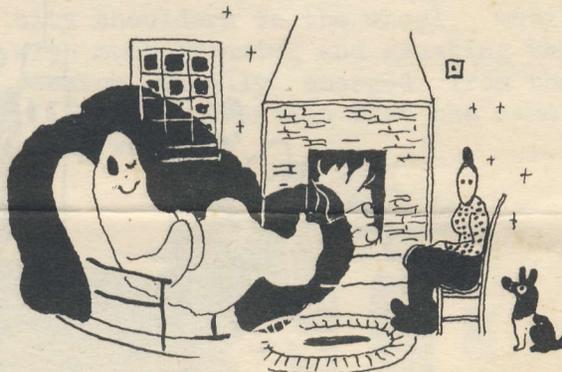


Every Castle Parker knows, or should know, that high up in the vine covered tower of the Castle lives a perfectly harmless, dignified ghost. In spite of his superior qualities, the old wraith has always been quite a problem to the Management, who never have been able to find him 'at home' when they go up to collect his room rent. As he occupies the upper tower, winter and summer, you can guess what his bill must be after forty-six years of residence.

Yes, it was forty-six years ago that the ghost moved in, and until very recently no Castle Parker had even been able to secure a satisfactory interview with him. Now, one of our own trusted members reports that on a blustery night this fall when she was alone in her cottage, she heard a weird tap at the window. Looking out she saw a most conventional ghost peering at her through the glass.

He quickly accepted her invitation to come in and warm his cold shins by the fire and as he plainly was in a mood for conversation, she let him ramble on telling her about some of the early days at Castle Park. Following are a few of the notes jotted down that night. If they are not entirely correct in detail the ghost himself must answer for it, because these are his own words:

"I remember back in 1893....just forty-six years ago...there wasn't a sign of man around this place. It was all wooded hills and grassy fields. Then one day along came a fellow names Schwartz- a German fellow he was who couldn't forget his homeland and wanted his family to live the same kind of life in America his ancestors had lived in Germany. I saw old Schwartz that sunny April afternoon when he first drove out from Holland with his horse and buggy, looked the land over and decided to build himself a Castle where he could shut his wife and two daughters safely away from all the world. Schwartz planned to be the king of his small realm - ruler of his submissive family.



"As the proper bricks for his Castle were not to be found in the vicinity of Holland, the materials had to be hauled by wagon from Grand Rapids, a distance of thirty miles. After many months the building was completed, the original structure being about half the size of the Castle as you see it today. A very odd looking home it was, rising bleakly from a field of overgrown grass and weeds.



"I happen to know" continued the ghost in a confidential whisper, "that all did not go well in the Schwartz household. The old man ruled the family like a dictator, and the women got pretty much fed up with the whole thing. Well, one dark night the older daughter actually had courage enough to let herself down from her tower room by a rope ladder! Her waiting lover put her on his horse and off they galloped down the sandy road, toward Holland. I'm sorry to tell you the elopement was more exciting than successful for the hot headed father armed with a shot gun, caught up with the fleeing couple just as they reached Graafschap, four miles east of Castle Park. The unhappy girl was dragged back to her tower room where she was kept under constant parental watch. I could hear her crying softly to herself when I sat in my own room directly over hers. It was a relief to me when Schwartz finally moved his family out of the Castle leaving me to drift around the place alone for the next few years.

"In the summer of 1894 Mr. and Mrs. John Parr and a group of pupils from the Chicago Preparatory School were camping at Macatawa Park. (I'm told on good authority that Carter Brown and his cousin Dorothy Parr were among those present. Too young to walk, the children were wheeled around Macatawa in their baby carriages; but that has nothing to do with the story just now.)

"Well, one day some of the older boys went out on a scouting party and you can imagine how surprised they were when suddenly they came out of the woods into a large open space and ran right into a sure enough Castle! They were so excited over it that Mr. Parr agreed to find out who owned this remarkable building.



"Two years later the Parr School held it's first vacation camp in the Castle, and such enthusiastic letters were written by the boys and girls that the parents began asking if they themselves might come to spend their vacations in this unusual spot. News of the Castle passed from friend to friend until the building was no longer large enough to care for all who wanted to come. Cottages began to grow up on the hills. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Barber and their three tow-headed youngsters, Harry, Luther and Phil soon had a nice big place on the ridge facing South. (These boys still come to that cottage every summer with their own boys and girls.)

