

# **NORWOOD PARK**

An Exclusive Summer Cottage Colony

Robert J. Fischer



Published by  
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## Dedication

The Hollywood section of Long Branch is remembered by the once famous Hollywood Hotel which was located on Cedar Avenue. It was a resort showplace which was founded by John Hoey .Less is known of its neighbor resort, Norwood Park, on the west side of Norwood Avenue. Through the 1890's into the early part of the 1900's it served as an exclusive summer cottage colony for wealthy and famous tenants. In his research on *Crossroads Mansions* (Shadow Lawn and The Guggenheim Cottage), Robert Van Benthuisen assembled information on Norwood Park. This, along with the attraction of the Norwood Cottages which line the West Long Branch part on Hollywood Avenue, had inspired him to write about them. Unfortunately his health failed and he passed away before any project could be started. The West Long Branch Historical Society has taken the task that our fellow member had initiated and we dedicate this work to his memory.

## Acknowledgments

George H. Moss Jr. Monmouth County Historian, whose private archives were accessed.

Elsalyn Palmisano, West Long Branch Library Director, who assisted in contacting Mr. Moss and obtaining some reference material.

Joann D'Esposito-Wachtmann, Assistant Librarian, Monmouth University, who located the files on Norwood Park compiled by Mr. Robert VanBenthysen.

The current residents of the Norwood Park Cottages who have cooperated with this project.

## Cover

Cover Photograph from George H. Moss, Jr. archives. This photograph of the Norwood Park Casino appeared in the book "Those Innocent Years" by George H. Moss Jr. and Karen L. Schnitzspahn.



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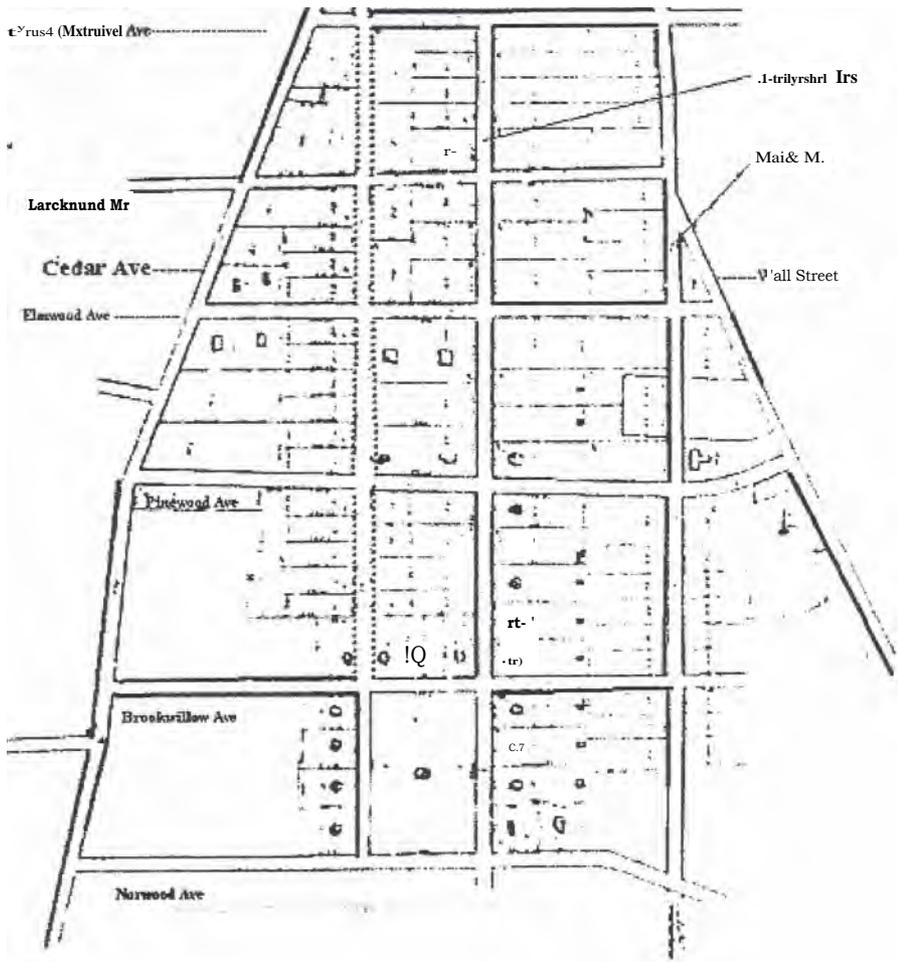
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Deiskyse 1905 Map  
Norwood Park



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## Introduction

From the mid 1800's through the turn of the century, Long Branch and the surrounding area was regarded as the most popular resort in America. Health seekers, actors, business leaders, and a sporting crowd came to the grand hotels or rented elaborate summer cottages for their families. The more affluent built their summer homes designed by a notable architect on a sizable plot of land and established it as their "country seat". Other well to do family oriented men leased Victorian homes that were often grouped as "cottage colonies". The unique situation at Long Branch with its healthful seashore, recreation attractions, popular appeal to US presidents, and its easy access from New York City enticed such prominent visitors and vacationers to this area.

