

History of Tudor Hall and Englewood

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This historical series focusses on the period during the 19th and 20th centuries in Englewood. The first piece centers on Tudor Hall, its construction beginning in 1924, and the history of Englewood during this time period.

Englewood, New Jersey, was originally called “Englishtown” to distinguish itself from the rest of the region, which was initially settled by Dutch Farmers. It is supposed that the name “Englewood” refers to one of the original settlers in “Englishtown,” Engle.² Englewood has 4 wards; wards 1 and 2 are located within the East Hill, which holds the wooded hills in Englewood. The East Hill can be considered the original Gold Coast of New Jersey. Once the home of prominent business leaders and the tycoons of high finance, Englewood was known as “the bedroom of Wall Street”.³ We will discuss in further detail the history and atmosphere of Englewood during the time that Tudor Hall was built, but first we will describe the lifestyle and history of Tudor Hall itself.

The Tudor Hall is located in historical Englewood within 4 miles from Upper Manhattan. It is located within the 1st ward on the East Hill of Englewood. Tudor Hall, located on Booth and Engle streets, was built on property originally owned by Thomas Booth, a land developer.⁴ “Tudor Hall is a high quality representation of architecture from the 1920’s and 1930’s period of growth in Englewood. A good example of Tudor Revival architectural style adapted to an apartment complex design.”⁴

Tudor Hall set the precedent in Englewood for apartment buildings not to rise

¹Lattimer, John K. This Was Early Englewood. New Jersey: Tavish Reproductions Inc., 1990.

²Lattimer. 56.

above 5 stories. Tudor Hall's construction was started in 1924 and was completed during the depression. During the depression, the developers, falling on hard times, sold Tudor Hall to private owners Mr. & Mrs. Hurbert and Martha Olney for a price of \$34,000. (They ran the building until it went condo in the 1980's.)

An exclusive, luxury rental residence, Tudor Hall was complete with a Ratskeller restaurant/ball room, rooftop terraces, and a full time concierge, who also performed the duties of a valet. If you look in your kitchen, your "humidor" might still be there. A humidor was a small metal box, with a door and vents within the wall that opened to the outside air. It was used as a place to keep wine, potatoes, or whatever food items that needed to be stored in a cool dry temperature. Dumbwaiters and many other amenities, such as door-to-door mail service, were a part of life in the Tudor Hall.

Socializing and a communal feeling was also an important part of the Tudor Hall lifestyle. Up until the 1960's, social references were required in order to become a resident. As well, during the holidays, there was extensive socializing with a club like environment. Each Christmas, carolers came into the courtyard, complete with a tree in the fountain, and would sing. Traditionally, all windows had a candle.

In 1924, Englewood was prospering due to much building activity and the business district, which served as the shopping hub for the Northern Valley of New Jersey.⁵ It was also close to Manhattan, and ferries, named "Englewood" and "Tenafly," commuted business people, along with actors working at Fort Lee Studios, the home of motion pictures before Hollywood, to and from Manhattan. Artists, writers, architects,

³ Lee, Will, et al. Englewood:Historical Sketches. New Jersey: Englewood Historical Society, 2003

⁴ Bromely. Franklin, 1912-1913 Vol 1

⁵ Lee. 21.

doctors and people of the entertainment industry all made their homes here.⁶ A large booklet, promoting home ownership in Englewood, was published and contained some 83 pictures of handsome homes and estates built by prominent architects.⁷ Most of these homes and estates were situated in the East Hill section. A copy of the booklet is still on file at the Englewood Library.

The most powerful business leader of high finance, JP Morgan, made the East Hill his home. HP Davidson, who created the Bankers Trust, was the man responsible for Englewood being termed “ the bedroom of Wall Street”. Enlisting neighbors such as Thomas Lamont and Dwight Morrow, who had no banking experience, “Bankers Trust” was formed on a morning train commute to Jersey City, which allowed one to take the ferry to Wall Street. Later on Davidson and Lamont became partners in JP Morgan’s firm.⁸ In fact, Lamont was quoted saying that during this time period, “ in the banking circles of New York, it became of the standing pleasantries of season to remark that, if one wanted a job in a bank, he must start making a home in Englewood”. However, Lamont is best known for his statement during the crash of 1929, “I believed there has been some disturbed selling in the market.” This understatement is now a classic Wall Street quotation.⁹

Ambassador Dwight Morrow, later Senator Morrow, and also another Morgan partner, built Next Day Hill, a Georgian Estate on 54 Acres. Going to Next Day Hill was known as going “To-morrow Hill”.¹⁰ Next Day Hill is now the Elizabeth Morrow

⁶ Lattimer. 136

⁷ Lee. 21.

⁸ Lattimer. 158.

⁹ Goldberg-Bouton, Bobbie and Irmari Nacht. Patchwork of Personalities and Places Englewood Historical Society.. 2001

¹⁰ Lattimer. 161.

School, which was started by his daughter Elizabeth. His other daughter, Anne Morrow, was married to Charles Lindbergh and resided on Next Day Hill for a short time; the couple stayed at Next Day Hill during the torturous time of the their first child's kidnapping from their New Hope home in New Jersey. Their celebrity status had reporters constantly hiding out near Next Day Hill to catch a glimpse of the famous couple.

Women who lived in the area were active in community affairs, running dance and music studios, and operating businesses.¹¹ Some of the most notable women of Englewood were Mrs. Sarah Homans and Miss Adaline Sterling. They formed a committee and raised the funds to build Englewood Hospital. In 1896, the Woman's Club of Englewood was founded with Adaline Sterling as its president, Mrs. Chester Loomis as vice president, and Elizabeth Vermilye as secretary. These women helped persuade the New Jersey Legislature to pass a law that would preserve the Palisades.¹² These women's efforts, coupled with the generosity of the Rockefeller family, is the reason we now have the preservation of the beautiful Palisades through the Palisades Interstate Park.

There was also Englewood's Maureen Orcutt and Mrs. Dwight Morrow. Maureen Orcutt was referred to as the "Duchess of Golf," twice winner of USGA Woman's Senior Title, and winner of over 65 major amateur events in an incredible career that extended over 42 years, one of the longest careers in golf history.¹³ She was also a journalist for the New York Times from 1937 to 1972.

In 1955, Mrs. Dwight Morrow's will generously "epitomized noblesse oblige with

¹¹ Goldberg. Nacht. 2 .

¹² Goldberg. Nacht .72.

¹³ Goldberg. Nacht 73.

substantial bequests” to mostly local charities, including the Englewood Hospital, the Englewood Public Library, the Community Chest, the Social Service Federation, the First Presbyterian Church, and the Elizabeth Morrow School.¹⁴

Currently, Englewood’s architectural heritage is being threatened by builders who are tearing down Englewood’s magnificent homes because Englewood has not yet implemented a historical ordinance. Various architectural styles of Englewood homes include Gothic Revival, Victorian Queen Anne Revival and Empire, Stone Victorian Gothic, Colonial Dutch, Georgian Colonial, French Chateau, American Foursquare, Mediterranean Revival, and Tudor/Jacobean/Elizabethan Revival (Tudor Hall’s style.)¹⁵

The historical homes, within a close distance to Manhattan, and with various architectural styles, make Englewood a very special neighborhood. It is a visual delight to drive through its streets, which are enriched by its past architectural heritage and history. We must understand the importance of saving the legacy that solely belongs to Englewood. Anyone who wishes to join in this effort can contact :

Eleanor Harvey, President, Englewood Historical Society

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¹⁴ Lee.

¹⁵ Lee. 131.