

COLLEGE GROUNDS HAVE HISTORY OF FAME AND ELEGANCE

Writer's Note:

The history of the Hobart Estate and family are replete with mysteries. Searches through archives, old documents, newspaper clippings, and other materials reveal many conflicts in information. Although records were scarce and contradictory, they reveal a rich heritage for the land which now holds William Paterson College. The following story reflects as accurate an account of that heritage as can be accumulated from those records.



William Paterson College now occupies the estate of the widow of the 24th Vice-President of the United States, Garret A. Hobart.

The 225-acre estate at the junction of Hamburg Turnpike and Pompton Road near the crest of Gaedes Hill (once the property of silk manufacturer Robert Gaede's) housed three generations of Hobarts before it was sold to the state by the widow of Garret A. Hobart Jr., in 1948. His mother, <sup>Carolyn Frye Hobart</sup> Esther Jane Tuttle Hobart, the widow of the Vice-President had purchased the estate, rich in revolutionary history and legend, at a public auction in 1902. The Vice-President's widow died on the estate in 1941 at the age of 91. Garret Jr. served as president of the Passaic County Park Commission. He also died at the estate that same year.

Known as Ailsa Farms, the Hobart property was regarded as one of the choice pieces of land close to metropolitan Paterson situated in the communities of Haledon, North Haledon and Wayne Township.

The forty-room tudor style manor house on the central hillside of the estate with its ivy clad walls is now occupied by college admissions and registration officers. Its multifarious marble-framed fireplaces and parquet floors still remain.

Atop the five-story spacious mansion, a roof garden once used for entertaining guests of the Hobart family, overlooked the Paterson metropolitan area now provides a view of the New York skyline.

The contour of the estate, capable of expansion due to its long rolling lawns and shady hills, permitted development and in the late 1940's seemed earmarked for a state-educational institution.

In November of 1947, the Paterson Evening News reported that the New Jersey State Board of Education "had virtually settled on the spacious Hobart Estate



on Pompton Road in Haledon" as a site for meeting the growing educational demands of the area.

Work in converting the buildings on the estate to suit college purposes began shortly after the college became the home of Paterson State Teacher's College in October of 1951.

Garage quarters soon became the site of the college's first cafeteria and bookstore. Old horse stables were converted into the first student center, the focal point for student activities.

The Hobart family purchased the estate of Robert Gaede, (Gaede's Hill), in 1938. Ten years later the state was to purchase the entire Hobart Estate, described as one of the finest country estates in the county.

On the Gaede Estate was Gaede's Pond which still stands today as a popular ice-skating spot. It was man-made in the 1900's having earlier stood as a swamp bog fed by springs. Peat was reportedly extracted from it for use as fuel for Gaede's Silk Dyeing Company.

~~The main house on the Gaede estate was located on the center hill where the college water tower now stands.~~

On that major tract of land, consumed by the Hobart estate, now stands the college's communications faculty where television and radio studios are housed. It is named Hobart Hall in memory of the distinguished family who occupied the land.

Added to the total 250-acre tract occupied by the college in 1969, are the Historic Buttermilk Falls which were protected from future development by the college's Development Fund Corporation, of which Garrett Hobart IV is a member.

The corporation purchased this additional 8.2 acre tract adjacent to the Wayne campus from a North Bergen resident, who held title to the property.

The falls are located on the site of a partly man-made sandstone quarry which supplied stone foundations to many of the houses in the area.

Science faculty members at the college conducted research studies which indicates the site is underlain by volcanic rock, the result of lava flow in prehistoric times. Huge boulders near the falls suggest that glaciers once covered the area.

The remains of stone walls in the wooded area by the falls attest to lands once farmed, later abandoned and overgrown by trees.

The thickly wooded pines which stood on the Hobart Estate at the turn of the century still remain although lessened in number since John MacCulloch developed the grounds and erected the castle manor house in 1877.

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