

APPLEWOOD

The Charles Stewart Mott Estate



ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF STORIES, 1916-2016 • SUSAN J. NEWHOF

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Applewood: The Charles Stewart Mott Estate—
One Hundred Years of Stories, 1916–2016

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Flint, Michigan.

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*To the people of the city of Flint, Michigan,
the Motts' adopted community*

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Welcome to Applewood

MARYANNE MOTT

As a child at Applewood, how could I know that it was anything out of the ordinary? To me, until I ventured outside its gates, it was simply home.

That home lay behind elegant wrought-iron gates, stately red-brick pillars, and a dense periphery of lush greenery. For almost a century, the private home of the Charles Stewart Mott family was shared with friends and colleagues by invitation only. For everyone else, Applewood remained utterly shrouded in mystery.

County records show that in 1915, my father, C. S. Mott, bought two parcels of land and combined them into one sixty-four-acre farm. Architectural papers and local permits reveal who designed the home, the gatehouse, and the landscaping. They show the layout of the house and the grounds. But what they cannot convey is the life of the place.

This book, *Applewood: The Charles Stewart Mott Estate—One Hundred Years of Stories, 1916–2016*, provides access and insights that you cannot find in the public record. For instance, you will discover that C. S. Mott set out to create a largely self-sufficient and sustainable farm. The bulk of his family's and staff's food needs would be met for more than forty years, even during the shortages caused by two world wars. You will read in his own words of the keen interest he took in every detail of the landscaping, the flower and vegetable gardens, and meat production.

The book shares the stories of the people who lived here, worked here, or simply visited. They include C. S. Mott, his four wives and their families, six children, many dogs, a farmer and a gardener and their families, upstairs and downstairs maids, nannies, cooks, farmhands, horticulturists and floriculturists, groundskeepers, estate managers, secretaries, and chauffeurs, in addition to major industrialists, entrepreneurs, engineers, visionaries, writers, journalists, cartoonists, artists, pals, and sidekicks.

The book describes family weddings, births and birthdays, summer picnics and winter dinner parties, holidays celebrated, sports and games played, sorrows nursed, and the struggles and routines of daily life. It presents photos and details of the furnishings and artwork that adorn the home and of the landscape that surrounds it.

The youngest of the six Mott children who grew up at Applewood, I have had the opportunity to help assemble and illuminate this history, to put flesh on bone, to give voice to long-dormant diaries, to refresh otherwise rapidly receding memories. Thanks to a rich resource of interviews, photos, video and film, oral histories, personal diaries, and correspondence, the stories have emerged, becoming animated and at times revelatory.

Applewood began not only as a home, a place of beauty providing respite and retreat for its owner and his family, but also as a farm, a place of self-sufficiency and productivity. And in perfect synchronicity and alignment with its originator, C. S. Mott, its purpose and functions have evolved with the times. Land that once served as pasture for livestock became a college campus, and grounds that were once the source of private pleasure were opened for public enjoyment and lifelong learning.

Through this book, we share and celebrate the unique and largely private past of Applewood, acknowledge the transitional character of its last fifteen years under the stewardship of the Ruth Mott Foundation, and prepare to embrace the dynamic public philanthropic purpose for which Applewood is destined.

My thanks go to the Board of Trustees of the Ruth Mott Foundation, for its members' commitment to publishing this book; to Susan J. Newhof, author extraordinaire, for her enthusiastic embrace and sensitive sharing of this family and this place as though they were her own; to Megan McAdow, for her expertise and long hours spent bringing the best professional elements to support this undertaking; to Lois Bolf, for her unceasing willingness to pursue items buried deep in the archives. Alice Nigoghosian, our book publishing consultant, coordinated a team of publishing professionals: editor Wendy Warren Keebler; book and graphic designer Mike Savitski; photographers R. H. Hensleigh and Tim Thayer; and Marilyn Bealafeld of University Lithoprinters. Their combined knowledge and skills turned Susan Newhof's manuscript into a beautifully illustrated book about Applewood.

Not only was I the last newborn to pass through these gates and become a resident of Applewood, but I was also the last of my generation to sleep under its roof. One might think the last standing also gets the last word. But it is my hope that we have instead brought you many voices calling up visions of times past.

I welcome you to Applewood!

Foreword

SUSAN GANGWERE MCCABE

The book you are holding recounts many stories of the Mott family and their lives at Applewood in their chosen home city of Flint, Michigan. It begins with Charles Stewart Mott, who embraced a changing world to become a pioneer in the automobile industry.

Although he was a very savvy businessman, he is most remembered today for the continuing legacy of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, which grew from his belief in investing in people and their communities. Guided by his family motto, “Let us be known by our deeds,” he led his family members by example to use their wealth to improve the lives of others. Through the establishment of his foundation in 1926, he began a pattern of giving that would influence Flint in many ways and, later, would be extended to assist others across the country and beyond.

This family giving tradition was carried forward with the additional establishment by his wife, Ruth Rawlings Mott, of the Ruth Mott Fund in 1979 and, after her passing, the Ruth Mott Foundation, along with the giving and leadership actions of several Mott children and grandchildren.

Like many family stories, the Motts’ is one of both happiness and tragedy. For C.S., his sorrow over the deaths of two wives was fought back with a resiliency that led to a final chapter of great happiness with his marriage to Ruth, a distant cousin from El Paso, Texas. It’s a story of a blended family: three children with his first wife, Ethel, and three children with his fourth wife, Ruth, all of whom grew up and marked life’s milestones at Applewood.

These stories span much of the twentieth century. Both C.S. and Ruth lived to be ninety-seven years old (C.S. passed away in 1973, Ruth in 1999), giving us great insight into a changing America. It’s remarkable to consider that C.S. was born into a world dependent on horse and train travel and lived to see men walk on the moon.

The story of the Applewood Estate begins at its creation in the early twentieth century. Throughout the country at this time, many members of the upper class created estates—

sometimes referred to as gentlemen’s farms—that combined large modern homes on landscaped grounds with attached small working farms. These country estates showcased homes that were designed with the latest modern conveniences and usually included athletic facilities, such as tennis courts, billiard rooms, and swimming pools. Before the days of radio and television, large pipe organs were often designed into these homes for family entertainment. They were decorated with antiques and Revival-style furnishings, and their walls displayed art collections that often included works of the old masters.

Applewood, built to include all of these features, is partially a reflection of this period, but because of the Motts’ interests and values, it stands apart from other examples. In contrast to many, the Motts chose to build their home within walking distance of downtown Flint, not out in the quiet countryside. Their working farm was not just a hobby but a primary food source for the family, even at a time when grocery stores were commonplace in the city. They saw value in raising the family’s own food, eating fresh vegetables in season, preserving a portion for later use, and sharing any abundance with those in need. The Motts were not concerned with making grand impressions, and the house is modest compared with other auto baron homes. Their home provided a level of comfort and just enough space for family, staff, and guests.

Not dictated by changing fashions and given C.S.’s thriftiness, the original antique furniture purchased by C.S. and Ethel remained in use in the home, although occasionally reupholstered. Pieces were added over the years, and the pipe organ was removed, but the living room looks very much as it did one hundred years ago. Although they filled it with quality antiques and artwork, the Motts never treated their home like a museum. You’ll read about how the family enjoyed living in this home, with children playing hide and seek in the antique urns and using sports equipment kept in an antique chest. The family valued a healthy, physically active lifestyle, and many photographs and diary entries record them enjoying their tennis and squash courts, swimming pool, and bowling alley.

Research for this book was greatly aided by the Motts’ penchant for saving the records associated with their lives and Applewood’s operations. The archives are rich with letters between C.S. and his brother-in-law, architect Herbert Davis, detailing the creation of Applewood, in addition to photos of the creation of the landscaping. Boxes of records include everything from receipts for furniture, listings of artworks noting when and from whom they were purchased, family photographs taken throughout the decades, and guest books signed by Applewood visitors.

Every birthday and holiday card sent to the Motts was saved, as were scrapbooks of thank you letters from children attending Flint community education classes sponsored by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. This rich pictorial collection has been a resource for illustrating this book.

Among the most significant items in the archives is a daily diary kept by C.S. from 1930 to 1971. In this, he recorded his activities of the day, people he met, movies and plays he saw, family news, and social gatherings at Applewood. These details of everyday life are valuable records of twentieth-century American history. Diary passages are found throughout this book, allowing you to get a personal perspective on life at Applewood.

Over the years, the Motts welcomed thousands of people to Applewood. After C.S.’s passing, his widow, Ruth, wanted to share his story and began a restoration process with intentions of eventually opening Applewood to the public. The centennial has allowed this vision to be expanded so that the Mott family story and details of life at Applewood may be shared. We hope you enjoy these stories and become inspired to consider how you may be known by your own deeds.

Susan Gangwere McCabe is a curator and historian who specializes in the country estate movement. She holds a master of arts degree in history museum studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program and currently works as a museum consultant.

Preface

SUSAN J. NEWHOF

In 1915, American families were paying 7 cents for a loaf of bread and about 34 cents for a dozen eggs. The average yearly income for a man was \$687; women earned half that. A typical middle-class house sold for \$3,200.

That same year, Charles Stewart Mott and his first wife, Ethel Harding Mott, purchased sixty-four acres in walking distance of downtown Flint, Michigan, and began planning their family home. They envisioned a gentleman's farm, with cows and pigs, chickens and geese, a huge garden, fruit trees, and horses for work and riding. The initial estimate to build the estate was \$70,000. The Motts called their spread Applewood after an orchard on the north lawn. The cornerstone was laid in 1916, and in 1917, they settled in with their three growing children.

C. S. Mott had already distinguished himself in manufacturing and local politics when he and Ethel began building Applewood. Over the next several decades, his engineering skills and passion for business yielded great wealth, much of which the elder Motts and their children and grandchildren have invested to benefit people and communities around the world. This book tells the other story. This is about the place they called home.

I was honored to be asked by the trustees of the Ruth Mott Foundation, which owns and operates Applewood, to chronicle the first one hundred years of this lovely estate. Having worked with the foundation as a writer for nearly ten years, I knew the edges of the lives of the Motts, and over the next eighteen months, I learned colorful and tender details that one might be privileged to know about good friends.

The family archives are housed in the residence at Applewood. In addition to the usual important papers you would expect to find there, I discovered boxes catalogued and filled with the kinds of curiosities that make a history lover's heart pound: childhood diaries from the 1800s, decades-old receipts for everything from cans of sardines and building supplies to high-style equestrian apparel and notable artwork, two guest books signed by Applewood's visitors over a span of more than eighty years, original garden plans, and more than 22,000 photographs. I read the Motts' personal letters, their accounting of events, their recipes, and stories others wrote about them. And I navigated C.S.'s diary, with all its meticulous detail, which he dictated faithfully nearly every day for more than forty years.

Many family members shared their memories and their photos of Applewood with me, as did the staff, some of whom have worked at Applewood for more than twenty-five years. And I read dozens of interviews conducted over the past six decades with family, employees, business acquaintances, and friends. All of this vast information gave me a 360-degree, multigenerational view of Applewood from the inside out.



What emerged were stories of a family that lived a full and active life here. They loved dogs, sports, card games, and homegrown food. They hosted dinner guests, fundraising events, bridge parties, weddings, and children from troubled homes. Alongside family photos, they displayed an enviable collection of heirlooms and fine art. And from the day they moved in, the Motts were assisted by a large and capable staff.

C.S. and his resident farmer experimented with different crops and breeds of farm animals, and the family delighted in showing visitors where their pigs slept in brass beds. Applewood's gardeners tended the fruit trees and vegetable garden and harvested thousands of pounds of food each year. The cooks canned, froze, and cellared most of what was not immediately consumed, donated, or purchased by the staff, and, as instructed, they planned meals throughout the year centered around the homegrown bounty.

Six Mott children grew up here, along with several children of employees who lived on the grounds. They played in the fields and barns and ice skated on Gilkey Creek. Family and visitors enjoyed billiards, swimming, tennis, picnics on the lawn, elbow bending, and festive New Year's Eve parties. There were grand times at Applewood, and there was also great heartache.

In the early 1950s, when the time was right, C.S. and his wife, Ruth Rawlings Mott, donated a sizable chunk of Applewood's pastureland to the Flint Board of Education, which began the eventual transition of Applewood from a gentleman's farm to the living classroom it is today.

Thinking that you would find the stories of Applewood most interesting if you got them firsthand, I have quoted liberally from documents and conversations. Those quotes appear in italics throughout the book. Designer Mike Savitski paired many vintage photos that have never been seen by the public with four seasons of new photos taken by R. H. Hensleigh and Tim Thayer so you can see how Applewood has changed and how it has stayed the same.

C.S. and I share a birthday. He turned seventy-seven the day I was born. I would like to have talked with him. I would like to have had tea with the remarkable women who loved and married him and made Applewood their home. And I wish I could have seen the Motts' pigs sleeping in their brass beds.

Instead, today, there is Applewood itself, carefully preserved, fulfilling Ruth Mott's wish that it be a memorial to her cherished husband and a resource for the community. You can explore the landscaped grounds and barns, take home helpful gardening tips, gaze up into the canopy of a giant old sugar maple, and learn how to care for the environment. You can sample the heirloom apples from the namesake orchard and discover their unique flavors, just as the Motts did. And beginning in Applewood's centennial year, you can tour the family home that anchors this historic estate.

The history at Applewood is so present that if you sit quietly on the south lawn on a warm spring day with your ear to the wind, you may be able to catch the sounds of children splashing in the backyard pool and the clucking of contented hens. You might even hear the unmistakable *thwack* of a tennis ball being skillfully lobbed over a net, and you will most certainly be infused with Ruth Mott's wise counsel to learn something new every day. There is hand-built beauty here and an energy that excites and inspires.

It is my great pleasure to bring you the stories of Applewood.

Right: Elsa, Aimeé, and Harding Mott with their grandfather, Herbert Harding, circa 1920–1921.

Far right: Aimeé Mott on the terrace at Applewood, 1922.



Genealogy

This list of family members includes the children and grandchildren, and their spouses, of C. S. Mott and Ethel Harding Mott and those of C. S. Mott and Ruth Rawlings Mott. It also includes the children and grandchildren, and their spouses, of Mitties Butterfield Rathbun Mott and Dee Furey, where we have been able to obtain that information. Nicknames are included in parentheses where available.

1900

Charles Stewart Mott (“Stewart,” “C.S.”) (b. June 2, 1875, d. Feb. 18, 1973)
m. **Ethel Culbert Harding** (b. March 20, 1877, d. June 6, 1924)

Aimeé Mott (b. April 15, 1902, d. Nov. 4, 1993)
m. **Patrick Butler, Sr.** (b. Oct. 18, 1900, d. July 28, 1990)

Patrick Butler, Jr. (b. Aug. 22, 1930)
m. **Patricia Catherine Maynard** (b. Nov. 29, 1930)

Peter Mott Butler (b. Oct. 13, 1931)
m. **Mary Sandra Kamman** (b. Jan. 2, 1934)

Kate Butler (b. Nov. 4, 1940, d. Jan. 31, 2011)
m. **Hall James Peterson** (b. June 4, 1939, d. March 6, 1994)

Elsa Beatrice Mott (b. Nov. 14, 1904, d. July 11, 1988)
m. **Hamish Mitchell** (b. Aug. 8, 1899, d. Jan. 4, 1975)

Joan Mott Mitchell (b. July 30, 1929)
m. **Peter Davenport Kleinpell** (b. May 9, 1927, d. April 14, 2009)
m. **Kenneth Charles MacGillivray, Jr.** (b. Jan. 22, 1945)

m. **Kenneth A. Ives** (b. 1903)

Charles Stewart Harding Mott (b. Nov. 4, 1906, d. May 10, 1989)
m. **Isabel Specht** (“Gerry”) (b. July 3, 1909, d. Oct. 23, 1995)

Charles Stewart Mott III (b. Dec. 17, 1933, d. Jan. 21, 1936)

Charles Stewart Harding Mott II (b. Nov. 5, 1936, d. Dec. 15, 1995)
m. **Paula Kee** (b. Jan. 27, 1943)

Claire Isabel Mott (b. Nov. 11, 1938, d. March 24, 2014)
m. **William S. White** (b. May 8, 1937)



Far left: Caroline Louise ("Sister") Rathbun and her brother, Walter Butterfield Rathbun, June 1932. (Photo courtesy of Mitties McDonald DeChamplain.)

Left: C. S. Mott with his six children and wife Ruth, 1948.

1927

Charles Stewart Mott ("Stewart," "C.S.") (b. June 2, 1875, d. Feb. 18, 1973)
m. **Mitties Butterfield Rathbun** (b. Aug. 19, 1892, d. Feb. 26, 1928)

Children of previous marriage of Mitties Butterfield Rathbun and Earl H. Rathbun:

Caroline Louise Rathbun ("Mitties," "Sister") (b. 1918, d. 1981)
m. **Edgar Lee McDonald** (b. 1917, d. 1996)

Stewart Scott McDonald (b. 1947)

Mitties McDonald (b. 1948)
m. **Ronald Oren DeChamplain** (b. 1938, d. 2005)

Walter Butterfield Rathbun (b. 1917, d. 1952)

1929

Charles Stewart Mott ("Stewart," "C.S.") (b. June 2, 1875, d. Feb. 18, 1973)
m. **Fernanda Jacoba Van Balkom Furey** ("Dee") (b. July 13, 1899, d. Sept. 6, 1986)

Daughter of Dee Furey:

Denise Furey (no dates available)

1934

Charles Stewart Mott ("Stewart," "C.S.") (b. June 2, 1875, d. Feb. 18, 1973)
m. **Ruth Mott Rawlings** ("Cousin Ruth," "C.R.") (b. Oct. 18, 1901, d. Jan. 25, 1999)

Susan Elizabeth Mott (b. Feb. 13, 1936, d. July 25, 1977)
m. **Sherrill Dansby** (b. July 29, 1931, d. Aug. 27, 2012)

Stewart Mott Dansby (b. March 14, 1956)
m. **Leah Wheeler** (b. Sept. 2, 1955)

Suzanne Elizabeth Mott Dansby (b. Oct. 20, 1958)
m. **Peter W. Phelps, Jr.** (b. June 9, 1961)

m. **Charles B. Webb, Jr.** (b. Sept. 4, 1924, d. March 26, 2006)

Elizabeth Rawlings Webb (b. Oct. 9, 1968)
m. **William Bowman Collier** (b. July 31, 1952)

Stewart Rawlings Mott (b. Dec. 4, 1937, d. June 12, 2008)
m. **Kappy Jo Wells** (b. Jan. 20, 1949)

Samuel Apple Axle Mott (b. May 8, 1988)

Maryanne Turnbull Mott ("Chickie Bone," "C.B.") (b. Feb. 27, 1942)
m. **Alain Roger Meynet** (b. Jan. 7, 1936, d. Jan. 25, 1995)

Marise Mott Meynet (b. Nov. 6, 1964)
m. **William Holmes Stewart V** (b. July 28, 1963)

Jean-Charles Mott Meynet (b. Dec. 6, 1965)
m. **Colleen Hogan** (b. June 2, 1960)

m. **Herman Enoch Warsh** (b. March 28, 1924, d. April 18, 2006)



A Gentleman's Farm in Flint

My first impression was that it was a small country town with about 15,000 population and a lot of good, progressive people wanting to make a fine city, and we were not disappointed.

Charles Stewart Mott, interview, July 7, 1967





Isabella Turnbull Stewart Mott
and John Coon Mott.

FROM NEW YORK TO MICHIGAN

A family of entrepreneurs

To begin these stories, we'll go all the way back to Adam Mott, an Englishman who arrived on American soil before 1645, and to 1750, when young Charles Stewart came to America from County Donegal, Ireland. Intrepid and industrious, both made their ways in a fledgling country an ocean away from their homelands, fought for high ideals, and inspired the generations that followed.

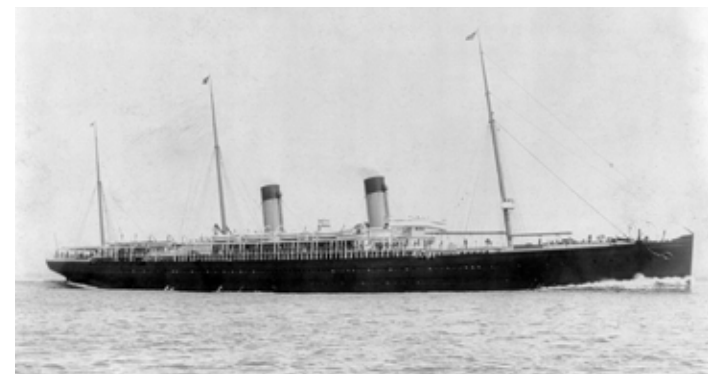
Perhaps John Coon Mott and Isabella Turnbull Stewart Mott had an inkling of their ancestors' legacy and of the bold, influential life that lay ahead for the baby boy born to them on June 2, 1875. They named him Charles Stewart Mott in honor of his revered ancestors. Family members called him Stewart and, later, Daddy Mott and Granddaddy Mott. Staff and business associates usually called him Mr. Mott or C.S.

C.S. adored his big sister, Edith, who was just two years older. As a child, he liked reading books and all things mechanical. His father hoped he would one day join the family's cider and vinegar business in New York City. But after graduating from Stevens High School in Hoboken, New Jersey, in 1892, C.S. entered Stevens Institute of Technology to study mechanical engineering, because engineering, not the making of fermented apple products, was the young man's passion.

At the end of his second year, looking for a way to satisfy what would become his lifelong love of adventure, C.S. joined the New York State Naval Militia and had a tour of duty as a seaman on the USS *San Francisco*. He followed that with an extensive

trip abroad, at the request of his father, to study the science of yeast culture in Denmark. While John Mott believed that the information C.S. would acquire about fermentation could be helpful to their cider and vinegar production, he hoped mightily that the trip would also get C.S. enthused about the business.

Armed with only a small amount of baggage and a sturdy light-weight bicycle, C.S. crossed the ocean on the White Star liner *Majestic* on August 8, 1894, and then embarked on an ambitious journey by bicycle, boat, and rail through Ireland and England, to the Netherlands, and up to Denmark, where he studied for nearly five months. And while he found the subject of yeast culture interesting, it couldn't compete with his fascination with and aptitude for mechanical engineering. When he returned home, he headed back to Stevens Institute, with his father's blessing, and received a degree as a mechanical engineer in June 1897.



The SS *Majestic*.



C. S. Mott and his sister, Edith, photographed in 1878 at the ages of three and five.



A jaunty C.S., circa 1899.



C.S., front row, second from left, with the Stevens Institute football team, 1897.

Below: C.S. with a pony,
circa 1888.



Right: A flier distributed by the
Weston-Mott Company in 1904.

Below, right: The USS *Yankee*, which
C.S. was assigned to in 1898.



John, meanwhile, had acquired a company that imported carbonic gas from Germany and built machinery that produced carbonated beverages. He reorganized the company in 1896, named it the C. S. Mott Company after his son, and engaged C.S. in all aspects of the business, even as the young man was completing college. After graduation, C.S. worked at developing the company's products.

John and his brother, Frederick, also bought I. A. Weston and Company in 1896, which manufactured bicycle hubs and wheels, and they reorganized it as the Weston-Mott Company. Uncle Frederick was president and manager, and C.S. served as a director.

On April 26, 1898, a year after graduating from Stevens Institute and the day after the United States entered the brief Spanish-American War, C.S. joined the Navy and became a gunner's mate first class. He was assigned to the USS *Yankee*, which became engaged in the Cuban Blockade a month later, and he was at Guantanamo in August when an armistice was signed between Spain and the United States.





C.S. wrote often to his family and friends during his tour, sharing with them even the smallest details of his experiences, including this enthusiastic observation written June 9, 1898:

We have been fortunate in moving around; had various experiences and seen quite a number of places for the length of time we have been in the service: Block Island, Delaware, and patrol service, then these three forts south here and taking a very prominent part in the Santiago bombardment and doing the Guantanamo alone. Have been with what is probably the largest American fleet, and had the excitement of blockading and being shot at and "torpedoed at."

C.S.'s experiences in the war revealed the young man's deep patriotism, his penchant for leadership, and his steadiness under stress. Military service also honed his respect for discipline and his capacity for working well with others. His practice of documenting his thoughts and observations evolved into a daily diary that he continued throughout his life.

After C.S.'s discharge from the Navy, he returned to his work at the C. S. Mott Company and as a representative for the lackluster Weston-Mott Company. The bicycle wheel business was slowing with the introduction of affordable cars, and the few automobile makers that sent orders seeking dependable equipment for their vehicles did not appear to be enough to keep the company afloat.

Then came a huge blow to the company, and a tragedy for the Mott family. On C.S.'s twenty-fourth birthday, June 2, 1899, his father died unexpectedly at only forty-nine years old. Uncle Frederick invited his nephew to assume management of Weston-Mott, and C.S. accepted.

C.S. as a gunner's first mate in the Spanish-American War, photographed April 26, 1898. Official Photograph U.S. Navy.

New thought is really only the old truths put in new form—we have to see so many views of ideas and things before we sometimes comprehend them.

ETHEL HARDING MOTT, 1912



Love and marriage to Ethel Culbert Harding

Ethel Culbert Harding was born March 20, 1877, in Yonkers, New York, to Aimeé Culbert and Herbert Harding. Her father was employed by a homeopathic pharmacy at the time, and in 1881, he began a long and respected career with Humphreys Homeopathic Medicine Company.

The diaries Ethel kept as a young girl give a clear picture of a much-loved child growing up in New York City with her sister, Mathilde, and of a gentle life filled with family and friends. She chronicled the frequent weekend trips her family took, traveling by carriage, train, or boat to visit relatives in New Jersey and Staten Island. And she wrote in detail about the rhythm of her days, of going to school when the thermometer registered 100 degrees, anticipating Aunt Mag coming from Staten Island to stay for a week, getting soda water with friends at the corner drugstore, and reading a book called *Elsie's Holiday* with Aunt Lizzy.

On a rainy December 6, 1890, Ethel wrote, *Charlotte came up to see us and we played paper dolls then I practiced in the afternoon and I could not go to dancing school on account of the rain and my cold—about four o'clock Ruth came and we played paper dolls then danced. In the evening I read.*

Ethel explored her early artistic talent by sketching in the pages of her diaries. She had a good eye for design, and she developed her skills as both a photographer and a painter in classes at Hunter College and the Art Students League.

When Ethel's mother reconnected with her childhood friend, Isabella Turnbull Mott, Ethel met the Motts' dashing son, C.S., and within a short time, the two were corresponding frequently. Their friendship grew into a romance that lasted through C.S.'s enlistment in the Navy and Ethel's trip to Europe with her family in 1899. They became engaged in the spring of 1900 and married on June 14 at All Angels Church in New York City. When they returned from a honeymoon in Canada, they set up residence in Utica, New York, where Weston-Mott was located.



Opposite, top: Ethel Harding's art class, with male model, circa 1894–1899.

Opposite, bottom: C.S. and friends at the beach.

Right: C.S. and Ethel aboard a sailboat, 1910.

Three children complete the family

Two months shy of their second anniversary, on April 15, 1902, Ethel gave birth to the Motts' first child, a daughter they named Aimeé in honor of Ethel's mother, Aimeé Culbert Harding. Elsa Beatrice followed on November 14, 1904. A son, Charles Stewart Harding, who carried Ethel's family name, was born two years later on November 4, 1906.

