hospital for Children her most important priority – and it’s one almost unknown today, even among her biggest admirers. The Robert Garrett Hospital for Children reflected a different side of Mary Frick, a woman motivated by deeply-felt concern for others.

Mrs. Garrett engaged community volunteers to tutor the children a few hours a day, helping them keep up with their studies.

- *Baltimore Sun*,
9 January 1897

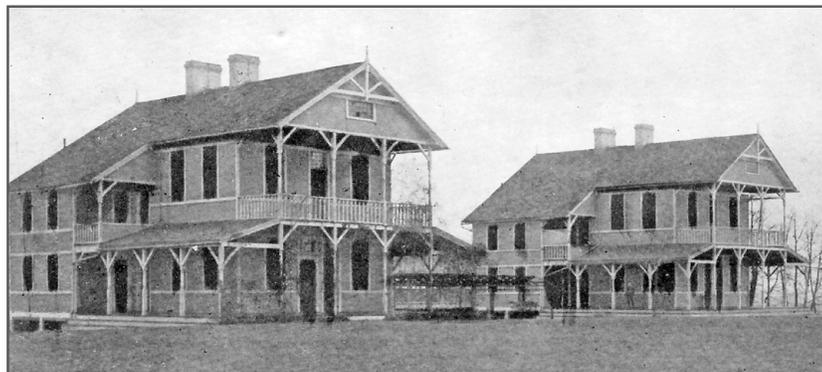
Mrs. Garrett loved children and sought ways to brighten their lives. She was famous for her Christmas parties for newsboys and messengers. But even more, she found a way to significantly improve the lives of many children. According to a 1937 *Baltimore Sun* story by Katherine Scarborough, during a trip to London in mid-1880s, Mrs. Garrett visited the Ormond Street Hospital, a free hospital for children from the city’s slums. Inspired by this hospital, she returned to Baltimore eager to establish something similar. In 1886, she got started by renting rooms in East Baltimore on North Caroline Street and creating a clinic.

She called it Grace Dispensary in honor of her church, Grace and St. Peter’s. Here, Dr. Charles Shippen examined sick children and wrote prescriptions to be filled at the pharmacy around the corner. Mrs. Garrett paid all the bills.

The Robert Garrett Sanitarium for Children

Mary Frick’s husband, Robert Garrett, at one time president of the B&O Railroad, supported her efforts. In 1887, he acquired 47 acres in Mount Airy, about 40 miles west of Baltimore, to build a medical facility for children. Their goal was to enable doctors to treat young patients away from the stifling heat of Baltimore summers. Mount Airy was easily accessible by train on the B&O Railroad, and the Garretts could provide the patients and their parents or guardians free passage to and from the Robert Garrett Sanitarium for Children. The comfortable, expansive institution, according to

Katherine Woods, writing for *The Churchman*, had 26 beds, an isolation ward, and living space for doctors and nurses, with buildings all connected by boardwalks.



The Robert Garrett Sanitarium for Children in Mount Airy. Image courtesy of the Mount Airy Historical Society.

The Robert Garrett Hospital for Children

It was soon obvious to Mrs. Garrett that this hospital met a dire need, prompting her to enlarge her vision. Back in Baltimore, she rented a space larger than the dispensary on Caroline at 107 N. Poppleton St. in West



Portrait of Mary Frick Garrett.
Painted in Paris by
Alexandre Cabanel in 1833.

Baltimore, fitting it out with six beds. Before the year elapsed, she realized that this space, too, was inadequate. So she started again. This time she purchased a three-story house a few blocks west, at 27 N. Carey St., remodeling it with the necessary beds, surgery space (she focused the hospital on orthopedic care), equipment, dispensary, and laundry. Both beautiful and practical, the hospital included a warm, welcoming reception room for visitors. All the floors were covered in the latest in hospital flooring.

