

She Persisted:

Celebrating the 100th
Anniversary of Women's Suffrage



To celebrate this special anniversary year, communities across the country are remembering and honoring the contributions women have made to their communities.

Despite often being cast in a series of male defined roles: daughter of, sister of, wife of, mother of, widow of – the women of Poughkeepsie found ways to better their community through acts of courage, creativity and compassion.

Here are just some of the City of Poughkeepsie's remarkable women whose accomplishments and indomitable spirit continue to inspire us today.

Holly Wahlberg, Historian
April 2020

Helen Andrus (1853-1927)



At first glance, Helen Andrus appears to be the classic small town piano teacher - patiently giving piano lessons in the family parlor, preparing organ pieces for Sunday church and accompanying the community's budding amateur vocalists as they took their star turns on stage.

Andrus did spend her life living in the house she grew up in on N. Clover Street, giving piano and organ lessons, serving as organist for various congregations and helping other musicians reach their potential.

Although her musical life seemed to stay within the constraints of what "musical women" of her era were allowed to do, Andrus was actually doing much more. Only a few of her friends were aware that she was privately composing music. Concealing her identity as a woman, Helen Andrus published numerous musical compositions as "H.J. Andrus."

She later recalled that while studying music at Vassar, a visiting teacher told her, "A woman has no more business to meddle with harmony than with a pick axe" – a statement which she said only made her more determined than ever to become a woman composer.

Andrus also broke new ground with her decision to become Poughkeepsie's first music historian. In 1912, Andrus produced a detailed history of Poughkeepsie's musical life in order to "rescue from oblivion the careers of many musicians who were residents of this city and who labored faithfully for its musical advancement."

In meticulously detailing the work of those she called "the faithful music toilers who builded better than they knew," Andrus gave small town musical life a legitimacy and importance rarely bestowed upon it.

Susan Buck (1950-)



For 43 years, Susan Buck and her pre-K students at Poughkeepsie Day Nursery were fixtures of the city landscape - frequently spotted heading out into the community pulling their little wagon of supplies for learning on the go.

Whether on their way to a show at the Bardavon, to a picnic at the riverfront, to the train station to learn about signs in braille, to Muzzie's for an ice pop, or just to the stone boundary walls of Wheaton Park looking for snails, Buck encouraged her young students to observe, discuss and ponder the world around them.

Each day Buck showed her students how to embrace the diversity of daily urban life and taught them how to see themselves as part of something larger than themselves.

Starting her career as an early childhood educator in 1969, Susan Buck quickly became a local treasure. Each of her students knew that every day, Miss Buck would have something special planned – flying kites, riding a bus uptown, checking the water level at Fallkill Creek, visiting the rose garden at Mt. Carmel Church, studying the shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe at the back of Dalleo's Deli, making a card for the neighborhood dog "Peanuts," or learning all about coconuts.

Buck's professional abilities were widely recognized and respected. But it was the affection and genuine love her students had for her that surprised outsiders, sometimes even parents. At times her creativity, even in the smallest details, became part of Nursery lore. There was, for instance, the "Miss Buck knot" – a way of tying sneakers that guaranteed the laces wouldn't come undone.

Celebrating the extraordinary things in the everyday world would become Buck's trademark. It was a skill she said she learned from the children themselves: "The children slow you down and teach you to pay attention to the small things."

In describing her own classroom, Buck emphasized the importance of both respect and community: "Most importantly, we are supportive and respectful of one another. It's our respect for each other and our interest in what's taking place around us that sets the stage for learning. We are very much like a family – always busy, always on the move and always enjoying our place in the world!"

Emily Collins (1857-1930)



Emily Collins was an early and outspoken advocate for victims of sexual abuse and perhaps the first woman in Poughkeepsie to speak openly about the sexual victimization of women by powerful men.

In 1901, Emily Collins “blew the whistle” on the Superintendent of Schools after hearing complaints from students that they had been “hugged and kissed” by the Superintendent. Collins withdrew the charges after facing a \$10,000 slander suit filed by the Superintendent. Some said the girls who complained were just “jealous” that they “had not been kissed” by the Superintendent. Emily Collins’ only comment was, “The men will stand together. Woman must stand alone.”

