



THE LEGACY

Exploring the history of the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion

2024

GARRETT-JACOBS MANSION ENDOWMENT FUND, INC.

The Life of Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs

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Life as a Private Physician



Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs. Norwell Historical Society.

In 1888, Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs—a recent graduate of Harvard Medical School—made a life-changing decision. Rather than establish a private practice in Boston, Dr. Jacobs instead accepted a position in Baltimore as the private physician to Robert Garrett, the wealthy president of the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad. His choice surprised many around him. Dr. Jacobs' family had deep roots in Massachusetts. A

descendent of John and Priscilla Alden of Mayflower renown, he grew up in the small village of Assinippi, Massachusetts, on the farm his family had owned since 1776. As a newly minted physician, he had been looking forward to life as a Boston doctor.

However, fate intervened when he answered a newspaper advertisement placed by Mary Frick Garrett, Robert's wife, seeking a full-time doctor to care for her husband. Robert's father, John Work Garrett, had famously led the B&O Railroad until his death in 1884. That same year, Robert became the company's new president. Unlike his father, Robert was not well suited to the position and overexertion resulted in debilitating illness.

With Robert as his sole patient, Dr. Jacobs entered a life vastly different from what he had planned. For the next eight years, he focused on treating every manifestation of Robert's illness. He also experienced the advantages

of the opulent Garrett lifestyle as he accompanied the couple on the elaborate excursions Mary Frick planned to delight, distract, or comfort the ailing Robert. An educated man with many cultural interests, Dr. Jacobs was no doubt a pleasant addition to life in the Garrett household, especially for Mary Frick, who, like the doctor, valued her family, education, and heritage. The two also shared an appreciation for Baltimore's thriving Gilded Age society, and Dr. Jacobs became a respected member of the community through his association with the Garretts.

A New Position and a Lifelong Friendship

After Robert Garrett's death in 1896, Dr. Jacobs took a teaching position at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and rented a house at 3 West Franklin Street with several of his colleagues. His neighbors included the school's physician-in-chief, Dr. William Osler, and his wife, Grace Revere Osler. Known for his generosity, erudition, and leadership in the medical community, Dr. Osler promoted sharing discoveries and innovations through publication. His library became a valuable resource for his young colleagues, and he invited them to access it as often as they could, leaving a key available for the neighbors he fondly referred to as the "Latchkeyers." Drs. Osler and Jacobs quickly forged what would become a lifelong friendship.



Sir William Osler

Courtship and Marriage



Mr. and Mrs. Henry Barton Jacobs / Mary Frick Garrett Jacobs and Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs. Norwell Historical Society.

Although no longer a member of the Garrett household, Dr. Jacobs stayed friends with Mary Frick. He invited her to a lecture and thus began a courtship. On April 3, 1902, surprising everyone, Mary Frick advised her secretary that she and Dr. Jacobs were stepping across the street to Grace Episcopal Church to marry in a quiet family ceremony. Baltimoreans were astounded, and the news was reported nationally.

The Oslers had known Mary Frick socially before her marriage to Dr. Jacobs

and were delighted when the couple married. Even after Dr. Osler took the position of Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University in 1905, the two couples remained close friends, traveling together and visiting each other. Dr. Jacobs developed a special relationship with the Oslers' son, Revere, writing to him and sending him presents. Revere was killed in Flanders, Belgium, in 1917 during World War I, and Dr. Jacobs was one of the last to receive a letter from him written from the trenches. Dr. Osler did not live long after that, dying of pneumonia in 1919. While his funeral was held at Oxford, Jacobs planned a parallel service at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, enabling Dr. Osler's many Baltimore friends to honor his life.

