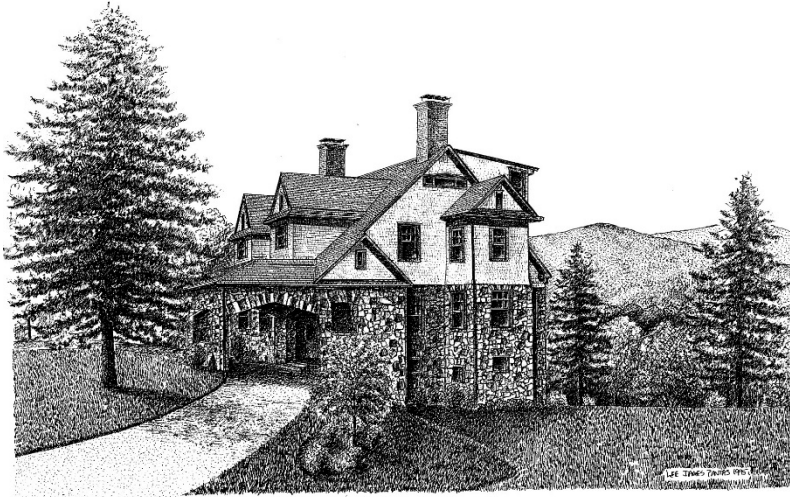


History of North Lodge on Oakland



North Lodge Today

The history of North Lodge on Oakland begins in 1904 when Robert Garrett built it as a residence for himself and wife, Adeline. The home was built after he sold the Smith-McDowell House (circa 1840), currently located around the corner and today is a museum.

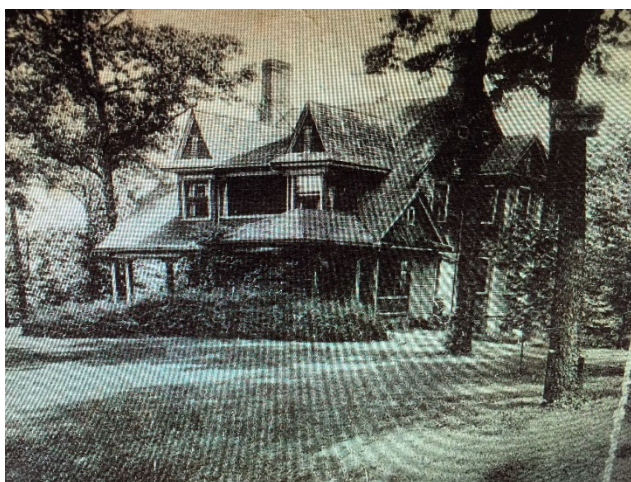
Formerly known as the Garrett House, North Lodge on Oakland was one of 15 houses in the affluent little town of Victoria. Victoria was incorporated as a town in response to George W. Vanderbilt's attempt to buy the property called Fernhurst on Vernon Hill, about 8 blocks from the Lodge. As we all know, Vanderbilt ended up buying property across the river instead, where he built the famous Biltmore Estate – the largest home in America. Many believe Fernhurst provides a better view!

Vanderbilt did eventually acquire some land here in Victoria. He built several large villas as rental "cottages" on Vernon Hill. It was in these houses where the visiting elite stayed. The cottages were "completely furnished, except for silver, linen and blankets" and rented for

\$200-\$350 a month in 1900. Only one survives today, Sunnicrest, located about 8 blocks from the Lodge, on the A-B Tech campus. Adeline maintained her position as a social leader in the community despite the move from the Smith-McDowell House to what is now North Lodge. The local newspaper, *The Asheville Citizen*, reported on two classes held regularly at her home for "outdoor study". The Garrett's eventually left the area and little is known about them since their departure.

The North Lodge started its life as a shingle style cottage with porches on both the first and second floors. *The Asheville Citizen* reported on two classes held here for "outdoor study." Certainly, Adeline maintained her position as a social leader for the town of Victoria, despite the move they made from the Smith-McDowell House. Because they eventually moved from the area, little is known about the Garrett's remaining years.