C.S. with his daughter Aimeé.



Wheels reinvented

C.S. talked with manufacturers in the evolving automobile business to determine how the wheels they wanted differed from those he was already producing. Then, with a combination of grit, skill, and confidence, he took a year's worth of orders, produced drawings for the desired products—which included front- and rear-drive axles—and adapted Weston-Mott's production capabilities to make them.

One of C.S.'s customers was the Buick Motor Company based in Flint, Michigan. Late in 1904, William C. "Billy" Durant assumed management of Buick. He appreciated the quality of Weston-Mott's products, but shipping the axles from Utica to Flint proved to be cumbersome and was impeding Mr. Durant's ability to boost Buick's production. In June 1905, Durant sent a letter to C.S. asking if he would entertain a proposal to establish a branch of Weston-Mott in Flint. Durant noted that Flint was in the center of the country's growing automotive industry.

C.S. had already considered opening a plant in Michigan and had subsequently dismissed the idea, but he countered. He offered to move the entire manufacturing operation to Flint in return for a civic investment that would guarantee financing and land on which to build the plant. Several months later, the offer was accepted. C.S. invited his employees to move with the company to Michigan. And he assured his customers that Weston-Mott would continue to provide high-quality products and first-class deliveries.

Weston-Mott began production in Flint in 1906. Ethel and C.S. moved to Flint with their three children the following February. After a few months in temporary quarters, they settled into a lovely home at 423 East Kearsley Street, designed by C.S.'s brother-in-law, Herbert Davis. Flint was small compared to Utica. Its population was estimated at about 16,000 in 1905. Still, the Motts made new friends and became involved in local social and charitable activities.

By October 1908, Weston-Mott had roughly 500 employees and was expanding to accommodate another 250. Billy Durant founded General Motors that same year and, in a stock exchange deal, acquired 49 percent of Weston-Mott. By 1910, Flint had grown to more than 38,000 residents, more than a fourth of whom were employed in factories there. A year later, Weston-Mott had 1,000 people on its payroll.

When C.S. had Weston-Mott running smoothly, he turned his attention to the needs of the city, which was not at all equipped to accommodate its burgeoning population. He was elected mayor in 1912 and began immediately to address Flint's poor roads, lack of storm sewers, inadequate fire protection, and other municipal issues. He ran and won again in 1913. That same year, he sold the remaining Weston-Mott holdings to General Motors and became one of GM's directors.

Opposite: C.S. at his desk at the Weston-Mott Company, circa 1900.

Inset: Business card.



ESTABLISHED 1884.

Weston Mill Company,
MANUFACTURERS OF
STEEL WIRE WHEELS,F. S. HOTT, President
W. S. BELL, Vice President
C. S. HOTT, Secretary**UTICA, N.Y.**

The site chosen for the home was a sunny rise of land well back from Kearsley Street that afforded sweeping views of the surrounding acreage.



TWO FARMS BECOME ONE

Land for a gentleman's farm

By 1915, with three growing children, a busy work and social schedule, and two more mayoral campaigns that both ended in defeat, C.S.'s desire for some self-sufficiency became a priority. The Motts purchased twenty-six acres from J. D. Dort, which faced Kearsley Street just beyond its fashionable residential area, and an adjacent thirty-eight acres owned by Charles Nash. The combined sixty-four-acre parcel was unusually large to be located so close to downtown, and it was perfect for the gentleman's farm that C.S. envisioned. The land came with a few outbuildings and an old orchard. Gilkey Creek meandered through the gently rolling fields.

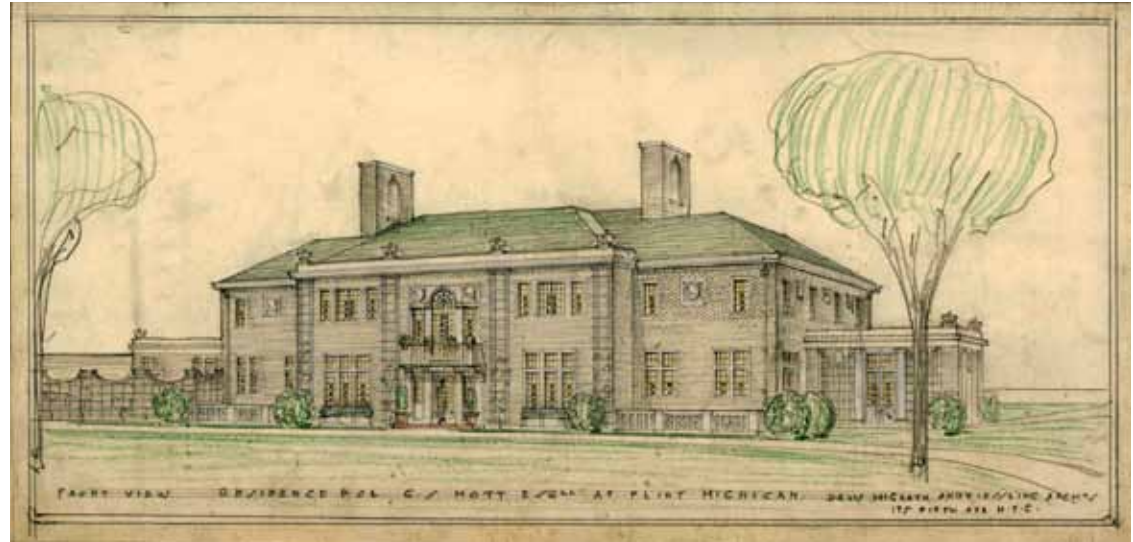
As Ethel and C.S. began planning their bucolic country home, the success of General Motors was cementing Flint's huge role in the auto industry, and the one-millionth automobile built by Ford rolled off the revolutionary moving assembly line in Highland Park, Michigan. Yet even as all seemed well on the home front, there was great unrest across the oceans. The world's first global conflict was pitting Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire against Great Britain and other European powers. On May 7, 1915, the British ocean liner *Lusitania* was hit by a torpedo from a German U-boat. Of the 1,198 passengers and crew killed, 128 were Americans, and the United States moved closer to declaring war.

Opposite and below left: Applewood's fields and pasture. Below right: Geese in Gilkey Creek.





Applewood architect Herbert Davis with his wife, Edith, who was C. S. Mott's sister.

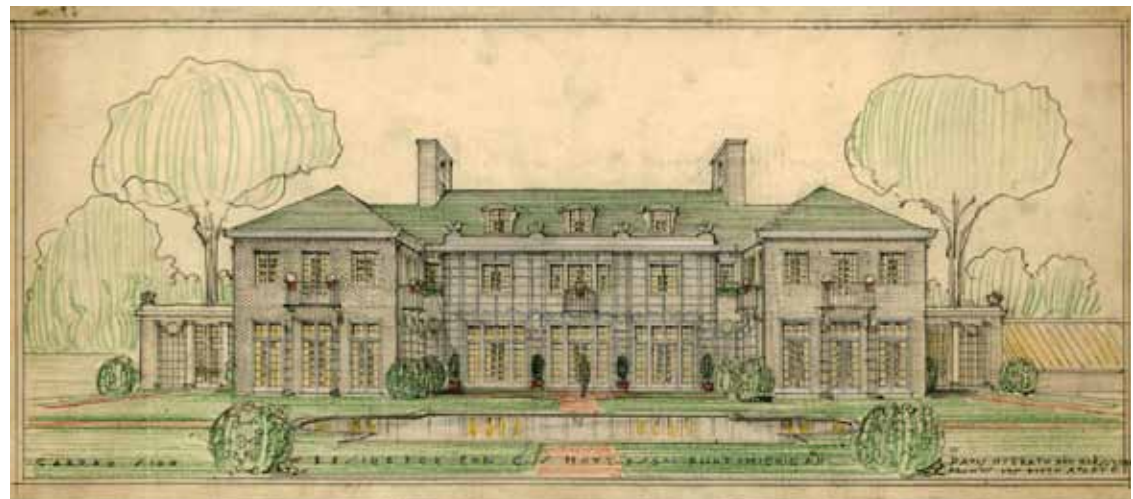


Herbert Davis, architect

C.S. and Herbert Davis served together on the USS *Yankee* during the Spanish-American War. They were close friends and became brothers-in-law when Herbert married C.S.'s sister, Edith, on January 9, 1900. Davis established a successful practice as an architect and a partner in the New York-based firm of Davis, McGrath & Kiessling. After designing the Motts' first home in Flint, he designed much-needed housing for plant workers who poured into the city to fill jobs in the rapidly growing automotive industry. And he designed an isolation building for Flint's Hurley Hospital, with features that made it possible for nurses to care for those with different contagious diseases under the same roof. The building was built with a gift from the Motts. Mr. Davis wrote of his project for a publication titled *The Modern Hospital*:

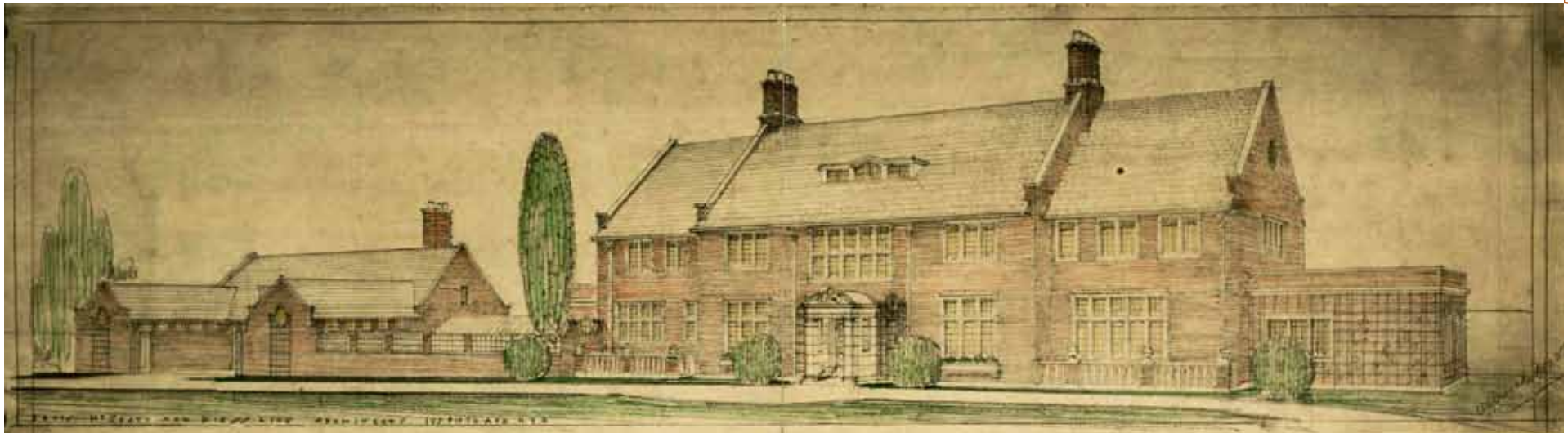
The isolation building of the Hurley Hospital presents a solution of the problem for the care of contagious diseases that is especially adapted to cities of the smaller class. The city of Flint has a population of fifty thousand and, like many other cities of its size, has up to the present time taken care of its contagious diseases in the much abhorred "pest houses," located as far as possible from the center of population and avoided by all.

As Ethel and C.S. began making plans for their gentleman's farm, they enlisted the skills of their brother-in-law once again



and asked that he design the residence and outbuildings. His fee was set at three percent of the total cost of the home, to be paid in installments.

Since Mr. Davis's office was in New York City, he scouted for furniture and accessories at the fine stores there and reported to the Motts when he found something he believed would fit into their new home. He had an eye for style and was a good judge of value. In a letter dated February 9, 1918, Mr. Davis described for the Motts an antique table and chairs painted in green and yellow, at one of his favorite shops called A. Olivotti & Company, *which might interest Ethel for the breakfast room.* He also had a



Of the two designs offered (shown opposite and above), the modified Jacobean (above) was chosen. Drawings are pencil on tissue paper with colored pencil accents, mounted on board.

sense of humor that was evident when he wrote, *Regarding the Settee at Bungarten's, I remember it very well, but will go up and see it again. Of course, the cushion would make a fine soft place for dogs, but I would like to have it just the same.*

In a follow-up letter, he noted that he went to look at the settee but did not find it as attractive as it was in the window in Chicago. He wrote, *I think that we can do better for a good deal less money.*

Years later, Herbert Davis was called upon to design the Mott family's mausoleum at Glenwood Cemetery in Flint.

A choice of two designs

The residence you see today seems perfectly suited to the rolling landscape for which it was designed, and it fit the family's desire for a home that was more modest than the castle-like estates being built by some of the industrial pioneers of the day. But it was not the only style considered.

Herbert Davis offered front and back views for two designs with similar floor plans but very different exteriors. One was a formal design with elements of Georgian Colonial and Italian Renaissance. Hand-colored elevations show two massive chimneys, small balconies off the largest bedrooms, third-floor dormer windows overlooking the back of the property, and a large formal pool a few steps beyond the back terrace.

The Motts chose, instead, Davis's design for a brick home in a modified Jacobean style, also called Jacobean Revival. The style was part of the larger Beaux Arts architectural movement in the United States that stretched from 1876 to 1930. Inspired by elements of the English Renaissance period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was popular with new industrial leaders who were moving away from the elaborate Victorian designs with their fussy spindles, scrollwork, turrets, and porticoes.

The projected cost of the residence was \$70,000 plus the architect's fee of three percent.

CHARACTERISTICS OF JACOBEOAN REVIVAL

Jacobean Revival design tended to emphasize symmetry, harmony, and balance. The exteriors often included elements of historic architectural styles, but the interiors were designed with modern floor plans that would accommodate and incorporate emerging domestic technologies such as home appliances, a central heating plant, refrigeration, and food storage. Adequate space for staff and the service areas needed to maintain a large home were also a priority.

As the use of furnaces increased, architects began locating fireplaces on walls where they served more of a decorative purpose, rather than being the central warming hearth of the past. Architect Herbert Davis followed that trend and included several large wall fireplaces in the Motts' home. It was also fashionable to include rooms that each filled one specific purpose rather than having several functions. A dining room, for example, was expected to be used only for dining.

A library might be used as an office but would not also double as a family gathering place or a sleeping room. In place of plain plaster walls, the surfaces of Jacobean Revival homes were often decorated with wood paneling and ornamental plasterwork. These elements were all incorporated into the Motts' home, along with classic Jacobean Revival details such as casement windows with metal muntins, steep gables, and a slate roof.



Building the family home

Mr. Davis's architectural plans included several pages of specifications for the home's interior and exterior. No detail was left out, from the location of picture moldings and installation of cork flooring to the particulars of ironwork and plasterwork, flower boxes and lattices, and even stipulations for the ash hoist adjoining the boiler room.

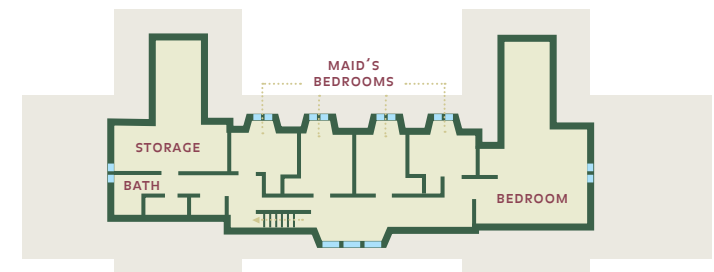
Construction for the residence began in 1916. C.S. and Ethel's grandchildren share a family story that Ethel's legacy made the building of Applewood possible, and she must have been delighted to watch their eagerly anticipated home take shape. Floyd Soule, who had built the Motts' first residence in Flint, was chosen to build Applewood, too, and he continued to be in their lives for many years to come, making repairs to the residence as needed.

The home's design included twenty-three rooms on the first and second floors, sleeping porches on the second floor, a third floor with living quarters for staff and rooms for storage, and a full finished basement. Dormer windows brought light and cooling cross-breezes to the third floor. The windows and doors throughout the house are surrounded by light-colored limestone trim.

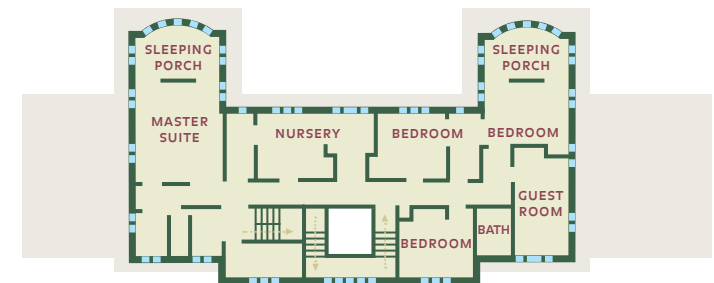
The deep red bricks chosen for the façade were manufactured by Western Brick Company in Danville, Illinois. Two matching brick chimneys rise several feet above the steeply pitched roof, which is covered with hard-veined variegated slate tiles. Copper was used for both flashing and downspouts.

A greenhouse, a gardener's work room, and a four-stall garage or "machine room" were added onto the east side of the house, along with a full-size squash court for this sports-loving family.

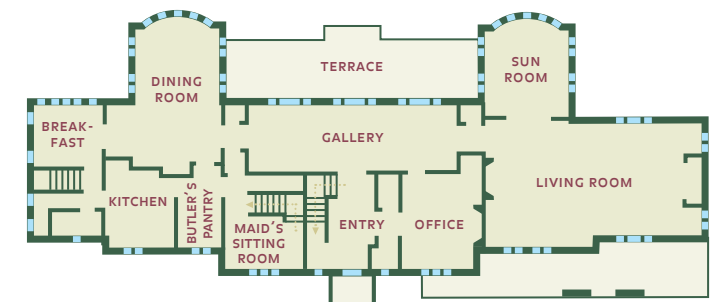
The Motts chose to replicate many of the home's Jacobean Revival design elements, including the brick façade and slate roof, for a two-story gatehouse, a tea house at the corner of the perennial garden, a grand two-story barn, and a chicken coop.



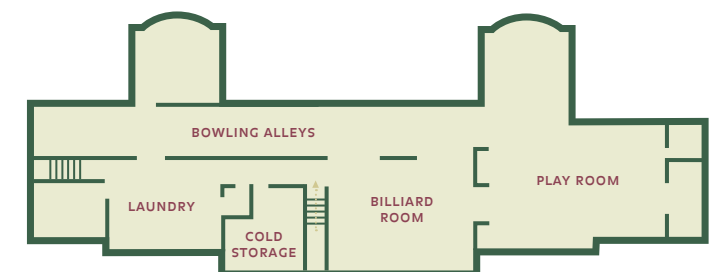
Third Floor



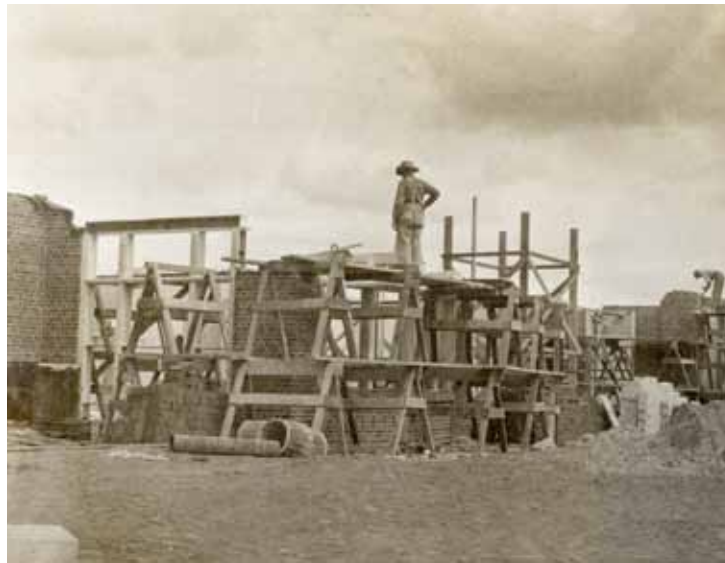
Second Floor



Main Floor



Basement



These provisions were included in the building contracts:

The contractor must install a telephone with long distance connections in the above office from the beginning until completion of the work. The architects to have free use of said telephone for local calls.

This Contractor must furnish all necessary lamps and oil, and keep a trust-worthy, able bodied man on the premises at night, from the time the work is started until the completion of the work, including Sundays and Holidays.

Throughout its construction, there was considerable correspondence between C.S. and Herbert Davis as they sorted through choices of building materials and products, such as the colors of wood stains and the style of fixtures being considered for the house and outbuildings. Many of their letters went back and forth between the Hotel Shoreham, where C.S. was staying while temporarily working in California during part of the construction, and Mr. Davis's New York office. Their letters, plus volumes of invoices and vendor contracts preserved in the Mott family archives, give an intimate and intriguing view of the process of building the family estate.



A letter dated December 14, 1915, from Mr. Davis to C.S. reads, in part:

My dear Stewart:

. . . on the basis of a total estimated expenditure of \$70,000, we have earned about \$1,250 to date (Dec 14, 1915). We would appreciate it if you would send us \$500 before Christmas.

From June 1916, there are proposals for plumbing to be installed in the residence, garage, greenhouse, gatehouse, and barn. In August, the Motts received a contract for a pipe organ. By October 9, Mr. Davis's commission was up to \$4,000 as he completed design plans for the outbuildings. Orders were sent for rough limestone and coal in December.

Records from January 1917 reflect work being done inside the home, with orders for the curved ceiling detail, wood stain, tile and terrazzo, and wood trim for the living room and another order for coal.

In February, quotes were accepted for marble mantles and for travertine stone that would be used for stair treads and risers. A cow weather vane was ordered in March, and a letter from Tiffany studio in New York was received with an estimated cost for an interior door. (The Tiffany door ultimately would not be commissioned for the house.)



Opposite and left:
During construction at
Applewood, Aimeé and
Elsa Mott and a friend
pose in the soon-to-be
swimming pool.

On March 10, 1917, Mr. Davis noted that good progress was being made on the plastering and that the third story, second story, gallery, and library were finished. He included a suggestion that the Motts *attach themselves to the interest and advice of one decorator, who will receive enough of the business to enlist a proper degree of his interest*, and he recommended a Mr. Bacon of Wm. Wright & Company. A note from C.S. to Mr. Bacon on April 6 requested a time for them to meet, preferably in Flint.

Mr. Davis reported on April 11 that “Jimmy” was putting up the living-room ceiling and that the windows were nearly all in. There is another order for coal in April and acceptance of a bid for a wrought-iron hand railing for the main stair.

On June 6, Mr. Davis sent an update on the furnishings and suggested having furniture covered in plain denim if necessary, in order to have it produced by the Wright Company, because he felt the foundation and finish of the work were the best available. He explained that the furniture could be covered with different fabrics at a later time.

Orders were placed for a wall safe in June and rugs, furniture, and curtains in July. A proposal for Everlastic-brand flooring for the kitchen and servants’ quarters was accepted. Carpet and floor lacquer were ordered in August and screens in September. Statements followed for a pair of dog-design foot scrapers and for plumbing fixtures in October.

After months of anticipation, the home, with more than 12,000 square feet, designed and furnished for comfortable, active family living and gracious entertaining, was completed. In October 1917, with son Harding almost eleven and daughters Elsa and Aimeé in their early teens, each member of the family signed Applewood’s guest book for the first time and moved into the estate that would serve as a home base for Mott family members for decades to come. Within a year, the sixty-four surrounding acres would begin producing enough meat, poultry, eggs, milk, fruits, and vegetables to sustain its residents and their guests, with plenty of extras to sell and give away.

Meanwhile, with winter soon upon them, there was the practicality of stocking the pantry. A receipt from November 20, 1917, shows the Motts took delivery of twelve cans each of clam chowder, fish balls, fish flakes, lobster filling, salmon, and shrimp and six cans of crab. The total cost was \$21.20. A note is attached acknowledging that the supplier was out of jar herring.

For the time being, the family referred to the new residence as either the Gilkey Farm or the Mott Farm. In November 1919, while attending Emma Willard School in Troy, New York, Aimeé wrote to her mother and asked if they had thought of another name yet. They would settle later on Applewood, in recognition of the old orchard on the grounds.



Living-room ceiling detail.

THE HOME

Four floors of comfort, fun, efficiency, and elegance

Herbert Davis's design evolved into a home that was every bit as elegant as it was warm and welcoming. It was a complete residence and a balance of beauty and function, where the Motts could raise children, receive business associates, enjoy sports and games, entertain friends, and produce enough food to be nearly self-sufficient.

Just steps from the front door, directly off the entrance hall, is the library and home office, with walls of bookshelves, a massive fireplace, and windows looking out onto the front drive and the orchard. It was here that C.S. often started and ended his work day, handled personal correspondence, held meetings, dictated his diary over the years, and kept detailed notes about his crops and animals. His personal secretaries also worked in this office and shared a large partners-style desk with him.

Across from the office is the maids' sitting room, which leads to two of the busier rooms in the home, the kitchen and the butler's pantry. Though not especially large, they provided ample space for the staff to store the many sets of dishes and glassware needed for frequent luncheons and dinner parties. There was room to prepare and serve everything from casual breakfasts to multicourse meals for the hundreds of guests invited to Applewood each year. Around the corner from the kitchen is a cozy breakfast room, also called the loggia, with a door to the attached greenhouse and a view onto the formal garden.



Left: C. S. Mott at work in his office in 1960, photographed by Peter Mahan of the Associated Press.

Opposite: The office today.





The entrance hall leads to a long gallery that stretches from east to west across the south side of the house. Standing in the gallery, visitors got their first look to the south at the home's lush landscape and gardens, the in-ground swimming pool, and cultivated fields beyond. The gallery walls display some of the family's exceptional art. Many of the children who played in this corridor through the decades have told stories of hiding in the waist-high urns there.

Two large wings extend from either end of the gallery. The east wing encompasses the spacious and often-used formal dining room, and the west wing includes a bright south-facing sunroom, which proved to be the perfect place for ladies to enjoy lunches and play bridge and canasta. For many years, the Motts put up a big Christmas tree in the sunroom, which still left plenty of space for family and friends to gather and open presents on Christmas morning. Its walls have always been covered with portraits of family members and some of their much-loved dogs.

A brick terrace between the two wings is also reached from the gallery by three sets of French doors. In the summer, a canvas awning over the terrace provides shade and protection from the rain. The home has never had central air conditioning, but the awning helps keep the terrace and the gallery cool on sunny days.

Opposite: The gallery, looking toward the dining room.

Right: The sun room, looking toward the living room (top), with its wall of family photos, and the opposite end decorated for Christmas (bottom).



The living room (below), looking east and west, and the living room today (opposite).



Off the west end of the gallery is an impressive living room, with a plastered barrel-vault ceiling in a Tudor Rose pattern, a large fireplace with a limestone mantle, and dark oak paneling. A player organ was installed in the living room when the home was built. Its pipes were carefully concealed behind a wooden lattice wall at one end of the room and behind a large tapestry in the entry hall. Unfortunately, it required frequent repairs and was eventually removed. Cubbyholes in the walls afforded C.S. a place to stash his large collection of opera records. This grand room must have been a surprise to first-time guests, as it is barely noticeable from outside through the trees.







Above: C.S. stands on the landing of Applewood's main staircase holding Lady Tabu, "Boo." (Photo by Peter Mahan, Associated Press, 1960.)

Right: The staircase today.



Top: The sleeping porch off the master bedroom.

Bottom: The daybed in the master bedroom.

