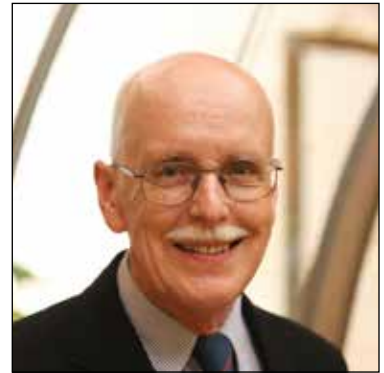


Recollections of Summers at Hulett's Landing, Circa 1950

Note from the editor: We are very lucky to have a memoir by Paul V. Turner, a retired professor of Art History at Stanford University, who told us that he had recently been recalling events from his childhood when his family spent summers at Hulett's Landing. Looking for information about Hulett's to jog his memory, he found our website and its oral histories. We encouraged him to write down his recollections. Says Paul, "I have no idea whether they will be of interest to anyone, but I've enjoyed calling up these memories—and it's made me realize that those summers at Hulett's were a formative experience for me in certain ways." We are happy to share such evocative memories of not only life in Hulett's but also the people who shared their love of the lake with Paul, especially Louise Woods Marsh. Paul is the much-published author of works on the architects Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, Joseph Ramée, and the history of the American campus, among other subjects.



My family—parents and younger brother and I—lived in Schenectady and took summer vacations to places on Lake George, such as a house on Dunham's Bay we rented for part of the summer of 1945, when I was five years old. Our parents, Ralph Moore Turner and Virginia Venable Turner, both loved Lake George, and Mother had an unusually intense, almost mystical attraction to it. They dreamed of finding a more isolated spot on the lake, where they could rent or buy a bit of property, and in the summer of 1947 they decided to visit Hulett's Landing to investigate the possibilities there.

*Rockholm,
pre-1950*



*Rockholm,
east side of
the house,
circa 1950*

We drove there one day (they liked the fact that it was more difficult to get to than other places on Lake George), and after descending the steep hill to the lake we took the road to the southern section of Huletts, the part we later learned was called the Hamlet or Land's End. Looking for a place to make inquiries, or at least to get closer to the water, we stopped at an old farmhouse and boarding house and spoke with the proprietor, a Miss Phillips. She said we could drive down her road to the little beach on the Cook Bay side of her farm to take a swim. We did this, but from the beach the main expanse of the lake wasn't visible, and Mother wanted to get a better view of it, so she headed off to the higher part of the peninsula. We followed her, and got to a place where a house could be seen, at which point Mother said she was going to go there to ask if there was anything to rent or buy in the area. Father said this was pointless, but she went anyway, and we waited for her. She later recounted what happened:



“Through the gate, around the house. There stood a lady, a tall, erect old lady. Old—eighty I soon learned—but not old in the conventional way. Lots of unruly, upswept hair, a subdued goldish grey. Breathless, my words poured out, ‘I had to come over. It is so beautiful. Is there anything for rent or sale here?’ She came over to me and put a hand on my shoulder, saying, ‘Why, my dear, you must love it as I do. Come with me and I will show you more beauty.’ We went together out on a high rock, the rock I was to love. The lake, the whole thirty-three miles of it, seemed to lie below.

*Rockholm,
seen from
afar*

That sheer bluff and that view I came to love with an intensity which sometimes would almost seem to burn me inside.”

Thus began our family’s remarkable relationship with Louise Elizabeth Woods Marsh, and with Huletts Landing. Mother returned and took the rest of us up to meet Mrs. Marsh and to see her house, Rockholm. After a couple of hours of conversation, plans had been made for us to return the next weekend and to rent the guest cottage down by the water, south of the house.

For four years we spent part of each summer with Mrs. Marsh at Rockholm (with our father coming there from Schenectady on weekends or during his vacation time). We had the rustic guest cottage and a small cabin on the shore, adjacent to the Gardiner property, but we spent much of the time in the main house with Mrs. Marsh, for whom Mother had become a kind of companion. After Louise Marsh’s death in 1951 we continued visiting Huletts for about three more years, renting the large cottage called Dannebrog next to Mrs. Frederick Pedersen’s house on Kitchel Bay. But our time with Mrs. Marsh at Rockholm made the greatest impression on us. And because the 1953 booklet *Hamlet Summers* gives little information on Louise and her family (saying, “Their long association with the Hamlet deserves more space in our story”) I’ve decided to devote most of this little memoir to my recollections of Mrs. Marsh and Rockholm, as well as additional information I’ve found from a variety of sources. These include: detailed notes written by my mother about our summers at Huletts; information and photographs provided by Marsh family descendants I’ve been able to locate; correspondence with Lance DeMuro, a member of the family that bought Rockholm from Mrs. Marsh and still owns it; and a good deal of internet searching.