Long Branch gave rise to two exclusive cottage colonies. Included in Long Branch proper was The Hollywood Hotel and Cottages developed by John Hoey, who was the president of the Adams Express Company located in New York. By 1862 he established his country cottage which he named "Hollywood" after the holly tree groves situated just to the north of Cedar Avenue. He created elaborate gardens in a park-like setting which attracted many visitors from all over the country. This popularity in 1882 led to the construction of the well known Hollywood Hotel and Cottages that attracted the more successful businessmen who, with their families, enjoyed tennis, golf, croquet, and other common interests in addition to the seashore life that Long Branch offered

Adjacent to "Hollywood" and bordered by Norwood Avenue in Eatontown Township was another cottage colony, "Norwood Park", created by Norman L. Munro. He was a successful New York publisher whose countryseat, "Normahurst", was located on the northwest corner of Cedar and Norwood Avenue. Norwood Park was developed in the latter part of the 1880's and flourished into the early part of the 1900' sit was located just to the west of Hollywood and connected to it either by means of Hollywood Avenue or Cedar Avenue. In 1886 Munro purchased the Mary Anderson Cottage on the corner of South Street (later to become Norwood Avenue) and Cedar Avenue, the present site of the Guggenheim Library of Monmouth University. Mary Anderson was a noted actress who lived in London at that time. Munro made the cottage his summer home for the season, but the following year he moved the cottage to the rear of the property and on its former site he built a mansion which was regarded as one of the finest in the Long Branch area. He named this estate "Normahurst" after his daughter Norma L. Munro. His summer vacations at the shore relieved him from the strains of conducting his New York City based publishing business; he was also deeply involved in owning and racing steam powered yachts on the Shrewsbury River. He realized that the wealthy and genteel class who sought Hollywood would prefer a home away from the crowded beachfront with its noise and gambling

atmosphere. Yet vacationers wanted to be near enough to enjoy ocean bathing, the healthy sea breezes and the refinements and social exclusiveness to which they were accustomed in their city homes. Hollywood offered such pleasures, but the vacationers were growing in numbers and Munro developed a colony to help accommodate them.

The Normahurst estate was ideally located. It was within extended walking distance to the beachfront and the railroad station at West End. It was fronted on Norwood Avenue and joined popular Hollywood to the east. It extended 800 ft. to the willow brook to the north. The mansion was centered on a beautiful lawn and shaded by carefully placed trees. Other sections of the property were devoted to gardens which included a miniature lake with a rustic bridge and a pavilion on one side with a greenhouse conservatory and a 150 foot observation tower on the other.

To the north were 150 acres of sparsely growing grasses and stunted bushes. This land was developed into Norwood Park. In a few years from 1886 through 1889, Munro had moved the Mary Anderson cottage, built his mansion and gardens, purchased, and developed the land adjoining Normahurst.

The Casino, the focal point of Norwood Park, was built; the first cottages, stables, and a saddle horse track were finished by 1889 when the first summer cottages were opened for guests. The Norwood Park cottages and Casino were an immediate success and additional cottages were built bringing the total to 25. By 1891, Norwood Park was well established with an ever-increasing number of guests who elected to make this attractive place their summer home. It has been reported that Munro spent a million dollars on improving and beautifying the park. Cottages lined hard packed Hollywood Avenue along side of the Casino and several cottages lined Brookside Avenue to the rear of the Casino. Only one of the original four remains on Brookwillow Avenue. The sandstone curbing and asphalt walks are still in place today and can be found around the old Casino block, and parts of Hollywood and Pinewood Avenues.

In 1908, the borough of West Long Branch was incorporated from Eatontown Township and Norwood Park became a part of the borough. By then the cottage colony was being dissolved and parcels of land including the cottages and the Casino were parceled off to individual buyers. The borough of West Long Branch has been composed of three sections; Borough Proper, Kensington Park, and Norwood Park.