The second floor is reached by a wide, U-shaped open staircase from the entrance hall and also from a narrow set of stairs off the first-floor maids' sitting room. Six sleeping rooms for family and guests plus four bathrooms and a bright sitting room used as the governess's room or "Nana's room" are located on this floor, along with storage areas for cleaning supplies and linens. The Motts' lovely master bedroom, located directly over the dining room at the east end of the house, has a fireplace with a limestone mantle and a bowed sleeping porch with views to the east, south, and west. A large dressing room with several built-in closets and a large bathroom complete the suite. A slightly smaller but similarly designed bedroom and sleeping porch are located at the west end of the house directly over the sunroom.

The third floor is reached by a back stair from the second floor. When the home was built, the third floor had five bedrooms for staff, one bathroom, and several closets and storage rooms. The rooms now house the Mott family archives.

At the time Applewood was built, most basements sufficed as storage space and a location for laundry facilities, utilities, and the heating plant for the home. Applewood's spacious basement is nearly equal in square footage to the first floor. It provided areas for housekeeping necessities, laundry equipment, the home's primary refrigeration unit for fresh food, storage for frozen and canned food, and a separate cold room for fruit and vegetable storage. However, most of the basement was given over to recreation areas for the family. Here they gathered frequently to play billiards, to bowl on two full-size bowling lanes with manual pinsetters, to host holiday parties and celebrate birthdays, and to watch the country's first television programs.





A greenhouse for year-round growing

In January 1918, three months after the Motts moved into Applewood, they received a proposal from the Lord & Burnham Company for a two-room iron-frame greenhouse 18 feet wide and 50 feet long. It was designed to span the area between the residence and the garage and connect to both. Nine pages of specifications furnished by Lord & Burnham included directions for painting all woodwork, the sash and door, the outsides of the plant beds, the framework, and ventilating machinery with coats of pure white lead and linseed oil. Lead-based paint was popular at the time because it covered well and dried to a smooth, satin-like finish.

The company assured the Motts that with the water in the boiler at 180 degrees, the greenhouse would maintain an inside temperature of from 55 degrees to 60 degrees in the section nearest the garage and 50 degrees to 55 degrees in the section nearest the residence, even when the outside temperature fell to zero.

Right: C.S. with his daughter-in-law Gerry Specht Mott (right) and her sister, Claire, in the greenhouse.



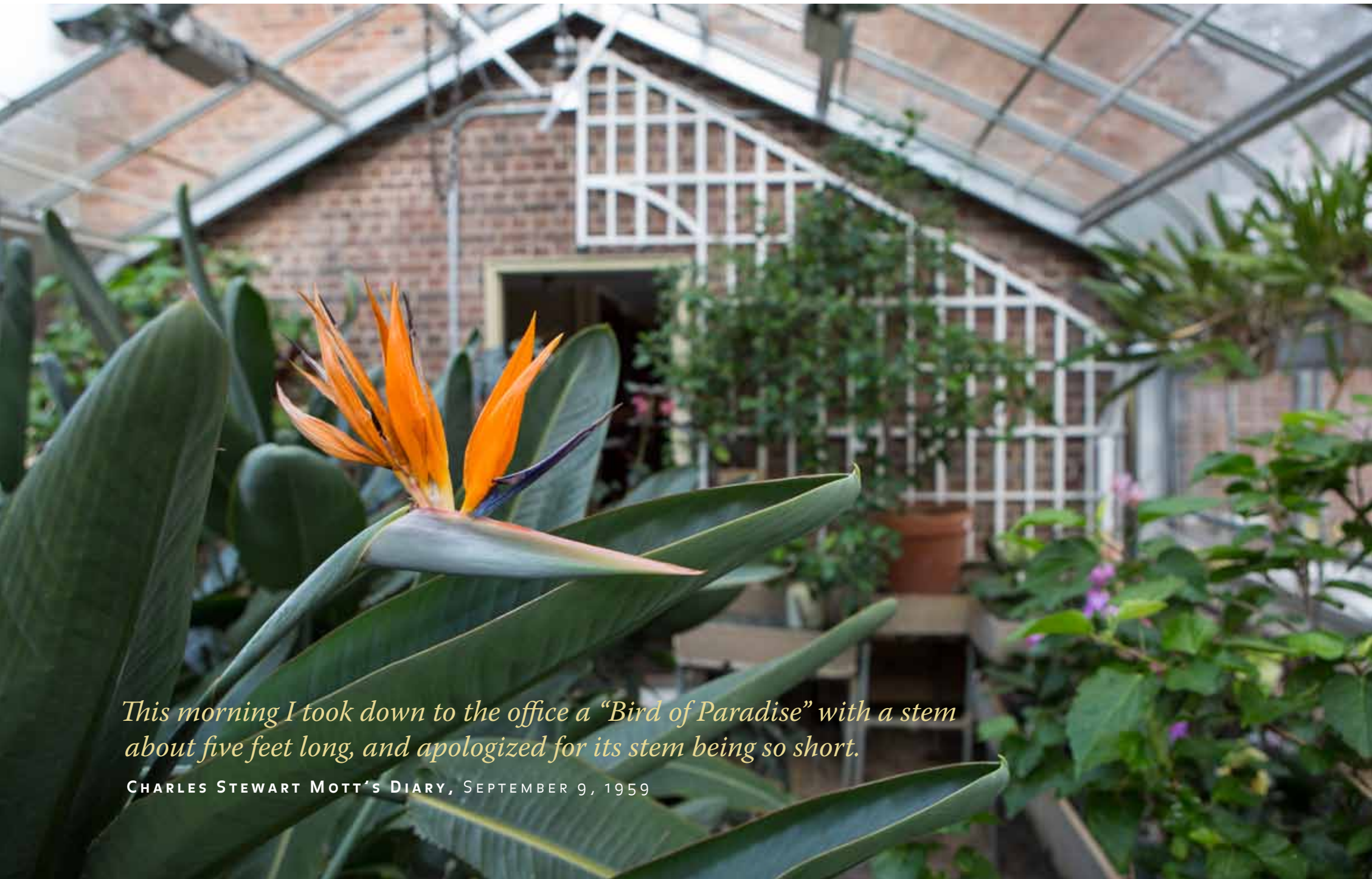
The estimated cost of the greenhouse was \$2,450 for materials and construction. The proposal was accepted in May with a few alterations to the steam-heating system. A propagating bed was added in one corner, and a special mushroom-growing area, called a mushroom cellar, was included. Just steps from the kitchen, the greenhouse lengthened the growing season for tomatoes and other cold-sensitive vegetables, and it was the perfect environment for citrus trees and C.S.'s favorite flower, the Bird of Paradise.

On October 28, 1930, C.S. wrote:

In the greenhouse, our chrysanthemums are magnificent, also the carnations. We are now getting ripe tomatoes from the [plants] inside. Mushrooms have been planted but not yet up. The six orchids we ordered have arrived. They blossom at different times of the year but two of them indicate that the blossoms are not far off.

Two years later, he noted in his diary that the greenhouse was awash in color and blooms:

The greenhouse is a sight to behold. Carnations are in profusion. The chrysanthemum plants are growing well and about five feet high. There are also numerous varieties of small chrysanthemums. Poinsettias and lilies, which will be at their best about Christmastime, also Jerusalem cherries. Pots of cyclamen, begonias, Buddlia, freesias, Stevia (a tiny white flower, which we intend to mix with the carnations for bouquets), Primrose and Streptocarpus (a small coarse-leaf plant with a bell shape flower similar to the petunia). There is also a center bed of snapdragons which are just beginning to bloom.



This morning I took down to the office a "Bird of Paradise" with a stem about five feet long, and apologized for its stem being so short.

CHARLES STEWART MOTT'S DIARY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1959



A practical garage

Architect Davis placed the four-stall “machine room” or garage directly to the east of the residence so it could be reached by a pleasant walk through the attached greenhouse and a gardener’s workroom. The garage was heated, which was no small consideration in a city where winter temperatures could hover in the single digits for days. It featured four sliding wooden doors and a full basement used to store gas tanks and coal reserves. A small adjacent workshop was stocked with tools.

Directly above the garage was an apartment that provided living quarters for Applewood’s caretakers through the decades. Alex Mair, son of Applewood’s revered Scottish gardener, John Mair, was four when his family moved into the apartment in 1928. He remembered that the hall, which ran nearly the length of the apartment, made an ideal place during Scottish gatherings for the bagpiper to walk up and down playing the pipes.

A tunnel runs from the utility rooms under the garage to the basement of the home. While built to be practical, the tunnel was also a great place for children to play.

Applewood’s garage today
(top) and in the early years
(bottom).



Modern conveniences

C.S. loved to retool, refine, and upgrade when possible, and building Applewood gave him many opportunities to try out some of the most modern conveniences being introduced for homes.

Instead of settling for an ice box, which was the standard of the day for keeping food cold, he considered an Audiffren-Singrun refrigeration machine from the H. W. Johns-Manville Company, which employed a state-of-the-art brine circulating pump. The manufacturer guaranteed that the machine, operating at 280 RPM, would offer refrigeration sufficient to *produce temperature of from 40 to 45 degrees and make at least 25 pounds of ice from five ice moulds holding 5 pounds each.*

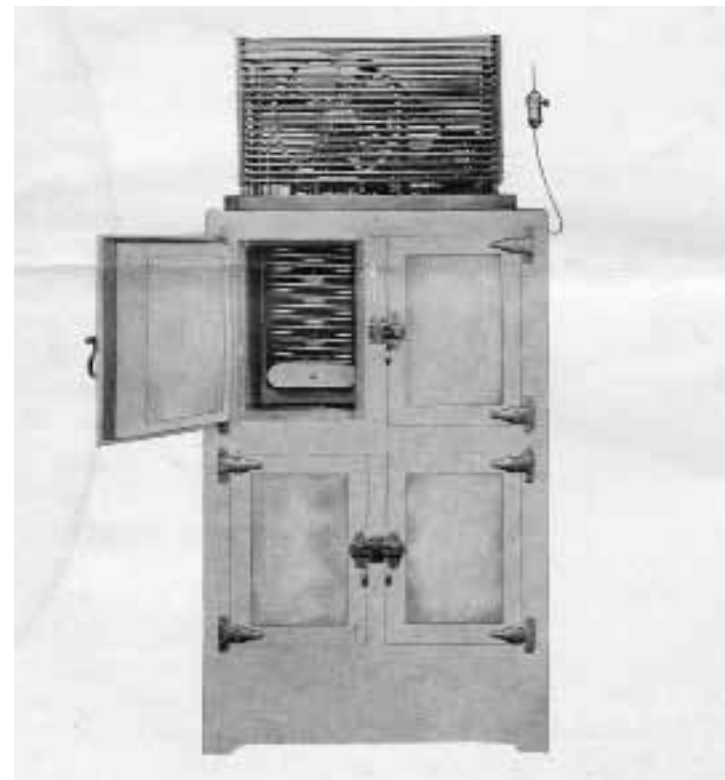
The machine would be fitted inside a standard ice-box-style container 5 feet wide, 2½ feet deep, and 8½ feet high, which the Motts were to furnish. The company would oversee installation and operation of the equipment for the first day. If the family wanted an engineer to remain longer, the contract specified that he would be paid \$9 per day.

With a bid price of \$2,125, quoted to the Motts in November 1916, the refrigeration machine cost four times more than Chevrolet's 1916 "Four-Ninety" model automobile, named for its initial price of \$490.

There is no bill of sale for the Audiffren-Singrun. Instead, there are specifications and paid invoices for a large Jewett porcelain refrigerator, with a glass panel door and drinking water coils for \$305.91 and an Isko refrigerating machine for \$285, which included \$10 for delivery and installation.

According to literature furnished by the company, the Isko cooled by *abstracting the heat through the tinned copper ice-making coils, in which liquid sulphur is being boiled by the heat extracted from the refrigerator, which changes the state of the liquid into sulphur steam, just as though it were of boiling water . . . sulphur steam is cold (14 degrees F).*

The refrigerator and refrigeration unit were installed in the fall of 1917, just a month before the family moved into Applewood.



A photo from a 1917 Isko brochure showing the refrigerating machine installation on a standard refrigerator.







The Families

Someday I hope that we will have a family reunion at Christmastime, all hands old and young, together with me at Applewood.

Charles Stewart Mott's Diary, January 11, 1934

2

ETHEL HARDING MOTT AT APPLEWOOD

Wife, mother, hostess, and community benefactor



A few years after moving to Flint, Ethel Mott wrote to her husband about the importance of helping others:

I used to think that the little one person could do amounted to so little that it was not worth thinking about, but I know, now, that if we can help one person to make their life brighter it is priceless . . . and, I don't mean help them to be happier for a week or a month but help them to permanently elevate their life and live it on a higher plane . . . perhaps by improving their surroundings or their education.

Thus, with a generous spirit and the tender heart of an artist, Ethel became involved in several civic and charitable causes in her adopted city. She took an interest in the programs at Hurley Hospital and was one of the founders of a movement to create a hospital specifically for women and children. She was active with Bethany Community Church and at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where many Mott family members were married. Both the YWCA and the Child Welfare Association recruited her to serve on their boards of directors, for which she likely contributed what the *Flint Weekly* described as her *unusual executive ability*. She was also a prominent member of the Eastern Star Lodge. The *Flint Journal*, in 1924, described Ethel as one of the most active *welfare and social workers in the city* and noted that she did a great many charitable acts *not* connected with welfare organizations.


Ethel was busy at Applewood, too, hosting social events and benefits to raise money for local causes, managing her staff, welcoming frequent overnight guests, and raising three growing children. At the holidays, she invited people who didn't have any other place to go to join the family for dinner.

Her husband's run for governor in 1920 presented a new slate of obligations for the potential first lady of Michigan. And with all her responsibilities and commitments, she still found time to pursue her love of painting and to make clothes for her daughter Elsa's dolls.

One great sadness in Ethel's adult life was her ongoing struggle with a nervous condition and depression and with treatments that often required her to be away from Applewood and her family for long periods of time. Even with her own troubles and the challenges that life presented her, Ethel conveyed a love and concern for people and a kindness to others that drew them to her. She maintained her belief in the importance of service to others throughout her life, and she touched deeply those who knew her. The Motts' friend and General Motors colleague John Raskob spoke for many when he wrote of Ethel as *a beautiful character . . . a good wife whose whole life seemed almost entirely devoted to love and charity, with a rare gift of faith in her fellow man*.

Left: Elsa Mott's dolls in clothes made by her mother, Ethel.
(Photos by Kathleen Walker.)

Opposite: Ethel Harding Mott at Applewood, circa 1917.



There is so much to be done in the world to better the conditions of our fellow men . . . all the poor people in the world that have but half a chance—poor children and souls that hardly see daylight between work and worry.

ETHEL HARDING MOTT, IN A LETTER TO HER HUSBAND, FEBRUARY 1912



Artist in residence

Ethel Mott was a talented artist and captured on canvas several scenes around Applewood. Among the paintings treasured by her family are a view of the antique marble wellhead that she and C.S. purchased, the often-used tennis courts, and a beautiful portrait of her younger daughter, Elsa, who was about eighteen years old at the time. Each is a window into the gentle heart of a talented woman whose life was unexpectedly cut short.

Above: Ethel's paintings—the gardens and tea house and a portrait of Elsa (photo by Kathleen Walker).



Ethel with her three children (from left), Harding, Elsa, and Aimeé.



Ready for swimming in the pool at Applewood are (from left) Aimeé, Elsa, and Harding.



Ethel with an armful of flowers, circa 1920.





Opposite: The antique wellhead today.

Left: Ethel seated on the wellhead with Pepper.

Below: The wellhead was a favorite subject for Ethel to paint.



Mrs. Mott was one of those that saw in every other human being, a part of Creation like as she herself; and because of her gifted vision, her talented trend, her endeavors to aid particularly her own sex toward the goal of better things—this was not to her a toil, but 'twas a labor of fondest love.

FLINT DAILY HERALD, JUNE 7, 1924



Opposite: Ethel Mott and her sister, Mathilde, on the terrace at Applewood, circa 1919.

Flint loses a good friend

On June 6, 1924, just a week before C.S. and Ethel's twenty-fourth wedding anniversary, a shocking tragedy unfolded. Ethel fell from a second-story window at Applewood and died from her injuries.

C.S. wrote in a letter to his friend George Black following Ethel's passing:

The Mott family have had a very heavy blow and when the most important part of a piece of machinery is taken away, it is pretty hard to keep the machine going.

With news of the sudden passing, a great cloud of sadness settled over the city of Flint and around everyone who had known her and been moved by her kindness and her deep concern for the welfare of others. Hundreds of mourners, including business associates and senior General Motors officials from around the country, attended her solemn funeral.

Letters to Ethel's family conveyed the love and respect that residents of the community felt for her and attempted to provide some comfort in the midst of shattering grief. In a note to Mr. Mott and his family, members of Bethany Community Church in Flint wrote of Ethel:

Those who knew her personally were charmed by her sincere friendliness. Her kindly interest in our work and her ready helpfulness have made her friends in us all.

We assure you of our sympathy . . . and communicate to you our sense of loss in the city where she had so freely served.

The *Flint Daily Herald* ran this tribute on June 7, 1924:

In the sudden passing of Mrs. Ethel Harding Mott, wife of C. S. Mott, vice president of the General Motors Corporation, this city has lost one of its most faithful and genuine laborers in the cause and promotion of social welfare.

Mrs. Mott came to this city from Utica, N.Y., in the fall of 1906, and ever since that date, a great portion of her time has been spent wholeheartedly in the earnest endeavor to further promote those interests that after all, mean most in the lives of humankind.

Those who knew her best have ever been frank in their expression of the very beauty of the life of the woman day by day. Her's was never a selfish aim. Her's was a constant aim to so toil toward that goal of gradual higher culture and upward tendencies that one man and one woman might love each other better as members of one great human family and that this world might be a better world to live in.

In these and in recent days, the minds of men and women in bulk have been stressed toward pleasure seeking, toward more and more personal enjoyment. Few after all, have been found—few after all may be found today—always ready and willing to sacrifice personal benefits in time, in effort and in money for the mere sake of promoting the welfare of another.

But Mrs. Mott was one of those that saw in every other human being, a part of Creation like as she herself; and because of her gifted vision, her talented trend, her endeavors to aid particularly her own sex toward the goal of better things—this was not to her a toil, but 'twas a labor of fondest love.

The end of her noble life came suddenly yesterday, so suddenly that it shocked the entire city and community. Heads bowed at the announcement, for women with aims and purpose such as she possessed, are few and far between. Flint womanhood, particularly, has lost a faithful and gracious friend.

In July, a deeply grieving C.S. wrote to friends that he was going to Europe for two months with his three children, *and will try to get better acquainted with them, as they have spent so much time away at school.* Nell Medbury, a family friend; Ethel's sister, Mathilde; and Mathilde's twenty-one-year-old son joined them on the trip.

When they returned, C.S.'s youngest daughter, Elsa, decided to stay with her father at Applewood for a while, because she felt he needed a hostess. She lived there and helped him run the house for most of the next few years, until she married Hamish Mitchell in 1927.



FINDING LOVE AGAIN

Mitties Butterfield Rathbun

Nearly three long years after Ethel died, C.S. met Mitties Rathbun and fell in love. Her name first appears in the Applewood guest book December 31, 1926. C.S. proposed to her the following July at Gull Lake, Michigan, near her father's home, and spent the next morning applying for a marriage license and a passport for Mitties, so she could accompany him on an upcoming business trip. Though C.S. may have considered this all a rather private matter, he noted that news of their forthcoming nuptials was already in the newspaper by the time he arrived at the office later that afternoon. He wrote that by five p.m., *it was the biggest thing you ever saw in the Detroit Times*.

In a letter to his friend Edith M. Goyns-Clark in York, England, regarding the possibility of seeing her and her husband in London during the business trip, he described his newfound love and the reason for his haste to marry Mitties.

July 9, 1927

As you undoubtedly realize, I have been very lonely during the past three years and the prospect of the trip was even more lonely, in view of the fact that I had become acquainted with a most attractive young woman in Detroit. Her name is Mitties Rathbun,



Mitties Rathbun Mott, 1927.

she is 35 years old, and has two children, a boy 10 and girl 8, and they are fine youngsters and I am very fond of them. Aside from the lonesomeness of the trip I could not bear to think of taking the chance of someone running off with her while I was away, so I prevailed upon her to accompany me, so we will be married next Tuesday, July 12. The trip is a business one with some of the other members of the company who have their wives along, but the time spent on the ocean will afford ample opportunity for honeymoon.

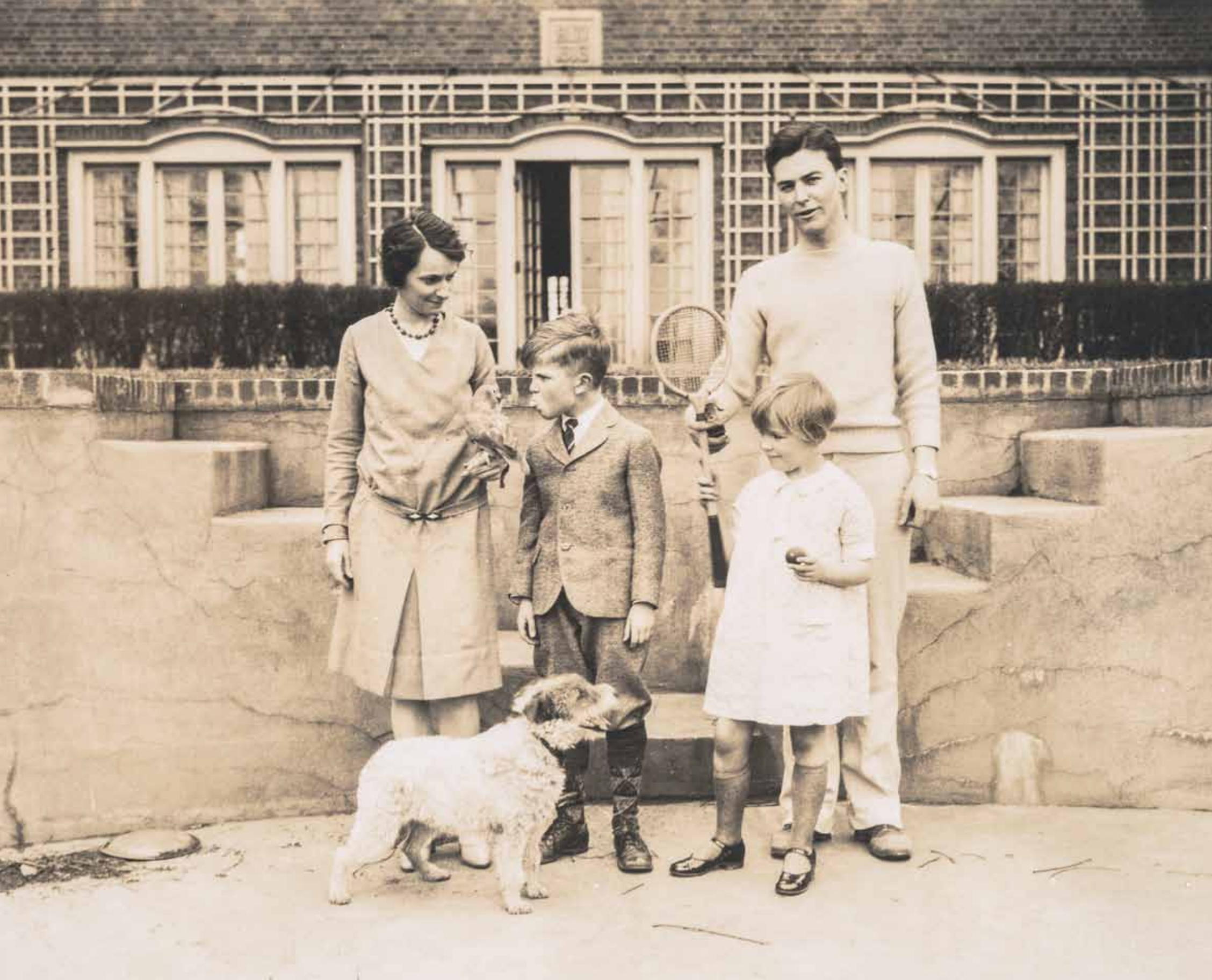
The happy couple set sail on July 16 on the RMS *Majestic*. A letter sent to them in August from Mitties's daughter, Louise, began, *Dear mother and daddy*. It's filled with news of her brother, Walter, going to camp and assures them that she is being a good girl and drinking a lot of milk. She signs it, *love and kisses from sister to mother and daddy . . . and all the kisses in the world*.



RMS *Majestic*.



Mitties and C. S. Mott
together in 1927.



At home at Applewood

Mitties and C.S. returned home from their honeymoon-business trip and settled into Applewood on November 2, 1927. Mitties signed the guest book, this time as Mitties Mott. In the column for guests to indicate their date of departure, she playfully wrote *never*.

On November 7, her children arrived and signed the guest book as Louise Mott and Walter Mott. Frances Walton, their nanny, who would continue caring for them at Applewood, also signed in. The children were enrolled in school, and the new family began a busy and happy life together.

Earlier in the year, C.S.'s daughter Elsa and Hamish Mitchell had announced their engagement. They were married at Applewood while Mitties and C.S. were traveling overseas and then moved to Australia. In a letter to Hamish on November 29, 1927, C.S. wrote:

A number of presents have come in for Elsa. Mitties is taking care of them, and will undoubtedly acknowledge same with postal card or its equivalent and send Elsa a list and description, and the presents will be taken care of in the attic, awaiting your next visit.



The holidays at Applewood had always been a time for gathering with friends and family, and Mitties and C.S. continued the tradition. Invitations were extended, and Mitties's half sister, Helen Butterfield Cromley, came for Thanksgiving. As Christmas neared, C.S.'s mother arrived. Mitties's father, Walter Scott Butterfield, and his wife, Irene, joined the celebration on Christmas Eve.

Eager to introduce his new wife to his friends and business acquaintances and to show her some of his favorite spots in the country, C.S. began making plans to take Mitties on a trip after the holidays to his beloved southwestern United States.

Opposite: Posing in the drained swimming pool in 1927 are (from left) Mitties; her son and daughter, Walter Jr. and Louise; and C.S.'s son, Harding. Also seen are Mitties's dog, Pete, and the family's parrot.

