

THE CATHOLINA LAMBERT STORY

The Young Immigrant: Catholina Lambert

"...he came upon a sentence that turned his face toward America...'In England the chances for success are one out of ten unless born of rich parents; in America, nine out of ten'."

An English Lad

Like the majority of immigrants to the United States in the 19th century, Lambert did not come from a wealthy or high-status family.

He was born on March 28, 1834 in the English village of Gooseye, near Keighley, Yorkshire. His parents, Ann Nichols and Samuel Lambert were paper mill workers. He went to work at ten as an errand boy in the cotton mill of Walter Evans & Company. According to one account, Catholina earned eighteen pence a week, for an average of seventy-two hours work. Cruel by today's standards, child labor was an accepted part of life well into the twentieth century.

England, like the rest of Europe, was rigidly divided into classes; the old landed aristocracy, a small but wealthy industrial and mercantile middle class, and the working class-agricultural and industrial laborers who formed the vast majority of the population. Ambitious working-class boys had little opportunity for advancement. Education was a luxury; Lambert had only eleven months of school. Most of his knowledge came from his own studies. Economic opportunity was one of the United State's greatest lures for immigrants throughout the 19th century.

Lambert was promoted to clerk in the Evans mill, but there was little opportunity for him to go much further. He saved for steerage class tickets on a "packet" sailing ship for himself and his little brother, William. As a farewell present, his employers presented him with five pounds sterling. This was a considerable sum, the equivalent of several months' wages, and shows the respect they had for Lambert's ambitions, as well as his talents.

In 1851, at the age of seventeen, Catholina sailed from Liverpool bound for America.

Difficult Choices: America vs. the British Empire

Why did Lambert come to America? In the 19th century, "the sun never set on the British Empire." Canada, Australia, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and South Africa were all colonies with opportunities for British subjects. However, in the colonies the rigid English class structure was duplicated. Although Lambert might have made his fortune there, his working-class background would have barred him from the top social circles. The old aristocracy had little regard for those who acquired their fortune "in trade."

The United States was different. The English, Scots and other Protestant nationalities were particularly welcome. Even in the 1830-60s, many people in the U.S. were alarmed by the

waves of new ethnic and religious groups coming to this country. The Irish, in particular, worried them. Thousands were arriving, fleeing the potato famine and political repression. While needed as laborers in the booming industries, the Protestant establishment was suspicious of their Catholicism. In contrast, Englishmen were regarded as equals with a shared heritage. In this atmosphere, Lambert had an advantage over immigrants from other lands. In 1857, he made the final break with Britain and became an American citizen.

Lambert In The New World

Most sources say young Lambert landed in New York City. But he did not stay there long. Like most newcomers, he used an informal network of immigrant friends and relatives to help him get started. His contact was a friend's relative living in Boston. He headed north, and was probably able to rely on his friend's relative for food and lodging. It is even possible that he obtained his first job through the same network.

At seventeen, Lambert was already an experienced worker. He began his American career as an office boy in the Dexter and Tilt Co.'s silk mill earning four dollars a week. One month later he was promoted to full clerk. The firm was a "trimmings house," producing decorative edging for dresses, upholstery, uniforms and many other uses. The firm also pioneered ribbon weaving in America, in 1849, but did not drop its other product lines. The factory was in a small, two-story frame building, and probably had few employees.

From 1851 to 1855, Catholina studied the silk business and American-style entrepreneurship. Anson Dexter, one of the firm's two founders, was Lambert's most important patron. In 1855, Dexter bought out his partner, Benjamin B. Tilt, and reorganized the firm. He admitted two new partners, Catholina Lambert and Charles Barton. The company's new name, however, was Dexter, Lambert and Company. Clearly, Lambert was already considered the second-most important man.

The Young Catholina Lambert

Lambert's success is easy to understand. He was strong-willed and hated losing to anyone. His self-admitted nasty temper did not endear him to his workers, but most people respected his integrity. He was not immune to vanity. Friends saw him delight in entertaining guests in style and proud of his accomplishments. Privately, he was a devoted family man and genial host. Ambitious, honorable, a born fighter, Lambert was the pattern of the Victorian success story.