A Memorial to her Husband

By the time the new facility was up and running, it was clear that Robert Garrett was seriously ill. Mrs. Garrett recognized in this hospital a way to honor and comfort him – naming it The Robert Garrett Hospital for Children. When Robert Garrett died in 1896, Mrs. Garrett took much satisfaction in having memorialized him in this way.

Her Commitment Endures and Grows

During Mr. Garrett's illness, Mrs. Garrett had engaged Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, to be ever present to care for him. After Robert Garrett's death, Dr. Jacobs took a position at Johns Hopkins Hospital researching tuberculosis. In 1902, Mrs. Garrett and Dr. Jacobs married. Many of Dr. Jacobs' interests coincided with hers, in particular his care for the sick. He too established a hospital for

consumptives, called Eudowood Sanitarium, east of Towson. While Mrs. Garrett (now Mrs. Jacobs) contributed generously to her husband's endeavors paying for a children's wing, she remained devoted to her own mission, and expanded The Robert Garrett Hospital for Children with a three-story addition in 1910 (*Baltimore Sun*, 22 April 1910).

Mrs. Emma Stone,
an African American
cleaning woman, kept
those floors spotless
for 50 years.

-Scarborough

The First Staff

Dr. Walter Platt became superintendent of the Robert Garrett Hospital in 1887 and continued his work there until his death 22 years later. While there, Dr. Platt became an expert in orthopedic procedures, presenting techniques he developed in treating hip joint disease to colleagues at a medical conference in 1898. (*Baltimore Sun*, 16 April 1898). He also became a specialist in the medical care of children; he presented a lecture on illnesses caused by tainted milk in 1912 (*Baltimore Sun*, 13 July 1912).

Mrs. Garrett employed two registered nurses at the hospital, Miss Mary Packard and Miss Sarah Martin, both graduates of the nursing program at Massachusetts General Hospital. They were the only registered nurses in Baltimore at the time. They became specialists in pediatric nursing and experts at teaching parents how to care for their children at home. The two nurses made more than 800 home visits in the first year, developing practices and modeling a kind of nursing that, according to Katherine Scarborough, would evolve into public health nursing.

Appreciative of their skills and careers, Mrs. Garrett realized that her facility could become a training center for intelligent young women seeking a career. With Miss Packard and Miss Martin, she established a two-year paid apprentice program for young women. This opportunity to engage in paid employment while learning soon created a cadre of graduates, all skilled in pediatric nursing. Six of them went on to work at the Robert Garrett Hospital.

Numbers Served

Over the years, the hospital staff kept excellent records, usually reporting annually in the newspaper on the number of children treated. For instance in 1901 *The Baltimore Sun* (February, 1) reported that four physicians and surgeons were connected with the hospital



Hughes Company, Woman and children entering Robert Garrett Hospital for Children, Baltimore, Maryland, 1905-1940. Digital positive from glass negative. The Photography Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (P75-54-1621g)

Every Christmas brought a big party for the children at the Robert Garrett Hospital that included entertainment, a visit and present from Santa, and a present from Mrs. Garrett as well. In 1895 the children were entertained with a magic lantern show.

-*Baltimore Sun*,
25 December 1895

and that in the last year 262 patients were admitted and 87 surgical operations were performed. Visits to the dispensary numbered 5,692 with 28 surgical operations; 5,300 prescriptions were written and filled.

The Hospital Evolves

After the market crash of 1929, Mrs. Jacobs' financial circumstances changed. With much foresight, she established the Robert Garrett Endowment to pay for a pediatric specialist and, she hoped, continued operation of the hospital. In the meantime, other institutions had emerged, including the Harriet Lane Hospital for children, Eudowood, and a small medical-surgical treatment space for children at Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions. After Mrs. Jacobs died in 1936, medical care for Baltimore's children continued to evolve.

