Email Exchange Regarding Giggleswick, the Woodland Avenue Estate of Mrs. Mellick

donotreply@andyswebtools.com

reply- Joseph Xxxxxx <xxxxx@comcast.net> to:

to: plainfieldgc@gmail.com date: Wed, Aug 21, 2013 at 5:33 PM

subj New "Contact Us" submission from Joseph Xxxxxx

tct:

name: Joseph Xxxxxx email: xxxxxx@comcast.net

message:

Hello, my name is Joe Xxxxxx I'm looking for possible contact information for Marjorie Blackman Elliott, who wrote the treatise on 'Giggleswick" in 1989. Is an e-mail address possible? She may contact me as well, please. I would like to speak with her about my own memories of the Giggleswick Estate

Thank you! Sincerely, Joe Xxxxxx

Plainfield Garden Club <plainfieldgc@gmail.com>

________

to: date: subject:

mailed- by:

Joseph Xxxxxx <xxxxx@comcast.net> Wed, Aug 21, 2013 at 7:04 PM Re: New "Contact Us" submission from
Joseph
Xxxxxx gmail.com

Dear Mr. Xxxxxx, Thank you for writing to us regarding Mrs. Elliott and Giggleswick. Sadly,

Mrs. Elliott passed away in 1992. You can read more about her at this link:

http://andyswebtools.com/cgi-bin/p/awtp-pa.cgi?d=plainfield-garden-club&type=4317

Giggleswick, as you must know, was the name of the Mellick estate located on that property. We have been in touch with one of the Mellick relatives and I could send your contact information on to him.

If you would be willing to share anything you can remember about Giggleswick or the Mellicks, please think of sharing it with us as we would love to add it to the historic profile of Mrs. Mellick located at this link:

http://andyswebtools.com/cgi-bin/p/awtp-pa.cgi?d=plainfield-garden-club&type=4512

Mrs. Mellick’s daughter-in-law was also a member of the club and here is her link:

http://andyswebtools.com/cgi-bin/p/awtp-pa.cgi?d=plainfield-garden-club&type=4576

I am sorry I am unable to help you further. This is just our little attempt at preserving the rich history of the Homes & Gardens of Plainfield.

Thank you again --
Greetings Ms. Fraser, I am sorry to hear of Mrs. Elliott’s passing so many years ago. Thank you for the great links about her and her work on the Mellicks and Giggleswick.

I have some connection to the house and that property, but I surely doubt it would be anything that any Mellick relative would be interested in. I was in that house hundreds of times as a boy, and spent more than five years all over that property. But as you must have guessed, it was all after the fire that destroyed it. For 22 years, I lived at 2354 Terrace Avenue in So. Plainfield, a mere 300 yards from the Giggleswick Woodland Avenue entrance. From about 1970 (when I was only 7) until, I think it was …---1976, maybe?----- when the house was
torn down – which I sadly watched from the grass field for a whole week—I grew up wandering that property and the house with friends. It was a great place for a boy with a fertile imagination! There was lots of adventure--------- especially among the beautiful rock gardens-------- and lots of scares too in the burned remains of that house. I remember almost every room, both in the old section and the incredible (it really was) main hall. There was a shaft that led down into the creepy cellar (laundry chute, perhaps?) We climbed through the lining of the roof above the main hall ... I remember looking down at how vast it was (at least for a 7, 8 and 9 year old!) with that creepy fireplace, which must have been magnificent at one time. So many memories of that place, I still recall so much of it. I remember how regal the Oak Tree Birdle path was ... The empty rock swimming pool with the gigantic bolder was like a magical sorcerer’s den to us. It made quite an impression on me, and throughout my life, I’ve thought about it from time to time.

Which leads me to my inquiring about the house and property. I would LOVE to see what the house really looked like in its prime! (in addition to the website links, which are small and unclear) All I know of it, sadly, is a burned out haunted
(EVERYONE for miles around town, all called it the Haunted Mansion, or just The Mansion) shell of a house. But it must have been magnificent when the Mellicks lived there! Are there more photo’s in Mrs. Elliott’s book? Are there other sources for photographs? Books? References? I’m particularly interested in seeing the fantastic Rock Gardens (they were so cool, even empty of water) and the Main Hall section of the house. Any help would be most appreciated. I’d also like to know when (the year) the house first caught fire, and how it happened? I’ve heard there were several fires as well. I read on the web links that hippies invaded the area? That must have been only a little before I started going there. Just very curious, always have been. I hope you understand my nostalgic childhood interest, and that it doesn’t appear superficially silly ... well, on the other hand, I guess it is!