The Lady of the House

Unfortunately, little information has surfaced on Lambert's beautiful wife, Isabella Shattuck. She was born in Pepperell, Massachusetts on April 8, 1837. The Shattuck's were proud of their pioneer heritage and traced their line back to the 1600s. Isabella's father, David Shattuck, was a "gentleman farmer" who gave his daughters an education appropriate to young ladies.

Isabella probably met her husband around 1855, during his Boston years. Lambert was already a partner in his firm and may have been considered very eligible. Most accounts agree it was a love match. They married when she was twenty, on September 9, 1857. In 1858, her family may have provided some money to help Lambert buy Anson Dexter's shares of his silk mill. The young couple moved to New York City soon after.

Isabella stayed out of the public eye. She focused her life on raising children and running the houses that they owned. Her influence on Catholina was probably through quiet persuasion and example. Unlike some wealthy women, she did not make a career of charity work. In later years she urged Lambert to donate money to the Belle Vista Chapel, but this was not a consistent pattern.

On one of the Lambert's early trips to Europe, Isabella received news that her infant son Clifford had died. It was said that she never wholly recovered from the shock. Her grief increased many times over the years, four more of their children died young.

In 1901, Isabella passed away, leaving Catholina to grieve alone. He designed and built a stained glass window to her memory in Paterson's Second Presbyterian Church called "The Flight To Heaven." Three years later, in 1904, Lambert remarried Isabella's widowed sister, Harriet. They remained companions until her death in 1916.

Family, Medicine and Tragedy: The Lambert's Children

Even wealthy families could not escape some of the stark realities of their day. Average life expectancy for Americans born in the 1870s was forty-one years. This was partly due to high infant and early childhood death rates. Disease struck regardless of class. Out of eight children, the Lamberts had only three survive into adulthood. They died of illnesses that are curable by today's antibiotics. The effect on the parents was predictably cruel. Lambert threw himself into business and art collecting. Isabella may have sought comfort in her surviving offspring.

- Clifford Whitfield Lambert, 1869-70
- Percy Russell Lambert, 1871-82
- Chester Nicholas, who died soon after birth in 1873
- Frederick Nelson Lambert, 1861-75
- Harry Lambert, 1865-1875
- Florence Lambert Suydam, 1859-1883
- Isabelle Lambert Dorflinger, 1868-1906
- Walter Stanley Lambert, 1864-1943

Maplewood Farm, Clifton

The Lamberts moved a number of times during their lives, as their finances and family needs changed. Until 1893, they spent most of their time in New York City or Brooklyn. Summers were probably spent near Paterson, in what is now Clifton, at the Maplewood farm Isabella bought in 1861.

By the 1890s, children were less of a consideration for the Lamberts than status. Lambert built the Castle for his showplace home. They kept Maplewood farm and later rented it out. Summers were now spent in New York's Catskill area, where they bought a third house and farm called Glenattie. During Lambert's final years the Castle remained his main residence, although he spent the winter "season" in Florida.

The Rising Entrepreneur

Catholina Lambert joined the silk industry in its infancy. By 1900, he controlled a small empire in a ruthlessly competitive business and employed hundreds of people. His success grew from personal qualities he shared with other industrialists.

He was both aggressive and flexible enough to seize advantage from each new opportunity. Lambert also demanded, and maintained, strict control over his firm.

In 1861, Anson Dexter retired from Dexter, Lambert & Co., and allowed Catholina to purchase his shares. The firm was prosperous, with a new brick mill, more ribbon looms and profitable military contracts. But its operations were too far flung. Raw silk was purchased in New Jersey, shipped to Boston for weaving, and then sent on to the firm's stores in New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco. To stay competitive, in 1866 Lambert consolidated the company's operations in the new silk capitol of America, Paterson.