In 1908, Collins spoke out against the city judge’s decision to sentence young girls picked up for prostitution to four years in a reformatory. Collins was the only woman in Poughkeepsie to visit the girls in jail. “They are mere children,” she said. “I believe there is some better way of influencing their lives than by sending them to this institution.”

Her sharpest criticism, however, was reserved for her fellow church goers: “Some ministers are too busy preparing sermons that their congregations will praise and admire to go out and put their shoulders to the load that humanity is struggling under. Holding pink teas to raise money for decorating the churches is only an incident or detail of church work.”

Emily Collins regularly visited the jail, the court room and the police station and publicly advocated for things like continuing education for young people behind bars and religious services at the Poughkeepsie jail.

Regarding her outspoken interest in female criminals, Collins noted, “These are young girls waiting to be saved. Some people say I’m butting in. I don’t let this cry influence me. I am going to do the right thing as I see it and pray and hope that I may bring good into some lives that are now hopeless and friendless.”

Few women took the risks Emily Collins did. Some urged the police department to hire its first female officer who could be put in charge of “mothering” any “wayward” girls. Other women preferred to support the YWCA and its mission to prevent girls from becoming “wayward” in the first place.

Anna Dayley (1868-1945)



Anna G. W. Dayley was Poughkeepsie's first woman lawyer and spoke out fearlessly on the need to increase women's legal rights.

After graduating from Poughkeepsie High School and Eastman Business College, Anna Dayley served as legal clerk and court stenographer in the law office of Robert Wilkinson until being admitted to practice law in 1905.

For decades, Dayley remained the only woman lawyer in Poughkeepsie – gamely attending the all male attorney banquets she jokingly called “stag parties.” As she rose to speak at her first such banquet, her male colleagues burst into “For She’s a Jolly Good Fellow.” Dayley teased them too. On the occasion of another banquet, she sent her regrets accompanied by a bouquet of roses tied in the yellow and white ribbon of the suffragists.

Throughout her life, Dayley lived with her invalid Irish immigrant parents and strongly identified with those women who worked because they had dependents to support. Her Irish heritage was also something she readily defended. While attending a women's club lecture on prohibition in 1930, she left the audience “gasping” when she stood up and challenged the speaker's use of an ethnic slur about drunken Irish “scrubwomen” who would never support prohibition. Dayley curtly announced to the shocked women that plenty of lawyers and judges who pretended to be “dry” had cellars full of liquor.

Dayley became known for what the newspapers called “crisp” statements such as her observation that “the only time men and women are equal is when they are dead or paying taxes...” or her comparison of the way men look after women's interests being much the way “the lion looks after the lamb at supper time.”

Anna Dayley ran as the Democratic candidate for New York State Assembly in 1924, but lost to her Republican opponent.

Carrie Hull

(1868-1933)



In an era notorious for exploitation of women factory workers, particularly in the garment industry, Carrie Hull pioneered a corporate philosophy based on one surprising thing: kindness.

She began work as a stenographer at Dutchess Manufacturing on Crannell Street (one of the world's largest manufacturers of trousers) before marrying the factory's owner, J. Frank Hull in 1894. Her influence over the company grew to include a number of progressive management ideas that encouraged social bonds among Dutchess Manufacturing's largely female work force averaging 700 employees.

Innovative benefits like a free lending library, a music lounge with a piano and Victrola and an employee cafeteria were made part of everyday life at the factory. A Vassar Music professor was hired to conduct a "Hull Glee Club" – a 50 woman employee choir that Carrie Hull herself sang in each week. In another unusual act, Carrie Hull opened the Hull's country home "Dutchess Hill" for employee summer outings. For her step-daughter Ruth's wedding, all 700 employees were invited to the reception.

After her husband's death in 1907 and the death of the factory's superintendent in 1912, Carrie Hull became company president and continued to experiment with new ideas such as adding a 500 seat civic auditorium to the factory campus and purchasing property at Upton Lake for employee recreation.

Decades of concern for employee health and happiness made Carrie Hull a revered figure. Although the factory increasingly embraced the management methods of an outside "efficiency expert," union organizers struggled to make inroads at Dutchess Manufacturing.

In a 1923 speech to her company's sales team, she articulated her beliefs regarding business life: "I believe the time will come when the human element will be the most important thing in business. The time will come when the banks will ask, not how much a man is worth, or what his business does, but what he is doing for the community and for the people of his concern. The human element is, above all things, the most important in business."

