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Hobart Manor revisited

By J.R. Rowley

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WAYNE — The name has been through as many changes as the building and the grounds, but Garret A. Hobart IV, great-grandson of the 24th U.S. vice president, still sees Hobart Manor through the eyes of a mischievous child.

"Some of my earliest memories are here," said Hobart IV as he toured Hobart Manor Saturday on the William Paterson College campus. "We lived in Tuxedo Park, N.Y., and we used to come visit quite often as a kid."

"I remember my grandfather taking me in here as a kid," said Hobart IV as he walked through the billiard room.

Since the state gave the manor to the college in 1952, the mansion has housed administrative offices, college library and classrooms and has undergone numerous and drastic renovations to accommodate its new functions.

In 1985, the college decided to restore the stately Wayne manor to its original grandeur, replicating as best as possible the mansion in its heyday.

The project has reached the point that it sparks memories for Hobart IV.

"My brother and I were little devils.

... We used to ride on the dumbwaiter and run around on the roof," said Hobart IV, who used to practice law in Morristown, but retired to run a sheep farm in Vermont.

"My grandfather died just before Pearl Harbor. ... but I do remember coming down here during the war," said Hobart IV. "Everytime the radlator rattled, my brother and I thought the Germans were invading."

Hobart IV said he never met his great-grandfather the vice president, but he remembers his great-grandmoth-

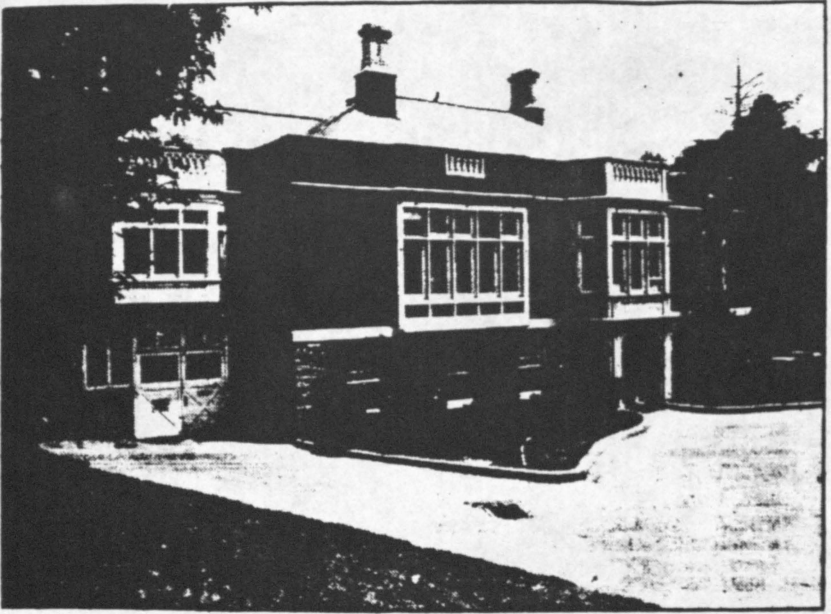


Shelly Matson/Herald & News

Garret A. Hobart IV is ancestor of vice president.

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PASSAIC



Hobart Manor on the William Paterson College campus.

HOBART/

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er Esther Jane "Jennie" Tuttle Hobart.

"She was a very powerful force in the running of the family right until the time she died," said Hobart IV.

After Hobart, an influential Patersonian, died in office while serving under President William McKinley, his widow Jennie bought the mansion and the property that now makes up William Paterson College.

Christopher Norwood, in her book, "About Paterson," wrote:

"Hobart died prematurely of an illness officially described as 'embarrassed respiration.' In Paterson it is rather more simply said that the portly vice president 'ate himself to death.' There is little doubt that Hobart would have been on the ticket of 1900 had he lived, and he, rather than Theodore Roosevelt, would have become president when McKinley was shot. Except for an accident of appetite, the whole country might have been run, just as Paterson was, by men whose principal concerns were their pocketbooks, their dinners, and their dignity."

Hobart IV said his great-grandfather was working as a law clerk under Socrates Tuttle in Pater-

son, when he met and married Tuttle's daughter.

"They (his great-grandparents) were both very active in Paterson's affairs," said Hobart IV.

Hobart was a member of the New Jersey Legislature, both the Assembly and Senate, before becoming vice president under McKinley.

"Hobart was put on the national Republican ticket of 1896 mainly for his financial connections," wrote Norwood.

Jennie and her son, Hobart II, died in 1941 and his widow, Caroline Hobart, sold the estate in 1948 to New Jersey for \$200,000 to be used as the new site of the Paterson State Teachers College, the forerunner of William Paterson College.

Hobart IV also visited the Ben Shahn Center for the Visual Arts at WPC to view the the Garret A. and Jennie T. Hobart Painting Collection. He said he didn't remember the paintings, because they had been donated to the Paterson Library by his great-grandmother in 1925.

Hobart said he is happy that WPC has decided to restore the manor. "You always wish that things could stay the way they are."