Lambert's new mill in Paterson was on Straight St. It was twice the size of the old Boston mill, with its own steam power and dye houses. Merchandizing was concentrated in New York City. The firm prospered and expanded its line of goods. In 1874, Lambert went to England to purchase a plant of power looms for weaving broad silk. By 1879, he built a second, larger mill across the street. He installed machinery purchased from two other firms and the company spun, dyed and wove silk, cotton and worsted (wool) into finished fabrics, ribbons and trimmings. Lambert opened offices in Milan and Florence to obtain Italian raw silk, as well as a sales outlet in New York City. He thus controlled all phases of his business. By 1892, his firm employed one thousand workers in Paterson alone, and did over one million dollars a year in business.

Why Paterson?

Paterson's scenery attracted Lambert for years, but his decision to move there made hard business sense. It was where he purchased his supplies of raw silk. Land was cheap and water to process silk and power machinery was plentiful. There were efficient railroad lines to transport his goods. New York City's markets for his products were only miles away. Skilled silk workers, attracted by the existing mills, were plentiful. Most importantly, by consolidating his operations in Paterson, Lambert could personally supervise all phases of his business.

Politics, Protection and War: The Silk Industry, 1855-1865

By 1864, the American silk industry was booming. Its success was assured by the policies of the American government, and relations between the European countries. Early American silk firms were small and weak. Production costs and foreign competition kept their profits low and uncertain. But by the Civil War, the situation had dramatically reversed and silk mills became big business.

In the 19th century, the American government was supported solely by tariffs (import taxes) on foreign goods. Before the Civil War, American farming interests successfully campaigned for high tariffs on raw materials, to discourage competition, and low tariffs on most finished goods to keep consumer prices down.

At that time, the tariff on unprocessed, raw silk was ten percent of its value. With no native sources of silk, American silk manufacturers had to pay high prices to import their raw materials. Meanwhile, their finished goods faced heavy competition from European silks. Tariff rates on imported finished silk remained relatively low from 1833 to 1861. And American consumers believed that foreign silks were higher quality and more fashionable. Europeans kept

their silk prices down enough to retain control of the American market.

As America's Civil War approached, her silk men had cause to rejoice. Congress began supporting protectionist policies for American industries, rather than agriculture. Tariffs became industry shields. In 1857, the tariff on raw silk was dropped to zero. When the war began, many of the strongest voices for low tariffs on finished goods joined the Confederacy, as the South basically lacked industries. From 1861 to 1864, tariffs on imported finished silks rapidly climbed to sixty percent, making it easier to sell domestic silk. In addition, Union military contracts for uniform trimmings kept the demand for American silk goods high.

As American silk mills grew, the British government took a fatal step for the English mills. In 1860, Britain signed the Cobden-Chevalier commercial treaty with France, which eliminated tariff protection for the British silk industry. French silks flooded England's home markets, just as the American market for British silks shrank. Mill after mill closed, leaving workers and machines idle. Hundreds of unemployed weavers left England, and brought their skills to the U.S. In addition, American entrepreneurs were able to buy English silk looms at bargain rates to equip their expanding mills.

Portents Of The Future: Lambert, Labor and Pennsylvania

On June 3rd, 1881, Lambert took his family to Pennsylvania to dedicate his latest project. His new mill in Hawley was as large as his Paterson works. Named "Bellmonte", after his wife Isabelle, it started a trend that would change the silk industry.

Up until 1880, Lambert and the other big silk manufacturers centered their operations in Paterson. But relations between the mill owners and Paterson's skilled, and increasingly organized, labor force were tense. Lambert sought to escape growing labor unrest by moving the first stages of silk manufacture to an area without unions. Improvements in machinery made it possible for him to hire unskilled women and children who were paid less than men and were considered easier to control.

The Hawley mill was so profitable, Lambert built a second mill in Honesdale, Pa. and named it after his daughter Florence. By the 1890s, other large mill owners followed his example. As these "annexes" multiplied, Paterson lost many jobs and Pennsylvania became a major competitor in silk.

