***Notes from presentation about the Shriners tenure at the Garrett Jacobs Mansion by Ed Heimiller to GJM docents, June 5, 2016***

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**Early History of Masons and Shriners**:

The Masons had their origin in the medieval guild system. Originally members were masons and apprentices learning the art of masonry. As early as 1640-60 men who were not masons were allowed to join. The Masons evolved into a fraternity which mixed training with the philosophy of the French philosopher Voltaire. Much of its ritual derived from the Old Testament; morality plays were common.

**The Masons and the Shriners**

In the US, the Masons evolved into a fraternity that was just about fellowship. The goals are to make friends and to raise money for charity. The only requirements for members are :1) male, 2) believe on one God, and 3) be an upright citizen. In the 19th century in the US in many rural areas, all men meeting these requirements were members already. To spur continued interest in the organization, new ritual organizations were created, such as the Eastern Star, DeMolay, Job’s Daughters, Rainbow Girls, and the Shriners, also known as the Boumi Temple. Boumi means ‘owl’ in Arabic, which fits in with the Middle Eastern theme of the organization. One must be a Mason first, before becoming a Shriner. Other local affiliates of the Masons are the Scottish Rite and Tall Cedars.

**How the Shriners came to the Garrett Jacobs Mansion**

After Dr. Jacobs dies in 1939, pursuant to the will of Mrs. Jacobs (who left Dr. Jacobs a life interest in the Garret Jacobs Mansion) the contents of the Mansion and the property were auctioned in 1940. There is an auction catalog in the Mansion’s library listing the lots for sale in the auction. The property and many of the furnishings and appurtenances were purchased by George Cook, the proprietor of Cook’s funeral home. He intended to use the property for his business. However, zoning restrictions, promoted by Dr. Jacobs during his lifetime, prevented his opening a business at this location.

The Shriners purchased the building from George Cook in 1941. They also acquired some of the furniture from Cook, which he had purchased at the auction and did not take to his new funeral home location in the Winans’ house on St. Paul Street or to his own home. During their tenure, from 1941 to 1958, the Mansion was used for social occasions and Shriners functions. Dinners were hosted in the supper room and many events took place in the ballroom. It was used similarly to the way the Engineers Club is used today. A few photographs of party-goers and of Shriners exist in the Library of the Masonic Grand Lodge.

In 1958, Baltimore City condemned the building, intending to demolish it to build a large addition to the Walters Art Gallery. The Shriners were forced to vacate the building.

**Aftermath**

Citizen outrage, led by Mt. Vernon residents, caused the bond bills on the City’s ballot designated to provide funds to build the new museum to be defeated. The Mansion was vacant for 2 years before being first leased and later purchased by the Engineering Society of Baltimore in 1962.

***More information about Mrs. Jacobs’ will and properties***:

**Mrs. Jacobs’ will**:

1. She directed that the GJM and its contents be sold and the proceeds used to support two charities: 1) the Robert Garrett Children’s Hospital and 2) for the support of “lonely church women.”
2. She left her Catonsville estate, Uplands, to the Episcopal Diocese, as a home for the lonely church women.
3. She left her art collection to the Baltimore Museum of Art, where it forms the core of its Old Master collection. The furniture from the drawing room, upholstered in 18th century tapestry, was also left to the BMA. Dr. Jacobs created a book about the art collection, which can be found in the Library of the Maryland Historical Society**.**

**The auction:**

1. Many of the large pieces of furniture were purchased by George Cook, to be used in the proposed funeral home.
2. Henry Gladding, who owned what we know today as the Hackerman House, also bought furniture from the Mansion.
3. Much of the furniture and decorative arts were disbursed.
4. Her jewelry was sold at an auction in New York City.

**Her other properties:**

1. Whiteholm in Newport, RI.

Designed by John Russel Pope, it reflected a similar esthetic as the Mansion. It was built after she married Dr. Jacobs. The building was demolished in 1963 so that Salvia Regina College could build a new dormitory and dining hall.

1. Uplands, her country estate in West Baltimore

This Frick family home was a gift from her father upon her marriage to Robert Garrett. She used it in the fall and celebrated Christmas here. While the building is still standing, on Old Frederick Road, near Edmondson Village, it is in severe disrepair. Originally a 42-room Queen Anne Shingle Style house, it was left to the Episcopal diocese for “lonely church women” in 1936. In 1950, it was transferred to the Episcopal Diocese and an addition was put on. In 1986, the facility was merged with Fairhaven Retirement Community in Sykesville. At the auction of the contents of Uplands, the Women’s Auxilliary purchased a few items which originally were in the Mansion and are now here again.

New Psalmist Baptist Church purchased Uplands and occupied it until 2010, when, having outgrown the building, they moved to Baltimore County. Currently, the building and acreage is owned by Baltimore City. Plans exist to develop the property, but have never been realized. The house is on the City’s historic list.

**The Decorative Arts**

1. At the Baltimore Museum of Art, John Russel Pope designed the Jacobs Wing to hold her collection. Much of it is on view today.
2. The frieze installed in the drawing room by Stanford White, painted by Thomas Dewey, is in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum.
3. Descendants of George Cook still own various pieces of furniture.
4. At Fairhaven, there is an Uplands Room, which contains various pieces of the furniture and decorative arts from the Mansion, which had been used at Uplands.