Grace Kimball

(1855-1942)



Grace Kimball did not arrive in Poughkeepsie until she was 42 years old, and few here realized they were welcoming a woman who was already an international heroine. Kimball's youth was largely spent as a missionary to Turkey. In 1882, she left America as a young society woman educated in Maine to travel across Turkey on horseback for a missionary assignment in the remote outpost of Armenia.

After six years of teaching in an Armenian girls school, Kimball returned to America determined to get a medical degree to better help the Armenian people. In 1892, she graduated from the New York Infirmary's Medical College and returned to Armenia where she now confronted a population ravaged by epidemics and mass starvation as Turkish soldiers conducted a campaign of genocide on the Armenian people.

In 1896, Kimball described the thousands of refugees descending on her missionary outpost: "...a vast army of wretched men, women and children bore down on the city, filling every inch of available space. A more helpless, hopeless, wretched set of people surely were never gotten together...Just at the beginning of winter, robbed of all their winter provisions, stripped of all their property, even to the clothing on their backs, driven out of their homes, many of their men killed or severely wounded, wanderers on the face of the earth, with not a crust to eat, not a rag to put on, and neither house nor fuel wherewith to withstand the cruel cold."

Facing the impending starvation and freezing to death of thousands, Kimball created her own relief program in which refugees carded and spun wool into cloth and sewed clothes and blankets for themselves and others who had fled for their lives with only the clothes on their backs. Next Kimball opened a series of bakeries that eventually fed 16,000 daily.

She ran these enterprises while also seeing patients two to four hours per day ("Mostly frozen feet and gun shot wounds – sword cuts don't count," she said) and also writing and telegraphing potential donors around the world to raise funds for refugee aid.

When her success attracted the notice of the highest Turkish officials, Kimball felt her life was in danger. She returned to America, taking a new job as Vassar's assistant physician - which surely must have seemed tame indeed.

Before long, Dr. Kimball became a familiar figure driving her horse and buggy to see patients all over the county. She turned her tremendous organizational abilities to the fight against tuberculosis (then known as the "White Plague") and somewhat hesitantly agreed to chair the board of the YWCA for one year. One year turned into 40 years during which time she transformed the YWCA from a well-intentioned society ladies charity into a highly regarded civic institution of women helping women.

Rosaria LaFalce

(1889-1980)



Rosaria LaFalce became Poughkeepsie's symbol of an immigrant woman's life in a typical Italian American "Little Italy" neighborhood.

She arrived in America in 1906 at age 17 speaking no English and making her way to Poughkeepsie to marry her childhood sweetheart who had come over from Italy before her knowing only the word "PoKips."

Working inside the home "keeping house," Rosaria LaFalce became the matriarch of a first ward family that included 11 children, 38 grandchildren and 27 great grandchildren. She and her family became a national symbol of the Italian American experience when Life magazine profiled the LaFalces in a 1953 cover story on Italian immigrants.

Rosaria LaFalce's daughter Mary became a nun; her daughter Helen never married and lived at home, cleaning the Mt. Carmel Church Rectory daily. Rosaria LaFalce's nine sons (Mike, Carmine, John, Frank, Pasquale, Joe, Louis, Jimmy, and Anthony) developed a flair for music, starting out as boy sopranos at church then moving on to group vocal performances and the mastery of various instruments - until finally forming the "LaFalce Brothers Orchestra" to earn extra money for the family.

Rosaria LaFalce's 9 room home at 45 Fitchett Street was referred to by her boys as "headquarters," especially on Sundays.

Rosaria LaFalce devoted her life to her family and demonstrated her strength in holding that family together through two World Wars and a Depression while her husband earned their income in a series of blue collar laborer jobs. She remains, however, largely invisible as a person - known primarily as "mother of" the LaFalce boys - the stereotyped Italian Catholic mama. All we know of her is related to her gender role and the obvious skill at which she performed it.

Elinore Massa

(1927-2003)



In 1971, the Poughkeepsie Urban Renewal Agency announced its plan to demolish 294 buildings and displace approximately 1,000 people in an area known as the Union Street neighborhood.

Planners dismissed the area as full of congested, narrow streets lined with houses that lacked “modern” kitchens, off street parking and “shopping facilities.” The word they used to describe the neighborhood was “slum.” Clearance and demolition were set to begin.