Then in 1918 G. P. Terrill occupied the home which was now in the City of Asheville (annexed in 1905) and the little lane of Oakland Road became a city street. Five years later, M. J. Corcoran purchased it and turned it into a tuberculosis rest home, a common practice in the 1920's. Some of the best B and Bs in Asheville were once tuberculosis rest homes. All the porches were enclosed to provide bed space.



North Lodge as it looked in 1918.

In 1936 Wallace B. Kelly, a Southern Railroad Pullman porter, purchased the home and lived here until his death in 1979. During the Kelly years, many changes took place. A rock exterior

covered the original clapboard lower siding in 1949. A stone porte-cochere followed the next year. After Mr. Kelly's death the house was used as rental property by members of his family, but by 1987 the house had deteriorated to the point where the city condemned it. The house stood empty and derelict until purchased by Herb and Lois Marsh in 1990.

For five years they undertook a major refurbishing of the property, restoring it to the glamour it once had but with modern comfort and convenience. In 1998 another expansion created additional guest rooms and innkeepers' quarters, along with the gazebo and fountain in the garden.

The name North Lodge on Oakland comes from North Lodge in the Woods, which was their home in England. We honor Herb & Lois's tremendous effort and inspired work by naming the third-floor room The Marsh Retreat.

This Inn was purchased March 2015 by Gary and Cindy Broaddus. Gary and Cindy are from Colorado where they raised their four children while working in the corporate world. It has been their long-term goal to own and operate a Bed and Breakfast together. Asheville's outdoor activities, relaxed atmosphere and extraordinary dining options, offered the perfect setting for their new home.

History of Our Neighborhood

The history of North Lodge and the Garretts is not only a classic tale of immigrant success in America, but it also mirrors the growth and development of Asheville during the late 19th Century. Alexander Garrett was born in Ireland in the 1820s and married Elizabeth Henry in 1845. Their only son Robert was born in County Downe, Ireland in 1846.

A year after their son's birth, the little family left Ireland for Kentucky where Alexander worked in the milling business. Then they moved again when Alexander opened a general store in Leavenworth, Kansas. The family eventually settled down in St. Louis, Missouri. Here, Robert met and married a woman from Kentucky and had a daughter. While Alexander's business interests in St. Louis are not specifically known, he was quite successful and gained great wealth. Stories we have heard allude to Alexander Garrett as the first bulk discounter in the US (the Sam Walton of his era). When Robert's wife, Mary Frances, contracted tuberculosis in 1880, the means were available for the Garretts to move to Asheville, North Carolina.

Tuberculosis and Asheville

In the 1880s, tuberculosis was the leading cause of death in the United States, ravaging its cities. However, TB was less common in rural areas and quite rare in the mountain regions of Europe and the United States. Doctors noticed a correlation between mountain air and its effect on TB patients, who gained weight and strength almost miraculously which prompted doctors to travel to mountain regions to research tuberculosis.

Asheville had the ideal climate on the East Coast for such research. A railroad was built to Asheville in 1880, making the city accessible to travelers from across the country. Pioneering doctors moved to Asheville to specialize in the treatment of tuberculosis, opening sanitariums and laboratories. The city quickly gained prominence as a vacation and health resort. Like many others, the Garretts came to Asheville with hopes that the mountain air could cure tuberculosis.

While doctors dreamed of converting Asheville into a Mecca for tuberculosis sufferers, Asheville's citizens feared that their city would become contaminated by the disease. However, Asheville finally overcame its concerns with the realization that newcomers like Garrett brought great wealth that the region had lacked since the Civil War.

By the late 1880s, Asheville had become the nation's foremost medical center for tuberculosis research and treatment, continuing to draw patients for the next fifty years. The resulting population explosion created economic growth for Asheville which rose to national prominence. It also created a stratified society, where wealthy newcomers usurped the social status of the descendants of the original pioneer families and, in many cases, snubbed these local people. The Battery Park Hotel posted a sign stating, "No Locals Allowed."

