



THE LEGACY

Exploring the history of the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion

2023

GARRETT-JACOBS MANSION ENDOWMENT FUND, INC.

Uplands: The Garretts' County Estate

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Rural Retreat

Visitors to the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion are often surprised to learn that its original owners spent only several months a year there. At the close of Baltimore's social season, which ran from November to Easter, Robert and Mary Frick Garrett would depart from their Mount Vernon Place home and either sail to Europe, enjoy the cool mountain air at the Deer Park resort in Western Maryland, or rent a "cottage" mansion in exclusive Newport, Rhode Island. (After Robert's death in 1896, Mary Frick would marry Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs and build her own villa in Newport.) However, it's possible that the place Mary Frick thought of as "home" was where she would return each autumn: Uplands, her country estate near Catonsville, Maryland.

When Robert Garrett married Mary Frick in 1872, his father, B&O Railroad President John Work Garrett, gave the couple the elegant Mount Vernon Place rowhome that would—after many expansions and renovations—become known as the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion. Here, the popular young couple would entertain guests during the winter social season. Meanwhile, Mary's parents, William and Elizabeth Frick, similarly honored the couple's union by gifting them Uplands. The childhood home of Mary Frick and her siblings, Uplands was a secluded retreat from their public life in the city.



Alexandre Cabanel. Mary Frick Garrett, later Mrs. Henry Barton Jacobs. c. 1885. *The Baltimore Museum of Art: The Mary Frick Jacobs Collection.*

History and Inheritance

Elizabeth had inherited the property from her father, James Swan, who had, in turn, inherited it from his father, General John Swan (1750-1821). An immigrant from Cockerfield Dumfries, Scotland, John Swan committed himself to the cause of independence and quickly distinguished himself while fighting in the Revolutionary War. He was personally recognized and promoted by General George Washington after suffering an injury during the Battle of Morristown. Later,



Uplands, the country estate of Mary Frick Garrett Jacobs. Image courtesy of Edward Heimiller.

General Swan served alongside the Marquis de Lafayette at the Siege of Yorktown.

After the war, General Swan was honored for his service with 1,000 acres of land west of Baltimore. The acreage was an expansive, tree-covered space that had been confiscated from Tory statesman Daniel Dulaney. The Uplands site was originally known as Hunting Ridge, and for good reason. The forested ridge was ideal for fox hunting, a sport much enjoyed by General Swan, and abounded in game like turkey, duck, and deer, to the delight of local hunters. At his new estate, General Swan raised sheep, cattle, and horses and hosted entertainments for friends, including Washington and Lafayette.

General Swan would continue to distinguish himself, serving as the head of the Maryland State Militia and president of the Maryland Branch of the Bank of the United States. Proud of his service to his country, he was one of the first signers of the constitution of the Society of the Cincinnati, a prestigious fraternal hereditary organization founded in 1783 to commemorate the Revolutionary War. The artist Charles Vincent Peale painted a portrait of General Swan and his wife, Elizabeth Maxwell (1757-1825), a testament to their important social position. His granddaughter Mary Frick proudly displayed the painting at her Mount Vernon Place home. Currently, it resides at the Maryland Center for History and Culture in Baltimore.

General John Swan's second-born son, James Swan (1798-1859), who served as president of two prominent Baltimore banks, inherited the Catonsville property from his father. He gave a portion to his eldest daughter, Ann Elizabeth Swan (1819-1880), in 1848 when she married William Frederick Frick (1817-1905), a Baltimore lawyer. The Swan homestead had first been called "Bleak House" and later renamed "Hill Top." In 1852, William rebuilt the mansion after the original structure burned down and rechristened it "Uplands." Like his daughter Mary Frick, William had great affection for the estate. Although he gifted Uplands to Mary Frick and her husband, Robert, William arranged it so that he could continue living there.

A Working Farm

After taking charge of Uplands, Robert and Mary Frick began to make improvements. They hired E. Francis Baldwin, architect for the B&O Railroad, to add rooms and special features, including a grand billiards room. John Stack and Sons, an in-demand Baltimore City builder, installed stained-glass windows, while the carpenters Charles F. Meislahn and Co. embellished fireplaces with Colonial and Renaissance Revival mantles. The Garretts also upgraded the gardens, producing prize-winning vegetables, along with flowers that Mary Frick loved giving to friends. In 1889, they added a greenhouse and engaged famed rosarian John Cook to act as the head gardener. Cook was renowned for developing rose hybrid varieties that he often named for Maryland events and people, including one called "Mrs. Robert Garrett."