From outside the neighborhood rose voices of protest defending the area as a rare surviving example of an “urban village” filled with numerous 19th century homes - many with their original character still intact. Yet unless neighborhood residents themselves wanted to put up a fight, the area’s survival was far from assured.

A leader from inside the neighborhood needed to emerge, and Elinore Massa was that leader: “I had such fight in me...and if these people felt I could do this for them, be their spokesman, then I had to try.”

With no prior experience as an organizer, Massa launched a petition drive, organized letter writing campaigns and attended meeting after meeting with her neighbors, putting a human face to the devastating consequences of Poughkeepsie’s vast experiment in urban renewal.

Although immediately dismissed as ridiculous romantics or worse, Massa and her neighbors refused to give up. “Love for our neighborhood kept us from defeat,” said Massa.

Saving the Union Street neighborhood was a milestone in Poughkeepsie’s history. For the first time, the city broadened its definition of buildings worth saving to include not just the homes of rich people or buildings from the Revolutionary War past. Poughkeepsie would now also celebrate and protect the urban fabric created by tradesmen, laborers, immigrants, and the middle class. Poughkeepsie’s urban planners would be forced to confront the fact that people did not necessarily want to be “relocated” to faceless high rises or dehumanizing “projects.”

Nina Mattern (1882-1918)



Nina Mattern was most likely the first woman for whom the city lowered its flags to half staff. She died at age 36, sacrificing her own life while saving others during the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918. Before her death, Nina Mattern was widely known as one of the city's most effective suffragists. It was estimated that Mattern probably held the local record for number of public speeches made on behalf of a woman's right to vote.

As an appointee to the City's Board of Health, Nina Mattern championed what was then referred to as the "Better Babies Movement." This work led her into the poorest wards of the city to record the number of children under 5 in each household. Canvassing these neighborhoods trying to convince mothers to go to the Pelton mansion in Wheaton Park for pure milk and baby health screening, brought Mattern face to face with some of the worst housing conditions in the city. Unlike Mattern, most other women remained divorced from such realities until the Spanish Influenza epidemic

of 1918 when women aid workers delivering meals to flu victims saw for themselves the city's underbelly.

At the height of the four month flu epidemic when thousands were sickened and hundreds were dying, the Board of Health and Mayor ordered the closing of all schools, churches, stores, and theaters in the city. Regular hospitals were quickly overwhelmed by the number of flu victims, and temporary emergency hospitals were set up at the City Infirmary, the Congregational Church, St. Peter's Church, and the Masonic Temple.

Nina Mattern took charge of the Masonic Temple hospital where she worked from dawn until late into the night while also grieving the loss of her own brother to the flu. Exhausted and showing signs of the flu herself, she was ordered home by a doctor. Initial reports indicated she would recover which deepened the community's shock when her sudden death was revealed. Mattern immediately became a community symbol of womanly courage and self-sacrifice. After the epidemic had passed, Mattern's colleagues at the newly formed Women's City and County Club decided to address the unsafe and inhumane housing conditions the flu epidemic had exposed. As a tribute to Nina Mattern, the club commissioned the "Mattern Memorial Housing Survey" which laid the ground work for building codes in the City of Poughkeepsie.

Rachel McCrimmon (1881-1970)



Restless and disenchanted with her job in business, Rachel McCrimmon decided at age 28 to leave her native Canada and move to Poughkeepsie where one of her girlfriends had settled. After graduating from the Vassar Brothers Hospital Nursing School in 1912, she was hired as Assistant Director of Nurses and Instructor of Nursing Arts. Older and with more life experiences than many of the other graduates, McCrimmon stood out from her peers.

Eight years later, she was promoted to Director of Nursing. That same year, she became a founding member and first president of the District 12 New York State Nurses Association, an organization formed to bring about improved professional standards and working conditions for nurses in Putnam and Dutchess Counties.

Although McCrimmon retired at age 63 in 1944, she continued working well into her 80s as hospital "Hostess" - a position created especially for her. Years after her death, a portrait of McCrimmon still graced the hospitals' central corridor. Those who remembered her called her "the hospital's soul."

McCrimmon is credited with profoundly shaping a generation of nurses with her distinctive blend of personal warmth and passionate devotion to professionalism. In a yearbook tradition where students selected songs to describe staff, the girls picked "There Will Never Be Another You" to describe Rachel McCrimmon.