## **Land Acquisition for Norwood Park**

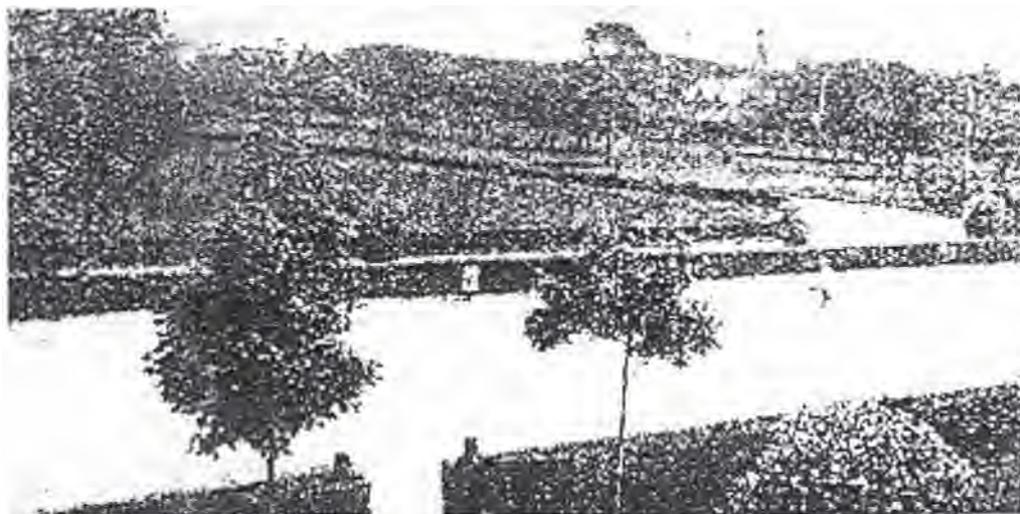
Subsequent to the establishment of Normahurst, Munro tried to purchase all the land in the immediate vicinity. The vacant land to the north was readily available. To the west of Normahurst the land which was owned by Mrs. John Albaugh, formerly Mary Lomax Mitchell (an actress and sister to the famous Maggie Mitchell), the Hughes



property on the southeast corner of Cedar Avenue and Norwood Avenue. The latter, which included two cottages not directly associated with the Norwood Park Colony but remained in his holdings. He also bought the Michael Whalen property on Norwood Avenue. With the exception of the Chanfrau cottage, the buildings were removed to make way for the land development. On the McIntyre farm there was an ancient cemetery. Mr. Munro purchased several plots in the West Long Branch cemetery and had the remains of all those buried there exhumed and put into the new plots. The old graveyard was cleared and graded to conform to the remainder of Norwood Park. In all, he purchased approximately 250 acres; the 150 acres adjoining Normahurst were developed into the active cottage colony.

### **Land Development**

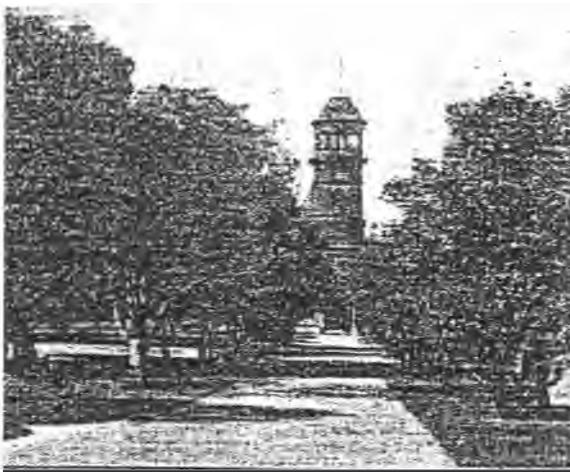
To develop his acquisitions into a cottage colony, Munro first improved the land into streets, pathways, and landscape plantings. To do this he engaged the local firm of James Lloyd and Son to transform the farmland and the neglected barren land into attractive building lots. Lloyd had an established reputation for grading and laying out large estates found in the Long Branch area since 1876. He also showed experience in establishing grass lawns, luxuriant shrubbery, and tree plantings. As a result, Norwood Park became one of the show places of the area. The roadways that defined the Casino block, Hollywood, Brookwillow, and Park Avenue were maintained in perfect condition when compared with the public roads in the vicinity. Hollywood Avenue was



Lloyds Landscape view of pony track from Pinewood Avenue

a wide thoroughfare with a smooth packed surface of clay and stone, it, as well as other streets near the Casino and saddle track were curbed with sandstone curbing. The pathways to the cottages and sidewalks along the streets were paved with asphalt and they have survived to the present time. They can be seen around the Casino block and are continued on Hollywood Avenue. When Norwood Park opened for rentals in 1888, horses and horse drawn vehicles were the main form of transportation, but after the turn of the century the wealthy cottagers of Norwood Park introduced automobiles for which the roads were well suited. In conjunction with the construction of the Casino, the cottages, and the stables, trees were planted, shrubbery and hedges complimented the cottage lots, and green grass lawns were established. The Norwood Avenue entry into the Casino would formally serve as the entrance to Norwood Park. The entrance created a rustic setting formed by oak trees and ornamental gas lighted lanterns set on hollowed oak posts, which flanked the carriage entrance to the Casino grounds. Shrub lined pathways led to the Casino proper. Under the direction of Munro and the capability of Lloyd and Son, Norwood Park was laid out in a true park like setting. The nearly level graded acres were skillfully landscaped with hedges, trees, shrubbery, and green lawns.

## The Tower



A view of the Normahurst Tower

A one hundred and fifty foot observation tower was located on the Normahurst estate grounds. It stood out in all the panoramic photographic views of Norwood Park. No newspaper accounts gave any hint as to its exact location or what happened to it except that it survived the fire that destroyed Normahurst in 1902.

The tower was one of several prominent features of Norwood Park. Since it was located in the Normahurst grounds, it was surrounded by beautiful lawns and well located shade trees. According

to an 1891 brochure there was a miniature lake with a rustic bridge and pavilion on one side and on the other side a greenhouse conservatory for rare plants that was located near the base of the lofty tower.

