

## Lydia Duff Gray Hubbard Garden,

155 Wildwood Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey, 07043, USA



Little is known or is published about this [garden](#) apart from the certain knowledge that Ralph Hancock worked on it between 1930 and 1933.

Hancock, with wife Muriel and baby daughter Sheila, arrived in the United States in June 1930. He soon settled in Upper Montclair, New Jersey residing at 44 Oakwood Avenue. It was also to Upper Montclair that Sheila was later evacuated during World War Two.

It was from Oakwood Avenue that Hancock was to build a foundation in America which would eventually see him design and build the *Gardens of the Nations* on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of the Rockefeller Centre and win numerous awards for his landscape designs.

**155 Wildwood Avenue**, Montclair, New Jersey or ***The Anchorage***, also sometimes known as Farlie House, was the home of Louis Vaughan Hubbard and his wife Edith Duff Gary Hubbard. Hubbard, before his death in 1929, had been President of the Taft-Pierce company and auditor of the General Electric Company.

Edith had been very active within the community. From 1926-29 she had been President of the New Jersey State Federation of Woman's Clubs as well as Chairman of the Upper Montclair Woman's Club. She held positions on a number of State charitable trusts and political organisations. She died on 10 August 1934 at her summer home in Castine, Maine aged 62.

The Hubbard's Georgian house, found in the leafy suburbs of Montclair, is listed in several national (US) and State libraries as being a fine example of its kind. In 1998 it was described as having "lovely brick work inspired by the 18th century. Virginia gardens are still the bones of this garden on a very small plot. They define the areas and direct the eye. The vistas from the handsome Georgian house, southeast and north while short are dramatic. The circle of brick in the front walk seems to be a favourite design of Frederic Leubuscher. A bronze bas relief in driveway wall is the work of S. Kinsberger."



Nothing is known of a 'Lydia' Duff Gray Hubbard. Hancock was certainly giving talks about gardens and landscaping to the Woman's Club of Upper Montclair of which Edith was Chairman. One should

therefore assume that Lydia may have been a relative who inherited the estate after her death in 1934?



A low brick wall similar to that favoured by Ralph Hancock at the front of the house. Examples of which can be found in virtually all the gardens designed by him.

This and other images were taken in 1998 and can be found at the website of the Smithsonian Institute .

Ralph is listed as one of the garden's designers between 1930 and 1933.



This curved wall (left) and main entrance (below) are also illustrated in both the 1936 and 1950 editions of *When I Make a Garden* so, therefore, they must be considered as one of Ralph's designs.

Hancock describes the wall as the side entrance of the same house. *Carried out in red brick and worked stone. Their formal treatment is saved from severity by the ornamentation and the delicate ironwork.*



There are a number of gardens illustrated within *When I Make a Garden* that are very likely to have been built whilst Ralph was resident in New Jersey. The colonial style of the houses and the style of planting and hardscaping can only lead the reader to believe that they were built in the five years in which he was resident on the East Coast.

When Sheila Hancock returned to Montclair during World War Two, and later in 1950, she recalls wooded tracts of land and swimming pools. Images of these can be seen in both editions of the book.

Unfortunately, like the numerous gardens that he designed in the UK, they may never be identified known only to those lucky enough to own one.