Lambert the Collector

Lambert collected art for over fifty years. Between 1860 and 1916, he amassed over 500 paintings, as well as rare statuary, porcelain vases and antique furniture.

Lambert probably became interested in collecting art for a variety of reasons. Buying art was fashionable among the newly wealthy, who wanted to prove that they had acquired taste and refinement as well as money. After he made his fortune, Lambert even purchased many of the furnishings from his child-hood employer's house. He also loved beauty for itself. He did not keep records of his purchases, since they were for his own pleasure and not an investment. Finally, the tragic loss of his children probably intensified his desire for the immortal.

By 1900, the collection was well-known in art circles. Lambert was compared to other famous collectors, such as J. Pierpont Morgan and Henry Clay Frick, whose New York homes are now museums. All three were self-made millionaires who made their fortunes between the Civil War and 1890. Like Morgan and Frick, Lambert was at home in the galleries of New

York, London and Paris. But he was not quite on the same level.

The quality of his collection was uneven. Too many of his "old masters", though beautiful, had debatable pedigrees. Other works were by artists whom he liked, but who achieved only limited reputations. Some were merely copies of famous originals. Lambert belonged to the upper-mid level of wealth, not the super wealthy.

A Lifetime's Work

Lambert admired and purchased a wide variety of artworks. His first known purchase, made around 1861, was a painting by Georges Michel. His choices were remarkably good for someone with little education. There are several explanations for this success. Lambert's wife, Isabella, came from a wealthy, educated background and he is said to have consulted her on purchases. Lambert also dealt with reputable dealers like Durand-Ruel, who probably advised him, as well as supplied him with artworks. Finally, on his frequent trips to Europe he could view great art for himself.

The collection was split between old masters and living artists of Lambert's own day. Some of these "moderns" did not become famous until long after his purchases. Art critics particularly acclaimed his British portraits. There were a few spectacular Renaissance works by Botticelli, Luini and Andrea Del Sarto. He even discovered an original Rembrandt. The modern artists in the collection were his most inspired purchases, including Renoir, Monet, and Ralph Blakelock, an American.

On the walls of Lambert's "Court", it is possible to detect Lambert's own appraisal of his collection. The ground floor displayed large numbers of landscapes and scenes by Monticelli, his favorite artist, noted then for his intense colors. Lambert purchased at least twenty-eight of his works. Another group of twenty canvases were by Georges Michel. The north wing was reserved for his British and Italian masters. Though Lambert was an early collector of modern Impressionist art, these works were placed on the third floor, far from the most public areas.

For All To See

Lambert welcomed groups to see his paintings and opened the house on Saturday afternoons to all comers. As far as we know, all the visitors were middle class and wealthy people. The Paterson Rambling Club came in 1904 and was given a personal tour. In 1898, President McKinley paid a call during his stay at Garret Hobart's home. Others wrote requesting a visit and were given a gracious reception.

But mill workers only day off was Sunday, so they could not come. Nor are there any records of Lambert inviting his own employees to view the estate. Regardless of his own origins, social status was still the key to admission.

By 1896, many wondered if Lambert would turn his collection into a public art museum. His interior design for the Castle suggests that it was meant to become a gallery after his death. He is also reported to have investigated buying land for building a public museum, but his offer of \$500 per lot was turned down. Even before the bitter years of 1913-1916 changed his fortunes, however, Lambert may have changed his mind about leaving the art to Paterson. He was disappointed that more people (of the right type) did not come to his open house Saturdays. He also felt that manufacturers, in general, were poorly appreciated in the city. His attitude was shared by many mill owners who left their fortunes to family or other areas.

Helping Hands

The exact number of servants employed at the Castle is not known. It probably changed over the years with Lamberts needs and fortunes. The Castle staff was probably largest between 1893 and 1900 when the estate hummed with galas and other social functions.