The brochure described an ascent of the tower. On the first landing, one could smell the sea-salt air coming in open windows. At the top was an open observatory provided with armchairs, field glasses, and a constant sea breeze. The view included the whole ordered layout of Norwood Park; the Casino, centered on its block, the cottages neatly lined along the streets facing the Casino block, and the saddle track with the stables and recreation facilities. Further to the north in a distance The Highlands and Sandy Hook with steamboats approaching from New York and the seacoast railroad from the Hook to Long Branch. On the east, the large hotels of Long Branch and West End, including the famous Phil Daly's Philadelphia House stood out. To the south lay Ocean Avenue with its spacious homes extending from Elberon to Asbury Park. To the west could be seen the village of West Long Branch and the spire of the Old First Church.

## **The Casino**

The Casino, the focal point of Norwood Park was built on a six-acre block of land bordered by Norwood Avenue, Hollywood Avenue, Brookwillow Avenue, and Park Avenue (later to become Beechwood Avenue). The Casino building was centered on the block and was used exclusively for the comfort and enjoyment of the residents of Norwood Park. These 1904 Pach photographs of the Casino are shown in two views, one looking from the southeast to the northwest and the opposite view facing the southeast. Aside from the outdoor activities of tennis, badminton, and croquet, the Casino offered many conveniences inside the surrounding porch. A stained glass door led from the veranda into a spacious hall with a gas jet chandelier hung in the center. To the rear was a mirrored cabinet containing costly rare vases and statues. At the other end of the hall a raised stage with foot lights, a velvet curtain, and all the accessories for private theatricals. The hall was also used as a ballroom where dancing was held three evenings a week with one evening a full dress affair with musicians engaged to furnish the music. The hall was used as a place for meetings, and on Sundays, church services were held. In the earlier years during the Munro management (Norman Munro died in 1894) Sunday evening services were led by Dr. Young who was from New York City along with the best city choirs to lead the singing. Later on, a Catholic mass was held by Father R.A. Crean from St. Michael's Church in West End. Other functions included fund raising auctions for the benefit of Monmouth Memorial Hospital, children's parties and any other entertainment that the residents wanted.

The lower floor of the Casino offered a billiard room with four tables, two bowling alleys, a library, and reading room. A telegraph office and a barbershop were available such as would be found in a first class hotel. A telephone connected to the stable, enabled one to order a coach. Electric lights were installed in later years at the entrance and about the Casino.



The Casino



Rear view of The Casino

## Saddle Track and Community Stable

A quarter mile saddle track, a stable, and a recreational area were located in the block directly to the west of the Casino.. Pony races and pony cart drives enabled the young people to develop their skills at horsemanship. The outdoor recreation facilities included lawn tennis, baseball, croquet, shuffleboard, and playground swings. In 1899, Miss Norma Munro suggested Norwood Park sponsor a horse show on the site. John McCall, the "Summer Mayor" of Norwood Park, led the judging staff.



From 1891 painting by A. J. Ripley "Norwood Park"  
which is in the George H. Moss Jr. collection

## The Golf Course

The Norwood Field Club was incorporated in 1896. An agreement was made on the 12th of July 1896 between the widowed Henrietta Munro and the Norwood Field Club, represented by John A. McCall, its president, for the use of a golf links and a baseball field situated at Norwood Park for a period of five years. Aside from being required to provide the routine maintenance of the links, ball field, and the tennis courts, the use of liquor on the fields was prohibited, and no games were allowed on Sundays.

There was a clubhouse, which is believed to have been located at what is now the Northwest corner of Pinewood and Maple Avenues. According to the 1896 agreement, the land allotted to the Field Club was located 150 feet North and East and 300 feet South and West of the clubhouse. Harpers Golf Guide for 1900 shows that the Norwood Field Club was one of eight golf clubs in the shore area near Long Branch. The annual dues were \$25.00, the membership numbered 65. The president was John A. McCall, vice president P. Stanford Ross, secretary, J. W. Albaugh, Jr., treasurer.

H. K. Browning, captain H. B. Billings and W. D. Harper and F. C. Goodspeed were members of the governing body. The nine hole course was laid out: the 1st hole 285 yards, 2nd hole 315 yards, 3rd hole 325 yards., 4th hole 150 yards., 5th hole 435 yards., 6th hole 195yards.,7th hole 205yards., 8th hole 300yards., and the 9th hole 350yards. The record for 18 holes was 86 strokes made by W.D. Vanderpool in 1898. The club champion was A. McClane. The club, as required by the agreement, put up the prizes.

Apparently, the Norwood Field Club golfers did not do too well in matches with the neighboring players. In 1900, the Long Branch Record gave a golf standing summary where the Norwoods won one match and lost six from clubs such as Deal, Hollywood, Sea Bright, Monmouth Beach, and Red Bank. By 1902, the agreement between Norwood Park and the Norwood Field Club expired and was not renewed due to financial reasons. The value of land was rising and it was decided to replace the golf links by subdividing the unimproved Norwood Park land into building lots in the same way that the Hollywood Golf Course, located on Hoey's Hollywood Cottage Company holdings, was abandoned in 1901.