Asheville is still a health center where people come for specialized treatment. Mission-St. Joseph's Hospital and the many specialists located nearby have made Asheville the prime medical center for Western North Carolina. Also, the Asheville area is considered to be the "New Age Mecca of the East" by many people. The area boasts many massage therapists, acupuncturists and other alternative health care practitioners. The impact of, the growth and development of sanitariums and the medical community between 1870 and 1930 is clear; Asheville attracted many people who ended up staying and contributing to its architecture, civic arena and its sense of place.

Smith-McDowell House

In 1881, Alexander Garrett purchased the Smith-McDowell House from Major William Wallace and Sarah Lucinda Smith McDowell. The McDowells, who were leading socialites in this region, were forced to sell portions of their 650-acre plantation to pay debts that had been mounting since the end of the Civil War.

Garrett initiated some changes to his new home, making the circa 1840 brick mansion a fitting showplace for his wealth and social position in 1880. The summer kitchen was modernized and connected to the main house, adding a butler's pantry and wine cellar. The pine shake roof was replaced with a metal roof. Stylish Italianate brackets were added beneath the eaves that were extended to hold a built-in gutter system that fed a cistern, providing water for the house. The windows were replaced with 2-over-2 glass panes that

were the style of the times. Also, it is believed that the Garretts added gas lighting, bathrooms, and a solarium to the house.

While Mary Frances convalesced in this fabulous house, Robert Garrett hired a local girl, Adeline Gash, as the governess for their daughter Alexandra. Unfortunately, Mary Frances did not regain her health and died in 1884. Alexander's wife Elizabeth (Robert's mother) died the same year.

In 1887, Robert married the former governess, Adeline, who was the daughter of Senator Leander Sam Gash of Brevard, North Carolina. Adeline was the first hostess at the North Lodge

The Town of Victoria

In 1887, Alexander Garrett founded the Town of Victoria and became its first mayor. Garrett family tradition maintains that he named the town after Queen Victoria because he was still loyal to his native Ireland. Victoria was adjacent to today's Victoria Road and encompassed the properties surrounding the mansions of both Garrett and Colonel John Kerr Connelly. Tradition maintains that Victoria's incorporation was in response to George W. Vanderbilt's attempt to buy Connelly's property (Fernhurst) before finally settling land across the river (Biltmore Estate).

In any event, Vanderbilt acquired several tracks of land in Victoria. He hired supervising architect for Biltmore, Richard Sharp Smith, to design several "villas" as rental properties on Vernon Hill, as Vanderbilt called it. When combined with the Garrett and Connelly mansions, the five Tudor-style villas helped provide context for Biltmore and provided a place for Vanderbilt's social peers to stay.

Doug Swain writes, "The visiting elite knew where to stay—the old Battery Park Hotel...if not one of Vanderbilt's sumptuous rental villas in Victoria." The cottages were "completely

furnished, except . . . silver, linen and blankets” and rented for a whopping \$200 to \$350 a month, depending on size. A 1900 advertising piece describes the properties:

“Spurwood, situated at the western extremity of Vernon Hill, derives its name from a copse of trees in the rear of the house. It has one view to the west, looking towards Mount Pisgah, and a second view to the east, up the Valley of the Swannanoa, looking towards the Craggy and Black Mountains. A little higher up the ridge, to the east is Westdale. Still further to the east, on the summit of the ridge, is Sunnicrest. On a spur of the ridge just below Sunnicrest is Ridgelawn. These three houses command substantially the same view, looking at right angles across the valley of the Swannanoa towards Busbee Mountain, Hickory Nut Gap, and Cedar Cliff, while to the left may be seen the range of the Craggies. Hillcote, the smallest house of the five, is situated at the head of a cove on a lower slope of the ridge. The view from this house looks to the south and west, including the Pisgah Range and the panorama of the Biltmore Estate.”