Seeing a need for a more comprehensive approach to child care, Johns Hopkins sought to enlarge its services to children. A committee of interested citizens was established to develop a plan to do better serve children. This group, including representatives of the



Hughes Company, Doctor examining patient at Robert Garrett Hospital for Children, Baltimore, Maryland, 1905-1940. Digital positive from glass negative. The Photography Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (P75-54-1622g)

three hospitals and Johns Hopkins Medical Institution, met to plan to use funds and endowments from each to create the Johns Hopkins Children's Center. ("The New Children's Hospital Center"). Today, the Robert Garrett Endowment still pays for the hospital's chair of pediatrics. (*History of Excellence*)

A Model of Modest Philanthropy

Few today realize this significant contribution of Mary Frick Garrett Jacobs. A woman both flamboyant and modest, she modeled social responsibility and commitment to Christian ideals of living. Mary Frick maintained the Robert Garrett Hospital for Children for 50 years. Today, her endowment still contributes in a major way to one of the best children's hospitals in the country. Katherine Woods described her as a woman acting quietly and unostentatiously, someone, "shrinking from praise," and "beloved by those who assist in [this] work." *The Baltimore Sun* also praised her "unparalleled record of individual philanthropy" (31 July 1932). Clearly, she ranks with other Baltimore philanthropists as a benevolent, modest benefactor of the social welfare of the city and region.

Bernadette Low, Ph.D., is a member of the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion Endowment Fund (GJMEF) Board of Trustees and Professor Emerita at Community College of Baltimore County, Dundalk.

Girls of The Sunshine Club of Western High School contributed pennies each month for a flower fund for the children at the Robert Garrett Hospital.

-Baltimore Sun, 31 December 1912

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GARRETT FAMILY SITES IN MARYLAND

The Garrett-Jacobs Mansion, along with the institutions mentioned in this article, are not the only places touched by the legacy of the Garrett family and their relations. These Maryland sites were also influenced by the Garrett family:

■ **Garrett County**

The final Maryland county to be established, in 1872, it was named for the highly influential B&O Railroad president (and father of Robert Garrett) John Work Garrett. The county's Deer Park Hotel, built in 1873 by John Work Garrett, was a respite for wealthy Washington and Baltimore residents during sweltering summer months.

■ **Garrett Island (Cecil County)**

This island at the mouth of the Susquehanna River was purchased by the B&O Railroad in the 1880s for a rail bridge and named for John Work Garrett.

■ **Garrett Park (Montgomery County)**

A former B&O Railroad stop, this charming English village-styled town just north of Bethesda was named for Robert Garrett.

■ **Evergreen Museum and Library (Baltimore City)**

The family of Robert Garrett's brother, T. Harrison Garrett, lived in this elegant North Baltimore estate, which is now a museum operated by Johns Hopkins University.

■ **Bryn Mawr School (Baltimore City)**

Robert Garrett's sister, Mary Elizabeth Garrett, was a passionate proponent of women's education and one of the founders of this college-preparatory school for girls in North Baltimore, the first in the United States.

■ **Baltimore Museum of Art (Baltimore City)**

The Garrett family was involved in the Baltimore Museum of Art since its inception. Mary Frick Jacobs donated a sizable portion of her art collection to museum, which is still on display.

■ **Monocacy National Battlefield (Frederick County)**

John Work Garrett, and the B&O Railroad, played a major role during the Civil War's Battle of the Monocacy. His warnings to the Union of a Confederate attack, and his trains, helped keep Washington, D.C., in Union hands.

■ **B&O Railroad Museum (Baltimore City)**

The Garrett fortune was built on the success of the B&O Railroad. This not-to-miss museum in Southwest Baltimore is the birthplace of American railroading.

■ **Locust Point (Baltimore City)**

Under the leadership of John Work Garrett, the B&O Railroad partnered with a steamship company to bring German immigrants to the United States via Locust Point's Immigration Pier.

■ **Garrett State Forest (Garrett County)**

In 1906, brothers John and Robert Garrett gifted a 1,917 acres of undeveloped land to Maryland on the condition that the state create forest management policies. Thanks to those laws, millions of visitors since then have been able to enjoy these beautiful and inspiring natural resources.

STATE OF MARYLAND