Louise Marsh at the edge of the rock, 1921

From that first meeting with Louise Marsh, she and my mother developed an unusually strong rapport and friendship. For Mother, “Lady Lou” (as Mrs. Marsh suggested we call her) may have served as a kind of maternal figure, as her own mother had died not long before. For Lady Lou, our mother was a welcome companion and helpmate, since she spent much of the summer alone at Rockholm; she was only occasionally visited by her daughter Faith or other relatives or friends. Among other practical things, Mother came to prepare many of Mrs. Marsh’s meals. But more than that, the two women loved spending time together, as they had similar interests and personalities. My parents were both journalists; Father was the editorial-page editor of the Schenectady Gazette, and Mother loved literature,

language, and good conversation. So did Lady Lou, who in addition had an intense love of art and beautiful objects. Rockholm was filled with such objects, most of which had connections with aspects of Louise Marsh's earlier life.

As for the house itself, it was rambling and mostly one story in height, had roofs with many gables, and was sheathed in weathered shingles. At the south end was a bedroom wing, to the north the master bedroom suite, and on the east side were the kitchen and a small dining room. In the middle was the living room, with a high cathedral-like ceiling, and at the ends of the room there were small balconies, one of which was accessed from a second-floor bedroom that one reached by way of a narrow, twisting stair. From the living room you went out to a large porch, which Mrs. Marsh called the "piazza," from which you walked onto the broad rock shelf—at the top of the great cliff that plunged down into the lake. In the evenings we would join Lady Lou on the rock (careful not to get too close to the edge), to watch the spectacular sunsets from on high.

As a child who already had something of an artistic temperament, I was fascinated with this house and its contents. Mrs. Marsh must have noticed my interest, for she would spend time with me and tell me about her favorite possessions and where she had acquired them—some of them on grand tours of Europe and the Middle East when she was young. (One framed photograph in the living room showed her, with several other properly dressed Victorian ladies and gentlemen, on camels in front of the Pyramids.) Japanese prints lined the hallway in the bedroom wing of the house. In the living room was a long, ornately carved table that had come, according to Mrs. Marsh, from a palace of Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria. At the center of the table was one of Tiffany's exquisite lamps. And hanging on one of the walls was a large Japanese ebony panel, inlaid with ivory, mother-of-pearl, and other materials, portraying birds and the branches of a flowering tree.

But most fascinating to me was Mrs. Marsh's collection of Roman glass, or what she called "buried glass"—small vases, vials, and other objects with iridescent or crusty surfaces that she would take out of the tall cabinet to show us—and which she said were from the excavations at Pompeii. At one point



Mrs. Marsh's inlaid Japanese panel



The Roman vase, reconstructed

Recollections of Summers at Huletts Landing, Circa 1950

she confided to us that the largest and best of the pieces, a double-handled vase, had been broken while in transit from New York to Huletts—and she had kept the pieces. I asked if I could see them and she went to a closet and brought out a box with the pieces in it. I said I wondered if they could be glued together. She was sure they could not, but then she said I could try to do it—and if I succeeded, I could have the vase. I spent some of the rest of the summer working on it, fitting the pieces together like a jigsaw puzzle with Duco cement from the kitchen. I managed to do it (although some of the pieces were missing), and the object is still intact, after all these years.

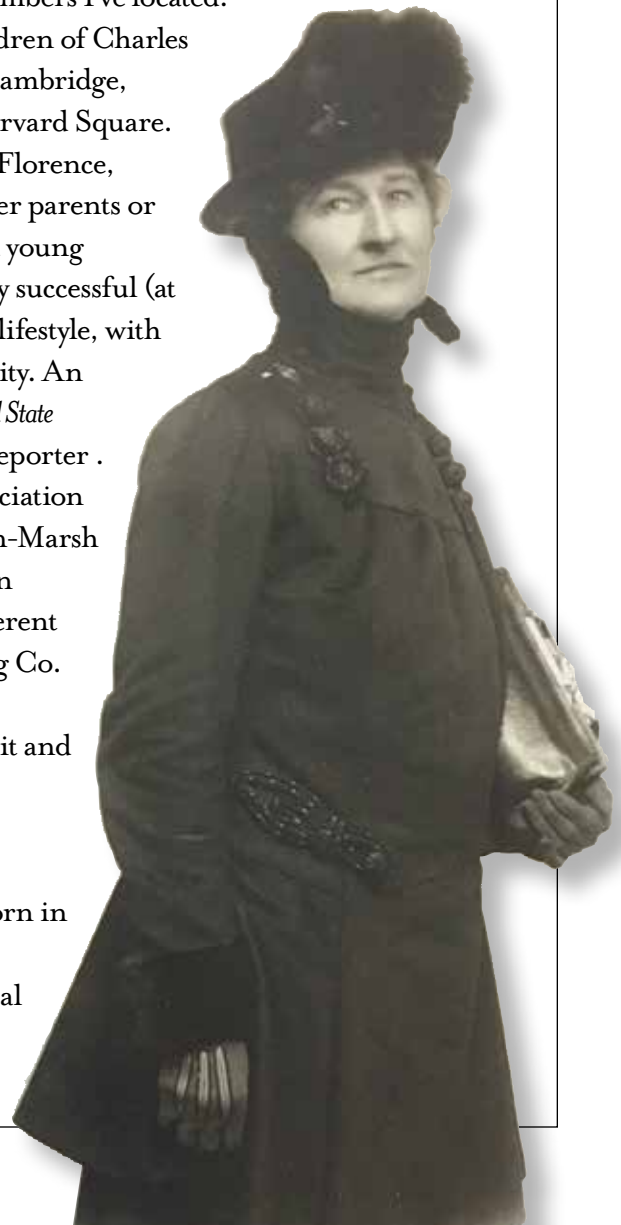
By the way, when Mrs. Marsh showed us her “buried glass” collection, she said that when she and her husband had lived in New York City, many years before, Louis Comfort Tiffany was a neighbor and friend of theirs—and he had admired the iridescent colors of these objects of hers, which had inspired some of his experiments with glass.