Lambert would have needed at least one groundskeeper and a few assistants to care for his extensive gardens and lawns. His horses and carriages needed stable hands; and, later, his autos needed a chauffeur. Two or more of these positions may have been filled by one person. Inside the mansion, at least two maids were needed to clean and attend to other family needs. A cook prepared the daily meals. Presumably, a butler or housekeeper supervised the daily chores and received guests.

The estate was designed to separate the servant's areas from the private family ones. The gatehouse, stables and possibly also the greenhouse had living quarters. Inside the house, there were separate servant's stairs, passages and doorways on the back side of the building.

Prejudice and Paternalism, Servants in an American Castle

Traditionally, servants were considered part of the household, under their employer's protection and control. Lambert shared this paternalistic belief. But he also probably shared Victorian prejudices on race, religion and culture. The Castle staff came from a wide variety of backgrounds. They mirrored three waves of people moving to, and within, the United States during the 1800s through the 1920s. Each found a country hungry for their labor, but often cruel as well.

Lambert's cook, Mrs. Murphy, was an Irish Catholic. Before the Civil War, the Irish were among the largest immigrant groups in America. They faced prejudice against their religion and stereotyped images of themselves as ignorant.

Second floor maid, Thekla Panasiuk, was part of the "new" immigration. From the 1870s to 1914, millions of people came to America from Italy, Eastern Europe, China and the Middle East. Their new customs, religions and languages frightened many into calling for restricted entrance for some nationalities.

Lambert hired at least one black staff member, his chauffeur, Caesar. In the 1920s, many servants were being hired from growing African-American communities in the North. Blacks from rural, southern states sought jobs in the industrial north, resulting in a great internal migration. They too found resistance, this time for their race.

New Immigrant and Old: Thekla and the Lamberts

Thekla Panasiuk was born outside Kiev, Russia in 1890. She was just fifteen and spoke no English when she left for America in 1905. Her mother urged her to join a sister already settled in Newark, New Jersey. Her steerage-class steamship ticket meant traveling far below deck. In America, her first experience was processing through Ellis Island. An official renamed her "Tillie," probably because he thought it easier to spell. She managed to get to Newark, but, her sister had become ill with tuberculosis and was gone. Happily, Ukrainian friends cared for her and found her a job as a seamstress.

Somehow, Thekla learned of the Lambert's need for a second floor maid. She was hired in 1908 by the mill owner's second wife, Harriet. Thekla worked and lived at the Castle until. She quickly developed a warm relationship with her employers. They helped her to improve her

English. Mr. Lambert also allowed her to take a handful of change from a bowl by the front door for pocket money on her night off. Thekla practiced to get the maximum amount. At Paterson's Ukrainian Hall she met her future husband, Feyodor (Frank) Bilyk. The Lambert's insisted they meet him before approving the match. Although Feyodor went, reluctantly, the interview went well. The couple's wedding present from the Lambert's, a crystal vase, became a cherished heirloom.

Soon after her marriage, Thekla left the Castle and the newlyweds struggled to make ends meet. Feyodor was injured in 1915, so Thekla had to go to work. She opened a penny candy shop. Even in hard times, Thekla's thrift let her deposit fifty cents a week for the future. The couple raised two sons, eventually bought a home and a Packard auto. Thekla died in 1965, another example of an American success story.

The End of an Era

By 1910, Lambert's world had changed. He faced challenges he was ill-equipped to deal with. His attitudes as an entrepreneur were formed in the 1800s. He believed in the sacred rights of property and demanded absolute control of the firm. The mill buildings and looms were his personal property, which he leased back to his company. He would not set silk prices with competitors or negotiate with labor unions. He fought anything that threatened his independence.

But, the rest of society was changing. Big industry was becoming corporate and monopolistic. Labor was organized, and no longer docile. Strikes became increasingly violent. Lambert, in his seventies, was no longer flexible enough to adapt to these new conditions.