A trip to the West ends in tragedy

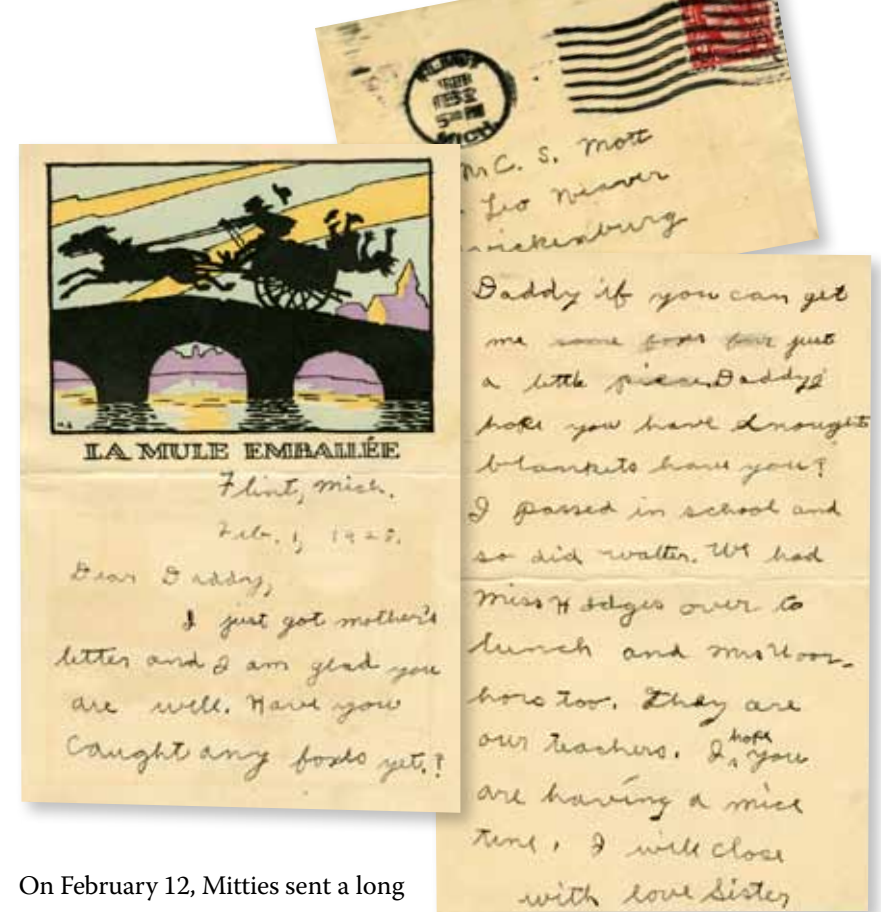
On January 20, 1928, Mitties and C.S. left Flint for Chicago, then traveled by train from Chicago to Phoenix and picked up the car they had shipped. They vacationed at a ranch in Wickenburg, Arizona, and followed that with a visit to Linda Vista Ranch about thirty-five miles outside Tucson.

In February, while Mitties and C.S. were still vacationing, Mitties's daughter, Louise, sent a letter to C.S. that began, *Dear Daddy*. She told him she was glad he was well and asked if he had caught any foxes yet, as she wanted a little piece of fox fur. She told him she and Walter had both passed in school and invited their teachers for lunch at Applewood. She signed it, *with love Sister*.

Mitties wrote to C.S.'s daughter Aimeé and her husband, Pat Butler, describing the glorious weather they were experiencing in the West and her valiant effort to learn horseback riding. She joked, *by golly it is making an old woman of me. I never claimed to be smarter than a horse!* She said they planned to leave for home a few days later by way of Apache Trail and El Paso.

She also reflected on their holidays:

Wasn't it a scream about the card table? Mother Mott has told me of its reception—but she perhaps didn't tell you of the free for all your Dad and I had when I suggested replacing the old tables and his ignominious defeat when he told me to replace the others with ones like you sent! Round one for me! The flower holders struck a responsive chord in my heart for they are the only ones that are really practical—We had an unusually nice holiday and only wished that you and Pat might have shared it with us. As soon as we get home which will be about March 1st plan to run over for a week end or as long as possible as I am anxious for you to see what the "interior desecrator" had done. They are working at the house while we are gone.



On February 12, Mitties sent a long letter to her father and Irene with news of their trip. She described the gifts she was sending to Applewood for Walter, since she would miss his birthday, and said she had asked Miss Walton, the children's nanny, to give him a party.

To Edward MacCrone, C.S.'s close and longtime friend, she wrote of her thrill in receiving from him *a huge box as big as a casket—filled with gorgeous long stemmed expensive roses that gives me a great kick—perhaps because it has happened only too few times in this rather uneventful life*. And she added, *Stewart and I are looking forward to next Tuesday. I hope this note arrives before we do*.

Mitties appeared to be in excellent health, and by all accounts, she and C.S. were having a wonderful time, when she suddenly developed a sore throat, high fever, and chills. Complications set in, and despite immediate medical care, Mitties, shockingly, died a week later. The final diagnosis was agranulocytic angina, a rare disease that C.S. learned had been first reported only a few years earlier. At the time of Mitties's passing, just forty-seven cases were known, and forty-three of the patients had died.

My cup of happiness has been spilled. CHARLES STEWART MOTT, MARCH 8, 1928

News of Mitties's passing raced across the wires. To protect the children, Miss Walton, their nanny, and the staff at Applewood were instructed to keep them from seeing the newspapers. Unaware of the caution, painters at the house spread newspapers on the floors while they were working, and when Walter and Louise were playing, they saw the story.

Stunned and shaken, C.S. returned by train to Chicago, where friends met him and brought him home to Applewood. In a letter to his friend Colonel Ira Wight, the grieving husband wrote:

Altho we immediately went to Tucson and had the benefit of first-class hospital, best doctors, nurses and all, in one short week she passed away on February 26. I arrived back here on the 1st of March, via Chicago, and the funeral was on the 2nd. I am not going to try to tell you of all her wonderful qualifications, except to say that our likes and dislikes were identical and we were 100% happy and both we and our friends looked forward to a long happily married life together.

To Grace Jones, Mitties's aunt in Columbus, Ohio, with whom Mitties had lived at times, C.S. wrote:

I have every reason to believe that Mitties' married life with me was extremely happy. I know mine was and we were hardly separated for an hour up to the time of her illness. Until that time, she was in such perfect health and spirits and every one of my relatives and friends loved her. Some things are hard to understand.

Opposite: Letter from Mitties's daughter, Louise, to C.S., February 1, 1928.

Right: Mitties and her children at Applewood, 1927.





If he does [take the children], it will be an additional loss to me, but in such case I suppose I shall have to bear it along with the other.

CHARLES STEWART MOTT, MARCH 1928

HEALING SADNESS

Briefly, a new Mrs. C. S. Mott

They were a handsome couple. Fernanda Jacoba “Dee” Van Balkom Furey had been born on the Indonesian island of Sumatra and educated in Paris, France, and was the mother of nine-year-old Denise. She came to the United States as a journalist, and by the time she and C.S. met, she was the attractive editor and publisher of the Detroit-based *Bridle and Golfer*, described in the *Detroit Times* as a *society publication*.

According to the same paper, the dashing Charles Stewart Mott was *one of Michigan’s best known millionaires* and vice president of General Motors Corporation. He was confident and gregarious but had already suffered the tragic deaths of two wives, leaving him with what he described as *my battered heart*. Dee must have seemed the perfect woman to fill the void.

The couple wed in Toledo, Ohio, on March 1, 1929. C.S.’s daughters, Elsa and Aimeé, attended with their husbands. Denise was there, too, along with a cousin and two friends. Following a luncheon, the couple boarded a Ford Trimotor airplane and headed for Phoenix, Arizona.

Almost immediately, they encountered a blinding snowstorm that covered the plane’s wings with ice, forcing the pilot to land in a plowed field seven miles north of Anderson, Indiana. All on board were shaken but unharmed, and the plane did not sustain damage. After spending the night in Anderson, the Motts continued on their way by train.

When they returned to Michigan in April, Dee signed Applewood’s guest book and included the remark *Thou are the captain of my fate . . . and I’m your flying Dutchman*. Denise signed in next, followed by C.S.’s daughter Elsa and her husband, Hamish Mitchell. The newlyweds’ life at Applewood was sandwiched between frequent business trips for both of them and overnights at their apartment in Detroit. Both Dee and C.S. were accomplished equestrians, and they purchased a fine horse for Dee, named Hercules, who was moved to the stables at Applewood.

The marriage was a struggle from early on. Dee was not content at Applewood, though she frequently invited her friends to join her there on weekends. C.S., Dee, Denise, and a governess sailed first class for Europe in June on the SS *Paris* and endured what turned out to be a strained and fractious vacation.

There had been talk early on of a family gathering at Applewood for Christmas, but the troubled marriage didn’t last that long. After months of discord and citing irreconcilable differences, the two were separated by the end of September and divorced on December 2, 1929. Dee moved Hercules to her farm near Grosse Pointe, Michigan.

Perhaps in an effort to shake off months of hurt and disappointment and unwanted attention from the press, C.S. gassed up his Buick convertible coupe, picked up his buddy Bill Huey, and left Michigan on March 13, 1930, for a six-week trip to C.S.’s beloved Southwest. C.S. wrote volumes about the trip along the way, noting details on everything from weather conditions and dust storms to punctured tires, gasoline use, average road speeds,

reunions with friends, riding horses during the day, and dancing in the evenings.

On March 16, in an entry titled *Way Up in the Air—Enroute Louisville to Memphis*, C.S. seemed to find a way to put the past behind him, even if only for a short time:

A chicken sandwich, a cup of coffee and we're off at 115 M.P.H. 2000' up.

Such a feeling of detachment—a happy party—nothing to worry about—utter disregard for the future, for some time at least. Bill will run the motor over tomorrow and when the spirit moves us we will “mush on”—“when, if and as” we may desire.

Stocks may be up or down—Congress may wrestle with the tariff—Europe may controverse [sic] and all creatures on terra firma may be occupied with their “pettiosities”—but way up here in the pure air and sunshine we are “out of touch” and for a period at least we are enjoying being “on top o the world.” The thought comes to us “why descend—why not stay up all of the time?” If we can't do it actually, we may succeed in doing it figuratively now that we have had the inspiration.

At the end of his letter of March 27, he signed off *Stewart Mott* (Now called *Desert Dick*). He loved the new moniker, which stuck for the rest of his life, and he donned the rugged cowboy look to match whenever he headed back to the Southwest.



C.S.'s western look as Desert Dick.



Dee on Right Royal and C.S. on Hercules.

COUSIN RUTH

A girl from El Paso

Ruth Rawlings was born in El Paso, Texas, on October 18, 1901, to parents who cared deeply about the welfare of others. Her mother, Sarah Esmond Mott Rawlings, was an educator and a transplanted New Yorker who helped found the YWCA in El Paso. Junius Ambrose Rawlings, her father, was a physician who hailed from Kentucky and provided medical care to residents on both sides of the Texas-Mexico border.

Ruth had warm memories of her childhood in Texas. She attended a private girls' school in El Paso, which was some distance from her home, *so I had a lovely little Mexican pony named Chappo*, she recalled. *Chappo and I went to school together, and that was a great experience.*

When Ruth was asked how she came by her interest in flowers, she told a story of her upbringing in the Southwest and of the log cabin her parents owned in Mountain Park, New Mexico. It was located 6,000 feet up in the mountains, which gave them a fine view of White Sands spread out below. It was a special place that Ruth's mother loved. They grew fruits, vegetables, and flowers there. Sarah and her daughter would gather their flowers and vegetables and sell them to people who were taking a local train that went up to Cloudcroft, New Mexico, which was a summer resort. Sometimes they gave money to people on the train to purchase thrift stamps, which were part of a government program to help fund expenses for World War I. Ruth recalled, *I learned from my mother.*



Opposite, left: Ruth Rawlings, at about fourteen years of age, dancing a solo in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the commencement play at El Paso School for Girls. She later remembered, *We were required to wear long stockings—with no shoes (which would be unheard of today). During the presentation I picked up a pin with my foot but completed my dance with the pin sticking in my foot.*

Opposite, right: Performing to *Clair de Lune*. Ruth is the dancer on the left.

After high school graduation in 1919, Ruth attended Lasell School in Auburndale, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston. Now a four-year coed college, the school had been founded in 1851 as the Auburndale Female Seminary and was the first two-year college for women in the country. Ruth spent two years there and loved it. She learned to swim so she could crew on the Charles River and proudly graduated with a Lasell letter sweater, which she felt was an honor.

Ruth was eager to pursue her interest in sports, so she enrolled next at the Boston School of Physical Education in Brookline, Massachusetts, also called Miss Bouve's School, which merged with Northeastern University in 1964. She completed a two-year course there, and at her father's insistence that she earn her own money, she went in search of a job. She was hired by the Friends Private Day School in Baltimore and taught physical education, athletics, and swimming for two years. She was also director of land sports for the school's summer camp.

When the Boston School of Physical Education extended an invitation to join the faculty, Ruth accepted, but her beloved El Paso tugged at her heart. She returned to Texas in the late 1920s to become head of the Physical Education Department at the El Paso High School and coach girls in sports at the nearby junior college. After several years of teaching and coaching athletics, Ruth's interests shifted to dancing. She left Texas once again to take lessons in New York and Los Angeles, then returned to El Paso and took a bold step: she opened a studio of dance.



It was hard work, and she enjoyed it. Her students ranged in age from five years old to her friends who came just for the exercise. She was happy teaching dance and may have entertained the thought that she would spend the rest of her life working in El Paso.

Just a month into the five-year diary she began in 1932, Ruth notes a social engagement and meeting distant cousin Harding Mott and his father, Charles Stewart Mott, who would change forever the direction of her life.

I really had the nerve to open a studio of dancing, at that age! RUTH RAWLINGS MOTT



The best blind date

Ruth Mott loved to tell the story of how she met her future husband. This is her recollection of the evening, from *Applewood—A Reminiscence*:

Well, this was in 1932. I had a call from a mutual friend of ours in El Paso that she was having a dinner party for a Mr. Mott from Flint and his son, Harding, and would I mind having a blind date with the son, Harding. I said, "No, not at all." And, I didn't know who Mr. Mott was or anything about him.

So, on the evening of the party, this tall, white-haired, good-looking gentleman came to the door, and my mother and father were there to greet him. And, as he came in, he looked at the Mott crest on our wall in the hall, he said to my mother, "Is that your crest?" She said, "Yes."

"Well," he said, "that's my crest." So they sat down. They talked genealogy, and discovered that they were fifth cousins by the same lineage . . . so, when I came into the room and was introduced, "Well," he said, "here's Ruth, another cousin, Cousin Ruth." And, I have been called Cousin Ruth ever since.

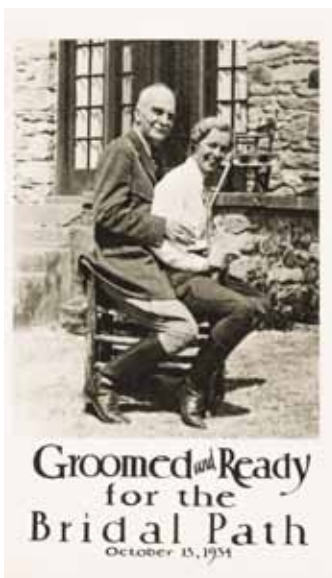
But, my blind date was out in the car. And, so we all went to pick up the date for Mr. Mott and went to the party. When we got to the party, Mr. Mott changed the place cards, so that Harding had his date, and he had me. And this was a lot of fun, but the hostess was a little put out that he would come in and change the place cards around, when it was really a party for him.

Well, when I first saw Mr. Mott, my impressions were that he was a very tall, handsome man, white hair, very erect, interesting. And I thought, "Well, this is wonderful," you know. "Something new has happened."

Having read Mr. Mott's diary, written in 1932, I found that he commented that I was a tall blond, charming, intelligent, and I thought, "Well, that's pretty nice."

He was very impressed that I had earned my own living for a number of years, almost eight years, I believe it was, because at that time, not many young women were going into business. Yes, there were teachers. Well, I was a teacher, but in the field of dancing. I had to maneuver that myself.

In later years, C.S. assembled the parts of his diary that chronicled his first meeting with Ruth, and he humorously titled the collection *I married my son's blind date*. Without expecting it, Desert Dick got riveted to the blond Princess of Western Texas.



Above: C.S. and Ruth's engagement announcement.

Right: Ruth Rawlings Mott on her wedding day, October 13, 1934.



Love and marriage

After Ruth and C.S.'s first meeting and the legendary place-card swap, C.S. and Harding continued on their way to Arizona. The distant cousins saw each other again briefly and got better acquainted when father and son traveled back through El Paso on their way home. Ruth was very flattered by C.S.'s attention. The considerable difference in their ages didn't seem to matter to either of them. Ruth said she found C.S. *very entertaining, interesting and very opinionated.*

For the next year, Ruth received copies of C.S.'s diary. She was pleased to be included on his mailing list, because he sent copies mostly to close friends and members of his family, and despite being a distant cousin, she didn't consider herself to be a "real" member of the family. She enjoyed reading his writings, and they gave her insight into the man she was falling for. They also exchanged letters. His were handwritten and began, *Sweet Cousin.*

In 1933, C.S. invited Ruth and her sister, Jeannette, to visit Applewood. He and his daughter Elsa met the sisters in Chicago, where they all attended the World's Fair that was in full swing there. Television was just coming into being, and it was featured prominently. After exploring the exhibits, the four traveled to Flint by car and arrived at Applewood July 26. Ruth found Elsa to be gentle and charming, and she thought Elsa's daughter, Joan, was adorable. She awakened on her first morning at Applewood and wrote in her diary:

Applewood is very beautiful—an ideal home with flowers and vegetable gardens and orchards. Tennis court, croquet, bowling green, swimming pool and a huge recreation room in the cellar.

For the next three weeks, the happy group filled their days at Applewood with games of tennis, dips in the pool, sunbathing, and riding the horses. They also had dinners with many of C.S.'s good friends, including Nell Medbury and Mr. and Mrs. Roy Brownell. Reluctantly, Ruth and Jeannette departed for El Paso on August 14.

Ruth later recalled her impressions of both C.S. and his home:

At that time, I realized Stewart's great love for nature. Applewood was full of beautiful trees and shrubs and flowers . . . a marvelous vegetable garden, and cutting garden for flowers.

It was a gentleman's paradise—gentleman's farm paradise. He had riding horses, a pair of Belgian work horses, Holstein cows, and these cows had girl's names. He named the cows for friends and family. And being the man that he was, he kept track of every quart of milk that was given, every egg that was laid. And then in his diary, he would say, "Well, now, this morning, Elsa gave four quarts of milk," or something like this, which was very amusing to his friends. . . . He had pigs and chickens, so, it was a very self-sufficient farm. And I'll never forget going around with him and having him tell me many of the names of the trees and the shrubs and the flowers.

Ruth and C.S. were married in El Paso on Saturday, October 13, 1934, Ruth on the arm of her father and the couple surrounded by C.S.'s children, their spouses, and numerous friends. They headed west the next day, bound for California, and sailed on the steamer *Mariposa* to continue their honeymoon in Honolulu. Ruth celebrated her thirty-third birthday aboard ship and suffered greatly from seasickness.

When they returned to the mainland, they made their way back to El Paso, then headed north 2,014 miles by C.S.'s calculation, and arrived at Applewood at seven p.m. November 27. C.S. wrote about the newlyweds' lovely homecoming and their warm welcome from the staff and his two dogs:

Mary and Harriet were on the job with a fine dinner and seemed very glad to have us return. Bizzy went nearly wild. Poor old Snuff wagged her little tail. [Gardener] Mair outdid himself. He had been keeping flowering plants in cool places, and the hall, logia, living room, sunporch and dining room were just full of flowers—mostly in pots. I counted 54 chrysanthemums from 5 to 8 feet tall. Immense blooms about 8 inches in diameter—mostly white, yellow and pink, and a few others. Then there must have been nearly a hundred pots of other mums from 2 to 4 feet high, of smaller variety—bronze, white and yellow—325 blooms per plant. Then half a dozen waterfall mums, plants on shelves in the logia—drooping to the floor. Also there were cut flowers, and a carnation centerpiece.

I carried C.R. across the threshold in proper fashion, and when she ran into the flowers, she wanted to get married all over again.

RAISING THREE MORE CHILDREN AT APPLEWOOD

Amid family tragedies, business, and war, Applewood welcomes three more children

SUSAN ELIZABETH MOTT

On January 2, 1936, Ruth boarded a train for El Paso, Texas. She was expecting her first child, and she and C.S. had decided that going back to El Paso, where she could be attended by her physician father, was the best plan. After she departed, C.S. left Applewood to take care of business matters both stateside and in Bermuda, intending to join Ruth as she neared her delivery date. While in Missouri, he received the terrible news that his grandson, Charles Stewart Mott III, the sweet toddler of Harding and his wife, Gerry, had become tangled in his bed clothes while taking a nap and died. C.S. caught a train to Detroit the next day—bad weather ruled out flying—and attended a memorial service for the child. On January 24, he accompanied his grieving son to the Mott mausoleum in Flint, where they interred the little boy's ashes.

A few days later, C.S. packed his car and headed for El Paso. Ruth and C.S. dined with friends and family, visited with business acquaintances, attended the ballet, and generally had a fine time in the mild Texas weather. But a letter from Ellen G. Rubel, C.S.'s secretary at his Applewood office, reminded him that life back at home in the dead of winter was not so carefree:

We are still living in a drab, gray world. Not much sunshine and rather cold. Today is very frosty. Yesterday we had another snowfall and I don't think I ever knew Flint streets to be in worse condition. There has been no attempt to clean the snow off.

Mary has gone home for a couple of weeks. Harriet is back and has the cast off her arm, but it is very stiff and painful at times.

Hatherly reports another "Queen Elsa" calf down at the barn; also the death of a brood sow. It seems that the male hog, which he brought from the Fellow's farm, gored her in the side and blood poison set in.

Hoping that all is well with you and Mrs. Mott.

On February 13, Susan Elizabeth Mott was born without complications. She was named for her great-grandmother Susan Amelia Turnbull Stewart, whom the Motts described as *one of the finest women of her time*, and for Elizabeth Rawlings, sister of Ruth's father and the *Stem Winder* of the Rawlings family. The following day, C.S. noted *Sue growing cuter every minute*.

On February 15, he wrote that he had received a letter from his infant daughter that included this:

I'm sure a husky girl—a perfect 114 oz. specimen, and I gave my Ma the minimum of trouble.

Gee but I'm glad to be out and to be your darling daughter. Have a little patience and I'll soon be night-clubbing with you. I'm going to be a star dancer, horseback rider, fancy swimmer and, as for tennis, I'll be a Wow.

*I'll sign my full name and say Bye-bye with love and kisses,
Affectionately,*

Susan Amelia Turnbull Stewart Elizabeth Rawlings Mott of Texas.

P.S. Just call me Sue.



Ruth and C.S. with Maryanne.

Susan, Stewart, and
Maryanne.



Susan and Stewart.



Susan Mott holds a horse with her sister and brother, Maryanne and Stewart, on its back, 1944.

Ruth came home from the hospital after ten days. She and C.S. planned to return to Applewood at the end of March. But Ruth's father became ill with bronchial pneumonia and toxemia and died just a week later.

After working in El Paso almost forty years, the much-loved Dr. Junius A. Rawlings had provided care to countless numbers of mothers and their new babies and devoted a great deal of time working in free clinics to help those who could not pay. It was a legacy of compassion that his daughter, Ruth, would continue throughout her own lifetime from her home base at Applewood, in her adopted community of Flint. Dr. Rawlings's granddaughter, Susan Mott, was his last delivery.

C.S. headed back to Michigan by car after the funeral. Ruth, her mother, and baby Susan traveled by train and were greeted enthusiastically by friends, family, and staff when they arrived at Applewood on April 6.

STEWART RAWLINGS MOTT

On November 30, 1937, a very pregnant Ruth woke her sleeping husband at two a.m. with news that she had been lying awake since midnight and believed it might be time to go to the hospital. She woke her mother, who was visiting from Texas, and the three got up and had coffee. When the sense of urgency had passed, C.S. built a fire in the living-room fireplace, and they listened to the radio until seven a.m. After breakfast, they drove to Women's Hospital in Flint, and Ruth was admitted.

Two days later, with no signs that a birth was imminent, Ruth returned to Applewood to wait a little more.

On Sunday, December 4, Ruth woke her husband and mother again at two a.m. and announced that it was time. Definitely time! It was snowing when the trio arrived at the hospital around three a.m.

By nine forty-five that morning, the Motts' robust baby boy, weighing nearly ten pounds, had made his appearance. The Motts named him Stewart Rawlings.

As was the practice, Ruth remained in the hospital with her son for several days. To her delight, her pregnant friend and fellow tennis player Mary Helen Burroughs was admitted to the room across the hall from her and gave birth to daughter Ann on December 5.

C.S. made daily visits to the hospital when he was in town, sandwiching them in between pressing business obligations. On December 18, Ruth and baby Stewart came home to Applewood. Big sister Susan was waiting at the door and was quite captivated by her little brother.

The observant father noted that Susan quickly adopted the practice of putting a cheesecloth mask over her nose and mouth when she was with the baby, following the example of Ruth and the nurse, and that she was very much intrigued with the *feeding operations*.

Good friend Mike Gorman sent a box of roses to Applewood with a humorous note to C.S.:

Dear Stewart:

I have waited until your family came home before sending you these flowers because Mrs. Mott probably feels she has been through as much as you have in the arrival of Stewart Rawlings. Mothers are that way. Many years of observation have made me more appreciative of the paternal ordeal and Thursday night at your dinner for we boys I was amazed at how well you looked.

My best wishes to all of you including Santa Claus' little advance man.



MARYANNE TURNBULL MOTT

Ruth and C.S.'s third child was born on Friday, February 27, 1942, at Women's Hospital in Flint, to the delight of family, friends, and everyone at Applewood. Maryanne Turnbull Mott was a bright light in the midst of unceasing news of the war. Susan's slightly delayed birthday party was held in Applewood's basement recreation room the next day. Friend George Stracke arrived with a movie that he set up for the children to watch.

C.S. went to the hospital daily to visit Maryanne and Ruth, and he sent a letter to his cousin, Mary Ella Turnbull, to announce the birth and explain the very deliberate process of choosing a name for his new daughter.

Young Stewart Mott with a grounds worker at Applewood, circa 1941.



Dear Cousin Mary:

I have always been proud of my Scotch and Turnbull ancestry. At 1:00 o'clock this morning my wife Ruth presented me with our third child, a 7½ pound daughter, who seems to be about perfect in every way. My wife and daughter, Susan, wanted a girl, and I would have been glad anyway.

If the new arrival had been a boy the name would have been James Turnbull, the Turnbull from your family and that of grandmother who married Charles E. Stewart; the James would have been a combination of the name of your grandfather and James Mott Jr., common ancestor of Ruth and myself. As the new arrival is a girl, we have named her Maryanne Turnbull Mott,—the Turnbull as above explained, and the Mary frequently occurs in Ruth's family and my own, being your name and that of your mother, and Aunt Mary Elizabeth who married Frank Dawes. The Anne is also common to our families—Anne Rogers was wife of James Jr., above mentioned; and my grandfather, Samuel Rogers Mott, married Anne Mary Coon. So I think you will agree that the naming of this youngster is very appropriate. I am not only delighted with the daughter, but also with the sentiment which attaches to her name.

In the decades that followed, C.S. would affectionately refer to his youngest as Chickie Bone and abbreviate it C.B. in his diary. She, in turn, signed letters from camp in the same way.

On the morning of March 14, Susan told her father, *The baby is coming home today. My baby.* Brother Stewart heard her and replied, *No, it's my baby.* Later that morning, Ruth and Maryanne came home to Applewood, and C.S. recalled, *Our two youngsters and all hands were on deck to receive the party in grand style.*

Bright, busy, and bold

Like all proud parents, Ruth and C.S. took delight in their children's discoveries of the world around them. The children were creative and high-spirited. Susan was very social. Young Stewart was analytical and given to arguing. He liked to test the limits of the formality that his mother was trying to uphold by coming to the dinner table wearing an outlandish tie or a T-shirt with a tie painted on it or wearing no socks. Maryanne was vivacious and often the only child in the house when her siblings were away at boarding school. Her idea of the worst punishment for infractions was to be sent to her room and told to sit quietly.