A patient remembering her stay in the maternity ward in 1930 noted: "Everyone was marvelous to me. The nurses were like family. Miss McCrimmon - well, you know how Miss McCrimmon could make you feel you were the only person in the world - absolutely refused to let me allow myself to be afraid. She could be a real battle-ax sometimes...but spiritually she could just pull you up. That beautiful posture. Have you ever seen a uniform that white?... After Billy was born, they would not let me get out of bed for ten days. John smuggled in martinis a couple of times. The nurses pretended they hadn't seen a thing. But we did have a scare once when Miss McCrimmon stopped in to say hello. I've always wondered....Do you think she knew?"

Earline Patrice

(1918-1993)



Earline Patrice moved to Poughkeepsie from New Orleans in 1951. In her adopted city of Poughkeepsie, she became a legendary humanitarian whose motto was “You have not, because you ask not.”

She began giving out food and Christmas gifts to the children of those she called the “poor poor” in 1964 in a muddy vacant lot on Jefferson Street. She later recalled that it was so cold that day in 1964 that “we passed out bologna sandwiches and had to also pass out handkerchiefs so the

kids could blow their noses and wipe the tears from their eyes.”

By 1973, Patrice had also begun cooking a community Thanksgiving dinner after “seeing so many people walking the streets at holiday time.” Memories of going to bed hungry during the Depression had remained with Patrice. But she also felt the dinners were for “the lonely” as well as for the hungry: “I’ve been lonely before. You don’t have to be without family to be lonely. They are all my family,” she said.

Although she selflessly cooked meals for thousands of people over the years, she mischievously told reporters, “I hate to cook...I don’t even like turkey and gravy. I’d rather have a hamburger and cup of coffee.”

Earline Patrice’s example has continued to inspire others such as Clem Parkinson, Eileen Hickey, John Flowers, and Penny Lewis to take up the mantle of humanitarianism. In 1995, City Council Member Clem Parkinson led a successful effort to change the name of Mansion Square to “Earline Patrice Park.”

Helen Reynolds

(1875-1943)



Local historian Helen Wilkinson Reynolds' meticulous research on the origin of the word "Poughkeepsie" literally rewrote history, upending all previously held theories on this subject. First published in 1924, Reynolds work on this topic has remained the definitive explanation of Poughkeepsie's unique name.

Helen Wilkinson Reynolds began her work as a historian in the traditional "womanly spheres" of church and family by compiling a two volume history of her church and a 100th anniversary history of her family's business, the W.T. Reynolds Company.

Yet her work pushed far beyond these boundaries as she moved to confront difficult challenges like inaccessible and decaying historical records, vanishing local landmarks, limited publication opportunities for local historical research, and the tendency by some to dismiss local history as unimportant.

Reynolds' energy and impeccable standards of scholarship elevated local history to a new level of usefulness and reliability. The retelling of folklore, hearsay and quaint anecdotes made for what Reynolds called "romantic history," a thing quite apart from the "scientific" collecting of historical fact she engaged in as a professional historian.

Former County Historian Joyce Ghee has pointed out how extraordinary Reynolds' accomplishments were: "Helen Wilkinson Reynolds was a woman with not a degree to her name, not even a high school diploma. A spinal affliction brought her formal education to an end at age 15. Everything she became – historian, researcher, writer, institution leader, and advisor to public leaders – was of her own making."

FDR, who was himself a dedicated local historian, called Helen Wilkinson Reynolds his "grand friend" and said of her, "She knows more about the county than anyone else." Reynolds used that knowledge to inspire respect for the past among members of her own generation, never losing faith that what she called "persistent enthusiasm" for history would leave behind a valuable legacy for the future.

Louise Stark (1925-1978)

Louise Stark, Republican of the 2nd ward, was the first woman to be elected to the city's Common Council.



Elected to City Council in 1969, the victory of Louise Stark as a Republican-Conservative in a majority Democratic ward was a surprise win. Stark rang almost 600 doorbells and handed out election freebies that made the most of her gender. On the sewing kits and pot holders she distributed was the slogan, "Let Stark Put a Spark in the Second Ward."

Her unofficial campaign headquarters was Lejon's Newsroom and Luncheonette on Main Street near her own business, Bob's Shoe Store. Members of the Business and Professional Women's Club became her chief campaigners.