Fighting "The White Plague"

In 1896, Dr. Jacobs began devoting himself to the treatment of tuberculosis, which took the life of his younger brother that year. Tuberculosis (historically known as "consumption") is a highly communicable disease caused by the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria. Those with active tuberculosis in their lungs can spread it when they cough, spit, speak, or sneeze. To fight this serious public health problem, Dr. Jacobs helped to organize the National Foundation for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, raising funds for them during the holiday season through the sale of Christmas Seals. He gave frequent lectures on the importance of hygiene and healthy behaviors in preventing its spread and pressured city officials to impose fines on citizens spitting in public places. Concerned that racial segregation was prohibiting Black patients from receiving care, Dr. Jacobs helped to raise funds for a hospital

for African American tuberculosis patients and partnered with Black pastors to share prevention information with their congregations.

Working at Eudowood

In 1894, a group of local women had founded the Hospital for Consumptives of Maryland. Initially located in a residential building in Baltimore City, the hospital, which treated tuberculosis patients for free, relocated to a mansion with 10 acres in Towson, Maryland, in 1899. By 1901, Dr. Jacobs was working on the campus of what was by then dubbed the Eudowood Sanatorium, named after the nearby train station. In 1903, he became its president, a position he would hold until his death in 1939.

Through his work, Dr. Jacobs developed innovative ideas to combat tuberculosis, envisioning a treatment center with large open spaces where patients could benefit from sunshine and fresh air. His vision was made possible by the family of Mary Frick's late brother-in-law, Thomas Harrison Garrett, who leased the family's Towson farm, Pleasant Plains, to the hospital in 1908. (The family would eventually donate the property to Eudowood.) Thinking creatively, Dr. Jacobs installed a garden, and the institution's ladies auxiliary contributed \$10,000 for a dairy. Caring for the garden and animals encouraged patients to be physically active while they earned money from selling extra produce. Knowing that patients would need productive skills after they recovered, Dr. Jacobs arranged classes on food preservation and housekeeping and instituted an industrial program where patients learned trades.

As the sanatorium grew, the needs of children became apparent, and Mary Frick donated the money for a children's hospital, presenting it to her husband as a gift for his 70th birthday. Under Dr. Jacobs' tenure, the 22-acre campus expanded to three hospitals, several cottages, a farm colony, skill training centers, and a nurses' home and became a model for other tuberculosis centers.



Buildings in Eudowood Sanatorium complex prior to demolition, 1960. David Turner, photographer. Baltimore County Public Library.

A Lively Social Life

While Dr. Jacobs worked at treating and preventing disease, his life was not solely devoted to this cause. He loved the social activities he was thrust into with his new wife. Soon after they married in 1902, he and Mary Frick decided to enlarge their home. They purchased the rowhouse next door to their 11 West Mount Vernon Place home and selected architect John Russell Pope to expand the mansion. With Pope, they added a theater/art gallery/ballroom, large supper hall, and special library for Dr. Jacobs. The supper hall downstairs was reached by a magnificent marble staircase, ideal for grand entrances. In the process of creating this addition, the Jacobs developed a close and enduring friendship with Pope and his family. They soon enlisted him to build a summer home, Whiteholme, in Newport, Rhode Island, a popular resort for the Gilded Age elite. The Papes later built a home next door.

The Jacobs were Baltimore's undisputed social leaders. Soon after their marriage, they began a dinner club, with each member hosting a monthly gathering. Mary Frick eagerly promoted the Debutante's Ball, held in the then-new Belvedere Hotel, and held dances, suppers, and musical gatherings at her Mount Vernon Place mansion. An annual party for the staff at Uplands, the couple's country estate, and Baltimore messenger boys was a traditional Christmas event.

As admirers of art, the couple was influential in the founding of the Baltimore Museum of Art, promoting the selection of both its location in the Wyman Park area and its architect, their friend John Russell Pope. Mary Frick wanted Pope to design a wing that would house her extensive art collection, which she was donating to the museum. Although she died



Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore: the opening of the Henry Barton Jacobs Room, 1932. Photograph, 1932. Created Jan. 14, 1932. Library exhibits. Baltimore (Md.). William Henry Welch (1850–1934). Blanchard Randall (active 1902–1942). Henry Barton Jacobs (1858–1939). Harvey Cushing (1869–1939). Fielding H. Garrison (1870–1935). William H. Welch Medical Library.