Thank you for your time,

Regards,

Joe Xxxxxx

from: Plainfield Garden Club <plainfieldgc@gmail.com>
to: Joseph Xxxxxx <xxxx@comcast.net> date: Sun, Aug 25, 2013 at 9:45 AM
subject: Giggleswick Hi Mr. Xxxxxx

THANK YOU for that fascinating account of your experience on the grounds of Giggleswick.

I have forwarded your email to some of our members and hope to collect more memories of the Mellicks and the estate. (In fact, I think the husband of one of our members actually lived there in '50's.) I also sent your emails to a descendent of the Mellicks and hope he contacts you directly.

As far as the photos that Mrs. Elliott used in her "brochure" my best guess is that she got them from the Plainfield Public Library. They have an impressive archive there. The librarian we work with is Sarah Hull. I don't believe there are any photos of Giggleswick in the Plainfield Garden Club files at the Library. However, last winter we discovered some brief images on some old film which we converted and believe dates from the 1930's. That is how we found the image of Mrs. Mellick.

The other source would be the archives of the Courier News. And lastly, Rutgers and the Drake House Museum in Plainfield may have some archives dating from when Mr. Detwiller developed the property. Mr. Detwiller and Mrs. Elliott were very good friends. (Mrs. Detwiller is still a member of the club and in her 90's)

Mrs. Mellick did have a photo of her garden in the Home & Garden magazine in 1918. Here is that link:

http://books.google.com/books?id=MArnAAAAMAAJ&pg
Another member also had her garden photographed for Home & Garden -- Mrs. Dumont who lived on Stelle.

**984 Woodland Avenue**

**Dumont, Mrs. John Brokaw (Annie Wright Mason) '15**

If you were in the area, you may know of these other notable homes:

-------------------------------

**1145 Woodland Avenue**

**Williams, Mrs. Lewis A. '31**

**1281 Woodland Avenue "Settle"**

**Mellick, Mrs. Roger Drew (Catherine Whiting**
Woodland Avenue

Fargo, Mrs. F. Miller (Lillian Foster) '44
1649 Woodland Avenue "White Chimneys"

Whitcomb, Mrs. William Henry '31 Stevens, Mrs. Ro Ten Whitney) '37

1681 Woodland Avenue

Stevens, Mrs. John Peters ("J.P."), Jr. (Edith S.) '37 Mrs Keith) '50

1779 Woodland Avenue
Ladd, Mrs. Delano W. (Caroline Le Baron Heminway
Woodland Avenue "Scrub Oaks"
Reed, Mrs. Charles Arthur (Katherine L. Clark) '15

Woodland Avenue
Barrows, Mrs. Dudley Hammond (Madeline Ashwell)
Woodland Avenue, South Plainfield -- Breezy Acres, Homestead Farm  
Barnhart, Mrs. Noah Chisholm, Jr. (Shirley Clark) '41

Woodland Avenue (South Plainfield, Edison)

Barr, Mrs. W. Manning (Marjorie) '39
2800 Woodland Avenue

Seybold, Mrs. Arthur D. (Anne Marie) '48
The Stevens family bought a lot of land (adjacent to Giggleswick) and many divisions of their family lived there -- sorta of a compound. On the property of Mrs. Barnhart (a Stevens' relative) an ancient native American artifact was discovered and now is kept at the South Plainfield Library. Did you ever find arrowheads?

I have spied some of the remnants of Giggleswick from the grounds of Plainfield Country Club -- including an old gazebo and some of the allee of Oaks for the bridal path. I really keep meaning to go in and photograph the grounds to document some of the old features on the property. (The Home & Garden article described the land as a "glacial moraine" which is incredible.)

Please let me know if you have any further information about the Mellicks or Giggleswick. The Club enjoys our role as the Plainfield history resource (and only a fraction of our 98 year-old artifacts have been uploaded to the website -- its a huge project!)

Thanks again -- Susan

RESPONSE FROM PGC
Member Martie Samek, August 25, 2013

RESPONSE from Martie: I believe the Kroll family lived at Giggleswick before it burned. That would be our (deceased) member Nancy Kroll who was the mother of former member Priscilla Kroll Farnum and the mother-in-law of Sally Kroll, our former member and PGC president. You may want to check this out to be certain. Woman "Mrs. Francis P." listed with
Mrs. John P. Stevens refers to **Fanny Day.** She lived in an apartment in the Stevens house after the death of **Mr. John P. Stevens (Jack).** PGC member **Helen Babcock Nash** and her husband Phillip rented 1707 Woodland Avenue from the Stevens for over 40 years. As you know, I live at 1717 Woodland Avenue (actually a private lane off Woodland although the house has a Woodland Avenue address) on land purchased from Jack and Edith Stevens. Penny (Kroll) and Bill Barrett lived next door on the lane to us for many years. Penny is the sister of Priscilla and daughter of Nancy. Best, Martie