One evening, a woman voter asked Stark, "Why should I vote for you? A woman's place is in the home." Louise Stark remembered her response: "I explained that my 'home' is a little dog, a French poodle who died September 18th. I go to business every day. That and out to meetings at night. I have served as treasurer, scholarship chairman and legislative chairman of the Business and Professional Women's Club and have been active on Zonta. I think I can bring to the Common Council a woman's compassion and yet I can approach things as a business woman."

In a bid to become the city's first woman mayor, Louise Stark lost the Republican primary to Arthur Weinberg in 1973 by 59 votes. She died at age 52 in 1978. It would be another two decades before a woman, Sheila Newman, was elected Mayor of the City of Poughkeepsie in 1993.

Mary Wiltsie (1818-1860)



Mary Wiltsie was a pioneer in the creation of Poughkeepsie's first charitable institution, the Home for the Friendless which opened in 1857 at the corner of S. Hamilton and Franklin Streets.

In 1847, Wiltsie and 20 other women from Poughkeepsie's churches went "two by two...into the streets, the garrets and the cellars feeding the hungry, clothing the destitute and providing employment and protection for the friendless and exposed."

After five years of ministering to the community, the women concluded that the "only true way to arrest poverty and crime" would be "saving the children of want and sorrow."

The dream of having their own building in which to care for orphans and friendless young women took another five years to realize as they struggled to raise money and acquire a site on what was then the city's edge at S. Hamilton and Franklin Streets.

The local newspaper noted that very few of the "first class men of wealth" seemed to be aiding the effort. But no set back seemed able to deter or defeat this band of women who held their faith to the highest test: is my faith useful to someone else?

On her death bed at age 42, as her friends wept around her, the first president of the Home for the Friendless, Mary Wiltsie suddenly raised her head and announced, "Be quiet! The Lord reigns." Her will bequeathed \$1,000 to the Home for the Friendless which, when combined with the same amount donated by Matthew Vassar, enabled the payment of the Home's debts and the establishment of an endowment for future expenses.

In 1919, Home for the Friendless was renamed "Children's Home" and still operates today at its Fulton Street campus as a nurturing refuge for at-risk children. No known image of Mary Wiltsie survives.

Laura Wylie

(1855-1932)



Laura Wylie graduated from Vassar in 1877 and became one of the first women to attain a Ph.D. from Yale. She served as chairwoman of the English Department at Vassar College but chose to live in the heart of Poughkeepsie at 112 Market Street.

Although a fine teacher and scholar, she had an equal passion for bridging the gap between town and gown. In this area, she led by example - becoming the driving force in a wide array of community initiatives. Even at her death, she included funds in her will to try to keep alive the close relationship between the city of Poughkeepsie and Vassar College that had begun as an outgrowth of the women's suffrage and settlement house movements.

Her leadership in forming the "Women's City and County Club" in the decade following New York State's suffrage victory enabled the momentum of the suffrage movement to continue. Where others saw the suffrage victory as an ending, Wylie saw it as just the beginning as she set about transforming Poughkeepsie's "Equal Suffrage League" into the "Women's City and County Club" which at its peak had

an astonishing 500 members.

Now able to vote, new responsibilities awaited Poughkeepsie women as they learned how to exercise the rights and responsibilities of full civic participation. Wylie pushed women to transform the old norms of "ladies club" culture and empowered them to develop a new model of club life – one that focused on advocating for civic improvements in housing, education, child welfare, and public health.

At Wylie's funeral service, Eleanor Roosevelt spoke: "There burned a light within her that made her see the fine things in people. I have heard some talk of making Miss Wylie's home in the city a memorial to her great civic accomplishments. I do hope this can be done. Her work in this community did much toward awakening 'city conscience' in Poughkeepsie."

In a 1939 newspaper editorial, Vassar president Henry Noble MacCracken noted the great difficulty of keeping the city and the college in meaningful contact and looked back at Wylie's decision to leave money for this cause as the finest thing ever done in the history of town-gown relations.

A year after Wylie's death, 112 Market Street was turned over to the Women's City and County Club as their new headquarters, creating what was hoped would become a "living memorial" to Wylie. In 1940, the club donated the house to Vassar College, hoping it could once again become home to a faculty member unafraid, like Laura Wylie, of living in the city's heart.