## **The Cottages**

Webster's dictionary first defines a cottage as a small house usually of one story, and many of us envision that as a description of a cottage today. As a secondary definition, Webster defines a cottage as a house at a resort or in the country, used for vacations or as a summer home. From the Victorian Period to the early part of the twentieth century the two and three story homes constructed in Long Branch and surrounding seashore communities were referred to as cottages. The Victorian styled cottages constructed at Norwood Park were of the latter type. They were built as summer rental homes at a popular summer resort for wealthy summer vacationers. The cottages exhibit the characteristic Victorian attributes that incorporate Medieval and Gothic style with projecting gable ends of the roof or with a rounded tower corner in some of the structures. All of the cottages were sided with shaped wooden shingles set in various patterns on individual houses. The roofs were covered with slate shingles. In fact one house remains with the original roof and displays the shaped wooden siding. That cottage is located on the northwest corner of Beechwood and Brookwillow Avenues. All the original cottages faced the Casino block, as shown on the map on page 2. Later larger cottages were built on Hollywood Avenue west of Pinewood Avenue the one remaining home of this type lost its third floor to fire and is now refinished as a two story dwelling. It is situated on the southwest corner of Hollywood and Pinewood Avenues. The cottage that faced it on Hollywood Avenue, has been replaced by a brick and stone home.. Further west on Hollywood Avenue, on the

southeast corner of Hollywood and Elmwood Avenues a large cottage was built especially for John McCall, who would later build Shadow Lawn. These buildings are located on the 1905 DeNyse map of Norwood Park.

The cottages were designed as summer rentals; every room was properly furnished in the best of taste and even included a fine upright piano. Gas lighting and city water were provided to fit the needs of the renters. Later, after the turn of the century, the cottages boasted a laundry, up-to-date sanitary facilities, and a servant's bathroom.

There were five differently styled cottages each with a foyer, parlor, library, dining room, butler's pantry, kitchen, and laundry on the first floor. On the second floor were four bedrooms and two baths; on the third floor were two to four rooms depending on the style of the cottage. These homes, taken from a 1907 brochure, are shown on page 13. The two larger cottages built on Hollywood and Pinewood Avenue facing one another contained a foyer, library, dining room, butlers pantry, laundry and kitchen; five bedrooms on the second floor, and four bedrooms on the third floor. They were located on a large lot with a combined carriage house and stable. The cottage on the north side of Hollywood and Pinewood had been torn down and replaced by an existing brick house. In the rear, the stable has been converted into a home on Pinewood Avenue. On the south side of Hollywood Avenue, the roof of the two-story home has been reconstructed over the original cottage whose third floor was destroyed by fire in the later part of the 1950's. The original shingle patterns covered the two stories that survived. The asphalt sidewalk and sandstone curbing are remains from the original Norwood Park layout.

Further to the west on Hollywood Avenue, on the southeast corner of Elmwood Avenue is where the McCall cottage was located. A modern home currently occupies that location. The original cottage was built for John A. McCall, then the president of the New York Life Insurance Co. and the "Summer Mayor" of Norwood Park. The "Summer Mayor" was a title given to the cottager who was foremost in defending and supporting the activities of his chosen summer residence. The resorts along the North Jersey Coast each had its own "Summer Mayor" and McCall's involvement in the Norwood Park horse show, Casino activities, and resultant popularity had earned him that title. He became better known as the builder of Shadow Lawn located on the corner of Cedar and Norwood Avenues. This would become the Summer White House for President Wilson and finally the location of Monmouth University. The McCall cottage in Norwood Park was larger than the other cottages; the first floor contained a foyer, parlor, billiard room, dining room, butler's pantry, kitchen, laundry and servants dining room; the second floor had five large bedrooms and three baths; the third floor contained six bedrooms and one bath. The stable and carriage house had living quarters and two baths. The lot on which this cottage was located was 250 ft. by 396 ft. the depth being equivalent to the Casino block.



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*Norwood  
Collages*

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MIA -3410111  
The Chanfrau Cottage

The Chanfrau cottage, located on the corner of Cedar and Elmwood Avenues, was the former Chanfrau farmhouse called "The Nest". Munro purchased the house and land from Mrs. Chanfrau. The house was a large old-fashioned farmhouse containing a foyer, large parlors, a dining room, butler's pantry, kitchen and servants dining room on the first floor; and five large bedrooms and two baths on the second floor. The carriage house and stable

included an apartment for the coachman. The property consisted of a 20-acre farm, which was sold to Munro in 1888. A ninetieth century photograph of the Chanfrau cottage is shown at left. It was burned to the ground in freezing weather in the winter of 1965. A modern ranch house now occupies the site.

On the opposite corner from the Chanfrau cottage is a two-story bungalow with a wide veranda, which was known as the California Cottage. In the summer of 1902 after Normahurst was destroyed by fire, Mrs. Munro repurchased the California Cottage with the intentions of living in it. However, she went abroad that year and returned to one of the cottages on the south side of Cedar and Norwood Avenue. John McCall lived there while his Norwood Cottage was being built.