Ruth made brief detailed notes in her five-year diary of everything from the children's first days of crawling to their enrollment in school, visits to church, and bouts with colds and high fevers. The children's father also recorded his observations.

Here are diary entries, memories, and snapshots of some of the events in the lives of the intrepid three children growing up at Applewood.

1940

When they were young, the Mott children were usually served dinner in the loggia—also called the breakfast room—before their parents and were kept occupied with their own activities during grown-ups-only parties. But at the Motts' annual New Year's Day party in 1940, before Maryanne was on the scene, Susan, Stewart, and their cousin Joan found a way to be part of the festivities. Far from being annoyed, their father was pretty amused when he recalled the events:

When the guests started to arrive the kids were kept up on the second floor, most of the time in their rooms, but sometimes out in the hall, and they elected themselves a reception committee



Maryanne Mott, circa 1945.

of three. Susan wished each one of them a Happy New Year as they came up. After brother had seen the performance a number of times he started to do his best at it. When Mr. Masbach came down stairs he was tremendously pleased because after Susan had Happy New Year'd him he mentioned that he was very happy; that today was his birthday, where-upon Susan sang to him "Happy Birthday to You." I expect that most of the people who came saw the youngsters and were very much intrigued.

Another good one: when Joe Davidson came in (Joe is very short) Susan ran up to him and said, "Happy New Year, you're little like I am, aren't you."

1942

March 16: The first night Ruth was home from the hospital after giving birth to Maryanne, young Stewart went to his parents to say his bedtime prayers for them. He recited the Lord's Prayer, and when he was finished, his mother praised him and told him that it was such a nice surprise to know he knew that prayer. The proud little boy replied, *I learned it on my Victrola while you were away.*

April 13: Ruth and her son took a trip to El Paso, leaving Dad at home with his daughter Susan, new baby Maryanne, and the staff. In a letter to her husband updating him on the progress of the trip, Ruth wrote, *In the rush to get Stewart R. on the train and off with his snow suit, he forgot to kiss you goodbye and wanted to know if he couldn't phone you and tell you and I said I would write you. . . . I couldn't ask for a better behaved boy. He's been grand so far. . . . I miss Maryanne in more ways than one—she is such a darling. I am mad about her.*

June 5: C.S. and Ruth had lunch together, after which C.S. headed upstairs to do a few repair jobs and to quiet young Stewart, who, he noted, *was howling over some grievance which turned out to be that he had washed his hands in the basin and Nana had pulled the plug, letting the water out, whereas Stewart wanted to save a piece of dirt which he said came off his hand and was in the basin. I assured him that there was plenty more dirt outdoors and he could have all he wanted of it.*

1945

From C.S.'s diary, February 1: *Susan and Stewart surprised the household by washing the dinner dishes.*

Maryanne has been an extremely good youngster today, amusing herself alone in her room, but after dinner I heard her calling and went up to quiet her. She asked for her Mother and I had to tell her she was out; she asked for Nana and she was out; she asked for Grandmummie and she hadn't come upstairs yet. I said, "Won't I do?" She was good about it and said, "All right, you read to me." So I read the story about the small elephant Bobo and his blue coat. Apparently she knows the story by heart because whenever I hesitated about a word, she filled it in.

1946

A strike of maintenance workers in mid-January caused the closing of the children's school. Ruth wrote in her diary that the children were jubilant, *but parents have a different slant!* She kept them busy at home with lessons and practice, work in the morning, play in the afternoon. The strike ended, and school resumed January 21, and Ruth noted, *Thank heavens.*

On Saturday, February 9, Ruth gave a birthday party for Susan with movies and games and a Valentine-decorated table and cake. Among Susan's gifts was a wristwatch she had saved for. She paid half and her mother paid half, and Ruth observed, *She was thrilled beyond words—so happy!*

The next day, Ruth and C.S. departed for the Southwest, leaving their children in the capable hands of the nanny. That first evening, Maryanne, who was not yet four years old, spiked a high fever. Nana spent the night sponging her to cool her down until the child's temperature dropped to a less threatening 101 degrees.

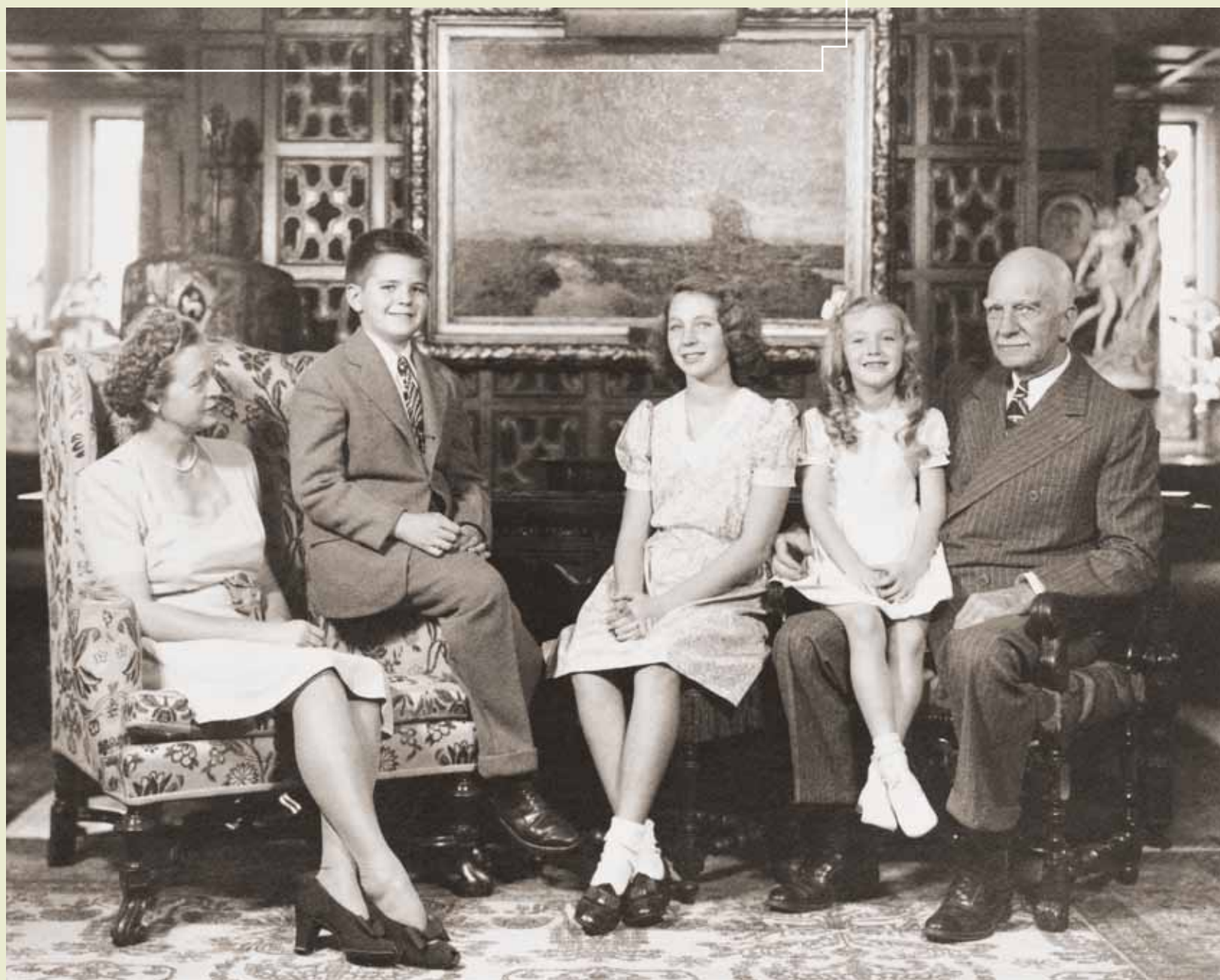
1949

As parents do today, Ruth and C.S. had discussions with their children about having access to emerging technologies. When young Stewart wanted an extension phone in his room, he went to the telephone company and learned that the cost would be 85 cents per month, which he said he was prepared to pay. Aside from his allowance, he earned 50 cents a week for cleaning the family's cars.

His father observed, *That bird is some figurer. I expect that in the course of time, he will be able to run a lot of things better than I. . . . The only hitch in the situation is that already the children over use the telephones and like to have long visits with their friends on it. So we don't look favorably on the prospect.*

It continues to be a difficult job to get the children together and in satisfactory mood for picture taking.

CHARLES STEWART MOTT'S DIARY, AUGUST 27, 1953



From left, Ruth, Stewart, Susan, Maryanne, and C.S. pose in the living room at Applewood in 1946.



Susan joined her brother's campaign, hoping the two of them would have a better chance of getting an extension phone if they agreed to share.

C.S. also noted that seven-year-old Maryanne ran home from school *in high glee carrying in her hand a tiny field mouse. She took it up to her room and made a house and bed for it in a box and kept it in her room for a couple of days when it passed on.*

An animal lover from early on, Maryanne likely buried the mouse, just as she buried the occasional dead bird she found. When she was in second grade, she took a dead mouse, wrapped up elegantly, as a gift to her favorite teacher, Miss Brown. Maryanne recalls: *It was my idea of a joke. She shrieked upon opening it and then laughed her head off, but by then the principal had arrived and I was in hot water! Miss Brown remained my favorite teacher and we often laughed about it later on.*

1952

With her brother and sister away at school, Applewood could be a pretty lonely place for the energetic Maryanne. When she was in the sixth grade at Pierce School in Flint, she put her problem-solving skills to work and created the *Fun Club* as a way of having a lot of friends come to her house. Once a month, through the school year, all the girls in her class came to Applewood, split into small groups, and took part in activities that ranged from cooking and sewing projects to sports. It was a big success, and it helped Maryanne feel like she *belonged*.

Maryanne liked to spend time outdoors, and she had a garden that was all her own where she raised food. Like her mother and John Mair, the head gardener at Applewood, she entered her crops in the annual garden show held at the Industrial Mutual Association Auditorium in Flint. In 1952, at the age of ten, Maryanne entered a number of animal figures made from vegetables, which won her three ribbons.

Observing an annual tradition, C.S. took the opportunity to measure the heights of various members of his family who were home at Applewood just before New Year's, and he listed them in his diary, along with a bit of observation:

You will note that Stewart is top man, now measuring 1¾ inches taller than his father who has settled down and shrunk in his old age ¾ inches from 6 feet. You will also note that Susan is 1¾ inches taller than her mother. Susan and Elsa are practically the same height.

1953

After returning to classes at Emma Willard School in Troy, New York, following Christmas break, Susan complained to her parents that she was having no fun at school, despite the fact that she had taken several side trips to New York City and other places and had attended the theater, opera, sporting events, and horseback riding.

The complaints continued into February, when she told her mother, *Please don't remind me of my seventeenth birthday. The years are slipping by so quickly and I feel like an old lady losing her youth, especially here.* On February 17, Susan's birthday, she worried again to her parents, *I am wasting my youth at Emma Willard.* To make matters worse, she had been sick with mononucleosis in the eleventh grade and was repeating it. Her friends had all passed eleventh grade and were now seniors planning their graduation.

That summer, the Motts decided they would seize the opportunity, while all three children were at home, to take a family portrait for their Christmas card. But Maryanne was mad at her mother that day for making her come out of the pool where she had been swimming for quite some time, and she refused to get into the picture. The photo was taken without her, and a solo shot of her had to be taken later and pasted into the family portrait—which was not so easy a task before the days of seamless computer photo-editing.

When another attempt was made to photograph the group all together on a steamy day in late August, Susan and young Stewart both protested at the huge inconvenience it was to them, especially since the repeat photo session had to be scheduled because of the bad behavior of their younger sibling. Their father was not amused and told them that Susan, in the past, had made such faces during a photo session that they had to replace her face on the card with one from another photo and that young Stewart had been just as bad. Ruth ended up taking the photos, and her husband observed, *It continues to be a difficult job to get the children together and in satisfactory mood for picture taking.*

Susan returned to Emma Willard in the fall to begin her senior year, but she wanted out. After she weighed the options, Ruth's solution was to take both Susan and Maryanne to El Paso and enroll them in her alma mater, Radford School. Ruth and Susan departed Chicago for El Paso on October 11. Maryanne and Nana—Emma Dodson—followed at the completion of Maryanne's fall classes. While Ruth saw the temporary move as the best option, it wasn't universally popular. Maryanne was eleven at the time and unhappy at the idea of being pulled from her junior high school friends in Flint. And back at Applewood, which had grown suddenly quiet in the absence of a wife and children and Nana, C.S. felt abandoned.

1954

Spring came to El Paso, and everyone settled into the new routine. Both girls did well at Radford. Susan's beautiful blue eyes caught the attention of Sherrill C. Dansby, a handsome young man stationed at Fort Bliss, and the two were quickly a couple. At the end of the school year, Ruth, the girls, and Nana moved back to Applewood. Susan and Sherrill announced their engagement, and on September 10, Ruth hosted a luncheon at Applewood in Susan's honor.

C.S. and Harding stopped at the house that afternoon and found Susan looking radiant and wearing orchids sent to her by her intended. She and Sherrill were married December 22 in St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Flint.

1962

Like his little sister, young Stewart had a soft spot for animals, even as he got older. While living on the East Coast in April 1962, he was scheduled to meet his father at Newark Airport and fly with him to Michigan. The young man had two cats and had recently acquired a third, a pregnant female, which he brought with him in a carrier to the airport.

C.S. noted the event in his diary:

Mathematical Formula by Stew. Two Plus One Equals Three, and Three Out of One Equals Six At Last Count—Maybe More Later

... He feared that her family might increase while he was in Flint, and therefore might need attention—so he brought her along to act as midwife. Well, last night, Thursday, April 5th, when Stew retired everything was serene on the "Cat Front"—but this morning when Stew got out of bed and looked in the bathroom, he rushed into C.R.'s room saying, "Mother, I'm a father—three infant cats have arrived." C.R. says, "Well, that makes me a grandmother." Shortly afterward, Stew left with the four cats. Three seemed to be a meager crop, perhaps more of them will be air-born when she is airborne.

And later: Apparently Stew got off all right taking with him his non-human passengers. . . . I think he had no further CATastrophes on way to New York.



Sixty-four Acres of Gracious Gardens and a Productive Farm

It is almost impossible to believe that fifteen years ago someone had the imagination to visualize how nothing but a field with a natural irregularity of levels could be transformed into what it is today.

Elsa Mott Mitchell, from C. S. Mott botanical binder, June 6, 1932



THE LANDSCAPE

The landscape designers and their art

William Chase Pitkin, Jr., was only thirty-one years old when the Motts hired him to design the landscaping for their new home. He was assisted by his business partner, Seward Mott, who was C.S.'s cousin.

A letter to the Motts from Mr. Pitkin dated October 19, 1915, offered details on the scope of the sizable project. It would be his responsibility to design and coordinate all grading and planting; the construction of roads, walks, gardens, and the pool; and the transplanting of a number of large trees. He included in the proposal the provision of a superintendent or plantsman to take charge of the work, at the cost of \$4 to \$5 per day.

Mr. Pitkin also helped select the site for the home—a sunny plateau well back from Kearsley Street that afforded sweeping views of the surrounding acreage. His design created a parklike setting with large expanses of green lawn plus a diverse collection of trees, shrubs, annuals, and perennials including native and exotic species.

Dozens of trees, both young and mature, were transplanted onto the grounds. Large trees, including cedars, ash, maples, and mature elms, were dug up and moved in from nearby woods. Favorites such as Austrian, Norway, and Douglas spruce; hemlocks and hawthorn; American linden; and a double-flowering horse chestnut were shipped from Amawalk Nursery in Westchester County, New York. C.S. liked the appearance of the chestnut so much he had it moved later to the front of the yard so it would be more visible. Striking specimen trees such as pyramidal silver maples, Schwedler maples, pin oaks, cut-leaf birch, European and copper beech, balsams, and dogwoods were added for interest.

The formal perennial garden and cutting garden were planned so they would provide flowers from early spring until frost. Five hundred *Rosa setigera* seedlings, a type of climbing rose, were ordered from Storrs & Harrison Company in Painesville, Ohio. The grape arbor and vegetable garden were large, to enable the Motts to grow much of their food. And to satisfy the family's love of sports, a tennis court, a bowling green, an English croquet lawn, and a swimming pool were added.

C.S. took great interest in the landscaping and made extensive notes about the varieties and quality of trees and shrubs being planted. He also kept a tally of his bills from nursery companies, which came to more than \$4,000 before the family moved into the residence.

In June 1920, *House Beautiful* magazine featured a story and photos of Applewood. Though the estate had been developed only a few years earlier, farm functions were running smoothly. The landscape, gardens, and orchards were thriving and productive, and the writer captured it all in detailed prose. Of special interest were several aspects of the estate's *pleasing* grounds and the relationship of the buildings to the gardens, fields, and farm animals. Excerpts from the *House Beautiful* article follow:

The location of the house was determined by the topography and takes advantage of a plateau overlooking to the south, the creek and the park, which contains several magnificent elms. This view takes in the maple and oak grove on the highland across the creek, which makes a restful green background through spring and summer, and a wonderful display of color in the autumn.



Unique is the arrangement of garage in relation to house, in that it is placed within fifty feet of the house, and is connected with it by the greenhouse and the wall enclosing the service yard. In this way the garage does not intrude upon any of the fine views from the house, and it affords opportunity for placing entire heating plant and coal storage in its basement, leaving house basement free for larger recreation room, billiard room, bowling alley and organ chamber.

The C. S. Mott Estate, Flint, Michigan

Here Architecture and Landscape Architecture Have Been Carefully Studied as One Problem, With the Result That They Harmonize Perfectly and That Each Art Brings Out and Enhances the Excellencies of the Other

William Pitkin, Jr., Landscape Architect—Davis, McGrath & Kierling, Architects

THE fifty-acre estate of C. S. Mott, Esq., is located within the limits of the city of Flint, Michigan. The residence portion covered by the accompanying plan, has a frontage of one thousand feet on the principal residential street of the city, and extends back to a park and boulevard bordering Gilkey Creek. The portion across the creek is partly wooded, and the rest is used for farming purposes.

The location of the house was determined by the topography, and takes advantage of a plateau overlooking to the south, the creek and the park, which contains several magnificent elms. This view takes in the maple and oak grove on the highland across the creek, which makes a restful green background through

spring and summer, and a wonderful display of color in the autumn.

The views to the south and the important street on the north developed a house plan which provides two fronts, one the more formal entrance front, and the other the more intimate living front, having a southern exposure. The service is all compactly arranged at the east end, where it relates properly to dining-room, front entrance and service yard.

Unique is the arrangement of the garage in relation to the house, in that it is placed within fifty feet of the house, and is connected with it by the greenhouse and the wall enclosing the service yard. In this way the garage does not intrude upon any of the fine views from the house, and it affords opportunity for

placing the entire heating plant and coal storage in its basement, leaving the house basement free for a large recreation room, billiard room, bowling alley and organ chamber.

Grouping the buildings in this way results in a very pleasing composition as will be noted in the photographs and is thoroughly practical as well. The owner, driving his car into the garage, does not have to go outside again, but passes through the potting-room and greenhouse directly into the breakfast room and gallery. A squash court in the east end of the garage is reached in the same way.

The co-operative efforts of the architects, Messrs. Davis, McGrath & Kierling, and the landscape architect, William



The planting along the driveway and in the border gardens is composed of large masses of flowering shrubs, evergreens and deciduous trees.



A side of end of Mott house after a heavy snowstorm. Almost all traces of the landscape design leading to the house seem to have disappeared.

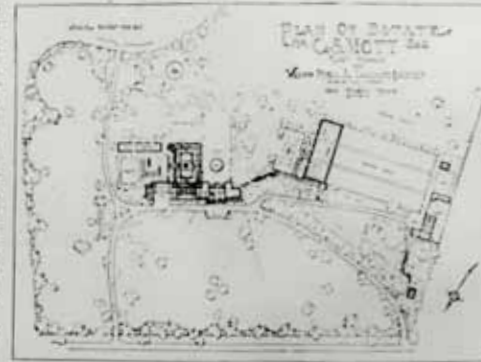
June 1920

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

1094

Pitkin, Jr., in developing this plan, further resulted in placing the flower garden south of the greenhouse on a little lower level, where it has the nicest relation to the dining-room and breakfast room, as well as to the large open panel of lawn directly south of the house. The garden is enclosed by a high wall on the east, and a low wall on the other two sides, this wall being relieved in the south by two groups of balusters on axis with the principal garden walks.

The garden house occupies a happy position in the southwest corner where it overlooks both the garden and the rest of the estate, and is well related to the playground east of the garden. The terrace on which the greenhouse stands is treated

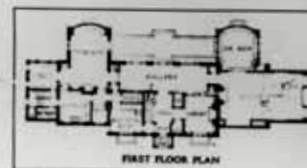


against the terrace gives the greenhouse a solid setting, and overcomes the possible objection to so much glass so close to a somewhat formal garden. The walk on the terrace is terminated by a trellis-covered wall-fountain at the garage end, and by a stone seat under the dining-room window.

The formal panel of lawn south of the house encloses a pool sufficiently deep for swimming, and in connection with the awning-covered south terrace makes an ideal playground for both children and grown-ups. It recognizes the

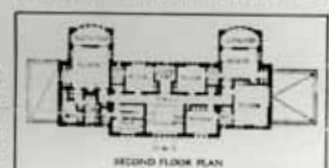
as an evergreen garden to provide an interesting year around picture as viewed from the dining-room and breakfast room. This planting with the planting

systematical architectural treatment of the house facade, and emphasizes the importance of the view over the park, by framing it within the planting.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

The views to the south and the important street on the north developed a house plan which provides two fronts: the more formal entrance front, and the other the more intimate living front, having a southern exposure.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN





C.S. standing in the tea house, 1930s.

The co-operative efforts of the architects, Messrs. Davis, McGrath & Kiessling, and the landscape architect, William Pitkin, Jr., in developing this plan further, resulted in placing the flower garden south of the greenhouse on a little lower level, where it has the nicest relation to the dining-room and breakfast room, as well as to the large open panel of lawn directly south of the house. The garden is enclosed by a high wall on the east, and a low wall on the other two sides, this wall being relieved on the south by two groups of balusters on axis with the principal garden walks.

The garden house occupies a happy position in the southeast corner where it overlooks both the garden and the rest of the estate, and is well related to the playground east of the garden.

The formal panel of lawn south of the house encloses a pool sufficiently deep for swimming, and in connection with the awning-covered south terrace makes an ideal playground for both children and grownups.

The flagstone steps down the bank lead directly to the tennis court where a sitting-out place has been provided under a splendid oak. The enclosure is covered with climbing roses and clematis and framed by shrub and tree planting.

A cutting and rose garden adjoins the tennis court, and the walks connecting it with the court and vegetable garden pass through rose-covered arches.

The arrangement of all utilitarian features in this lower section of the estate has been most efficiently worked out, and the variety of uses to which this comparatively limited area has been put is extremely surprising. The vegetable garden supplies generous quantities of every kind of vegetable and has large permanent beds of asparagus, rhubarb, strawberries and bush fruits of all kinds. Grapes are grown on the south slope; space is provided for trained fruit trees, and nut trees of every kind are planted on the

hillside below the gardener's cottage. Chickens, ducks, pheasants, pigeons, pigs, cows and horses are well cared for in the buildings along the west line, and all are the purest pedigreed stock.

The planting about the house and gardens is composed of material of a refined character and architectural outline to harmonize with the lines of the building, and includes a large number of evergreens for winter value and for contrast with the deciduous foliage. These with the red brick walks give warmth and color the year around, and add much to the attractiveness of the house setting. The planting along drives and in the border gardens is composed of large masses of flowering shrubs with enough evergreens and deciduous included to give height and an interesting sky line. Specimen trees, both deciduous and evergreen, are planted singly or in groups close to the drive or just outside the border plantations, but in all cases the lawn areas are kept open and unbroken, except for occasional large existing trees.

Many pleasing effects are secured by the grouping of several varieties of the same family to tell as a mass from a distance, but of interest on close inspection for their individual characteristics. There have been used in this way, many varieties of flowering crabs, plum, peaches and thorns, all exceedingly valuable for their flower, fruit and foliage. The steep banks have been planted largely to native shrubs, as sumac, viburnum, dogwood, etc., with large masses of wild roses, clematis and honeysuckle for a ground cover.

The Mott estate is interesting primarily because it is generous in scale; is exceedingly livable, and is typical of the good taste of the average man of wealth in the Central West. It possesses to an unusual degree the possibilities of furnishing, within itself, all the forms of recreation enjoyment and comfort desired by family or guests. It is also unusually efficient in the arrangement of its component parts, and in the utilization of every portion of it for some definite purpose or for the production of some necessity.



THE TEA HOUSE

The open-air brick tea house, or garden house as *House Beautiful* referred to it, mirrors the design of the residence. For years after it was built, it was used, but not for its named purpose. The athletically inclined Motts were more likely to play tennis and squash or to ride their horses than to spend a quiet afternoon in a tea house. The grandson of Applewood's longtime gardener, John Mair, remembered the tea house having a sand box in it when he visited as a young boy.

On July 5, 1933, C.S. had friends visiting and noted in his diary:

After lunch Nolte and I had a game of anagrams. Later on Florence Moll arrived and the Masons with Bud and Sid came over for tea, which we had in the tea house at the end of the Formal Garden. This place was designed by our honored architect for that purpose over 15 years ago and yesterday was its initiation.

The formal panel of lawn south of the house encloses a pool sufficiently deep for swimming, and in connection with the awning-covered south terrace makes an ideal playground for both children and grownups.

HOUSE BEAUTIFUL, JUNE 1920



A pool evolves

The swimming pool in the backyard, just a few yards from the terrace, was five feet deep when constructed in 1916. It was the site of many parties and informal gatherings and served as a lovely focal point for special occasions. When Joan Mitchell, daughter of Elsa Mott Mitchell, had the reception for her wedding to Peter Kleinpell at Applewood in 1951, the pool was painted, and gardenias floated in it.

Years later, when she lived in Flint, Joan packed picnics and brought her children and their friends to Applewood to play in the pool. The children changed into their swimming clothes by ducking into alleyways created by the surrounding bushes, so they wouldn't disturb the family.

The two large toad sculptures that sit opposite each other at the edge of the pool were a gift to C.S. from his sister, Edith, and her husband, Herbert Davis, Applewood's architect.

C.S. wrote this observation in his diary on Saturday, April 2, 1932:

The two stone toads that Edith and Herbert sent me arrived safely and they have been placed on the border of the pool. I heard a big barking this morning and it appeared that Snuffy (a 12-year-old Chihuahua) had just discovered them and she was out there barking and walking around for nearly an hour before she would get at all close to them. They are very interesting and I wish to thank Edith and Herbert for them.

In 1981, the Motts' son, Stewart, had an eye-catching fountain installed on a base in the pool for his mother's eightieth birthday. Its colored lights and dancing waters cycled through several configurations and illuminated the pool after dark, and she loved both its sights and its sounds.

The company that made the fountain was out of business by the time it needed repairs, so a similar fountain was installed that sends up streams of water in changing patterns. The depth of the pool has been reduced to eighteen inches, which works perfectly for the fountain and reduces safety concerns when the grounds are open to the public.

Opposite: The fountain today.

Below, left: The empty pool, circa 1920.

Below, right: C.S. flanked by friends Lucille and Nolte Ament as they cool off in the pool, 1930s.





