

# A vice-president called Paterson 'home'

GUS HOBART was 56 when he was hit by the illness that was to kill him. When it became clear that all the medical skill in Washington couldn't help, Gus Hobart asked to be taken home to Paterson to die.

Home was Carroll Hall, an imposing three-story Victorian mansion shaded by stately elms. The house stood at the corner of Carroll and Ellison Streets until 1955, when it was torn down to make way for the new YWCA.

And it was in Carroll Hall on a gray November day in 1899 that Garret Augustus Hobart died. He was the 24th vice-president of the United States.

If Garret Hobart had survived, he and not Theodore Roosevelt would have become the 26th president of the United States.

Hobart's death came just a year before President William McKinley was reelected on a Republican ticket that surely would have borne Vice-President Garret A. Hobart's name in second place. In his place Teddy Roosevelt was nominated. And in 1901, when Leon Czolgosz assassinated William McKinley, Teddy Roosevelt became president.

Czolgosz, the assassin, was said to have been a frequent visitor to Paterson. An anarchist, he is believed to have organized branches of that movement among the immigrant silk-mill workers. It is a fact that for some time Czolgosz lived in what was then called Cliffside and is now known as Fort Lee. He was part of an anarchist group that looked for leadership to Mrs. Gaetana Bresci, widow of the man who had assassinated King Umberto of Italy.

It's unlikely that Czolgosz ever met Garret Hobart. They traveled different paths.

Garret A. Hobart was born in Long Branch and received his early schooling at Long Branch Academy, where his father was a teacher. He was 19 when he received a degree from Rutgers, and 21 when admitted to the New Jersey bar.



Prodded by the ambition of the genteel poor, Hobart chose to make a career in the booming industrial city of Paterson. He began by taking a post in the law office of former Mayor Socrates Tuttle. In time, he married the boss's daughter, Jennie.

Although he came from a family of longtime Democrats, Hobart became active in his father-in-law's Republican party, then dominant in Passaic County. In time he became Paterson city counsel, then counsel to the Board of Freeholders.

THERE followed election to two terms in the state Assembly and two more in the Senate, where he twice served as president. For his second term in the Senate, Hobart was elected by the largest majority of any candidate in Passaic County up to that time.

His political activity didn't hurt Hobart's business career. He became a receiver in bankruptcy, especially of railroad properties. And he was a good one. Taking over the bankrupt New Jersey Midland, Hobart ran it so well that even unsecured creditors received a dividend.

Hobart's rise in national politics was meteoric, stemming mainly from his post as Republican state committeeman. He impressed Mark

Hanna, Ohio senator and president-maker. Hanna's choice for president in 1895 was William McKinley, and he wanted a solid Easterner as a ticket-balancer. Hobart was given the nod.

When word came that Hobart had been chosen as the vice-presidential nominee, Paterson went wild.

"No such demonstration," said the Paterson Press-Guardian, "was ever seen in this city before."

Members of the Hamilton Club, to which Hobart belonged, rented 10 trolley cars, decked them with lights, stocked them with fireworks, and, with Hasse's Band tooting away, toured the city.

Even South Paterson, heavily Democratic, greeted the procession with shouts of approval.

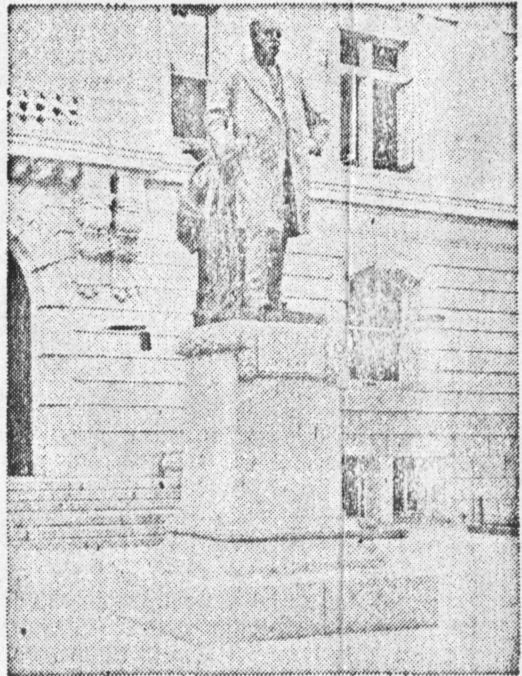
Not even the news of Hobart's — and McKinley's — election caused a bigger celebration.

Nov. 25, 1899, was a different story in Paterson. The city was in mourning.

It was estimated that 60,000 persons streamed into Paterson to pay tribute to the dead Hobart. President McKinley led the party of official mourners, along with the entire Cabinet, 50 United States senators, members of New Jersey's legislature, and Mayor John Hinchliffe, leading Paterson's official party.

Services that gray November morning took place at the Church of the Redeemer on Broadway and Graham Avenue, a church that is now the Martin Luther King Jr. Center. Some 10,000 surged around the church, eager as much for a glimpse of President McKinley as to pay their respects to the dead man.

A private service had been held at Carroll Hall, with just the family and President McKinley present. The coffin, borne by eight members of the Capitol Police, was then carried to the church, with 24 honorary pallbearers walking behind, led by Sens. Mark Hanna of Ohio and John Kean of New Jersey.



Garret Hobart Statue in front of Paterson City Hall

Dr. David Magie, pastor of the Church of the Redeemer, eulogized Hobart, ending his service with the words:

"We are to lay away these mortal remains, but in our hearts Garret A. Hobart lives, and will live, while life remains."

At the cemetery 15,000 crowded in for the interment. It became almost a mob scene as the curious tried to push through the press of dignitaries to get a glimpse of what was going on.

Just before his death the Paterson Press-Guardian had called Garret Hobart New Jersey's most eminent citizen. In his home city that November morning, few disputed that claim.