The California Cottage today

Over the years, later owners of the California Cottage have maintained it in good condition and it exists as an attractive home today.

Normahurst, Norman L. Munro's villa from which Norwood Park originated, became a summer rental property at times after his death in 1894. The villa was constructed in 1886 at a cost of over \$40,000. It was lavishly furnished with costly works of art, two pianos, an organ, a \$4,000 gold dinner set from Italy, and \$3,000 worth of cut glass. The ground floor contained a spacious dining room, breakfast room, a wide reception hall, parlor, pantry, kitchen, and bath. Mrs. Henrietta Munro remained in the house after her husband's death. She occupied a bedroom with a bay window on the East side of the homestead. She spent time traveling abroad and in her absence, Normahurst

was leased for the summer season. In 1899, it rose to national prominence when it was leased to the Vice President of the United States, Garret A. Hobart. He was in poor health and chose to recuperate near the healthful seashore. Among the Vice President's visitors during August of that year were President William McKinley and Mrs. McKinley, Senators, and Cabinet officers. Hobart later counseled the Secretary of War, General A. Alger, into resigning from the President's cabinet due to trouble with the war of 1898. The President was opposed to war with Spain yet the influence of the Press and Secretary of War Alger were instrumental in entering the conflict. In 1901, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Guggenheim of New York City leased the famous cottage for \$5,000 for the season. It is quite likely that his brother, Murray Guggenheim, was influenced into purchasing the site in 1903 to build his own villa, which now houses the Murray Guggenheim Library of Monmouth University. Mrs. Munro did not intend to occupy Normahurst in 1902; she planned to meet her son in Paris that summer. In March of 1902 Normahurst, with all its valuable contents burned to the ground and nothing of any value remained. A costly children's playhouse nearby also burned. The following year Murray Guggenheim purchased the remains of the Normahurst estate and cleared the land for his countryseat.

On the current map of Norwood Park, page 18, the remaining cottage locations have been numbered from 1 to 12. Cottage #1, which originally fronted on Hollywood Avenue, has its entry on Norwood Avenue; Cottage #2 adjacent to it on Norwood Avenue is now being restored by its owner; Cottage #3 on Hollywood Avenue had been the primary subject of a research paper by Marta L. Carlson titled "Norwood Park: A Reflection of Eclectic Victorian Architecture and Its Contingent Lifestyle." The paper was submitted for an undergraduate course at the University of Rhode Island in 1982. The site on the northeast corner of Hollywood and Brookwillow Avenues once boasted a towered cottage; that burned in 1987 and was replaced with a contemporary home. Today 12 out of the original 25 cottages remain. Photographs of the 12 remaining cottages when arranged for comparison on page 19 show how the cottages are similar. They vary only in their roofline, gables -either rounded or squared and peaks -either steep or even flattened. Cottages designated as #5, #8, and #11 are identical in construction and may be compared to cottage #1 whose front gable spans the whole front where cottages #5, #8, #11 have a large and small gable instead. The two cottage types with corner towers had been destroyed and current comparisons could not be made. The California Cottage differs from the the other cottages and is unique as a two story bungalow.

## **The Dissolution of the Norwood Park Cottage Colony**

After the death of Norman L. Munro in 1894, the Cottage Colony continued to flourish as it had since 1888 under the Munro management. In 1901 his daughter, Miss Norma Leslie Munro became of age and rumor had it that she would ask for her share of the estate. The remaining heirs, Mrs. Henrietta Munro and her teenage son, Henry Hume Munro, were negotiating the sale of Norwood Park to John A. Mc Call, the president of the New York Life Insurance Company, who for many years was a prominent resident of the colony. The dealings with Mc Call did not materialize. The Norwood Park Cottage Colony was sold to James W. Cunningham of the Stock Exchange firm of Ellingwood and Cunningham of New York and Thomas P. McKenna a local lawyer who arranged the transaction and maintained an interest in the property. Since the sale of Norwood Park to McCall did not take place, he purchased the Hulick farm across Cedar Avenue from Norwood Park and built his countryseat, Shadow Lawn. He referred to the Shadow Lawn address as being located in Norwood Park. The sale of Norwood Park Cottages followed the breakup of its companion summer cottage colony the Hollywood Hotel and Cottages who subdivided their extensive holdings which included the Hollywood Golf Club (a private golf club who leased their golf links from the Hollywood Hotel Association) grounds which extended south to Park Avenue, Elberon. In like manner Norwood Park, though much smaller in area, was also subdivided including its Norwood Park golf grounds, known as the nine hole Norwood Field Club.