I’ve learned some of the facts of Mrs. Marsh’s life from my mother’s notes and I’ve discovered other details from internet searches and from the Marsh family members I’ve located.

Born in 1867, Louise Elizabeth Woods was the eldest of several children of Charles Rowell Woods and Sophia Levering Mattis Woods—a prominent Cambridge, Massachusetts, family that had a large house that still exists near Harvard Square. One of Louise’s books, which I now have, bears her signature and “Florence, March 1, 1885,” showing that she was visiting Italy, no doubt with her parents or other family members, while still a teenager. In 1890 she married a young author and businessman, Converse Denny Marsh, who became very successful (at least for a while), allowing the two of them to lead a truly luxurious lifestyle, with yachts and a large apartment on Central Park South in New York City. An article on Converse in the 1918 edition of *Who’s Who in New York City and State* includes the following: “Capitalist . . . Began career as newspaper reporter . . . and later the proprietor of an advertising agency; formed an association with Thomas A. Edison in electrical enterprises; president of Bryan-Marsh Co., manufacturers of incandescent lamps; has made investments in various electric and gas properties; president or treasurer of 14 different companies, including a controlling interest in the Bates Advertising Co. Republican. Recreation: Yachting.” However, Converse had major financial reverses at some point—losing his wealth, then regaining it and losing it again—according to a member of the Marsh family I’ve corresponded with.

Converse and Louise had three children: Faith Levering Marsh, born in 1892; Converse Emerson Marsh, born in 1896; and Richard N. Marsh, born about 1900. The family is listed in New York City social registers at various times in the first two decades of the century. In

Louise
Marsh in
1917



1906, Lloyd's *Register of American Yachts* listed Converse Denny Marsh as the owner of two yachts, *Calyso* (26 tons) and *Rosemary* (58 tons). The following year, a newspaper account of a New York Yacht Club event listed the guests aboard several of the major vessels; among those on the *Rosemary* were Mrs. Converse D. Marsh and one of her sisters, Hope Woods.

Hamlet Summers says the following about the family's arrival at Huletts Landing: "Mrs. L. Elizabeth Marsh, with her children, Faith, Converse and Richard, came to the lake in 1910. They rented the Peters' house that summer . . . and then for two or three seasons occupied 'Cabin Castle' [the Frederick Pedersen house], before buying the house on the bluff, previously occupied by Admiral Rhynd and his two sisters. This house was later torn down and 'Rockholm' built."

"Admiral Rhynd" was Rear Admiral Alexander C. Rhind, who had commanded U. S. ships in the Civil War and had retired from the navy in 1883. A 20th-century deed for Rockholm indicates that Rhind purchased the property in 1890 from Samuel Cook—including the right-of-way through Cook's farm to get to it—and that on his death in 1897 it was inherited by Charlotte S. Rhind, no doubt one of his sisters. Rhind himself had never married. Charlotte died in 1911, and the property was acquired by Randolph Ridgely, Jr., another naval officer, who was related in some way to the Rhind family. In 1916 Ridgely sold the property to Mrs. Marsh. She evidently bought it independently from her husband, for Converse isn't mentioned in the deed. He and Louise later separated, but they were still listed as occupying the same New York City address in the 1920 Social Register of the city.

As for the earlier Rockholm house, Mrs. Marsh showed us a postcard that pictured it, as seen from the lake, with the caption "The House that is Built on a Rock." The present occupants of Rockholm have a copy of this postcard, and Lance DeMuro has provided me with a scan of it. Another old photograph of the original house identifies it as "Rockholm on Lake George," indicating that the name "Rockholm" predates the house that Louise Marsh built.

According to my mother's notes, the new Rockholm was designed by an architect friend of Lady Lou, and she specified many of the details of the plans. For example, the two balconies in the living room were included to provide places to hang oriental carpets or other textiles—one of which was a splendid "altar cloth." Mother asked Lady Lou where it came from and she said, "Mama got permission to bring it out of Italy from the Uffizzi Galleries."

The first house at Rockholm, on a postcard



My mother rather indiscreetly asked how much it cost, and Lady Lou replied, "I don't know. Money was of no consequence."

The Marsh family's financial situation declined when Converse's businesses had reverses, but Louise apparently had resources of her own. It was probably after her separation from Converse that she began taking her favorite possessions to Rockholm, which eventually became her only remaining real estate. (In her later years she spent winters either with her daughter Faith in New Mexico or with her son Converse in Southern California.) By the time we met her, in 1947, she was living on a dwindling trust fund. Soon after she got to know us, she suggested that instead of renting part of her Rockholm property, we should buy it. Mother recalled, "She needed money. But she never would have sold us that fifty feet of her precious shoreline for that reason alone. She liked us, she spontaneously felt toward me as I did toward her, and she wanted us to share the beauty of Rockholm." So my parents bought a strip of land on the southern side of the property, which included the guest cottage we had been renting.