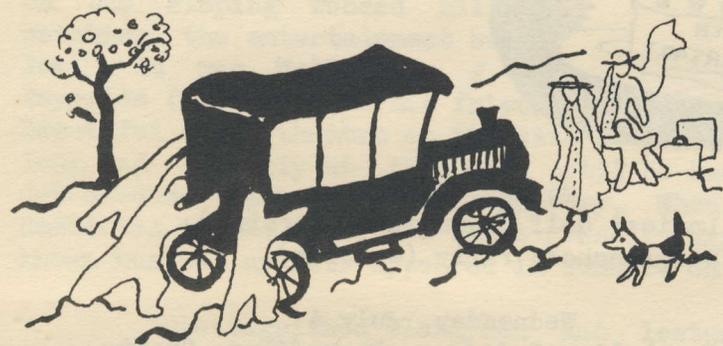
"That year Grandma Parr built the cottage now owned by Mrs. Carter, and Mr. S. W. Parr built the cottage which now belongs to Mr. Joseph McConaughy. Eva Brown, mother of Buelah and Carter put up several cottages about that time.

"If I remember correctly the friends who built here in 1896 and shortly afterwards were Mr. J. A. Mack, Mr. W. S. Goodhue, Miss Frances Parr, Mr. R. D. MacGuffin, Mr. E. A. Beach, Miss Vania Crowell, Dr. J. A. Vance and Mr. Thomas Hall (uncle of Arthur Hall).

"By 1903 the Castle itself was enlarged with a brick addition at the back. A small sun parlor was also added. The driveway from the main road ran in under a port oochere at the west side of the Castle so that guests alighted from their conveyance onto steps leading to the sun parlor. To the right of the drive stood a small store where groceries, kerosene and candy were sold by the hotel proprietors and their helpers.



"In the early days guests coming from Chicago by boat, landed at Jenison Park, there to be met by the Castle Bus- that is if the horse was able to pull through the deep sand that formed the road between Castle Park and the dock. Even when the boat passengers had been properly met and their baggage piled into the waiting bus, they must always be prepared to get out several times and help push the load through any particularly soft stretches of sand.



"It was a proud day when a snorting Jackson automobile (built by Buick) first roared out to meet the guests at Jenison Park. It's first trip to the boat dock was made in 1906. On the home trip the gallant gentlemen passengers were forced to leap out and put their city shoulders to the wheel, until with much groaning and grunting the Jackson finally emerged from the

deep ruts and chugged good naturedly on her way. (I might mention that the same friendly cooperation was necessary every time the trip was made.)

"And speaking of cooperation reminds me of the days when Dr. Jay used to come out on his porch waving a towel in the direction of Dr. Van Benschoten's cottage as a signal that the Jay's water supply was exhausted. "Can you lend me just enough water to wash my ears?" Doc Jay would call to his neighbor.



"In the year 1905 when as children, Dorothy, Joe and Maizie Vance first spent the summer on the Castle Park beach their young playmates were Dorothy Parr, the Barber boys, Ned Earle, Edith Jordan, Helen and Marion Wilkie, Carter and Buelah Brown and several other children. Dell Marshall (now Mrs. Ivan Miller) attended a house party in the Barber cottage a year earlier than this. The Hamm quintet, <sup>with</sup> Dot, and Fred, ~~Patty, Harriet and later, Pete~~ started coming with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Hamm in the summer of 1905.

*started coming to Castle Park about 1900 and rented Virgil Smith's cottage. later Patty, Harriet and Pete became regular Castle Parkers.*

"The sand hills on which all the children played were quite different in shape from the ones you know today. The dune where people now dance on Saturday night was, in those days just a flat stretch of sand lying level with the board walk leading to the beach.

"The early Castle Parkers had a lot of fun trekking to Macatawa several times a week for ice cream sodas. There were grand picnics too in Maple Grove and hilarious entertainments on the Goodhue cottage porch, as well as in the Castle sun parlor. On Fourth of July long lantern processions wound slowly up South Hill while guests on the Castle lawn watched the flickering lights crawling like a gilded serpent over the hillside.