In March of 1902 Normahurst, the Munro countryseat was destroyed by fire and Mrs. Henrietta Munro sold that corner land to the Norwood Park Cottage Association. In turn, she intended to purchase the California Cottage from them for her personal use. In October of 1902, Norwood Park changed hands again. The major portion of Norwood Park, twenty cottages, the Casino, and recreation grounds were exchanged as partial payment for improved property in New York City. The new owner was George E. Wallace, a New York builder, who took it in part payment for five large modern apartment houses off Seventh Avenue in the Harlem section of New York City. The trade involved \$2,500,000 of which Cunningham and McKenna submitted Norwood Park as part payment of \$1,000,000.

This sale of Norwood Park came shortly after the sale of Hollywood to another New York builder. Since Hollywood and Norwood Park were near neighbors, there were plans for consolidation. The Hollywood Hotel had thrived and there was talk of building another new hotel in Norwood Park; however, the merger of Hollywood and Norwood Park was never made. Throughout these transactions, Norwood Park continued its summer rentals, realizing \$23,000 per season. The Casino still served as a place for religious services, theater, dancing, concerts, and fund raising events for the benefit of

local charities. The new management retained Thomas P. McKenna to manage Norwood Park. His son, Thomas F. McKenna was included as a legal advisor.

In 1903, the Norwood Park Land and Cottage Company leased the Park through Cunningham and McKenna with a \$150,000 mortgage. Thomas M. Fowler, the president of the company, failed to make a \$3,750 interest payment on the mortgage, sold some of the cottage furnishings, and proposed to sell the gas fixtures. Cunningham received a court restraining order against that Norwood Park Company from selling the gas fixtures. It was contended that they were part of the real estate and could not be sold. Thomas McKenna took over control of Norwood Park rentals for the coming season of 1904.

Murray Guggenheim purchased the vacant Normahurst plot for \$50,000. The contract for his villa was estimated to have cost over \$200,000. This included the estimate for grading and landscape work. The clearing of the land prior to building must have included the tearing down of the 150 ft. observation tower, which was a feature of the original Norwood Park Colony. The tower had survived the 1902 fire that destroyed Normahurst, and it was never a prominence on the Guggenheim countryseat. Under the new management by McKenna of the Norwood Park cottages in 1904, they were refurbished and refinished. A successful season was predicted; however, only half of the cottages were rented. Then in 1905 in spite of increased prices, nearly all of the cottages were rented. The Casino continued with its religious services and the other functions, which were held during the summer months. Through the 1907 season the summer concerts, fund raising events for charities, and the celebrations of catholic masses continued in the Casino, but near the end of August the Casino block was sold to Benedict J. Greenhut. He was a summer resident of Norwood Avenue, a New Yorker in the winter and president of the Siegel-Cooper Company department store. The Casino building was not included in the purchase by Greenhut, and it was to be moved to the pony saddle track in Norwood Park. A \$100,000 cottage was to be built to replace the Casino as his summer home, which was intended to be an exclusive show place. However, it would not match the mansions of his neighbors, Murray Guggenheim nor that of Abraham White, the new owner of Shadow Lawn. In the meantime a building boom had developed in Long Branch on Norwood Avenue between Broadway and Cedar Avenue. Real estate values were soaring, vacant lots were being developed, and new cottages erected. The Norwood Park Casino building, where Father Crean of St. Michael's Church said the summertime Masses for Norwood Park guests, was purchased from the new Norwood Park owners (who were represented by Henry M. Fitch) by St. Michaels Church. The major part of the Casino structure (the right end of the building was removed) was moved across Norwood Avenue to a lot on the Long Branch side where the building boom was taking place. The Casino became known as St. Michael's Church Annex and Masses were held in



Norwood Park 199B

### The Cottages today



Cottage on lot #3



Cottage on lot # 2. Style similar to lot #3



Cottage on lot #6



Cottage on lot #4. Style similar to lot #6



Cottage on lot #5



Cottage on lot #1. Style similar to lot #5



Cottage on lot #7



Cottage on lot #9. Similar to lot #7

the summer months just as they were held for the past 16 summers in Norwood Park. The right side of the Casino was left near its original site possibly to be incorporated into a grand cottage for Mr. Greenhut. The larger part of the Casino that was moved to become the Church Annex has since been converted into living quarters; it is now a home with the left side of the old Casino fronting on Norwood Avenue.



The Surviving portion of The Casino

Mr. Benedict J. Greenhut abandoned his plan to develop the Casino block into his country seat; he was able to purchase Shadow Lawn at a bargain price. Shadow Lawn was completed for John McCall in September of 1903. A judgment against McCall led to his loss of the property which was purchased in 1906 by Abraham S. White, then the president of the De Forest Wireless and Telegraph Co. By September of 1907, White was

accused of using the company funds for the purchase, which was reported to be between \$400,000 and \$500,000. After White lost "White Park", which he had renamed Shadow Lawn, it was bought by a group of investors consisting of: Myron H. Oppenheim, P. Stanford Ross, Joseph Behl, Harry Content and the estate of F. F. C. Young for \$108,000. The investors were successful in having Shadow Lawn reassessed to \$100,000 from \$200,000 and offered it for sale at \$150,000. Mr. Greenhut made the purchase in 1908 and established it as his country seat instead of the Casino block in Norwood Park. His original plan for the Casino block would not have been finished until the 1910 season; so he made a bargain with time as well as obtaining a grand estate for the same amount it would have cost him for a lesser place. After he renamed White Park into Shadow Lawn, he improved the house and grounds at double his purchase price and he enjoyed the luxury of the residence. He offered the estate to serve as the summer White House for President Wilson in 1916. In anticipation of Wilson's coming, the West Long Branch Council approved an ordinance for curbing and sidewalks on the westerly side of Norwood Avenue between Wall Street and Cedar Avenue. This was done out of respect toward President and Mrs. Wilson who it was thought would stroll from Shadow Lawn to Broadway, Long Branch.

