

French Norman on South Mountain Ave.

CONTRIBUTED BY MIKE FARRELLY, MONTCLAIR TOWN HISTORIAN, PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW WANDER

THIS MONTH'S property is one of the French Norman style houses on South Mountain. The 1982 Junior League Preservation Survey says that it is a Queen Anne style house with a French Chateau façade. To my untrained eye, the house appears to be mostly French Chateau.

It was built about 1894 for Abram & Charlotte (Dingley) Terhune. The architect is unknown. Abram was a (shipping) freight broker and senior partner of Williams & Terhune in NYC. He also served as the recording secretary on the board of The Neptune Submarine Co. They cleared wreckage from active shipping lanes by blowing up portions of the sunken ships and removing them from the water. Abram passed away in 1906. Charlotte stayed in the house until 1908.

In 1909 Charles W. and Eleanor Williams purchased the house. Charles was the president of the family paper jobbing and importing business, Charles W. Williams & Co., founded in 1895, with headquarters on Lafayette St. in New York City. Charles W. Williams Jr. took over after his father retired. The Williams family owned the house until 1933, but they moved to Hillside Ave. and, in 1923, rented the house to Charles B. and Frances Ebbert. Ebbert was a sales manager who operated out of the New York office of the national White Oak Coal Co. The house was sold in 1933 to Richard D. Currier who never lived in it.

He lived nearby in another French Norman style house. Currier rented the house to Russell C. (for Cahoon) and Lois (Lottridge) Gates. Russell was born in Illinois, but moved to Montclair when he was a boy. Russell and Lois lived in several different places in Montclair but this house happened to be across the street from where Russell grew up. Russell's parents were the Rev. Frederick T. Gates, a Baptist minister, and Emma (Cahoon) Gates. Russell's father was well known throughout the



world as the philanthropic advisor to John D. Rockefeller and was one of the founders of the Rockefeller Foundation.

Russell had been a "scientific" farmer and a bank clerk, but it wasn't his job that made him influential in Montclair. He was the president of the Montclair Republican Club and chairman of the Essex County Republican Committee. He served as Essex County Clerk and was a "kingmaker" in Montclair politics for many years.

In 1937 Richard Currier sold the house to Douglas and Dorothy (Ferrett) Brown. The notice of the sale in the April 23, 1937 issue of the Montclair Times stated that the house had 10 rooms, 3 baths and an attached garage. The Browns lived in the house for about 20 years. Douglas was a stockbroker. He spent most of his career at Hornblower and Weeks, one of the largest brokerage firms in the World. They merged with Loeb and Rhodes in the 1970s and again with the Shearson/American Express empire in 1981. They remain part of the American Express conglomerate. When Douglas worked for Hornblower their main offices were at 40 Wall St., which is now Trump Tower. The Browns often vacationed at Spring Lakes, NJ., where they became close to Elmer

Bobst, a fellow Montclairian and the CEO of Warner Lambert who also vacationed there. In Spring Lakes they played host to several notable people, for instance, the French actor Adolphe Menjou and his family, and the Nixon family in 1953, when Richard Nixon was vice president of the United States. Richard's daughters Julie and "Tricia" Nixon also spent time with the Browns at Spring Lake in 1957.

The house had several short-term occupants in the 1960s and early 1970s. Lawrence and Janet (Graef) Witte lived there until 1965 when Lawrence passed away. Lawrence had been the public relations director for the National Paper Trade Association. In 1966 Ivan E. and Jessie (Rupe) Ingersoll moved in.

Ivan had owned a laundromat in Indiana and became familiar with clothes washing equipment. When he moved east he became the general manager of Lavarex Inc., importers of washers, driers and other laundry machines from Italy. In 1971 Robert and Barbara (Littauer) Allio moved here from Connecticut.

It seems that they only stayed in the house for a couple of years. At the time Robert was director of corporate planning at Babcock and Wilcox, a boiler and heavy equipment manufacturer. He worked as a corporate planner at other firms and started teaching Management courses, most notably at Rensselaer Polytechnic, Babson College, and Brown University. Currently, he is a principal in Allio Associates, strategic planning consultants based in Providence, RI.

In 1973 the house was purchased by Charles H. and Michelle Spain. They owned it into the 1980s. Charles graduated from Lincoln University in Oxford, PA and went on to earn a law degree from Columbia University. He specialized in business law and worked for several companies. When he lived in Montclair he worked in the law department of Allied Chemical in Morristown. Later he became a guest lecturer on business law at several colleges as part of the National Urban League's Black Executive Exchange Program. At present, he heads his own law firm in Ohio. Michelle earned a degree in psychology from Wilberforce University and went on to receive a master's degree at the University of Illinois. When she lived in Montclair she was a guidance counselor for the NYC Board of Education.

It is our policy not to mention current owners of the houses we cover. Because this house has had so many owners and occupants we have to stop several decades short of the present. ■

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2020 Montclair Real Estate Report

HOME SALES

\$300,000 ---- \$400,000	63
\$400,000 ---- \$500,000	64
\$500,000 ---- \$600,000	60
\$600,000 ---- \$750,000	97
\$750,000 ---- \$900,000	92
\$900,000 ---- \$1,000,000	66
\$1,000,000 -- \$1,250,000	67
\$1,250,000 -- \$1,500,000	63
\$1,500,000 -- \$1,750,000	25
\$1,750,000 --- \$2,000,000	8
\$2,000,000 -- \$2,500,000	4
\$2,500,000+	3

Largest Sale \$3,190,000

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