*George
Inness,
"Early
Morning,"
oil painting,
1869*



Mrs. Marsh's possessions at Rockholm embodied the affluence and exuberance of her earlier life. Besides the items I've mentioned already, Mother's notes describe a painting by the 17th-century artist Volterano; a gilded Florentine mirror that Lady Lou said had belonged to

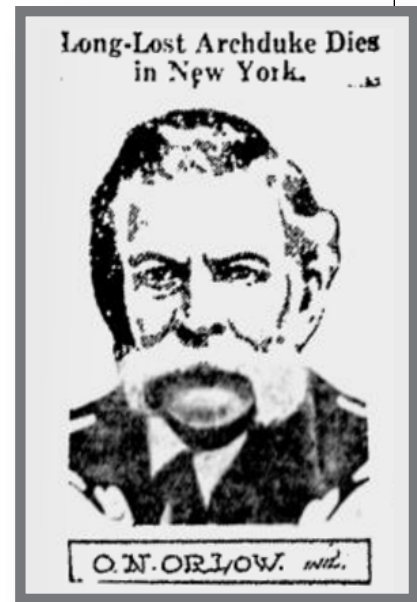
Stanford White (she added, “Harry K. Thaw killed him, you know”); and a high, carved chair she called the “archbishop’s chair.” She told my mother there had also been a landscape painting by the great American artist George Inness, but she had sold it. While putting together this memoir, I wondered if she was right about this. Had Louise really owned an Inness? I contacted the foremost authority on Inness, Michael Quick; he consulted his data base, and using Mrs. Marsh’s name he was able to identify the painting—and sent me a photograph of it. He told me the records for the work indicate that Louise Marsh inherited it in 1909 from an aunt of hers, Elizabeth Woods Austin. Titled “Early Morning,” it was painted in 1869 and is a wonderful example of Inness’s luminous landscapes. It was surely the most important artwork at Rockholm—or, for that matter, probably anywhere at Hulett's Landing.

Each of Mrs. Marsh’s objects at Rockholm had a story, but the most unusual story was about the massive table—made of ebony and having life-sized cupids for legs—which Lady Lou said was from one of the palaces of the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph. Mother asked Lady Lou how she got it, and the story she told is so fantastic, involving an archduke of the imperial family and a suicide in Louise Marsh’s New York apartment, that I can’t resist quoting much of my mother’s account of it here.

“According to Lady Lou, she met the Archduke Salvator in New York, where he and his niece were living, down and out. One summer, when she was up at the lake, she let him and the niece use her apartment, and later he rented it for a year and a half. With them was a parrot and a dog. They paid the rent as long as they could, but finally ran out of funds. While living in her apartment, the archduke died of pneumonia. The niece then cut her throat while lying in the bathtub. The archduke, it seems, had told Lady Lou that if anything happened to them she was to have his furniture in payment of rent. . . . She said she didn’t quite believe that the woman living with him was his niece. . . . I asked Lady Lou how he had gotten the furniture out of Austria, and she admitted she didn’t know. But the archduke had told her that the emperor Franz Joseph had insulted his mother, whereupon the duke threw the emperor down and thrashed him, challenging him to a duel which was never fought. Friends smuggled him out of the country and onto his yacht. History has it that the yacht foundered and all were drowned, but according to him this didn’t happen. He went to San Francisco, living incognito in a huge estate which was demolished by the earthquake.” According to Lady Lou, the archduke called himself Dr. Orlow while in America.

The story sounded ridiculous to me, but I decided to do some internet sleuthing. It turns out that there were several “Archduke Salvators” in the Austrian imperial family, and one of them, Archduke Johann Salvator, born in 1852, did reportedly have an altercation with the emperor, left Austria, and supposedly died when his yacht sank in 1890 in the South

*Dr. O. N.
Orlow,
a.k.a
Archduke
Salvator*



Atlantic. But a “Doctor O. N. Orlow,” who appeared in San Francisco in 1899 and later went to New York, where he died in 1924, identified himself as the missing archduke—a claim that was supported by a couple of people who had known the archduke. Following his death, on March 31, 1924, articles in the New York Times and other newspapers nationwide covered the story and the mystery of his identity—and they confirm some of the oddest details of Lady Lou’s tale. On April 2 the Times reported that the archduke had a “ward” who lived with him, and that she “killed herself yesterday by cutting the arteries of her wrists in a bath at their apartment, 19 East Fifty-ninth Street” (Louise Marsh’s address at this time), and that she had “drowned her pets, a spaniel and two parrots, before committing suicide.” Another article reported that the woman had left a suicide note “on an ornately carved table in the apartment”—perhaps the cupid-legged table that ended up at Rockholm.



None of this proves that the man who died in Louise’s apartment in 1924 was really the Austrian archduke, nor that the table at Rockholm was from an imperial palace. But it does underscore the romantic or melodramatic aura that surrounded many of Lady Lou’s possessions, which surely intensified her emotional attachment to Rockholm.