The Roots of Conflict

In the 19th century, mill owners were free to set wages, hours and conditions within their businesses without regard to the workers' needs or safety. When business was good or labor scarce, workers were fairly well treated. But when times were bad, or labor plentiful, mill owners increased hours and cut wages in order to preserve or increase their profits. From their perspective, it was essential that they control costs by getting the maximum work for the lowest wage. They resented any interference in what they saw as private business decisions.

To workers, it seemed that they paid the price when times were bad, but did not share in the profits when times were good. They often struggled to survive, while the large mill owners lived in luxury. As a result, workers became increasingly attracted to trade unionism, socialism, communism, and anarchism. These movements all promised a more equitable distribution of wealth, and a balance of power between those who contributed their labor to an enterprise and those who contributed capital. These reform movements were born in the industrial cities of Europe, but quickly took root among workers in America. The radical, and sometimes inflammatory, rhetoric of some groups was alarming to the upper and middle classes. It heightened existing tensions between the groups that were based on religion, language, culture and degree of assimilation.

1913: the Year of Anger

Workers and mill owners had a long history of conflict in Paterson's silk mills. Between 1881 and 1900 there were thirty-one strikes at various mills. Most began as disputes over wages and hours. Hours and wages were arbitrarily dropped or increased as the mill owner dictated. Few mill owners were willing to negotiate with union representatives.

In 1909, three-quarters of the male workers earned about \$741 a year, but they needed nearly \$900 a year to support their families. So the women and children had to work too, just to survive.

The Great Strike of 1913 was sparked by a new issue. Doherty & Wadsworth Silks wanted to "stretch out" workers by having them tend four looms rather than two. Henry Doherty built a large, modern mill with new, automatic looms to make the four loom system possible. Workers were angered by this additional burden, but they feared loss of jobs more. When Doherty tried to increase the number of weavers working four looms, his employees walked out. The strike grew, and a mass strike was called on January 27, 1913. Soon, all sizes of mills and dye houses were paralysed.

Owners saw the strike as a direct attack on their property rights and a threat to their ability to remain competitive against rival firms. Religious and ethnic prejudices also fueled fears of anarchist violence from largely immigrant Italian and Jewish silk workers. As weeks passed, incidents grew. Owners had the advantage of city government support. Strike rallies were banned from Paterson and police arrested supporters. Some manufacturers also hired men to protect their mills and anyone willing to cross the lines to work. Confrontations between strikers and these "private detectives" even lead to the shooting death of Vincenzo Madonna, an innocent bystander.

The strike held through May, but strains showed on both sides. Many small mills neared bankruptcy and large ones lost an entire season of business. Workers could not get credit from stores and faced losing their homes. In June, most workers drifted back, but they were still angry.

None of the issues that caused the strike were resolved. Instead, the strike accelerated the departure of large mills from the city. Later strikes, combined with changes in fashion, growing competition, and new synthetic fabrics, continued the decline of Silk City.

Debts Of Honor

Lambert was a hardliner in 1913. After the strike, however, his firm was unable to pay its mounting debts. Lambert pledged his home, art collection and Paterson mill as security for a two year credit extension for the firm. This private mortgage was \$1,103,754.95, the largest ever granted in Passaic County.

The company never repaid Lambert, so in 1916, he had sell some of his assets. He auctioned off his art collection in a four day sale at New York City's Plaza Hotel. Though some paintings brought record prices, the total came to only \$500,000, or about one third of its estimated value. To complete the debt payment, he sold his mill in Hawley, Pa.

Lambert was not financially "broken" by the strike. He sold his smaller Paterson mill, and was left with a comfortable fortune to live on. His huge Honesdale mill continued to operate as the Lambert Silk Manufacturing Company. According to one account, he even bought back many of his favorite paintings. If there was damage, it was more personal. He felt his age. The fighter retired for his last years.

Gilded Dreams, Changing Realities

Lambert's final years were quiet ones. His debts were honorably settled. The industrialist played cards with grandchildren, reminisced with friends and enjoyed his home.