"In 1906 the Tenth Anniversary of Castle Park was celebrated with a week of festivities. An eight page program was printed commemorating the occasion:



Sunday, July 1  
 Five o'clock Vesper Service  
 Old Time Sunday Evening Supper

Monday, July 2  
 Ladies' Golf Tournament (morning)  
 Neighborhood Party (evening)

Tuesday, July 3  
 Ladies' Golf Tournament (finals)  
 Dinner at Hemlock Camp  
 Evening Concert at the Castle

Wednesday, July 4  
 Baseball - Dudes vs. Ragmuffins, Quoits,  
 Potato Race, Wheelbarrow Race, Running,  
 Jumping, etc. Fireworks, Torchlight  
 Procession, Marshmallow Roast

Thursday, July 5  
 Men's Golf Tournament, Cottagers  
 Progressive Reception, Toasts, Speeches,  
 Reminiscences, Vaudeville in evening

Friday, July 6  
 Golf Tournament (finals), Tennis  
 Tournament, Dancing (evening), Music by  
 Breyman's Orchestra

Saturday, July 7  
 Tennis Tournament (finals), Baseball-  
 Castle Park vs. Macatawa  
 Masquerade

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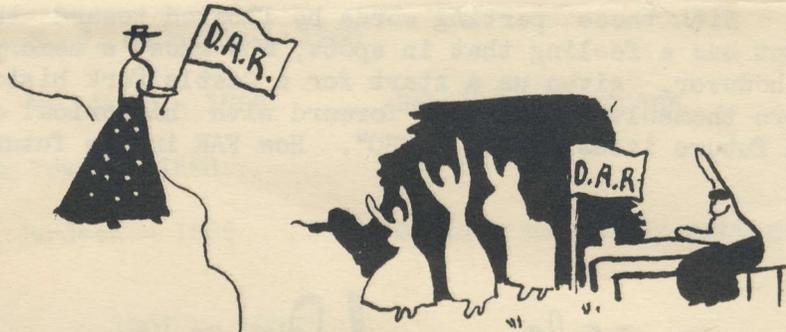
"Thomas Hair, Sr., then a bachelor, Arthur Hall and Dr. J. A. Vance constituted the Golf Committee during this gala week. Mr. and Mrs. Prescott Jordan who had just been married, spent their vacation in Castle Park that summer.



"In 1908 Tom and Florence Hair, newlyweds, became Castle Park enthusiasts. They still talk about the informal Sunday night suppers when the handful of guests foraged for themselves in the kitchen of the Castle, and later put on their own entertainment in the dining room.

"Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Robertson with Francie and Hazel were welcomed into the Castle Park fold in 1916. On Sunday mornings they were always ready when Mr. J. C. Clow (brother-in-law of Prescott Jordan) came down to the campus with a long staff in his hand, calling 'HIKE! HIKE! HIKE!', a signal to the ambitious that a party of hikers was about to scale Baldy or trudge through leafy paths to Gilligan's Lake.

"I forgot for the moment that summer in 1907 when the Daughters of the American Revolution came to Castle Park as the guests of Mrs. S. E. Earle. For their picnic and entertainment they chose a delightful ravine in the woods, and were amazed to discover the remarkable acoustics in this particular spot. Hereafter Castle Parkers often held their parties in this natural amphitheatre, the audience sitting on the ground on the sloping wooded hill, watching the entertainment below. It was Wellington J. Reynolds ( Sir Josh to his friends ) who first saw the possibility of building a beautiful Greek theatre on the site of this natural amphitheatre. Sir Josh labored long and lovingly at this work until he had created one of the most interesting out-of-door theatres in this country. When the work was completed the theatre was dedicated to the memory of Flora Pennell Parr and in the following years many well known musical artists appeared in concert on the stage of this theatre.



"Distinguished Clergymen and lecturers also were attracted to this beauty spot and on Sunday Evenings Castle Parkers were privileged to hear inspiring sermons at their Vesper Services - one of the traditional features of Castle Park.

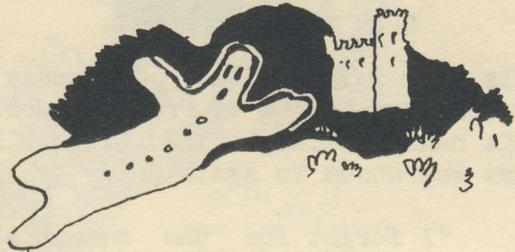


"When, in 1917 Marion Wilkie married her childhood playmate Carter Brown, the honeymooners went immediately to Castle Park, for Carter had just purchased the Castle from his Uncle John Parr. Shortly afterward Mr. H. A. Wilkie ( who with his family had been guests at Castle Park since 1905 ) joined Carter as business partner and manager of the hotel. If you'd look at one of the old hotel registers you'd find that among the first guests to write their names in the Brown and Wilkie book were: Mr. and Mrs. Guy Summers, Miss Phebe Gould and Wellington Reynolds. The three King sisters occupied little Pine Cliff Cottage that same summer. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wadell and Frances who were staying in

the Helen Jordan cottage took their meals at the Castle and the following summer Mrs. Younglove and Mary registered here for the first time.