By 1911 the Norwood Park property minus the Casino block was assessed by the Borough of West Long Branch for \$215,000. The Norwood Park Company, which had acquired the bankrupt Norwood Park, represented by its president, Leopold Stem, testified that the land area held by the company had been diminished due to the loss of lots that were sold and the reduced value of their mortgages. The cottages

rented from \$500 to \$1200 for the season, which showed depreciation from prior years. In addition the stock in the company fell to one-half its original cost and was even being offered at one quarter its cost. As a result of this appeal West Long Branch reduced the assessed value of the Norwood Park Company to \$189,000. In 1912, the Norwood Park Company exchanged Norwood Park's built up lots, then consisting of twenty cottages and seventy acres of land, for a New York apartment house on Riverside Drive called the Glen Cairn, which was built in 1910. In the exchange, Norwood Park was valued at \$400,000 and the Glen Cairn Apartments at \$1,000,000. This partial payment gave control of Norwood Park to the Cabot Investment Company who in turn served as brokers and made the exchange of Norwood Park to the Orb Realty Co. who was owner of the apartment building.

The Norwood Park Company was established June 26, 1907 after purchasing all of the Norwood Park tracts from the creditors of James Cunningham, Monroe F. Mannheimer and others. They sold off the Casino Block to Greenhut in 1907. Then through 1910 they sold most of the vacant lots in the western part of Norwood Park to their shareholders for \$10 each; they donated streets to West Long Branch. On the DeNyse map of Norwood Park of 1905 Munroe Street was called Locust Avenue; in 1910, it was donated to the Borough. Several lots in that vicinity were sold to local buyers at fair market values of \$300 to \$1000. By 1916, the Norwood Park Cottages on Hollywood Avenue had been sold to individual owners. Hollywood Avenue had been neglected by the Norwood Park Company. The Norwood Park property owners donated Hollywood Avenue to the West Long Branch Council. This would lead to street lighting and fire plugs for fire protection. The cottages were also improved and gained their former popularity. This could have been due in part to their proximity to Shadow Lawn, the Summer White House. The fine stable on the section of Brookside Avenue, which was once a stretch of the pony track, has now been converted into apartments. It was built in the fall of 1916 for a Mr. Tucker who must have purchased the greater part of the block bounded by Hollywood, Pinewood, and Brookwillow Avenues. The stable was 30x90 feet, two stories. with living quarters on the second floor. The land, to the rear of the stable on Brookside Avenue, included part of the pony track and recreation facilities for the original Norwood Park. From 1916 to the 1980's the stable and the exercise ring were used to stable and train show horses.

By 1928 all officers, directors, and trustees of the Norwood Park Company had passed away and on July 12, 1928 the Company was dissolved by the stockholders. J. Ernest Stern the oldest son of Leopold Stern, the last president of the Norwood Park Company signed the papers dissolving the company. All the land that was purchased and developed by Norman L. Munro into a thriving summertime resort colony had been divided and purchased by individual owners. Many of the original cottages remain on Hollywood Avenue today as well as one cottage on Beechwood

Avenue and one cottage on Brookwillow Avenue. The Normahurst plot (now the Guggenheim Library grounds), the Albaugh property and Livingston property (which Munro was unable to buy), and Shadow Lawn are now part of Monmouth University.



The Stable as seen today

The Casino plot itself has been divided into six lots on which there are four dwellings. The home that has been built where the Casino once stood could have included part of the Casino in its construction. It was built in the 1920's copied after an English seaside house. As for the major portion of the Casino, it is located across Norwood Avenue in Long Branch and serves as a private home. Mr. Robert. Kastor, who ran for Mayor in the 1950's, owned the California Cottage. After his death in 1979, he passed it on to a relative. Several owners

have occupied it since. It remains on the corner of Cedar and Elmwood Avenues.

From 1910 until it was dissolved, The Norwood Park Company engaged the engineering firm of either Seamans or Throckmorton for the subdivision work of the vacant land that extended to Munroe Street (formerly called Locust and most probably named after Munro even though the spelling varies on the current street signs). From Elmwood Avenue to Monroe Street private individuals owned these lots; they were further subdivided and built upon from the 1920's to the current times. There are no Victorian cottages west of Elmwood Avenue. The Norwood Park Cottage Colony no longer exists as such, but the Norwood Park section of West Long Branch remains.



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## Notes



\$6.00

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