But, the world around him continued to change. World War I made great estates into "dinosaurs". The flood of immigration slowed to a trickle, and servants were increasingly hard to find. New income taxes cut into private fortunes like Lambert's. The "modern" taste of the 1920s scored elaborate Victorian homes and overstuffed furniture. The Castle sank slowly into decay. Many decorative features were not repaired as they became damaged.

Lambert died peacefully at home, on February 15, 1923. On his last day, he still predicted an optimistic future for the silk industry to his close friend, John C. Ryle. For Paterson, however, the great days of silk were over. The largest mills had gone out of business or moved away. Small family shops were the rule, vulnerable to any economic downturn. An era was over.

Changing the Guard

When Catholina Lambert died, his son, Walter, inherited the bulk of his estate. Though he lived at his father's house for a time in the 1920s, it was not the house where he was born or grew up. He preferred living in the family's house in the Catskills, to be near his wife's relatives. This, along with the upkeep and taxes on the Castle, probably persuaded him to sell the place.

Walter sold the Castle to the City of Paterson in 1925, two years after his father's death. He was paid \$125,000 for the buildings and grounds. An unrestricted auction disposed of the furnishings and art in 1926. Walter and his family left the city for Lordville, New York.

The City did not make any alterations to the Castle or its grounds. Instead, the Tuberculosis Health League was allowed to use it as a summer camp for consumptive children for two years.

In the Public Domain

The Passaic County Park Commission acquired the Castle as part of the park they created on Garret Mountain. The Commission was created in 1927 to acquire and preserve open land that was rapidly being developed in response to the soaring county population. The Commission's goal was to preserve of "places of unusual beauty and historic interest" and to provide "all possible forms of recreation to the maximum number of children and adults". With this in mind, they attempted to establish parks as near to the centers of population as possible. Lambert's Castle became the new Commission's headquarters. To the Commissioners, the Castle was a landmark because of its unusual form. But it was not considered an historic house. It was only forty years old; one of many elaborate Victorian mansions in the area.

The Castle was extensively renovated and altered to suit its new role. The work was done under the auspices of the WPA, a Depression-era job-creation program. A ceiling was inserted into the court to create an auditorium on the second floor, and crafts-men created leaded glass doors to separate the parlor and music room from the court. Arches were cut into the north and south walls of the court, opening it into the breakfast room and the passageway. The former kitchens were transformed into public rest-rooms and offices.

The Parks Commission hired the famed Olmstead Brothers to design the grounds of the new park. The Olmsteads built nature trails on top of the mountain, and transformed Lambert's formal garden into a more naturalistic landscape that was easier to care for and conformed with current taste. The observation tower was equipped with a snack bar.

In 1936, the Commission pronounced the north wing of the Castle unstable, and tore it

down. The Historical Society, which had opened its museum in the Castle in 1934, was dismayed by the Commission's decision because it wanted to use the space, not because a historic building was being altered.

A New Treasure House

The Park Commission invited the Passaic County Historical Society to establish its museum and headquarters in Lambert's Castle. Founded in 1926, the Historical Society had amassed an extensive collection of artifacts, clothing, portraits, documents, photographs and furniture relating to early life in Passaic County, all donated by County residents and Society members.

The Society opened the doors to the County's new treasure house in 1934. Some of the material related to prominent citizens such as Garrett Hobart, the Paterson lawyer who became Vice President of the United States. Other items came from the mills, shops, farms and homes of the County's middle and working classes. Under the guidance of Curator Edward Graf, the Society's collection grew until it filled the entire lower floor of the Castle.

Today, the Society's collection is too extensive to display all at once. The emphasis now is on preservation and restoration, as the Society works to ensure that its treasures will survive to inspire and instruct future generations.

Lambert was not a hero or a statesman. He was just one of the millions who came to this country in search of a better future. In turning his house into a museum, we celebrate the American dream that continues to inspire Passaic County citizens; newcomers and oldtimers alike, from every walk of life.

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