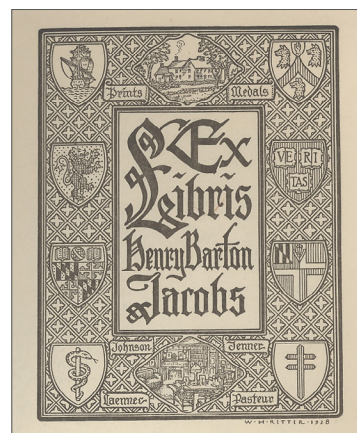
before she saw her wish completed, her husband celebrated her and the importance of her gift to the city a few years after her death.

Both Mary Frick and Dr. Jacobs were active members of the parish at Grace Episcopal Church (later Grace and St. Peters) in Mount Vernon Place. Mary Frick donated gifts and, upon her death, her Uplands estate in Catonsville, Maryland, to the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. Dr. Jacobs served as a vestryman and, with his wife, hosted events for both parishioners and clergy. He had a special interest in history and was governor of the Society of Colonial Wars, which aimed to study and preserve the history of America's Colonial era. In 1935, Dr. Jacobs headed the local celebration of the golden jubilee of King George. A great believer in beauty and the preservation of beautiful buildings and areas, Dr. Jacobs worked with zoning to ensure the protection of the Mount Vernon neighborhood.

Both were active in Newport as well. They supported Trinity Church and engaged in social events and groups. Mary Frick was well regarded for her dinner parties and teas, and she delighted in showing off the grounds at Whiteholme during annual garden tours. Dr. Jacobs, meanwhile, headed the Sprouting Rock Beach Association and the local library.

Dr. Jacobs was an enthusiastic collector of rare books and relics related to medical history. Fascinated by Edward Jenner's (1749–1823) discovery of the smallpox vaccine, he collected Jenner's writings.

In his office he displayed hairs from Blossom, the cow Jenner used to obtain the cowpox lymph for his vaccination experiments. Dr. Jacobs also acquired publications and ephemera related to René Laennec (1781–1826), including the stethoscope he invented in 1816, works from Louis Pasteur (1822–1895), and early editions of works by the 18th century English writer Samuel Johnson (1709–1784). In 1932, he donated his 5,000-piece collection to the Institute of the History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University.



Bookplate from the library of Henry Barton Jacobs.

A Life Well Lived

While Dr. Jacobs' marriage gave him access to wealth and privilege, he still remembered his early years as a farm boy and young collegiate. He happily reconnected with old Harvard schoolmates when a group of them took up the challenge, after 50 years, of rowing on the Charles River. He remained close to his mother who, after the death of her husband and younger son, spent the winter season in Baltimore, staying at the nearby Sherwood Hotel. Though Dr. Jacobs obviously loved his social life with Mary Frick, he wrote to his mother that he found traipsing around Paris while his wife looked for clothes tedious and, at such times, thought fondly of his life at the Jacobs' farmhouse.

Jacobs Farmhouse. From, A Narrative History of South Scituate-Norwell, Massachusetts by Joseph Foster Merritt.



Dr. Jacobs died in 1939, three lonely years after his wife's death in 1936, and was buried by her side at Baltimore's Greenmount Cemetery. He had thrived in Baltimore and had contributed significantly to the health of the community when tuberculosis ravaged the city. Ever mindful of his roots, Dr. Jacobs left money to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities—an organization he headed for many years—and left the Jacobs' farmhouse, barn, and stable to this organization, along with \$22,000 for their maintenance. Ultimately, the path he chose in 1888 led him in to make Baltimore his home. The people of Baltimore benefited from that decision, and his life emerged fuller.



Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs. National Library of Medicine.

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.

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