Above: Susan Mott with gardener John Mair.

Opposite: The Cut Flower Garden today.

Gardeners and caretakers

Applewood's marvelous gardens have had the skillful tending of many excellent gardeners through the decades. William Watson was one of the first. His two children played with the Mott children, and his son, William Watson, Jr., and Harding Mott became pals.

Most memorable in the early years was John "Jock" Mair, a native of Ayrshire, Scotland. The head gardener of Brooklyn Farms in Morris Plains, New Jersey, where Mr. Mair worked briefly in 1911 and 1912, described him in terms of not his gardening skills but his personal attributes, which were *thoroughly honest, sober, straight forward and reliable*.

In 1928, Mr. Mair was offered a gardening position in Cleveland but turned it down because his wife, Janet, did not like the living quarters that would be provided for them. While still in Cleveland and pondering his next move, he heard about a job available at Applewood and drove to Flint for an interview. He was offered the position of head gardener, which included a salary and the convenient apartment over the garage for his family of five, plus produce from the vegetable gardens and a share of the animals that were butchered. Mrs. Mair approved the arrangement.

When Mr. Mott was home, he looked forward to going on daily inspections of the grounds with the affable gardener and referred to their discussions often in his diary.

Saturday, May 28, 1932:

I wanted to see Mair for a few minutes and found him over between the apple orchard and Kearsley Street putting in dahlia plants—167 of them in that particular place. Then we have 40 boxes in which we will plant dahlias to be placed around as we did last year.

Saturday, July 16, 1932:

I had a session with Mr. Mair. I think he enjoys it as much as I do. We are arranging for slight additional planting, changes, etc., all of which will add materially to the attractiveness and interest of the place.

Monday, August 22, 1932:

Mair has been away on vacation for a couple of weeks and got back yesterday. We spent the first part of the morning with him around in the gardens discussing projected modifications and think we have things worked out to make much improvement, which will probably be more evident to me than to others who do not study it in so much detail.

The Mairs' son, Alex, was not quite four years old when the family moved to Applewood. In a 1992 interview, Alex recalled, *A lot of what Dad got was not in the form of cash, but it was very valuable to us especially in the . . . depression years.*

Life on the estate was great fun for young Alex, who lived at Applewood until he went into the Navy in 1943:

We were completely free to bring anyone here we wanted. But I remember this day in particular that Mr. Mott, hearing the noise I suppose, came out and watched us for quite awhile. I got very nervous about it. I must have been about twelve at the time.





The rose arbors divided the lower flower garden from the vegetable garden, late 1930s.

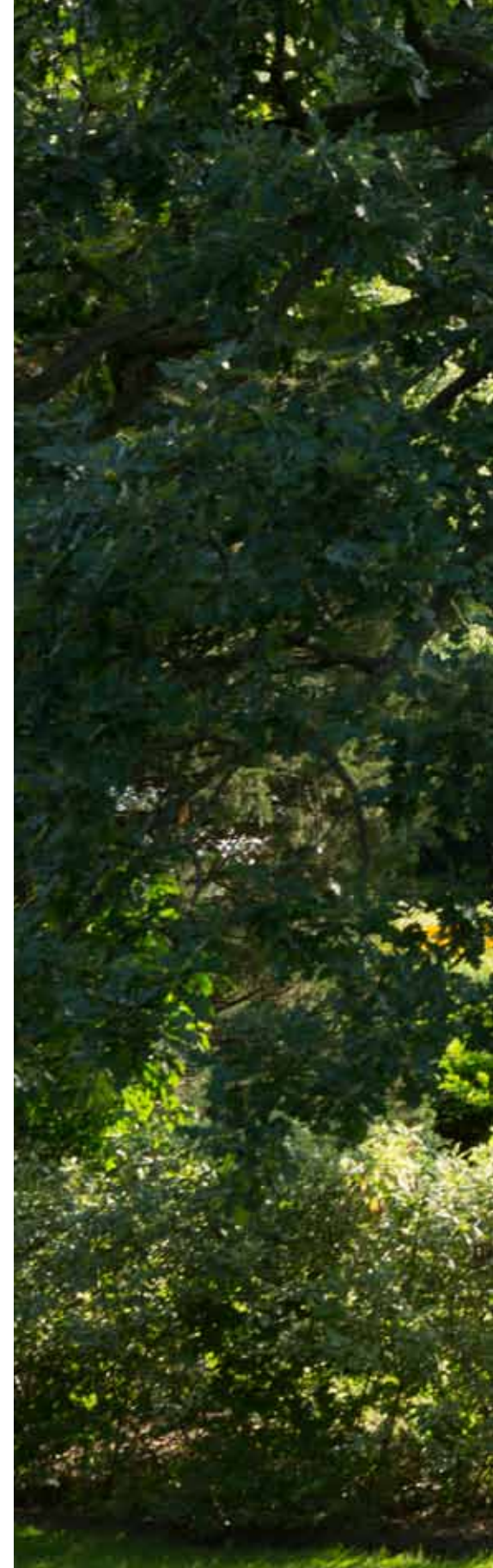
I thought that, oh golly, Dad is going to get bawled out for this. . . . He did go find my father, and he said that he was so pleased to see the young people enjoying that place as we did. He said, "I want you to know that they are free to do anything that they feel that they would like to. I only have one rule. Please, don't allow breakage and rowdy behavior."

. . . My Dad asked for and got permission to hang a basketball back stop in the squash court and I had my private gymnasium. We had a toboggan slide . . . a sunken bowling green . . . a croquet court with one of those English sets for croquet with the cast iron wickets. We sunk soup cans all over the place and played golf. We did just about everything you would think of doing.

There was a tunnel, probably a hundred feet long, that connected the furnace room clear through to the recreation room. We had a club that met down there by candlelight. We called ourselves the Tunnel Terrors.

When Ruth Mott moved to Applewood as a new bride in 1934, she was charmed by John Mair's kind demeanor and his eagerness to help her learn the names of the flowers and trees on the estate.

Mr. Mair managed the grounds and the flower gardens at Applewood for twenty-seven years. He also provided cut flowers for the house and created special flower arrangements for parties, and he cared for the flowers and vegetables growing in the greenhouse. The displays he entered in shows held by the Yard and Garden Club of Flint earned him both public recognition and high praise.





THE GATEHOUSE

A home for the farmer

Architect Herbert Davis designed a picturesque gatehouse, in the same Jacobean Revival style as the residence and main outbuildings, and it was constructed near the west entrance to Applewood. The petite home had everything a small family would need in the early part of the twentieth century. The first floor housed a kitchen

and dining room and a spacious living room with a fireplace. A partially open staircase led to the second floor, where there were two bedrooms and a bathroom. The walkout basement offered work and storage space.

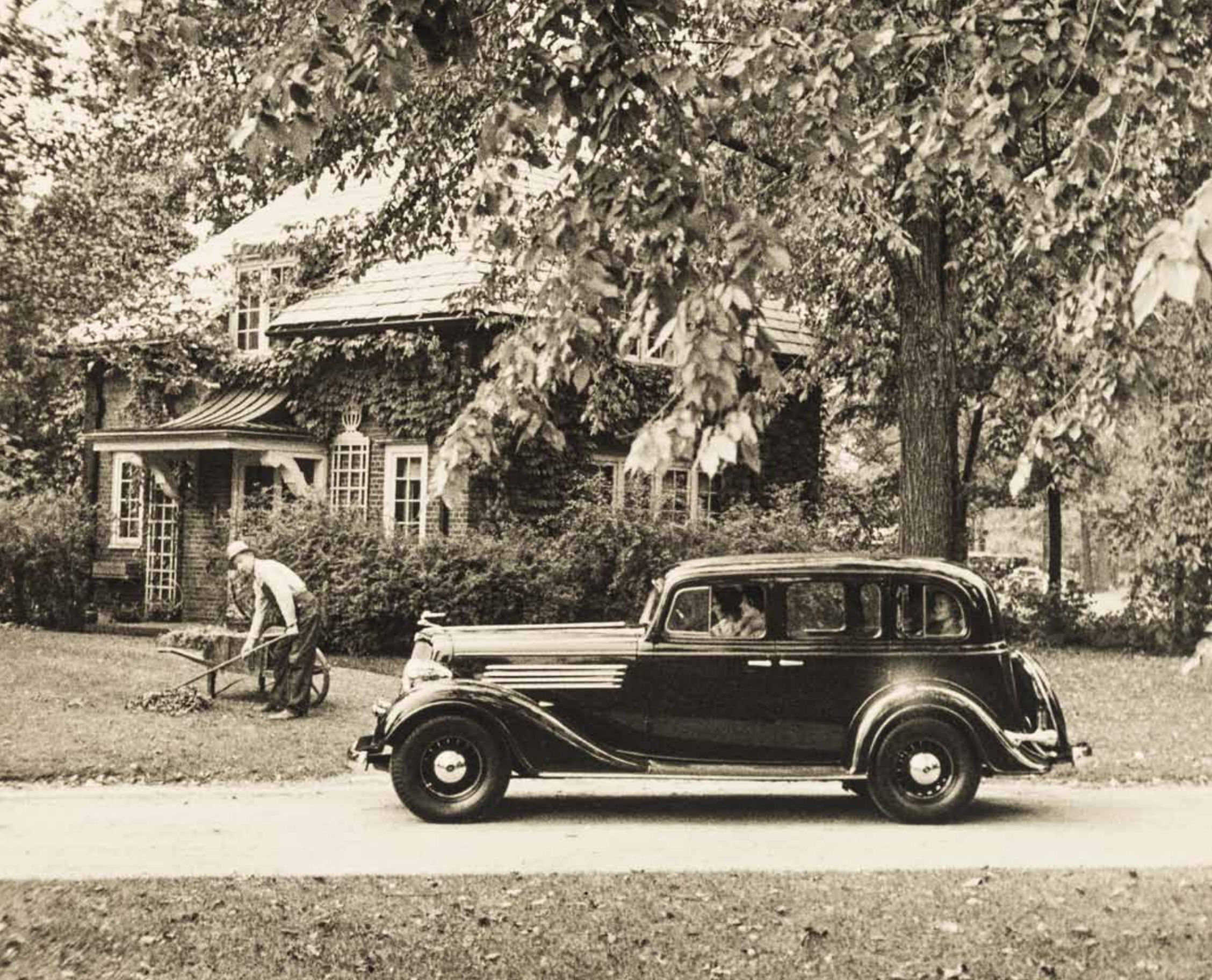
The gatehouse was intended to be the residence for Applewood's farmer, and shortly after Arthur Hatherly was hired for the position, he and his wife and two sons settled in.

By the early 1950s, the Motts no longer raised farm animals, and the gatehouse was available for rent. It was often leased by people transitioning to a new life in Flint. Its proximity to the community college, the University of Michigan–Flint, and the activities in the cultural district along Kearsley Street, plus its lovely setting, made it a very desirable little residence. Many of the tenants sent holiday cards and greetings to the Motts long after they had moved on.

The gatehouse in the early years (left) and now (opposite).









A murder solved by science

The Flint community was shocked in early November 1986, when Margarette F. Eby was found murdered in Applewood's gatehouse. The former University of Michigan–Flint provost and organizer of Flint's yearlong Basically Bach Festival was well known in town. She had rented the quaint two-bedroom home in the early 1980s when she first moved to Flint and had lived there for five years.

DNA samples were taken at the scene. The new forensic science had come into use just a year earlier. One fingerprint was also found, but the murderer eluded investigators.

Fifteen years later, laboratory tests and a new statewide database revealed that the DNA samples collected at the gatehouse matched those taken from a Detroit-area hotel room where flight attendant Nancy Ludwig was murdered in 1991. The case was cracked when the fingerprint and DNA matched those of Jeffery Gorton, a seemingly mild-mannered family man who had served time in a Florida prison in the mid-1980s. Remarkably, he was still living in Genesee County.

Gorton received life sentences for the murders of both women.



Opposite: A 1936 Buick drives past the gatehouse while John Mair works on the lawn.

Right: The Applewood entrance today.





BARNs, FIELDS, AND FARM ANIMALS

The main barn and its residents

C.S. was pleased that his farm animals could provide most of the meat, eggs, and dairy products for his family. In return, he provided them with handsome, state-of-the-art quarters and purchased the best supplies and equipment available.

The main barn was built in the same Jacobean Revival style as the residence, including the slate roof. Many of its features were designed to ease the heavy work of daily chores and to help promote cleanliness.

The first floor of the barn had several stalls for pleasure horses and for the Percheron and Belgian workhorses that were used to plow the fields. Quarters for cattle included high-quality stanchions that were used to restrict movement of the Motts' award-winning Holstein-Friesian cows while they were being milked. Grain bins, storage, and an office with a coal stove and water heater were located in the center of the barn. The largest room provided wagon access and held stable gear such as saddles and harnesses for the horses. The east wing housed carriages. Pigeons had their own specialized quarters in one gable end of the barn.

The second floor of the barn was constructed with a vaulted ceiling that allowed considerable storage space for hay, straw, and grains. Special chutes through the floor were designed for easy pitching of feed and bedding directly to the horses and cows, saving time and effort.

Mr. Mott corresponded with the Armstrong Cork and Insulation Company of Pittsburgh in September 1918 regarding the use of cork brick floors in his barn. A response from the company included testimonials from farmers who had installed the cork and found it to be excellent for their animals. Concrete floors, while easy to clean, were cold and damp. Wood was warmer but difficult to keep clean. Cork was both warm and easy to clean, and the company claimed it offered a degree of cushioning that reduced the leg and foot problems often seen in animals stabled in barns with concrete floors. Evidence being in their favor, cork floors were installed.

The Loudon Machinery Company provided equipment and 960 cork bricks for the cow stalls, a maternity and calf pen, a litter and hay carrier, equipment for horse stalls, and miscellaneous items such as a water trough, at a cost of \$537.

Having hot and cold running water on-site was rare in early-twentieth-century barns, and the farmhands must have appreciated the convenience of it at Applewood. It eliminated the heavy and often cold task of hauling buckets of water from an outside pump and aided in cleaning the milking area. The cows also had separate watering troughs with hinged covers, which reduced the possibility of saliva contamination and helped keep the troughs clean.

It is because I live on my country place and try to raise most of what my family consumes and because we enjoy fresh food and also enjoy seeing and having animals on the place that we are keeping cows.

CHARLES STEWART MOTT, QUOTED IN *HOLSTEIN FRIESIAN REGISTER*, 1919





Cattle raising was in C.S.'s blood. His ancestor James Mott, Sr., a Quaker who lived in Hempstead, Long Island, raised cattle and registered a brand in 1706.

Above, left: C.S. on horseback and his Holstein bull calf, winner of three prizes at the Genesee County Fair in 1923.

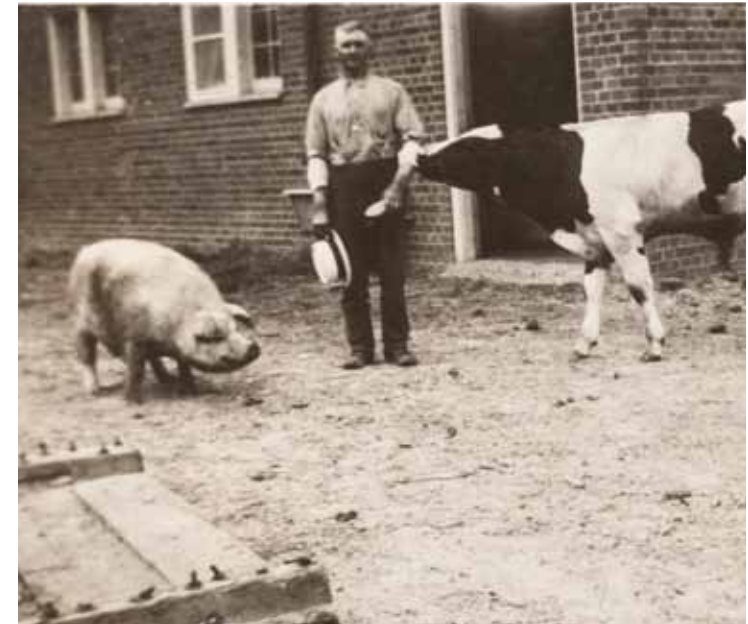
Above, right: This is believed to be Arthur Hatherly, Applewood's farmer, in the barnyard.

Whitewash was applied to the interior walls of the barn. The white coating made dirt easily visible so it could be quickly cleaned up, and with repeated applications, whitewash smoothed over rough surfaces, preventing dirt and bacteria from accumulating. Whitewash also has a high alkaline content and antimicrobial properties.

An efficient, back-saving suspended litter carrier, which transported manure out of the cows' area and clean straw back in, was remarkable enough to be featured in an article in the October 15, 1919, issue of the *Holstein Friesian Register*.

The dairy cows that provided abundant quantities of milk, cream, and butter brought out C.S.'s sense of humor—he named them after female family members and friends. For example, in 1935, a year after he married Ruth, he registered Queen Elsa Sarah, named for his second daughter and his new bride's mother. A cow named Elsa Jeannette Joan was registered in 1939 in honor of his daughter, Ruth's sister, and his granddaughter.

Daily production records were kept, and in 1922, Applewood's well-cared-for girls had the second-highest butterfat production among Michigan Holsteins in the junior three-years class, thirty-day division.



From the beginning, the Motts kept several riding horses and two draft horses that were used for plowing the fields and other heavy work. The last team of workhorses, Rose and Ruby, were purchased in 1941. Although tractors were being used on large farms, it was still common practice on small farms to rely on true horsepower. And while tractors needed gasoline and oil, horses needed food and lots of it. Between 1931 and 1941, an average of 9,400 pounds of oats and 22,000 pounds of hay were purchased each year—just for the horses.

The farmer and his crew

Farm manager Arthur Hatherly and his wife and two children were the first residents of Applewood's gatehouse. The charming two-story brick cottage was just a short walk from both the house and the main barn, and Mr. Hatherly could be on hand quickly at any hour of the day or night for anything that required his attention. Through the end of World War I, the Spanish influenza epidemic, the Great Depression, and World War II, the diligent farmer oversaw every aspect of farming from plowing, planting, and harvesting crops to selecting new livestock, milking the prized dairy cows, mending fences, and filling the Motts' freezer with meat.

There were always unexpected challenges—the untimely death of a cow or a group of boys stomping on crops and harassing the animals. But the rewards were great. Under Mr. Hatherly's watchful eye, crops thrived in the fields, and the animals supplied superior-quality milk, meat, and eggs for the family, with plenty left over to share and sell.

C.S. recorded brief comments about his conversations with the man he referred to simply as Hatherly, and they hint at the breadth of the farm manager's responsibilities.

August 9, 1932: *Found a lot of boys taking a free ride on our Percheron truck horses. When they saw me, they beat it off; later they came back and asked if I objected. I said I did not, but could not answer for Hatherly. Shortly Hatherly appeared, and gave them the devil and chased them away.*

December 31, 1934: *Hatherly has just called up to see if we want chicken or what for tomorrow's dinner and C.R. says that we will have a roast of lamb for a change.*

January 20, 1942: *Went down to the barn and saw Hatherly about killing two hogs, for we are going to have our annual Board of Education Dinner here at Applewood.*

October 7, 1942: *Up early and discussion with Hatherly regarding livestock and farm matters. . . . Hatherly reports that the five acres of corn is the finest and heaviest crop we have ever had and he is busy harvesting it. Our heifer which we bought to beef is well fattened up and probably will be butchered within a month or so and cut up and frozen for future use. Later we will have six hogs to slaughter, but they will largely go into hams and bacons which will be hung in the attic. We have a lot of chickens dressed, packed, and frozen, and more to come.*

November 16, 1943: *This morning, Hatherly dropped in and told me that our seven-year-old cow, Susan, had a stroke in the bearing of a husky male calf a few days ago, and that she has passed out of the picture. Proper authorities are notified and will remove the carcass for which we receive \$4.00, this coming from the salvaging of hide and conversion of the balance into fertilizer—in case you didn't know what happens in things of this sort. . . . Then we have a 1,000 pound bull which we bought months ago from John McDonald. He is a fine specimen, gentle disposition, but is playful and needs exercise. Hatherly says when he is turned loose in the barnyard, he wants to toss everything up into the air, farm wagons, gates, etc., so we will have to have him dehorned. Thus life goes on at Applewood.*

To help with chores, Mr. Hatherly hired Herm Skinner and, later, Cliff Boze. Herm's focus was care of the animals. Cliff tended the vegetable gardens during the growing season and also served as a handyman, especially in the winter. John Peck was hired to manage the horses, and together, with seasonal help as needed, the men kept farming operations organized and productive for decades.

Cliff's son, Stuart, was hired for part-time work when the Motts hosted parties, helping park cars and setting pins on the twin bowling lanes in the basement recreation room. Stuart Boze recalled that his entire family was invited to Applewood to visit with the Motts at Christmastime, and that his father, Cliff, received a \$5 bill as a bonus.



Susan Mott with grounds crew members Cliff Boze, John Lannon, and John Mair, 1944.

Pigs in brass beds

It may be that the most fun aspect of touring Applewood's farm operations was visiting the pigs' barn. The wooden structure was built in 1918 and included a ramp up to the second floor, where the pigs' sleeping quarters were encircled with bars painted gold. Nestled in their clean, deep straw, they looked every bit as if they rested in luxury accommodations. C.S. seldom missed an opportunity to take new visitors to see the pig barn, where his Ohio Improved Chester pigs slept in what he described as their brass beds.

On November 13, 1931, C.S. took a group of newcomers for an autumn stroll around Applewood:

Walked around the place visiting the gardens and stables, etc., the visitors being much impressed by the sight of pigs going upstairs to bed and sleeping in brass bedsteads.

He also recalled, in 1939, that the fun spread across the ocean:

Lord Perry was Sir Percival Perry during the First World War and acted as a procurement agent for the British Government. He and

C.S. with his pigs.



Walter Chrysler were at dinner with me here at Applewood in October, 1918, and he is the man who was so intrigued with our pigs going upstairs to bed and sleeping in brass bedsteads that when he went home, he domiciled his pigs in similar equipment, and has undoubtedly intrigued his fellow-countrymen with the arrangement.

Dozens of piglets were born and raised on the farm over the decades, and C.S. often noted the birth of a litter in his diary. They grew strong and healthy, feasting, in part, on the abundance of skim milk left over when the cream was separated from the rich whole milk produced by the resident dairy cows.

On May 2, 1940, C.S. recorded in his diary the audience for a pig giving birth:

Yesterday one of our sows had a litter of 11 pigs—today the other sow got into production and C.R., Gerry, and Harding were interested and went down to watch the operation—C.R. said she had never seen pigs arrive—now I expect she will be looking for cats, dogs, calves, and foals, and an opportunity to see a baby elephant or hippopotamus arrive would be a great show for her to witness. I believe we now have about 18 piglets here.

The Motts enjoyed eating and sharing the pork from their pigs and felt it was absolutely superior in taste. C.S. was delighted, and not surprised, when he served his pork to an acquaintance from Virginia, who agreed that the Applewood pork was as good as the legendary pork from his own state.

When winter was upon them in 1942, C.S. noted his afternoon activity:

The weather was exceedingly cold today and we felt the effects in the house. At 4:00 I drove over to Davison and brought home livers of pigs which had been slaughtered for use. The balance will be cut up for fresh meat, sausage, hams and bacon.

Right, top: A rooster poses with the Motts' little dog, Pepper.

Right, bottom: One of the spacious chicken runs, with about three dozen Leghorns, circa 1917–1920.

A home for chickens and geese

The handsome chicken coop was constructed on a flat section of land just south of the main barn and mirrored the modified Jacobean style of both the barn and the residence, complete with a brick exterior and slate roof. South-facing windows added sunshine and warmth to the coop and could boost egg production a bit during the winter months when most hens are inclined to take a rest from laying.

Mr. Hatherly made sure there was always a fine flock of egg-laying hens, usually Leghorns and Rocks, to supply Applewood's cooks. Records show that in the first four months of 1934, the hens laid a total of from 270 to 437 eggs per month. Those numbers would vary greatly with the number of hens employed and from season to season. Hens lay more frequently as days get longer. The cooks got all the eggs they needed for the family's use, and the extras were purchased by the staff. When aging egg layers stopped producing, they were butchered, and because the meat would have been pretty tough, it's likely they were stewed and used for making soups and chicken stock.

Mr. Hatherly also purchased thousands of chicks through the decades to raise to a good roasting weight. In April 1930, C.S. made note of the one hundred roosters procured by Mr. Hatherly which were five or six weeks old and weighed one-half pound each. They would be ready for eating beginning in thirty days. It was common for several chickens to be butchered at one time, and the cooks would freeze any that they did not immediately need.

Geese were also raised in the chicken coop. Along with announcing the arrival of the young roosters, C.S. noted that of their five geese, one was sitting on a dozen eggs in the hen house, and he was *hoping for good results from her*.

Daughter Elsa once expressed her wish that the family have turkey at Thanksgiving, as was the national tradition. But because the Motts raised geese, not turkeys, the centerpiece of their bountiful Thanksgiving feast was usually a large roasted goose.



GROWING FOOD FOR THE TABLE

The gentleman's farm flourishes

C.S.'s diaries are full of descriptions of the wholesome, tasty foods produced at Applewood. The dairy products with their high butterfat content from the award-winning Holstein-Friesian cows, the meals built around the meats and poultry from animals raised and butchered at Applewood, and the fresh and preserved fruits and vegetables that came from their orchards and gardens kept family, friends, and staff well fed.

Managing the animals and acreage properly was a major undertaking that required many hands. Though C.S. left the day-to-day operations and many of the major decisions to his staff, he was deeply engaged in the process. He consulted frequently with the gardener and resident farmer and often noted in his diary their conversations and the seasonal foods he was enjoying.

By fall of 1930, at the age of fifty-five, C.S. had been widowed twice and was near the one-year anniversary of both his divorce and the crash of the stock market that led to the worldwide economic depression. Work was challenging, and C.S. was moving in social circles again. Dozens of good friends visited, and often they stayed through the weekend. His daughters, Aimeé and Elsa, both married, came back to spend time at Applewood, and his mother came for at least one visit a year. C.S. was delighted to entertain them and to share Applewood's harvest prepared by the skilled staff. His appreciation for all that Applewood offered, and for something as simple as the sweetness of a fresh pear, never wavered.




On October 28, 1930, with the harvest nearly completed, he wrote:

Of course, things in the outdoor garden are absolutely thru though they have not yet taken in the celery and brussel [sic] sprouts but we are living on the farm produce stored away in the cold cellar and, believe me, everything is mighty good. At the moment, besides apples, we are having some of the finest russet pears I ever ate.

The following spring, the cycle began again. On April 20, 1931, with his characteristic attention to detail, C.S. observed:

Well, now about the farm here: It certainly looks grand. The weather has been delightful; in fact, too good—we need rain badly. We had some precipitation last night and today, but need a lot more—still the grass is beautiful and green. The leaves on the trees are just starting—willows are coloring up—magnolias are in bud and have opened where they have warm locations. The yellow daffodils in the gardens are in bloom as are also hyacinths and other white flowers on the sides of the steps leading down to the tennis court. The forsythia bushes are in full bloom—a marvelous yellow. We are eating fresh rhubarb from the garden. The new croquet ground seems to be coming along very nicely. There are a few small bare spots which will have to be filled in to make it perfect, but this will be taken care of. In the Green House, they have fig trees and nectarines with a lot of the fruit started. Grape vines in there are showing signs of life. Tomato vines are three to four feet high and carry quite a lot of fruit. Cucumbers are up at least four feet and are blossoming. We still have a quantity of carnations and other flowers in the Green House, including the amaryllis. One of the orchids has two beautiful blossoms and is in



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CHARLES STEWART MOTT'S DIARY,
APRIL 20, 1931

the living room. There are also many pots and boxes of flowers and vegetables started. From now on each week will show great advances and I expect it will not be long before we have asparagus.