Like many ladies of the era, Mary Frick developed an interest in poultry. Always determined to be the best at whatever she pursued, she oversaw a vast number of fowl. In 1894, the Garretts constructed a 260-by-18-foot poultry house,



Famed rosarian John Cook managed Upland's gardens. His rose hybrid "Mrs. Robert Garrett" was developed in honor of Mary Frick Garrett Jacobs.



The poultry house at Uplands.

which included three turrets, a drawing room, a library, and a living space for Uplands' head of poultry. The specialized building featured one tower for choice fowl, one for feed, one for brooding, and a pigeon loft for fattening, killing, and dressing the birds. While attending a gathering of poultry enthusiasts in Asheville, North Carolina, Mary Frick was recognized for her outstanding stock, and she won special prizes for her Barred Plymouth Rocks, Light Brahmas, Partridge Cochins, and White Wyandottes.

Entertaining at Uplands

Ever the hostess, Mary Frick made certain that family and close friends enjoyed the comforts of Uplands. Members of Mount Vernon Place's Grace Church (now Grace and St. Peter's Episcopal Church), where Mary Frick attended, looked forward to the festive picnics held there each summer. Her brother James Frick and his wife, Elsie Wincheser Dana, were frequent visitors. To better entertain the guests who joined Robert in hunting game, the Garretts arranged for pheasant eggs to be shipped from England and hatched using the hens at Uplands. At the opening of hunting season, the gamekeeper released the pheasants to the delight of local hunters and the Garretts' guests.

The Garretts were protective of their rural sanctuary and guarded Uplands from urban intrusions. They successfully sued the Baltimore Traction Co., a trolley company, and the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad in order to prevent rail tracks from being constructed near their property.

Envisioning the Future

Mary Frick, an active and supportive member of the Episcopal Church, was attuned to the needs of her church community. She especially noted the plight of clergymen's widows who, lacking pensions or personal savings, were often left nearly destitute. Their situation prompted her to leave her Uplands estate to the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland to create and sustain a beautiful home for "lonely church women." Here, she imagined, they could live out their last years in comfort and dignity.

Mary Frick died in 1936. Three years later, following the death of her second husband, Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs, the property, along with a \$1.3 million endowment, was transferred to the diocese. However, it took several years for Mary Frick's vision to become a reality. First, she had directed that the billiards room be remodeled for use as a chapel to meet the spiritual needs of residents. Fire safety was also a concern. To comply with local codes, a new fireproof sleeping wing was constructed, the house's wood siding was covered with stucco, a fireproof elevator shaft was built, and fire-resistant stairways were added. Delays were related to funding. Endowment stipulations limited funding for some of the improvements the property needed, so several years passed before the endowment's interest, along with the sale of some 300 acres of adjacent property, raised the funds needed for renovations.

At last, the diocese began taking the final steps. A board was established, a director hired, and a part-time minister, shared with St. Bartholomew's in nearby Ten Hills, was engaged. In the drawing room, a plaque prepared by Mary Frick was lovingly hung.

Uplands Furnishings Find New Home at Garrett-Jacobs Mansion



This mahogany breakfront was recently donated to the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion by Jim and Edie Garrett.

In early 2023, the Garrett Jacobs Mansion Endowment Fund (GJMEF) was the happy recipient of several pieces of historically meaningful furniture. The items—a mahogany breakfront, a curio cabinet, an ornately carved library table, and two chairs decorated with cherub, lion, and griffin heads—once graced Uplands, the Catonsville country estate formerly owned by Robert and Mary Frick Garrett, and later by Mary Frick and her second husband, Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs. The furniture had remained at Uplands after Mary Frick's death, when the property became the Uplands Home for Church Women, a residence for the widows of local Episcopal Church clergymen.

In the mid-1980s, the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland arranged for Uplands Home to merge with Fairhaven Episcopal Ministries for the Aging, a new diocese-owned life care facility in Sykesville. The Uplands property was sold, and proceeds enabled the construction of a building—also named Uplands—on the Fairhaven campus. This new building included a salon decorated with the best furnishings from Mary Frick's beloved home as well as a plaque recalling her generosity. The property was later known as Intergrace Fairhaven.