*Oil
painting
by the
Archduke/
Dr. Orlow*

My mother’s notes mention something else about the archduke: that he was an artist, and that one of his paintings, signed “J Salvar” (presumably for Johann Salvator) was in the living room at Rockholm. A Marsh family member has told me she now owns this painting, and has sent me a photo of it. A 1932 photograph of the north-east corner of the living room shows where it hung.

I did some more internet searching for information about Dr. O. N. Orlow, a.k.a. the Archduke Salvator. After appearing in San Francisco in 1899, with an unknown background, he became a kind of celebrity there and was involved in an unusual variety of activities: dealing in Japanese art and oriental rugs; running a large furniture factory; lecturing on philosophy; creating a spiritualist magazine and a cult-like organization that attracted many followers; and getting caught up in legal conflicts of various kinds. Following the 1906 earthquake, he left San Francisco and lived for a while in Seattle, where he was described as “an elderly man of distinguished appearance who, with two young nieces, led a quiet, retired life” and produced many “beautiful paintings” to support himself. It was after he moved to New York that he finally identified himself as the missing Archduke Johann

Salvator. The details of his connection with Louise Marsh, her apartment on East 59th Street in New York City, and the objects that ended up at Rockholm on Lake George, add another angle to the story of this colorful and mysterious character of early 20th-century America.

Of Mrs. Marsh's three children, our family only knew Faith, who visited her mother at Rockholm during two of the summers we were there. Based on what my mother told me, as well as some internet research and information from Marsh family members, I can give an outline of her life—one that was marked by tragedy. Faith Levering Marsh married a Harvard graduate, Arthur Wait, in 1917. In 1924 they had twin daughters, Faith and Hope, but baby Faith died shortly after birth. In 1929 the family was living in a suburb of St. Louis. On the morning of January 21st, Arthur drove Hope to her kindergarten, and while crossing a railroad track the car was struck by a train, killing both Arthur and Hope.



Faith Marsh Wait, in newspaper wedding announcement, 1917

Faith then moved to New Mexico and lived for most of the rest of her life in an adobe house at Pojoaque, a village outside Santa Fe, working as an educator at schools in the area. She became close to many of the Pueblo Indians in the area, including the great potter Maria



Rockholm, a corner of the living room, 1932. The seated man is Converse E. Marsh.

Martinez. In 1936 Faith married again, to a much younger man, Fritz Peters, who had been born in Wisconsin but grew up in France and was a disciple of the mystic guru Gurdjieff. His marriage to Faith lasted only briefly, and he went on to become a successful author of fictional and non-fictional works, including one of the first well-received novels with a



homosexual theme, *Finistère*. Around 1940 Faith took on the role of foster mother to two of her nephews, Converse and Dwight Marsh, the sons of her brother Converse. Converse had been going through a difficult period, his wife having died, and he sent the boys to live with his sister. On one of Faith's visits to Rockholm, in 1948, she brought Dwight with her. She drove from New Mexico in a station wagon, and I distinctly remember her arrival—because it was actually Dwight who was driving the car. Since he was only about thirteen years old, I found this amazing. He later told me that in New Mexico he could legally drive (was that really true?), and that he had done much of the driving across the

Louise Marsh with grandsons Dwight and Converse, circa 1938

country. We had fun together during his visit to Rockholm, and I remained impressed that a boy not a lot older than myself was able to drive a car across the country.

Occasionally friends of Faith's visited her at Huletts, and *Hamlet Summers* mentions one of them. "Mrs. George Danforth reminds us of the recital given in the church by a friend of Faith's, Madame Maruchess, who played seventeenth century music on a seventeenth century instrument, the viola d'amore." I remember attending this concert in the Mountain Grove Memorial Church with my mother, and Madame Alix Maruchess gave us a more intimate performance in the living room at Rockholm one evening, with a fire in the large fireplace.

Another memory I have of Faith is less sedate. One day she asked me to go with her on a canoe trip to the Landing, to buy some groceries at the store there. (The rest of us always walked to the store, which I think was the easier route, but for some reason Faith preferred the canoe trip.) We got to the Landing with no trouble, but on the return voyage an intense Lake George storm suddenly struck, blowing from the south (the direction we were heading into), and we had to paddle furiously to make any headway and to keep from capsizing. As I was working as hard and fast as I could, at the front of the canoe, my right hand scraped against the side of the old canoe and a long splinter was jammed up into my middle finger behind the nail. I screamed in pain, but Faith yelled at me to continue paddling as hard as

possible. Somehow we made it back to the dock . Up at the house Faith removed the splinter and bandaged my bleeding finger. I remember feeling proud—and rather grown up—that I had managed to cope with the ordeal and meet Faith's expectations of me.

Speaking of the store at the Landing, I'm reminded that my brother, Ralph, and I often went there to get supplies for our mother or Mrs. Marsh. We would walk through the north part of Miss Phillips's cow pasture, use the stile to get over the fence (we had never seen a stile before being at Hulett's), and go through the colony of little cottages to the hotel grounds and the store. When we went there we always bought two "Drumsticks"—the ice-cream cones covered with chocolate and nuts—to enjoy on the way back. To this day, I'm often reminded of the those summers when I see an ice-cream Drumstick.