We have four milking cows and three growing heifers, one of which I believe will freshen this summer. During the last few weeks two more baby heifers arrived, so that gives us nine head in all, which is probably more than we need. It is quite likely that we will dispose of three of them in the course of time. We also have a litter of nine young pigs, which should take care of our requirements.

Harvest time again, October 1932:

I have been out making an inspection. It is two weeks since I made the last one and such a change has occurred in that time: Fall coloring everywhere; also plenty of dead leaves. . . . In the vegetable garden it is just what you would expect at the close of the season. Cabbage, kale, and Brussels sprouts, celery and things of that sort. Other things are either on their last leg or entirely gone. The floor of the garage, squash court and shed is a sight—bbls. boxes and bins of apples and pears. We will be putting away what we want to keep for ourselves and the balance will be disposed of to our friends and to children's organizations.

In 1980, daughter Elsa reflected on the family meals:

[We had] lots of chickens and eggs and we had our own cream and . . . we made our own butter. Then, of course, all the lovely fresh vegetables from the garden and strawberries in season . . . we had cherries and peaches and lots of corn. That was one of my father's favorite vegetables . . . corn. Corn on the cob. My father wouldn't care if we had it every day!

Elsa's daughter, Joan, who spent a good deal of time at Applewood when she was a child, kept a tin cup hanging up in the barn. When Mr. Hatherly was milking, she liked to hold the cup under the cow and get a drink of the freshest milk possible. She remembers, *It was wonderful!*

The namesake apple orchard

An old map of the property on which Applewood was built shows that apple trees were growing in an area referred to as the Gilkey orchard. Mr. Mott and his gardener added several apple varieties to the grove in order to produce a crop with a long harvest season and apples with diverse characteristics.

Each type of apple had features valued for certain purposes. Some were crisp and tart at maturity and great for cooking. Others were soft and candy-sweet—perfect for eating out of hand. Applewood's cooks knew how to blend the fruit to produce the best combinations for everything from sweet-tart pies to tangy applesauce and Applewood's signature apple cake.

Among the varieties was the Esopus Spitzenburg, a late-season apple whose superb flavor made it a favorite of Thomas Jefferson. It was discovered in the early eighteenth century near Esopus,

New York, and C.S. may have been familiar with it because it was valued as a cider-making apple.

The Northern Spy they added became the first choice of many of Applewood's cooks for making pies. It had been introduced in New York around 1800 and was the last variety to bloom in the spring.

The earliest apples to ripen on the estate were the Yellow Transparents, ready in late July. The last to be pulled from the trees in early November were usually the Golden Russets. When all the apples had been harvested, the family enjoyed months of fragrant apple dishes prepared from preserved fruit and from fresh apples stored in the root cellar dug into the hill behind the barn. The cellar maintained temperatures of between 40 degrees in midwinter and 60 degrees in the summer.

The orchard in spring bloom.



Keeping track

On any given day when Mr. Mott was at Applewood, you could ask him how much milk his cows had given that morning or how many eggs the hens had laid or how many piglets were being fattened, and it's likely he would know. He maintained daily records of every aspect of the farming operations at Applewood, from what the animals cost him to what they gave back, along with records of the cost and yield of the crops grown to support the animals. He compared production from week to week and month to month and often noted it in his diary.

The Motts usually kept four to six Holstein-Friesian cows for milking and to produce calves that would be raised for meat. Each cow gave an average of nearly 8,500 gallons of milk per year, from which the staff made about 160 pounds of butter. More than half of it was sold to the staff. Much of the skim milk that remained after removing the cream was given to the pigs and weaned calves.

In May 1934, C.S. compared the quantities of milk and butter produced at Applewood for the first four months of the year and noted the following:

In January, four cows produced 3,556 pounds of milk and staff churned 90½ pounds of butter.

In February, two cows produced 2,241 pounds of milk and staff churned 46¾ pounds of butter.

In March, four cows produced 3,445 pounds of milk and staff churned 83½ pounds of butter.

In April, four cows produced 4,476 pounds of milk and staff churned 107½ pounds of butter.

From 1943 to 1959, records show that more than fifteen kinds of vegetables and sixteen kinds of fruit, including seven varieties of cherries, were harvested at Applewood and were eaten fresh or preserved by canning, freezing, and other means for future use. Crops such as apples, carrots, and potatoes could be stored in the root cellar. More than twenty flavors of jams, jellies, pickles, and preserves were put up by the kitchen staff by the end of the growing season.

| May Sales | Cash | Mrs. Timko |
|-------------------------------|------|------------|
| 2nd Mrs. Larkin 5 lbs. Butter | .52 | 2.80 |
| 4th Mrs. Timko 4 doz. eggs | .25 | 1.00 |
| 5th Mrs. Timko 2 lbs. butter | .40 | .80 |
| " " 4 doz. eggs | .25 | 1.00 |
| " Watson 1 doz. eggs | .25 | .25 |
| 8th Mr. Olmstead 4 doz. eggs | .25 | 1.00 |
| Mrs. Stever 1 doz. eggs | .25 | .25 |
| 9th Mr. Cox 2 doz. eggs | .25 | .50 |
| Mrs. Watson 1 doz. eggs | .25 | .25 |
| 11th Mrs. Stever 1 pt. cream | .30 | .30 |
| " " 3 doz. eggs | .25 | .50 |
| Mrs. Timko 2 lbs. butter | .40 | .80 |
| 12th Mrs. Timko 2 doz. eggs | .25 | .50 |
| Mrs. Watson 2 doz. eggs | .25 | .50 |
| 13th Mr. Olmstead 1 doz. eggs | .25 | .25 |
| 15th Mrs. Timko 3 doz. eggs | .22 | .66 |
| Mr. Olmstead 3 doz. eggs | .22 | .66 |
| 22nd Mr. Olmstead 4 doz. eggs | .23 | .92 |
| Mrs. Timko 4 doz. eggs | .23 | .92 |
| " " 1 doz. eggs | .22 | .66 |

Pages from C.S.'s records showing sales of products from Applewood, 1923.

More people belong back on the farms

On June 1, 1931, the *Flint Journal* ran an article resulting from an interview with Mr. Mott. Having created Applewood as his ideal of a residence that provided much of the food for his family and others, he was a serious proponent of people moving out of the cities and onto small farms:

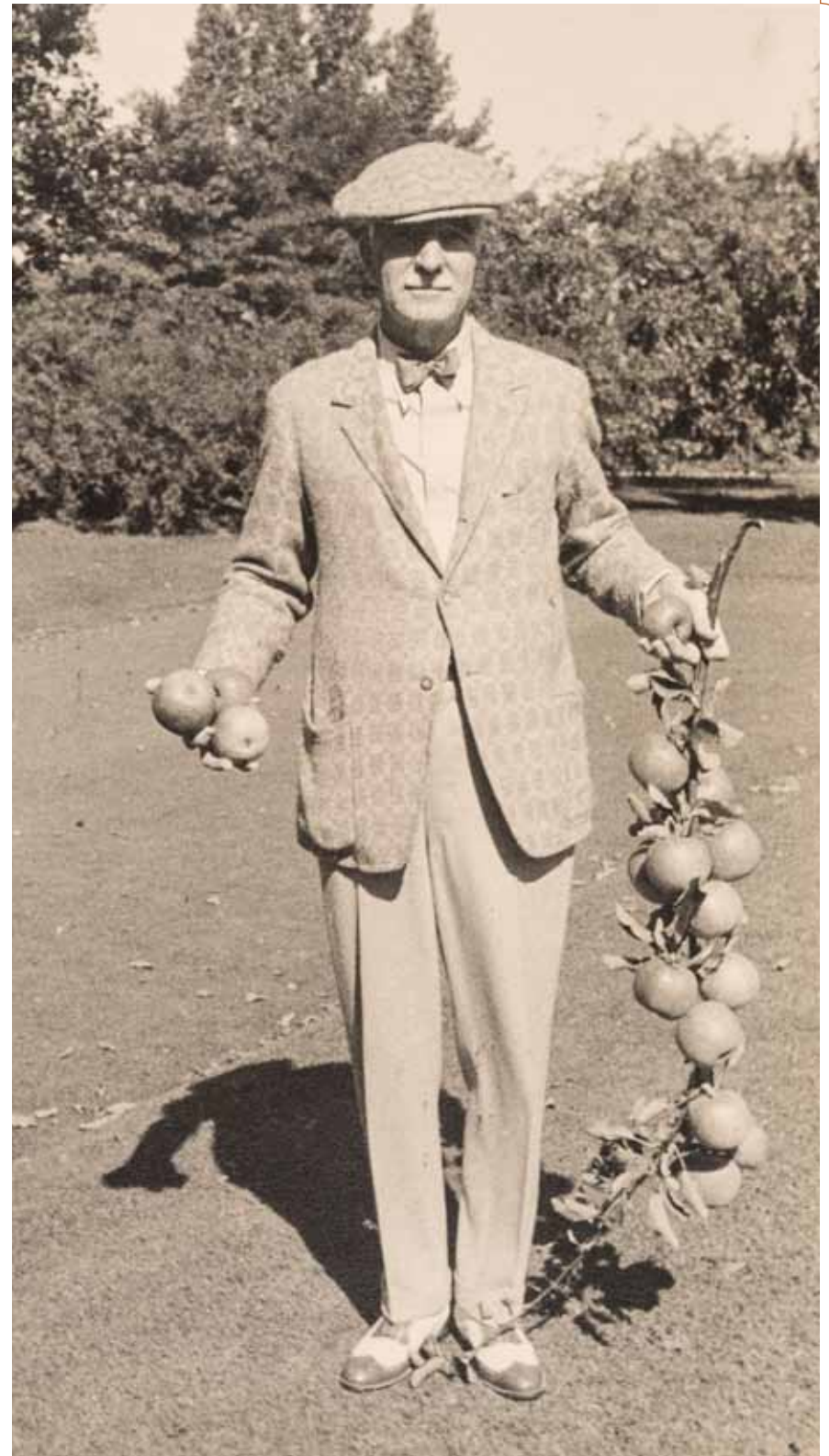
It's a great mistake if everybody sits around waiting for good times to come back. The high pressure times of 1928 and 1929 were not normal. We should consider normal times as some percentage less than that. Normal times will not absorb all of the labor in exactly the same way that it was absorbed in those years. There will be redistribution.

It therefore behooves people not to sit down and wait for prosperity, but to get busy and try to create prosperity.

More people belong back on the farms—where they can at least grow enough to make a living. I do not mean that these people should expect that they can make farming a highly profitable business. Prices are low and they cannot hope to compete with the big, scientifically operated farms which specialize in certain crops. But the small farmer can at least raise his own chickens, own a few cows, keep a garden patch, and provide food and shelter for himself and his family. This is better than what he can expect in the factory cities where manufacturing has drawn more men than fundamental economics requires.

There is plenty of good, productive land in this country and more people should be using it to make their own living instead of remaining in cities where they are dependent upon a branch of industry which has men in excess of its need.

C.S. with apples from the orchard and a branch broken off in a storm, circa 1932–1934.





The Heart of the Home

*Applewood was our country club for my kids
and the neighborhood. It was such fun!*

Joan Mitchell MacGillivray, oral history, June 29, 1993



FURNISHINGS

Acquisitions from near and far

From Applewood's earliest days, its furnishings have reflected the Motts' love of Italian, English, and American antiques and also the trends of the times. Many items, such as one-of-a-kind silver serving pieces and a four-hundred-year-old storage chest, were put back into the service for which they were originally intended—or close to it—once they arrived at Applewood. Cherished heirlooms, fine art, crystal, and rare period pieces acquired through the decades are blended into the mix.

In addition to the six Mott children raised at Applewood, there were often cousins and friends and later grandchildren and great-grandchildren running through the halls and playing games. The furnishings needed to accommodate the practicalities of busy families along with the social, political, and business events held there regularly, so comfort, utility, keepsakes, and elegance were kept in balance.

Much of Applewood's contemporary and everyday furniture was ordered from Marshall Field & Company in Chicago. Rare and historic pieces often came from shops in New York and Europe when the family traveled. Among the Motts' much-loved items are those described here.

The cassone, filled with sports equipment, has not been moved from its spot in the foyer since it was acquired by Ethel and C. S. Mott in 1918.



CASSONE IN THE ENTRANCE HALL

This large sixteenth-century Italian wooden chest is one of the first things a visitor sees when entering Applewood. It is carved with a classic scroll and Baroque leaf design and has the images of women's faces on both sides of the front panel. Herbert Davis advised the Motts about the chest two months after they moved into Applewood and suggested that it would be perfect in the entrance hall along the side of the stairway.

Cassoni were typically used as marriage chests to hold linens and other valuables. However, this cassone is believed to have originally been in a Florentine monastery. The Motts purchased it in May 1918 from A. Olivotti & Company. It was moved into the recommended spot in the entrance hall and has remained there all these years. The chest became a handy place to store sports equipment, which could be grabbed on the way outside to play.



Entrance hall showing the cassone today (left) and in 1919 (above).



DINING-ROOM TABLE

Generations of Motts and their friends and business associates gathered often around the large table in the formal dining room to eat and celebrate and enjoy each other's company. C.S. purchased it in London in September 1924, while on a trip with his children, following the sudden death of their mother, Ethel. Through the end of the 1940s, the meals served at this table included many foods that were raised or grown on the grounds of Applewood.

The table, which dates to 1800, has a solid mahogany top and Sheraton-style pedestal legs that sit on brass paws. With all six leaves, it measures 142 inches long and seats twenty-four.

C.S. and his wife, Ruth, whom he married in 1934, added eight Sheraton-style chairs—two arm chairs and six side chairs—which Ruth liked better than the existing dining-room chairs. They ordered four more identical side chairs from Irving & Casson of Boston, the same company that made the paneling and woodwork for Applewood's living room and library.

Prior to 1924, the family shared meals around a five-foot-diameter round English mahogany table (below) that went into storage when the new table arrived. Many years later, Ruth Mott offered the round table to daughter Maryanne, along with its matching sideboard

and eight chairs. The set was a good fit in her home, and new generations of Motts have gathered around it there for decades. The glass cabinet that was part of this original set remains in Applewood's dining room and is used to display crystal and glass.



DINING-ROOM SIDEBOARD

C.S. paired the dining-room table he purchased in 1924 with a mahogany-veneered Sheraton sideboard from Gill & Reigate in London. The large, sturdy piece has satin wood inlays, tambour doors, two locking doors, and square tapered legs. A compartment on the right side is lined with metal and was designed to hold wine or liquor bottles. Like the table, it dates to 1800.

The sideboard was used to store silver and display the silver tea service that was a gift from General George Washington to C.S.'s ancestor Colonel Charles Stewart.

BILLIARD TABLE AND BOWLING ALLEYS

The Motts hosted many lively parties in their spacious basement recreation room, and often the activity revolved around a serious game of billiards on the mahogany table that Ethel and C.S. purchased shortly after they moved into Applewood. It's an elegant piece, with fine wood inlays and green crocheted pockets. A three-light lamp hangs overhead.

Opposite: The dining-room table, built in 1800, was purchased in 1924 and is still in use today. The chairs were added later by C.S. and Ruth.

Below: The billiard table and twin bowling lanes were installed in the basement recreation room when the home was built and are still there.



American home designers, influenced by English country estates, often included a separate billiards room where the men would retire after dinner. But at Applewood, the billiard table was fair game for everyone. C.S. spent many hours engaged in amiable competitions with friends, and he wrote of playing pocket billiards with Ruth. Children and grandchildren and their guests were all permitted to use the billiard table, in addition to the twin bowling lanes just steps away. Both had been installed by the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, the premier source at the time for billiard tables and bowling alleys.

After nearly twenty years of heavy use, the equipment needed repairs. C.S. contacted the company and noted the work in June 1939:

Shortly after 5:00 a Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co. representative 'phoned me and came out regarding proposition to fix up our bowling alleys and billiard table, and I gave him orders to go ahead. They have never been really serviced since they have been put in, and I think it will be found to be a great improvement by those who use them.

Below: The pianola.

Opposite: Ruth's much-loved Lalique swans sit beneath a painting by J. H. Weissenbruch, surrounded by family photos.



New additions to the billiard table included red pocket trim leathers, Ivorylene Pocket Balls with a green diamond cue ball, and carom king cues with ivory points. In later years, the table served as a base for son Stewart's Lionel train set.

The twin bowling alleys are still in their original location in Applewood's basement and in good working order. They are a rare find, as many of the bowling alleys in historic estates have been removed over the years.

PIANOLA

C.S. purchased a new Duo-Art pianola and stool in 1925 from Grinnell Brothers of Detroit for Applewood's living room. This handsome instrument is a regular piano and a self-player that can be fitted with rolls of recorded live musical performances. Steinway & Company produced the piano, and the Aeolian Music Company installed the player mechanism.

Susan, Stewart, and Maryanne Mott took piano lessons with a Mrs. Jolly, and the pianola became a frequent playmate for Maryanne. She liked to sing and dance to the music of the piano rolls with her mother as her audience. Many years later, she realized that her favorite dance music as a child was Giuseppe Verdi's famous opera *Il Trovatore*.

LALIQUE SWANS, 1943

Ruth described the large white glass swans sitting on an etched mirror as her *prized possession in crystal*. *A pair of Lalique swans, serenely gliding down the lake.*

The birds were designed by Marc Lalique (1900–1977, France) and purchased by C.S. in Bermuda as a surprise Christmas gift for Ruth. The Motts' friend Bob McCullough stored the fragile birds in the trunk of his car, where they rode around with him until just before the holiday so Ruth wouldn't discover them.

The swans are part of Ruth's collection of crystal and porcelain birds and flowers, which includes pieces by well-known sculptors and manufacturers such as the Royal Worcester Porcelain Company, Edward Marshall Boehm, Dorothy Doughty, Steuben, and Wedgwood. She cherished them for their exquisite beauty and because many were gifts from family and friends. The swans can still be purchased from Lalique.





The late-eighteenth-century Martha Washington-style sewing cabinet was made for C.S.'s ancestor Zebulon Mott.

MARTHA WASHINGTON SEWING CABINET

C.S. and Ruth were excited to learn about a mahogany Duncan Phyfe-style Martha Washington sewing cabinet table that was offered for sale by Fred J. Peters Antiquarian of New York. The piece had been built in the late eighteenth century, and it was an especially important find because it had been made by Boston cabinetmaker John Seymour for C.S.'s great-great-grandfather Zebulon Mott of Saratoga County, New York.

Zebulon was born on Long Island, New York, in 1757. He was a Quaker, and though Quakers generally refuse to participate in war, Zebulon became a private in the Revolutionary War. He later served as a town supervisor, moderator, and member of the state legislature for Saratoga County. In 1781, he married Rebecca Smith, with whom he had eleven children, including C.S.'s great-grandfather John.

Sadly, the sewing cabinet was damaged in transit to Applewood, so the Motts returned it. The shop owner sent a letter saying he had engaged his best cabinetmaker to repair it and that no one would know it had been broken. The family treasure was reshipped to Applewood and has been located for decades in the master bedroom.

ITALIAN WOODEN SIDE CHAIR

Ruth had a favorite chair with a red velvet seat and petit point top that was positioned in the front hall at Applewood. Maryanne recalled that her mother would sit in it, in anticipation of arriving guests, after all preparations for her visitors had been completed. It was purchased in Florence in 1924 as part of a set.



SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ITALIAN CHAIRS

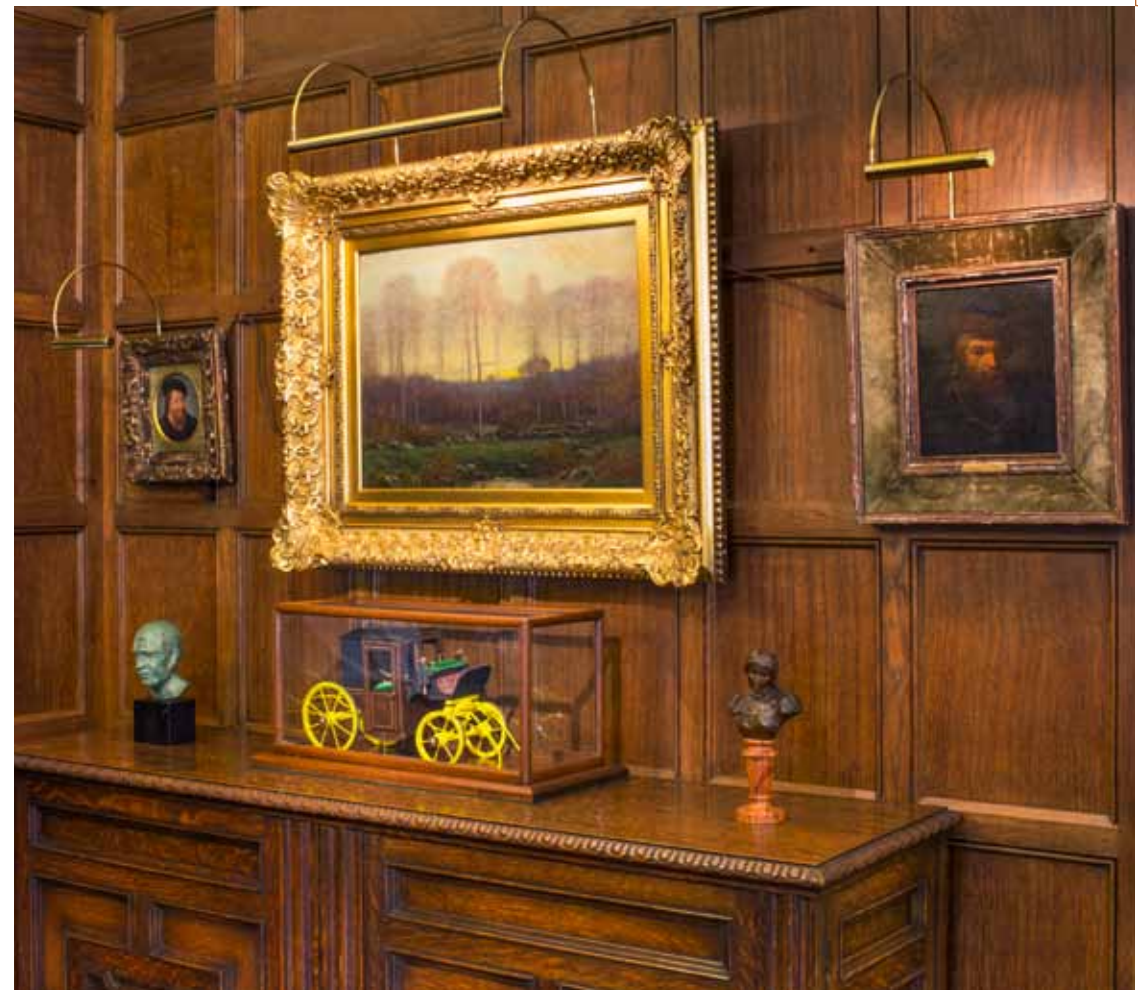
A pair of walnut Sgabello-style chairs in the second-floor hall date from sixteenth-century Italy and came to Ethel and C.S.'s attention in a letter from Herbert Davis in 1918. These chairs are unusual in that they have trestle-style or "splat" support in front and back instead of having four legs.

OAK PARTNERS DESK

This large desk in the office off the front hall was designed to provide enough space for two people to work at the same time, facing each other. It was first used by C.S., who sat at the side closest to the entry door. Behind him were overstuffed floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. This is where he often sat to dictate his daily diary and to listen to news on the radio. His secretary sat opposite him on the side closest to the fireplace. After her husband died, Ruth and her secretary shared the desk.

CARRIAGE MODEL AND FRAMED WATERCOLOR ADVERTISEMENT FOR CARRIAGES AND COACHES MADE BY JAMES TURNBULL

James Turnbull, C.S.'s maternal great-grandfather, and his brother migrated from Scotland to the United States in 1818, carrying with them a letter vouching for the quality of their craftsmanship from author Sir Walter Scott, and they operated a carriage-making business in Newark, New Jersey, for thirty years. The flashy model of an 1840 cabriolet coach, complete with a black cab, yellow wheels, and a green driver's seat, was James Turnbull's design and may have been used as a salesman's model. A framed advertisement for his fine carriages and coaches hangs in the sunroom. Both the carriage and the ad were acquired by the Motts in 1941.



Above: A painting once believed to be the work of Hans Holbein the Younger hangs above the family's heirloom salesman's carriage model.

Left: An advertisement from C.S.'s great-grandfather's carriage business, circa 1840.



Collections from a legacy

Ruth and C.S. learned in the 1940s that C.S. was the great-great-great-grandson and namesake of Charles Stewart, who had been born in County Donegal, Ireland, on March 9, 1729. The enterprising young man traveled to North America in 1750 and took up work as a surveyor. Among his new friends was another young surveyor named George Washington.

Charles pursued farming, but the turbulent times drew him into politics and military service. He was commissioned lieutenant colonel of militia in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, in 1771. In February 1776, just a few months before the history-changing Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress, Charles became a colonel of the battalion of the New Jersey Minute Men. After the outbreak of war, Congress commissioned him to serve as commissary general of issues for the Continental Army, and he became a member of George Washington's staff. He also served as a New Jersey delegate to the Continental Congress in 1784 and 1785.

What began as a companionable relationship between Colonel Charles Stewart and George Washington developed into a close and highly regarded friendship that continued throughout their lives.

The Motts were interested in collecting some of Colonel Stewart's significant personal possessions, and antiquarian and publisher Fred J. Peters helped make that possible. In February 1942, he wrote to the Motts about the availability of a *most important silver tea service of three pieces, silver teapot, covered sugar and a creamer*. The set was made by well-known silversmith J. Musgrave of Philadelphia. Peters noted that it was decorated with the Washington arms and crest and bore the following inscription:

To my esteemd friend

Col. Charles Stewart.

GW

The Motts purchased the tea set, along with three silver camp cups, also given to Colonel Stewart by Washington. Each cup is engraved with a large W. Stewart used the cups often during the Revolutionary War when he needed durable containers to heat beverages and soups over his campfire while he was in the field. The Motts also obtained a handsome sword that Washington presented to Colonel Stewart. It was designed to wear in a parade or at a formal occasion, rather than for battle.

Opposite and bottom: The silver tea service and sword were given by General George Washington to Colonel Charles Stewart.

Below: C.S. in the 1960s with a sword and pistols from his collection.





Above: Silver punch bowl from Brigadier General "Mad" Anthony Wayne.

Below, left: Cannons given to Colonel Stewart in 1785.



Below, right: German flintlock pistols from Baron Von Steuben to Colonel Stewart, which young Stewart Mott took to school for show-and-tell.