In the early 2020s, Fairhaven Episcopal Ministries for the Aging merged with Acts Fairhaven, a Retirement-Life Community, and the salon was dismantled to make way for administrative offices. Resident Charlette Sandberg contacted her friend Jim Garrett, the great nephew of Robert and Mary Frick Garrett, and suggested that he might like to find a new home for the family furniture. Seeing an opportunity to place some of this furniture in a Garrett-

connected mansion, Jim and his wife, Edie Garrett, offered some of the Uplands pieces to the GJMEF. His idea was that the furniture might, in a sense, return home.

Edie had served on the boards of Uplands Home for Church Women and Fairhaven Episcopal Ministries for the Aging. As a result, Jim and Edie had an established relationship with the facility and were able to connect with Susan Arcadia, Executive Director of Acts Fairhaven, Retirement-Life Communities Inc. Susan graciously arranged for temporary storage of the furniture while the process of entrusting the pieces to the GJMEF took place. In March 2022, Jim and Edie Garrett officially donated the furniture to the GJMEF, ensuring that the heritage of Uplands and its former residents live on.



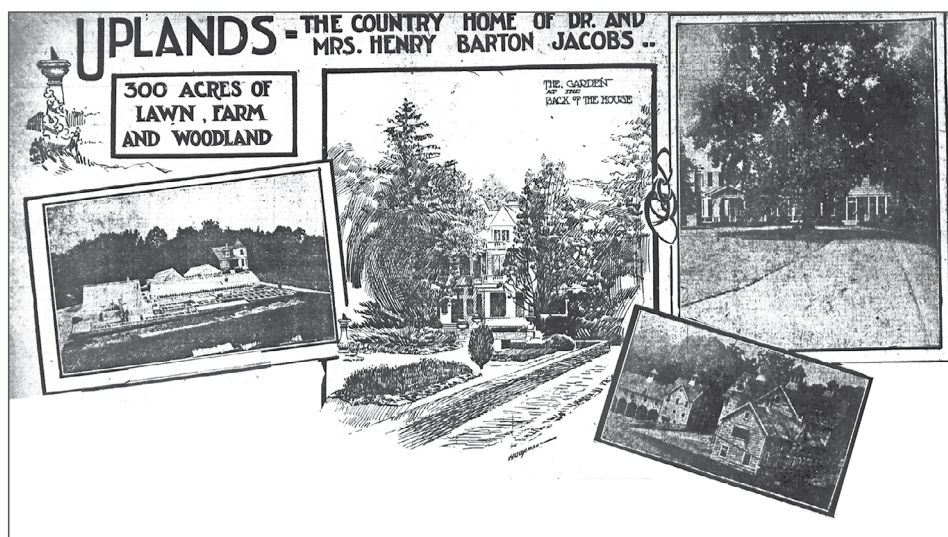
This mahogany curio cabinet (left) once graced the Uplands' drawing room (right images) and is now housed at the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion.

It read: "Uplands Home for Church Women Established by Mary F. Jacobs To the Glory of God and a Loving Tribute to her Devoted Husband, Henry Barton Jacobs Who in his life has shown such unfading sympathy for those in need and has been such a tower of strength to her in aiding her to meet the emergencies of life so common to us all."

A Peaceful Home

In 1952, 18 guests moved in. Soon, there would be 32 residents and a waiting list of 140. Two of the first residents undertook to create a scrapbook history of the Uplands Home for Church Women. Charlotte Wilcox assumed the role of historian, while Edith H. Sainsbury became the scribe,

Uplands was featured in a 1910 issue of the Baltimore American.



recording the history, names, and personal information of each resident in her beautiful calligraphic script. The Uplands Home for Church Women remained a sanctuary for its residents until the mid-1980s, when the need for an updated facility prompted the sale of the property. (See accompanying article, "Uplands Furnishings Find New Home at Garrett-Jacobs Mansion.")

Over the years, many residents would express their gratitude and joy at having such a wonderful place to spend their later years. Mrs. Ruth Lynch wrote: "I am privileged to be at Uplands Home surrounded by these beautiful trees and shrubs." She said it felt as if she were living in the trees. And Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson wrote: "I love this beautiful peaceful

Home. I hope to be able to live a long time in order to enjoy it." And Mrs. Caroline Whittiker, inspired to goodness and kindness by those who provided this home to her, wrote: "O God help us to redirect our lives toward the great ends service and kindness and spiritual well-being so wonderfully typified in this gracious Uplands Home for Church Women."

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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