Speaking of the cow pasture brings back memories of Miss Phillips—a middle-aged woman who was rather large, as I recall, but still did much of the work on her farm. She once told us of the time she was gored by a bull and showed us the resulting scar. I recently learned from

Hamlet Summers that she was the daughter of David Phillips, the talented carpenter who had been brought to Hulett's in 1876 by Frederic Condit and built the houses of many of the first families.

Miss Phillips had a daughter, Calista (I hope I've remembered her name right), who was the wife of Arthur McGowan, another one of the full-time residents of the Hulett's area. They were the nice couple who did a great deal of work

for the Hamlet families—transporting material, making repairs to the houses, and opening and closing them at the beginning and end of each summer.



*Faith Wait
with her
nephews
Dwight and
Converse
Marsh,
1945 or
1946*

Arthur McGowan's mother, Anna McGowan, was still alive when we summered at Hulett's, and we once met her. One day my parents, brother, and I took a drive to explore some of the more remote areas near Hulett's, and one of the roads we took was Pike Brook Road. Finding ourselves without enough water, we stopped at an old house, knocked on the door, and were met by an elderly woman who turned out to be Mr. McGowan's mother. She was extremely deaf and held a large ear trumpet to one of her ears (the first time I had seen one of these odd-looking devices), but we somehow were able to communicate and she kindly drew some water for us from the well next to the house. She then said, in an excited tone, "Come! I have to show you something wonderful—something my son has just done for me." She took us into the house and into the kitchen, where she pointed to the ceiling. Hanging from a wire was a

bare light bulb. Her son had just electrified her house—or at least this one room. In retrospect, I wonder how this was done. Surely there was no publicly-supplied power in this remote area. Had her son installed a generator? All I know is what Mrs. McGowan told us and showed us.

Another of our family events comes to mind. One of our father's hobbies was barbershop-quartet singing (he was also a talented piano-player), and he was a member of the Albany/Schenectady chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop



Quartet Singing in America, or SPEBSQSA. One year he arranged for the group's annual summer outing to take place at the Huletts Landing hotel, and for the members to get there from Lake George Village on the Mohican (or was it the Ticonderoga?). In preparation we cut letters from colored fabric and sewed them to a bedsheet, spelling "WELCOME SPEBSQSA." When the boat arrived at the dock at Huletts, someone on board snapped a picture of us holding the banner to greet the group. Luckily, my brother still has this photo.

Our mother, who was a great letter-writer, maintained a lively correspondence with Mrs. Marsh when they weren't together at Rockholm. Unfortunately, none of Louise's letters to Mother survive, but I do have a postcard she sent to me, in 1948. It was addressed, in a bold and vigorous hand, to "Paul Turner, Esq." I may have preserved the card because of the strangeness of this form of address for a nine-year-old boy. The card pictures a camp ground

*The Turners
welcoming
a visiting
group of
barber-
shop
quartet
singers to
Huletts*

in California, and the message-and-address side is nearly two-thirds filled with writing, which is as bold as the address but so tightly packed that it's rather hard to read. It says: "Sunday PM—Oct. 7/48— On Top of San Gabriel Mt.— 6,000 ft.— where there is a lake called Crystal Lake . . . [illegible because the postmark covers it] . . . my Son Converse, Daughter, Faith, and 3 grandsons— and Dorothy, my Daughter in law— have just finished a wonderful dinner cooked on one of the many stone fireplaces— and eaten off of a Stone Table— Such magnificent pine trees I have never seen— and the drive up too beautiful for description— How I wished You Four dear ones were with us. The Cascades water falls, Canyons, rocky formations. All so Thrilling at every curve driving up— a 2 hour drive— But they are waiting for me to go down— Wish I could spend the night camping out! Love, from Guess Who."

Mrs. Marsh's exuberant postcard to Paul, 1948

So many things about this message remind me of Mrs. Marsh's personality. Her enthusiasm and sense of humor. Her idiosyncratic way of writing, with dashes and capitalizations for emphasis. And most of all, her intense love of nature. At Rockholm she was always drawing our attention to the beauty of nature—the gradations of color in a sunset; the changing

patterns of waves or white-caps on the lake; the shapes and colors of trees and plants. She would ask my brother and me to go out and collect wildflowers and other plants for her to arrange in the vases she had for this purpose; and she explained to us her principles about the matter. Don't look only for big or flashy flowers. Just as



beautiful, or more beautiful, can be small flowers with muted colors, or even what we call weeds. And she would include in her flower arrangements other things, such as reeds or long grasses, or branches that had bits of moss or lichen on them.

Much later I learned that this was part of an esthetic that had developed in the 19th century, influenced partly by Asian—especially Japanese—art and philosophy. Tiffany was part of this movement, as well as Elbert Hubbard, some of whose books were at Rockholm. The esthetic was embraced and championed by a class of educated and progressive Americans in the late

19th and early 20th centuries, and certainly was represented also by other Hulett's Landing families, and by their rustic "cottages." Without my being conscious of it, these summers with Louise Marsh at Rockholm must have imbued me with something of this esthetic and its special attitude toward the relationship of art and nature. When I read Frank Lloyd Wright's writings for the first time I recognized the same philosophy and principles. And more generally, my childhood summers at Hulett's Landing certainly helped shape my developing interest in art, history, and architecture—which ultimately led to my becoming an architectural historian.