Vanderbilt eventually sold these villas with a view to individuals for private residences. Vanderbilt’s cousin also had a home on Vernon Hill, making the town of Victoria one of the wealthiest and most elite communities in Asheville. Victoria was incorporated into the City of Asheville in 1905. Out of the five Vanderbilt villas, only Sunnicrest survives today, as part of the campus of Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College.

Oakland Land Company

Alexander Garrett’s concern about Vanderbilt’s impact was reasonable given that Alexander had invested in land near his home and had formed the Oakland Land Company. Alexander’s interest in land investment was quite typical of many living in Asheville in the late 1880s. Douglas Swain notes, “Tracing deeds often reveals that a parcel of land surveyed as a residential lot in the 1880s changed hands a half dozen times before being built upon.” The increasing cost with each sale showed a rapid rate of inflation. In July 1890, Alexander

acquired 84.52 acres that he conveyed to the Oakland Land Company for \$100,000. This land was subdivided into tracts for sale for residential construction.

The Victoria Inn

Hoping to capitalize on the times and on fashionable Victoria, Alexander built the Victoria Inn in 1889 for over \$100,000. Located at the entrance to both Victoria and his Oakland Land Company development, the Victoria Inn was a three-story frame building with eighty rooms. The Inn had a long and interesting history. According to a newspaper article, Alexander and Robert operated the hotel with “indifferent success.”

Alexander deeded the property to Robert in 1891. Robert transferred the property to the board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church. Later, a company headed by former Governor Charles Steadman purchased it and operated a hotel called Oakland Heights. Next, it became a sanatorium and then, a boarding school for girls. In 1909 (twenty years after its construction) it was re-opened as a hotel named the Victoria Inn!

The Inn became St. Genevieve of the Pines, an elementary school operated by the Catholic Church, before being demolished. The remnants of St. Genevieve’s are now called The Pines and are part of the A-B Technical Community College campus. A new historical marker is located on Victoria Road.

End of an Era and Beginning of North Lodge

Alexander continued to live in the Smith-McDowell House where he died in 1895 after suffering from pneumonia. His obituary states, “Mr. Garrett was of Scotch-Irish descent and a whole-souled, hearty old man. His good deeds were many, and he was a devout Christian.” His son Robert and granddaughter Alexandra survived him, but had no additional land holdings in his estate.

Robert continued to be a leader in the town of Victoria. He acquired additional acres in 1896 at a public auction for \$25,000. The 1898 wedding of daughter Alexandra to Robert Johnston was portrayed in the local newspaper as a social event.

However, there were signs that not all was well with the Garretts. That same year, 1898, Robert sold Smith-McDowell House and approximately 6 acres to Dr. Charles Van Bergen for \$10,000 (Note that William Wallace McDowell had purchased the house and some 350 acres for \$10,000 in 1859). It appears that Robert lacked the funds to maintain the old-fashioned brick mansion. According to the deed, the new owner had the right to one-half of the highway in front of the property, and a right to the sewer pipe and the water main running from a spring and pump house west of the property. Robert also reserved a right of way that connected his other properties.

After selling the Smith-McDowell House, Robert and wife Adeline moved to a smaller house that they built on Oakland Road in the remnants of the Oakland Land Company's holdings. Newspaper articles from the turn-of-the-century provide us with a small glimpse into their life there. The Asheville Citizen reported on two meetings or classes for outdoor study, to be held at the Garretts' home in Victoria. Certainly, Adeline maintained her position as a social leader for the women of Victoria, despite the move around the block. Because they eventually moved from the area, little is known about the Garrett's remaining years. Their Oakland Road home survives today as the North Lodge Bed and Breakfast. The Town of Victoria, the Victoria Inn, and the Oakland Land Company survive only through road names.

Prepared by Alex S. Caton, Revised by Rebecca Lamb, Smith-McDowell House Museum