"And so Castle Park began to grow up. The Castle itself was again enlarged. 'Plantation House' and 'Slave Quarters' were built as Annexes to the Castle. Attractive cottages were up on every available site. The funny thing about it is, that in spite of all the changes and modernizations, there's a fine atmosphere about Castle Park that never has been lost. The place has an individuality that's hard to describe, but people sense it the minute they drive into the grounds."

As the ghost was about to branch out on a new line of conversation, he suddenly noticed the clock was ready to strike twelve. Wafting quickly out of his chair he billowed apologetically toward the door murmuring that he had a lot of ghost writing to do at home that night. When his hostess thanked him for all the information he had given her, he only waved a misty hand, saying: "Think nothing of it. You may quote me at any time."



With these parting words he floated toward the Castle Tower. Our correspondent has a feeling that in spots, the ghost's memory is as hazy as his form. He has, however, given us a start for a Castle Park history and if some of the Castle Parkers themselves will come forward with historical data it will be most welcome for a future issue of the "ECHO". How FAR in the future no one knows!



# HISTORY OF CASTLE PARK COTTAGES

Grouped according to approximate building dates

## 1896 -- 1900

Barbers	A. H. Barber - 1897	
Waddells	Mrs. Eva Brown - 1897	Remodeled by Waddells in 1915
H. E. Robertsons	1897	Remodeled - Virgil Smith Remodeled - Robertsons
Carters	Mrs. James Parr - 1897	Goodhues, 1903-25
McConnaughy	Prof. Parr - 1896	Later Mrs. Tanner and Mrs. Post
Minerva	Mrs. M. T. McGuffin - 1900	
Prescott Jordans	Rev. Mr. Mack - 1898	Rebuilt by Jordans
Mack	Miss Towne - 1898	
Elliot	Mr. Jardeen - 1899	Onetime McConathy cottage

## 1901 -- 1905

Vance	Dr. Vance - 1902	
Hall	Mrs. James Parr - 1902	Thos. Hall - 1906 Rebuilt by Arthur Hall
Mrs. Hamm	Frances Parr - 1901	Rebuilt by Mrs. Hamm 1937
Erb	Alice Parr - 1904	Mr. Ivins - 1926 Rebuilt by Erbs
Playhouse	1903	Remodeled by Hotel
Bandbox		Remodeled by Hotel
Dargan		
Sherer	Mrs. Jordan	Rebuilt by Sherers - 1922
Stibbs	Mr. Paul	

## 1906 -- 1910

Noble	Judge Kirby - 1908	
Beach		
C. M. Robertson		Onetime Tanners
Moore		Onetime Thorntons

1911 -- 1920

Beldon "Tree Tops"	James MacDermid - 1919	Mrs. Belden - 1922
Belden	Mr. Springer - 1919	Belden - 1927
Butler	Frances Parr - 1913	Dr. Jay - 1915 - 24 Armstrongs
Paul McLean	Van Benschoten - 1913	
Goebel	Prof. Goebel - 1914	
Godfrey	Mrs. Godfrey - 1911	
King	King Sisters - 1915	
Vennell	Mr. Jordan - 1914	Vennell - 1930
Needham	Mr. Stibbs	
Mrs. Hill	Mr. Stibbs	
Keelor	Mr. Stibbs	Remodeled by Keelors
Mrs. Younglove	Mrs. Eva Brown	
Cricket Hollow	Mrs. Eva Brown	
Mr. Wing	Mrs. Eva Brown	
and the following:	Miller, Fuqua, Richardson, Hair, Wilkie	

1921 -- 1930

George		
Steketee	Mr. Stibbs - 1926	
and the following:	Sears McLean, James McLean, Leach, Mathews, Clarke, Cleveland, Burton, Page, Henry, Myers, Wonderle, J. S. Brown	

1931 --

Laing	The Castle - 1936	
Ebenezer's Barn	The Castle - 1939	
Costens	Dr. Costen - 1939	

This information was very kindly compiled by Miss Frances Parr. It is not complete, as you can see, and we would be grateful if anyone will submit additional data for the records which can be included in a future ECHO. Send it to E.F.Hamm, Jr., 418 So. Market St., Chicago.