Lady Lou filled Rockholm with books, and we often found her reading, usually on one of the porches or in a lounge chair on the rock itself. According to my mother's notes, she especially loved poetry, and one of her favorite books was Kahil Gibran's *The Prophet*. She would often quote from her favorite authors, and one of her quotations made a striking impression on me and I never forgot it: "The good die young, while the evil wither to their socket" (at least that's how I remembered it). There was something almost frightening about the image it called up to me as a child, and I was puzzled that an elderly lady would say something like this about growing old. I recently found the source of the quotation; it's from one of Wordsworth's poems and actually reads, "The good die first, and they whose hearts are dry as summer dust burn to the socket." (Mrs. Marsh herself must have said "wither" rather than "burn," for I wouldn't have made that change in my own mind.) I have several of Louise's books, and on a blank page in one of them (Maeterlinck's drama *Pelléas and Mélisande*), she wrote "Rockholm, September 1919" and copied out an entire poem that also deals with time and growing old—beginning "Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten." The poem turns out to be by Sara Teasdale, a contemporary poet who must have been one of Louise's favorite authors, because she also had a copy of her *Strange Victory*, a book of poems that link descriptions of nature to one's own life and emotions. The book was signed by Louise and inscribed "Rockholm 1934," which was right after the book's publication. Louise Marsh clearly loved good writing, especially poetry, and kept up with the work of present-day authors she admired.

By 1949 Mrs. Marsh's financial situation had become very tenuous and she reluctantly agreed with Faith that Rockholm had to be sold. My parents were not able to purchase the property, and it was bought by a lawyer from New Jersey, Paul DeMuro, who had spent summers in the Hulett's area and had gotten to know Mrs. Marsh. The new owner naturally wanted to acquire also the strip of land we owned, and my parents sold it to him.

Only about a year after the sale of Rockholm, in February 1951, Mrs. Marsh died, at the home of her son Converse, in Whittier, California. I don't know the physical cause of her death, but my mother later said, "There was, I think, nothing more for her to live for." Her emotional attachment to Rockholm was, indeed, intense. Mother's notes about the living room at Rockholm and its associations with Mrs. Marsh's life, include the following



*Louis XVI
settee,
originally
part of a set
in the
Marsh
home*

recollection. “Lady Lou remarked to me more than once that ‘I’d like to take this room to heaven with me.’ I said, ‘Maybe there’ll be something better there.’ ‘No, there couldn’t be,’ she replied.”

Before the new owner took possession of Rockholm, Faith came to clear out the house, and she asked us to meet her there—mainly just to see us again, but also so we could have some mementos of the place, from among the things that she or other family members weren’t keeping. The items we took back to Schenectady included the following. The large Japanese inlaid panel described earlier. Several pieces of a set of dinner china made specially for Converse Marsh’s principal yacht, decorated with rich gilding, the name “Rosemary,” and the boat’s flags. And three pieces of ornate Louis XVI furniture, which were not in the main house at Rockholm, but were stored in the rafters of the cottage we had, because they were in very poor condition. They were nevertheless impressive, and Mrs. Marsh had sometimes spoken of them, saying that they were just half of an original six-piece set that had been in a “French” room in their New York home—the other half of the set having been kept by her husband when they separated. They had once been in the living room at Rockholm, and even after they became unusable, Mrs. Marsh had kept them—perhaps being unable to bring herself to dispose of any of the treasures that held so many memories for her.

*China from
one of
Converse
Marsh’s
yachts, the
Rosemary*



Faith also gave us some of the books that were in Rockholm, and I now have several of them that bear Mrs. Marsh's signatures. They're worth mentioning, as they provide some interesting or puzzling clues about her character. The earliest signatures are in two volumes of a fine edition of George Eliot's novel *Romola*—one of the signatures dated 1885 in Florence, as noted earlier. Oddly, however, the two signatures do not use the name Louise. One is written as "Louie E. Woods," the other as "Louis E. Woods." And a different two-volume work, of Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*, contains, in both volumes, the signature "Louie Elizabeth Woods," with the date October 17, 1890 (which happened to be the date of her marriage to Converse). Louise had decided at some point in her youth to call herself Louie or Louis. She continued using one of the alternative names after her marriage, for at some point she added the signature "Louis Elizabeth W. Marsh" to one of the volumes of Eliot's novel. Also intriguing is an earlier signature in another book (Ruskin's *Roadside Songs of Tuscany*), "L E Marsh/ 1889"—which is puzzling because she wasn't married to Converse Marsh until the following year. She continued to use the alternate names occasionally for the rest of her



life (in 1934 she signed a book of modern poetry "Louis Elizabeth W. Marsh," and a deed written in 1950 identifies her as "Louie E. W. Marsh") These name variations suggest the unconventional or playful side of this woman's personality. One other book I possess bears her signature, a small volume of Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*. She

Louise Woods Marsh's bold and stylish signature

signed it "L. E. W. Marsh/ Rockholm"—but in contrast to the more-or-less conventional handwriting of her youthful signatures, it is in the bold and exuberant hand of her later years. Even her signatures are fascinating.

We wanted to continue visiting Hulets after Mrs. Marsh's death, and Mother made inquiries about rental possibilities. She had become friendly with several other women in the community—in particular, Lillian Peters—and this is probably how she found available places. We were put in touch with Mrs. Frederick Pedersen, the owner of "Cabin Castle" on Kitchel Bay (Mr. Pedersen had died in 1948), and my parents arranged to rent the adjacent two-story cottage, which was called "Dannebrog." (The Danish word for Denmark's flag may have been applied to this structure because of a connection it had with Lorentz Hansen, the Danish naval architect who had married the daughter of Frederick Pedersen's brother James—as it was the Hansens who then owned Whileaway and were therefore neighbors.)

We enjoyed spending part of the summer of 1952 in Dannebrog, and went back there for two more summers. We also got to know quite a few of the residents of this part of the Hamlet, especially in the southern portion called “Land’s End.” The houses at the end of the road belonged to several branches of the Condit family, and I got to know a couple of the Condit children. Closer to the Pedersen house and Dannebrog was the Newell family, whose large house was on the east side of the road, away from the lake. There were five Newell children—all girls except for Walter, who became a friend of my brother Ralph and me, as we often swam and boated together. We also hiked up Elephant Mountain one day. One of the few photographs we have from our Hulets summers shows Ralph and Walter and me in a classic old row-boat that was part of the collection of fine old boats at the Pedersen boat house.



*Paul
Turner,
Ralph
Turner and
Walter
Newell*

The most impressive of the Pedersen boats was a vintage “launch.” It was a beautifully proportioned, sleek vessel; it had an engine but was completely different from a modern motorboat. At one point Mrs. Pedersen invited us to join her and several others on an excursion to Sabbath Day Point in the launch. The boat moved smoothly and almost silently through the water, and I remember feeling nearly as motionless as if I were seated on dry land. What it lacked in the speed of a powerful motorboat was amply compensated by the serenity and civilized feeling of traveling in it.

To the south of the Pedersen house was the Jelliffe house, which was then owned by Samuel Jelliffe’s granddaughter, Miss Elizabeth Hupp. Ralph and I got to know the charming Miss Hupp and the lady who shared the house with her (whose name I can’t recall), and they invited us to join them in their favorite pastime, Canasta. They taught us how to play the card game, and they seemed to enjoy having two youngsters to give the game more action. There was always a lot of laughter at the card table, and when the game wasn’t going well for Miss Hupp she would shout out her favorite swear-word: “Shoot!”

I was fascinated with Miss Hupp's house, as it was a type of architecture I had never seen before going to Hulett's Landing: a rustic style in which many of the structural members—such as the posts of the porches, as well as railings and other elements—were natural trunks or branches, with the bark still on them. A number of the “cottages” in the Hamlet were of this style, and at first I was puzzled by them, wondering why people who clearly had the financial means to construct fine houses would have their carpenters leave the parts so unfinished. But I came to realize (I'm not sure how consciously, at that time) that it was all done on purpose, and was part of the same attitude about art and nature that Mrs. Marsh had embodied, with her preference for humble wildflowers over cultivated hybrids. In this way Hulett's Landing contributed to my architectural education.

I had always enjoyed drawing, and I must have brought art supplies with me, for I recall making pencil and ink and watercolor sketches during this period. I no longer have any of them, and I can't remember exactly what they portrayed—except for one. I recall that one day I took my watercolor box and a bottle of water to the meadow in front of Whileaway, the Hansen house, and did a drawing of the house. While I was working on it, a couple of people came out of the house and looked at the drawing—and, much to my surprise, asked if they could purchase it. I was very flattered, of course, and I either gave it to them or accepted a small amount for it. The event boosted my confidence and encouraged me to pursue my interest in drawing and painting.

In between the Hansen estate and our Dannebrog cottage on the Pedersen property was the large house of Miss Lillian Peters, called “The Birches.” Reportedly one of the first summer houses to be built in the Hamlet, it had been purchased by her father in 1896 from its



*Mrs. Marsh
reading on
her
bedroom
porch*

builder, Elijah Howland. Lillian and my mother became good friends, and my brother and I would often accompany Mother on her visits to “Lil’s” place. Miss Peters was well educated, had held responsible jobs before her retirement, and was involved in musical and charitable activities in New York City, where she lived when not at Huletts.

Lillian Peters and Mother continued to stay in touch and correspond, even after we stopped going regularly to Huletts Landing, as other events and activities began to occupy us individually during the summers. Once, when I was in college and told my mother that I’d like to show Lake George to a friend of mine, she mentioned this to Lillian, who kindly offered me the use of her guest cottage if I came to Huletts—which I did. Spending some time there, visiting with Lillian, and swimming and boating on the lake brought back many memories of the enchanted summers when I had been there with my family. Composing this memoir, many years later, has brought it all back once more.

Of all my memories of Huletts Landing, the most evocative and significant for me are those of Louise Elizabeth Woods Marsh, of her art objects that fascinated me as a young boy, and of the magical place called Rockholm.

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February 2021

Thanks to Lance DeMuro, Sheila Marsh Peterson, and Miriam Marsh for providing photos of Rockholm and of the Marsh family.