The remarkable collection of Colonel Stewart's possessions includes a pair of tiny solid-silver cannons, crafted in France in the eighteenth century, given to him in 1785 by naval officer Robert Morris. Colonel Stewart later gave them to American artist Charles Wilson Peale, who had them displayed for a time at Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

A solid-silver punch bowl purchased by the Motts had been presented to Colonel Stewart by Brigadier General "Mad" Anthony Wayne in recognition of the colonel's assistance in holding the Pennsylvania line in the Mutiny of January 1781. Wayne was known as a loyal and disciplined officer with a fiery temper and bold, strategic military skills. General Washington relied on him heavily for military advice throughout the war. The punch bowl has a scalloped edge for carrying and cooling wine glasses. On June 2, 1945, it was used to serve Applewood Punch at a stag dinner that Ruth organized for her husband's seventieth birthday. A set of Colonel Stewart's Sheffield silver half-pint noggin mugs were also used that evening. They are engraved *Colonel Charles Stewart Union*, which refers to Colonel Stewart's homestead in Union, New Jersey.

After the victory in Yorktown in 1781, American officers took turns entertaining the captured British, but Prussian officer Baron Von Steuben, who served on Washington's staff, lacked the necessary funds when it was his turn to entertain. He offered to sell his horse to Colonel Stewart for \$1,000, but knowing how

important the horse was to its owner, Colonel Stewart turned down the offer and, instead, loaned his friend the money. Later, the grateful baron presented Colonel Stewart with a set of German-made flintlock pistols.

The Motts were fortunate to acquire the pistols, and Ruth loved to tell the story of the day the pistols went to school. When her son, Stewart, was about eight years old, Ruth received a call from his teacher, who told her in a frantic voice that the young boy had brought the pistols to class for show-and-tell. *I am sure he wanted to share this exciting treasure with a wide-eyed, captive audience!* Ruth recalled. The pistols were promptly retrieved.

C.S. and Ruth purchased an eighteenth-century Chippendale tea table with a pie-crust edging that had been first owned by Colonel Stewart and bears a small silver plaque with his name. The table was made by respected Philadelphia cabinetmaker William Savery and was owned, at some point in its long history, by U.S. President William Henry Harrison. There are two identical tables in the home, but paperwork describes only one, so the origin of the second table is unknown.

A gleaming eighteenth-century circular silver tray, made by London silversmith Robert Rew, belonged to Colonel Stewart's father, Robert Stewart. It sits on three claw feet and has a pie-crust edge design. The Stewart arms and crest and the initials *R.S.* are engraved on it.

Below: The Stewart arms and crest, initials of Colonel Stewart and "Union," which refers to his home.



Right: The eighteenth-century Chippendale table with a pie-crust edge was first owned by Colonel Stewart.



Centuries of art

The Motts loved art, and over the decades, they purchased many fine paintings and sculptures that are displayed alongside family photos and portraits of ancestors. Several paintings are by artists from the French Barbizon, English, and Italian schools who were enjoying popularity with collectors in the early 1900s when Applewood was built. Other items, including western artwork and landscapes, were added later and reflect the Motts' personal interests.

In 1940, C.S. and Ruth purchased from a New York dealer a painting they believed to be by Dutch artist Rembrandt van Rijn. The beautiful little portrait was hung in the living room, and the Motts were thrilled to have it.

Years later, when several of the paintings were assessed for value and restoration needs, a few were found to have been painted not by the declared artists but by artists of the same school or style.

The Motts were not alone in being deceived. At the time of their purchases, there was a big market for the works of the old masters, and a great many paintings have since been identified in homes and museums throughout the world as superb imitations. While that realization was disappointing to the family, they still liked the paintings, and they remained on display as a part of the collection, the great majority of which is indeed authentic.

Ruth and C.S.'s son, Stewart, once found another use for the art. His sister Maryanne remembers:

We each got mad at our parents at various times and had different ways of expressing our dissatisfaction. Mother came into the living room once to find all the paintings turned around with their fronts to the wall. It was a creative way my brother chose to say, "I'm mad at you!"

What follows are examples of art purchased for Applewood.



C.S. with his Frederic Remington painting and sculpture, February 4, 1960. (Photo by Peter Mahan, Associated Press.)



Bronco Buster (left), 1895, bronze
Frederic Remington (1861–1909),
 United States

C.S. purchased this Frederic Remington sculpture in 1930 from Tiffany & Company in New York. He may have shopped around for it, as there is a letter from another dealer who offered a similar piece for a higher price.

In 1975, the sculpture was loaned to the Flint Institute of Arts, which questioned whether the casting was original. It is smaller than an authenticated one in another museum collection, which may indicate why Tiffany's price was lower.

Dragin It from Him (above, left), 1931, watercolor and pencil on paper
Untitled (above, right), 1931, watercolor on paper

Jack Van Ryder (1899–1967),
 United States

Jack Van Ryder gained fame as an artist early in his career. He grew up on a ranch in Arizona and worked cattle from Canada to Mexico. In 1926, he began to teach himself how to paint, and two years later, he was featured in a one-man show in New York at the Montross Gallery.

He and C.S. became good friends and business associates. The two jointly owned Camp Verde Ranch in Arizona, where Jack lived beginning in 1931. C.S. traveled to the Southwest as often as possible, kept his saddle at the ready, and was always eager to roll up his sleeves and help with ranch chores, thus earning himself the nickname Desert Dick. His diary includes many stories of the good times he and Jack shared. C.S. was a big fan of western art, and he particularly liked the work of his friend Jack.



*Approaching Storm
(Homeward Bound)*

(above left), 1890, oil on canvas

Winslow Homer (1836–1910), United States

Winslow Homer, one of the foremost nineteenth-century American painters, began his career as a commercial illustrator. Later he took up both oil painting and watercolor and was largely self-taught. This work was completed during a period when he focused his art on the beauty, force, and drama of the sea.



Portrait of a Gentleman (above, center),
1746–1828, oil on canvas

School of Goya, Spain

This portrait was purchased with the understanding that it was by the famed Spanish painter Francisco de Goya. During the early 1980s, Ruth Mott began having many of the family's paintings analyzed and restored; that is how she learned that this portrait was not painted by Goya himself. Disappointed, Ruth decided not to send it out for conservation. However, G. Stuart Hodge, director emeritus at the Flint Institute of Arts, gave her some sound advice. He wrote to her, *the fact that the Spanish portrait is not by Goya in all probability should not deter you from having the work done. It is still a fine painting of that era and will be handsome when restored.*

Thus, the painting was sent for restoration to Thomas Gentle, director of the Intermuseum Laboratory on the campus of Oberlin College in Ohio, and when it was returned, Ruth wrote to him with great enthusiasm, *The rejuvenation of this gentleman is unbelievable. He has come alive! . . . many thanks to you and your group for making this happen!*



Portrait of Anna Rogers (above, right),
1746, oil on canvas

Robert Feke (1705–1767), United States

Anna Rogers was Charles Stewart Mott's paternal great-grandmother and Ruth Mott's great-great-grandmother. Anna married James Mott, Jr., in 1748 in Huntington, New York. It is believed this portrait was painted in 1746. It is signed and dated on the back.

Robert Feke painted portraits of leading families in Boston, Newport, New York, and Philadelphia. He was a Quaker, as were Anna's father and her husband, and he hailed from Oyster Bay, Long Island. It is possible that a connection may have been made through Quaker meetings that led to the painting of this portrait.



Sir William Hamilton (above, left),
about 1820, oil on canvas

Sir William Beechey, R.A. (1753–1839),
United Kingdom

Sir William Beechey was the royal portrait painter to the court of George III, and he painted many of the fashionable ladies of the time. The subject of this painting, Sir William Hamilton, was a Scottish educator and philosopher who specialized in logic and metaphysics.

A conservator questioned its provenance, as a note from 1907 shows the portrait as having disappeared from record. When Ruth Mott sent the portrait to be restored, she received a call asking if she wanted it to be put back into its original condition. She said yes, and when Sir William Hamilton—who had left with a full head of hair—was returned to the Motts, he was bald.



Night-Moonlight (above, center),
1914–1915, oil on canvas

Dwight William Tryon (1849–1918),
United States

C.S. and Ethel purchased two paintings by Dwight Tryon in 1915. The one pictured above, *Night-Moonlight*, and the other, *Evening Light-Autumn*, both hang in Applewood's living room. Tryon lived on Central Park West in New York City. C.S. noted the purchases and his early relationship with the artist:

I used to know this artist very well as he lived in the same apartment house on 59th Street with us many years ago, and was born the same year as my father. He took a great interest in me. He was very fond of personally sailing and racing small yachts and usually had one or two near his country

studio near New Bedford, MA. When I was a boy he used to build model yachts and we used to sail them together in Central Park at 72nd Street. He was one of America's best artists and highly appreciated by the late Charles Freer of Detroit, who bought many of his works. Mr. Freer specialized in Tryon and Whistler and at his death the collection was turned over to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. I purchased these pictures personally and while not of a large size they represent Tryon at his best.



Minding the Cows (Holland)
(above, right), 1885–1886, oil on canvas

Anton Mauve (1838–1888), Netherlands

Anton Mauve was a Dutch realist painter of the Hague School, and his paintings, especially those of sheep, were popular among Americans in the early twentieth century. While *Minding the Cows* does not feature Mauve's sheep, C.S. was thoroughly happy with his purchase.

It had been acquired by a dealer at auction for a low price, most likely because it was covered with an unattractive yellow varnish. C.S. bought it from Henry Rheinhardt on April 21, 1915, and he wrote:

It was purchased at a reasonable figure, so it could be sold to me on a reasonable basis. The great call for Mauve is sheep pictures and they usually bring much higher prices than his cows, but the beauty of this picture stands for itself and satisfies me completely.



Madonna, Child, and Angels

(left), about 1850, marble

Giovanni Bastianini (1830–1868), Italy

Marble sculptures, particularly of a religious nature, were often collected and displayed in early-twentieth-century country estates. This marble work was purchased from A. Olivotti & Company in 1924. It is framed in a walnut tabernacle designed by Jan Dander Mullhen and is lined with seventeenth-century green velvet and brocade.

In the early 1860s, Giovanni Bastianini conspired to create forgeries, and one piece was sent to the Louvre. Although he was chastised in the French press when the story was uncovered, his work was purchased a few years later by the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and described as a contemporary work inspired by Renaissance sculptors.

In C.S.'s notes and receipts, *Madonna, Child, and Angels* was listed as being made in 1820. This, however, was impossible, as Bastianini wasn't born until a decade later. While the date issue hasn't been resolved fully, it is believed to have been a typo made by Olivotti and transferred by C.S.



Madonna and Child (above, left), about 1780, marble

School of Antonio Canova, Italy

This marble plaque of the Madonna and Child with gold halos and garments outlined in gold was purchased by C.S. and Ethel from Olivotti & Sons in 1918. Records show that it was acquired from a patrician family in the northern part of Italy before that territory was occupied by the Austrians. They had kept the plaque in their private chapel.



C. S. Mott Portrait, 1941, oil on canvas

Ruth Mott Portrait, 1941, oil on canvas

Susan Mott Portrait, 1941, oil on canvas

Stewart Mott Portrait, 1941, oil on canvas

Maryanne Mott Portrait, 1945, oil on canvas
(above and opposite, left to right)

Johann Waldemar de Rehling Quistgaard
(1877–1962), Denmark (b.) and United States

On the morning of February 6, 1941, Ruth and C.S. met with Danish artist Johann Waldemar de Rehling Quistgaard at his studio on Randolph Street in Chicago. C.S. wrote:

*Very pleasant gentleman just under 60—
saw a number of examples of his work which
interested us and we shall probably have him
come over and paint portraits of Susan and
Stewart. Also met Mrs. Q.*

Mr. Quistgaard took the overnight train from Chicago to Flint and arrived early in the morning on February 18 to begin the time-consuming process of painting the children's portraits. He returned to Flint on March 15, and C.S. noted:



Mr. Quistgaard arrived early this morning from Chicago. The children's portraits are practically completed and late this afternoon C.R. is planning an unveiling and expects some 50 guests to view the portraits and bend their elbows in honor of the children.

This morning Mother Mott was sitting up and we had Mr. Quistgaard take the pictures in for her to see. She admired them greatly and told Mr. Quistgaard about the pictures of her father and mother which were done in 1851–90 years ago—in pastel and the pictures and frames are in as perfect condition as if they had been done yesterday.

At 5:00 our guests began to arrive. . . . In the sun porch the children's pictures had been set up on easels with dark curtain background and properly lighted. The pictures were veiled and the sun porch doors closed. At 5:30 C.R. had the doors opened and I was called upon to make a speech introducing Mr. Quistgaard and telling them the story of what led up to this event. Then the artist made a short talk and the pictures were unveiled.

In the meantime Susan and Stewart had come downstairs dressed in the same clothes as in the paintings and they stood under the easels so that our guests could compare the pictures and their subjects. Everyone seemed very much impressed and delighted and at least half a dozen people spoke of how much Susan's picture reminded them of Elsa. Then I brought down a picture and photograph of Elsa at an early age and they showed much similarity.

The Quistgaards moved to Flint later that year, and Mr. Quistgaard was commissioned to paint individual portraits of C.S. and Ruth. In 1945, he was commissioned again to paint the newest addition to the family, three-year-old daughter Maryanne, in a pink dress and with long golden curls.

Charles Stewart Mott (above, right), 1979, bronze

Marshall Fredericks (1908–1998), United States

In 1978, the General Motors Cancer Research Foundation created three awards to recognize outstanding individuals in the field of cancer research. The awards were named to honor Alfred P. Sloan, Charles F. Kettering, and Charles Stewart Mott for their long association with GM and their dedication to the *betterment of mankind* through their philanthropy. Internationally acclaimed Michigan sculptor Marshall Fredericks was commissioned to create three gold medals, each with the image of the man for whom the award was named.

Fredericks sculpted the original models for the medals in life size at his Detroit studio, using a special nondrying oil-based clay. Then he reduced them to the medallion size of 2½ inches and cast them in gold. The first Charles S. Mott Award for the most outstanding recent contribution in the prevention of cancer including environmental influences was given in April 1979 to Sir Richard Doll, M.D., from Oxford University in England for his research in environmental cancer.

The life-size bronze medallion plaque that hangs in the entryway at Applewood was made by Fredericks from his original life-size model of C.S. He presented it to Ruth on June 6, 1979.

HOUSE STAFF

Nannies as family

Anna Devereau came into the lives of Ethel and C.S. when she was hired to be nanny for their three children. She was a constant presence in the Mott household for many years and cared for Aimeé, Elsa, and Harding Mott nearly every day of their young lives until they headed off to boarding school.

In August 1933, C.S.'s mother visited with Anna, who learned that the Mott children had been back in Flint and was disappointed that they had not come to see her. All three were married by then, but they weren't too old to be scolded by their father, who wrote:

You children owe her a lot on account of the care she took in raising you, and it would have been a nice thing for you to have called on her, or to have seen to it that she got over here to see all of you and the [grand]children. I manage to get over to see her every once in a while, which is my obligation, but I am sorry that I cannot always think far enough ahead to look after all of your obligations.

By 1935, Anna's family included her own daughter plus two sons of Marcel Murphy Harris, one of the Motts' cooks, who had passed away ten years earlier. C.S. stopped at Anna's home and invited them all to come to Applewood and *make themselves at home and look the place over whenever they felt like it*. It was important to him that Anna be acquainted with the other staff at Applewood so they would welcome her and *make her a cup of tea whenever she comes up*. He made arrangements for Marcel's twelve-year-old son to go to the Mott Camp for two weeks and helped smooth the path for some of the family members to get jobs.

Anna got back to Applewood occasionally to visit with the grown children she once cared for and to meet their children. When Christmas came around, the Motts delivered presents to Anna and her family. In the mid-1950s, C.S. and Ruth learned that some of Anna's family members were facing devastating medical issues, and at the same time, Anna was trying to support several dependent children. With characteristic loyalty, C.S. put Anna on the payroll again and noted, *we expect to take care of the situation*. He and Ruth continued to visit Anna until she passed away in her eighties in 1965.

Emma "Nana" Dodson was a trained nurse when Ruth and C.S. hired her to care for their six-month-old daughter, Susan. When Stewart was born in 1937, and Maryanne followed in 1942, Nana happily added the new babies to her flock. The genial governess lived at Applewood and was a constant companion to the children. She played games with them, monitored their slumber parties, celebrated their birthdays, soothed their troubles, nursed them through illnesses, took them for haircuts, and shared meals with them when they were too young to eat with their parents. She also taught them old-time songs she learned growing up in Missouri. On the cook's night off, Nana could be counted on to make dinner for everyone. She accompanied the children when they traveled and was an essential member of the entourage when the family made trips to their vacation home in Bermuda.

Maryanne left Applewood to attend Kingswood School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, in September 1956, and with the house empty of children, Nana went on a three-week vacation. When she returned, she resumed work at Applewood, though her responsibilities changed. She assisted Ruth and C.S. when needed, attended to the children when they came home from boarding school, and cared for the grandchildren when they visited. Nana and Ruth occasionally went to movies and cultural events together. Nana continued to make supper on the cook's night off, and when Ruth was out of town or visiting friends, Nana and Mr. Mott often ate together in the kitchen.

Though Nana had a devoted boyfriend who would gladly have made her his wife, she never married. Much loved by her adopted family, she lived at Applewood until her passing in 1967 and is buried at the Mott mausoleum in Flint.

Gardener John Mair with cook Dora Sharp, nanny Emma Dodson, and housemaid Harriet Martin on a sunny July 10, 1959.





Shelling peas on a summer day. Cook Sarah Simmons is at the sink. Nanny Emma Dodson and kitchen staffer Margaret Alexander are at the table with an unidentified woman and toddler Marise, the daughter of Maryanne and Alain. (Photo by Alain Meynet, circa 1966.)

Valued members of the household

Applewood was a busy place through the decades, and it required a large staff to keep things humming. Many employees lived on the grounds of the estate. Maids had individual sleeping rooms on the third floor, and the apartment over the garage provided private accommodations for an individual or small family.

By all accounts, the Motts were caring employers who took an interest in the lives of their staff. They enjoyed hosting the children and grandchildren of employees at the estate and gave them pretty much unrestricted access to the grounds. Occasionally, when a member of the staff was burdened with an unexpected expense, like the purchase of a new furnace or medical bills for a relative, or when school tuition was due, the Motts loaned the funds to cover what was needed, and records were kept noting when the loan was paid back.

High standards, conscientious service, and unquestionable loyalty were expected from staff. In return, they were paid well and on time and treated with respect. Many of the staff received their wages from the Motts in cash during the Depression, which was a huge benefit at a time when banks were failing and jobs of any kind were scarce. Employees often worked for the Motts for decades and left only when retirement called—sometimes long after typical retirement age.

Harriet Martin had worked for the Motts' friend Mrs. Medbury and came to work at Applewood in September 1934, filling a vacancy left by housemaid Myrtle Snyder, who had gotten married. As workloads were juggled, C.S. noted that another maid, Katherine, who had been at Applewood for a while, was given the upstairs work and Harriet the downstairs, and he was certain the

arrangement would work out nicely. Harriet was fun and friendly, and the family affectionately referred to her as HaHa. Besides doing housekeeping and helping Nana with Ruth and C.S.'s three children when they came along, Harriet would sometimes fill in on the cook's night off.

The Motts' granddaughter, Joan Mitchell, was staying at Applewood when she had her first date with Peter Kleinpell, the young man she would eventually marry, and she remembers coming back to Applewood at about five a.m. She climbed in through the pantry window and raced up the front stairs just as HaHa was coming down the back stairs.

Harriet left for a month's vacation in 1943. She explained to the Motts that she was tired of housework and wanted to live near her daughter in Ohio. When the family said good-bye to her, they did not know if she would be back. But Harriet did return, and she worked at Applewood until January 5, 1957. She had married the previous December 1 and promised the Motts she would stay on an extra month to help them through their busy holiday season. *She has served us long and well*, wrote Mr. Mott, *and we hope the remainder of her days will be healthy and happy.*

Annie McFadden worked as the laundress at Applewood in the 1940s and 1950s. Maryanne remembers that Annie was warm and gracious and always arrived at Applewood dressed in a hat and gloves and carrying her purse, as though she was on her way to church.

Mary Chema came to work at Applewood in 1970 and did everything from laundry and light housekeeping to cooking and watching over visiting grandchildren. To manage her diverse and very busy days, she kept detailed notes so she knew, for example, who would be at breakfast, when it was to be served, and which beds were scheduled to be changed.

While still quite new to Applewood, Mary hung up a load of fresh laundry in the courtyard outside the kitchen door one day, only

to come back and find it on the ground and dirty, because the clothesline was old and broken. While in her upset state, she encountered an older man at the house whom she had not met before. He asked her what the problem was, and she told him that she thought someone with such money would be able to afford a decent clothesline so her laundry would not fall on the ground! The next day, Mary found new clotheslines in the courtyard and officially met the man she had complained to—her boss, Mr. Mott.

Hilda Zrakovi's thirty-four-year relationship with the Motts began while she worked for Dorothy Curtice, whose husband, Harlow Curtice, was the eleventh president of General Motors. Mrs. Curtice grew beautiful pansies, and she occasionally asked Hilda to bring some to Mrs. Mott. In the mid-1970s, Hilda accepted an invitation from Mrs. Mott to work part-time at Applewood. Her initial responsibilities were cleaning and house care, and she became known for her high standards for silver polishing. Mrs. Mott



House staff members Mary Chema and Dora Anderson, Christmas 1983.

Chopped Apple Cake

Beat together:

1¼ cups oil

2 cups sugar

2 eggs

Sift together:

3 cups flour

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking soda

1½ teaspoons salt

Add dry ingredients to the oil and sugar mixture. Add 3–4 cups chopped apples, 1 cup raisins, and 1 cup chopped walnuts (raisins and walnuts optional). The batter will be stiff like cookie dough. Bake in an ungreased 9" x 13" pan at 350 degrees for 50 to 60 minutes. Check at 45 minutes with a toothpick. It should come out clean when done. Also, the edges of the cake will start to pull away from the pan. When cooled, frost with cream cheese frosting.

Cream Cheese Frosting

Beat together:

8-ounce package cream cheese

½ cup softened butter

2 cups powdered sugar

1–2 teaspoons vanilla



Maids Irene and Ida Steche, twins, and cook Emma Bickel enjoy the Applewood pool in 1918.

taught her how to serve, and she assisted Margaret Alexander, the cook, when there were gatherings at Applewood. She also helped out in the kitchen making crabapple jelly and canning pears and peaches that would be given as gifts at Christmas.

Hilda sometimes accompanied Ruth Mott to the family home in Bermuda. She shared Mrs. Mott's passion for collecting recipes, and she was encouraged to experiment. The apple-shaped frosted sugar cookies she created were a big hit, and her adaptation of a chopped apple cake recipe became a classic that the staff at Applewood still make and serve at special events (recipe at left).

When Mrs. Mott required more assistance, Hilda took on overnight care, responding when Mrs. Mott rang a little silver bell. Creative and efficient, Hilda used the elevator chair installed on the back staircase to bring laundry upstairs.

In 1990, Pearl Lusk learned from her daughter, who worked for the Motts' family business office, that they planned to hire a night caretaker for Mrs. Mott. Pearl left her home in West Virginia to come for an interview and was hired on the spot.

During her first several years at Applewood, Pearl made Mrs. Mott's dinner and breakfast and stayed overnight in a third-floor bedroom in case she was needed. *There were 20-plus years difference in our ages, remembered Pearl, but she was up and still going strong when I was ready for bed!* Pearl often dressed up as a clown when the staff threw birthday parties for Mrs. Mott. Over time, the two women developed a warm friendship. Mrs. Mott called Pearl her *jewel*.

Russian-born Elena Kondrashin came to the United States in 1994 and started working at Applewood as a full-time housekeeper in 1995. Soon after, she began assisting Mrs. Mott in the evenings and accompanied her on three trips to the vacation home in Bermuda. Like her husband, Mrs. Mott was very keen on making sure that people turned out the lights when they left a room. Elena remembers the evening she left a light on in the closet while she was helping Mrs. Mott get ready for bed. Elena was asked, politely, to turn off the light, and she said she would, just as soon as they were finished. But a few minutes of a light bulb burning unnecessarily was a few minutes too many for her conscientious boss. Mrs. Mott gently replied, *Please turn it off now*.

Elena continued to work at Applewood after Mrs. Mott's passing. She helped with the renovation of the house when work began in 2005 and used specialized products to clean and preserve the paneling in the living room and office and to remove decades of wax from the original travertine floors.

When meetings are scheduled at the house, Elena often serves cookies and cakes that she makes from recipes collected by Mrs. Mott and perfected by the house staff over the years.

A cook for all seasons

A capable cook was an essential member of the staff at Applewood. During the first thirty years of the estate, the cooks needed to be able to prepare meals for the family and their guests, for gatherings large and small, and also oversee and carry out preparations for freezing, canning, drying, and storing the meat, milk, eggs, fruits, and vegetables that were grown and raised at Applewood. It was the cook's job, working in concert with the gardeners and farmhands, to make sure that to the greatest extent possible, most of the food served at Applewood came from Applewood, year round.

Dora Sharp cooked for the family and also did light housekeeping beginning in 1952. On January 17, 1959, C.S. and Ruth went to the home of Dr. Mott Rawlings, Ruth's brother, to celebrate his birthday, and they brought along a tasty cake that Dora made for the occasion. When Dora left the following March, Mr. Mott noted in his diary that she had given notice not because of dissatisfaction but because she had *too much home work of her own to attend to*.

Sarah Simmons took over cooking at Applewood in 1960. When she was hospitalized with complicated health issues in 1961, C.S. asked a Dr. Sitts, who was executive for the Mott Programs, to review her case. Sarah recovered and stayed on full-time at Applewood until early 1968, then worked only occasionally as needed for another year.

Margaret Alexander moved to Applewood when her husband, Herman, was hired as head gardener there in 1961. The couple lived in the two-bedroom apartment over the garage. Margaret worked as a pastry chef at Bryant Junior High School and helped out the house staff at Applewood when needed. She had a friendly relationship with the Motts, and when they offered her the position of cook in 1968, she accepted.

In a *Flint Journal* feature story on Margaret in September 1979, she confessed to being very nervous when she began working for the Motts. *When I first started to work there, I was really on edge*, she explained. *Once I was going to serve baked potatoes and forgot to ever turn the oven on.*

Time eased her nerves and proved her worthy of taking on the substantial responsibilities of running the kitchen in this busy household. Margaret cooked everything from intimate suppers to parties for scores of hungry Motts and their guests, who included entertainer Kitty Carlisle and journalist Mike Wallace.

By the time she arrived on the scene, farm animals were no longer being raised at Applewood. Still, she kept the freezer, pantry, and fruit cellar stocked, and she made good use of the fruits, vegetables, and fresh herbs harvested from Applewood's large garden and greenhouse. Her chicken and beef stocks were made from scratch, and she kept a supply of homemade peppermint ice cream and lemon sherbet in the freezer.

She also organized the preparation and packing of many baskets of canned and baked goods that were given as Christmas gifts to past and present staff and delivered around town to friends of the Motts.

Margaret ran a no-nonsense kitchen. Her day usually began at seven forty-five with the short walk from her apartment to Applewood's kitchen to prepare breakfast. Afterward, she met with Ruth to discuss the meals for the day and menus for upcoming special occasions. Margaret was an avid collector of recipes, and she loved her work. She delighted the family and their guests with her skills in the kitchen until 1983, when, at the age of sixty-nine, she died unexpectedly in surgery while undergoing a knee replacement. Her husband planted a blue spruce at Applewood in her memory.

One of Margaret's specialties was apple pie, made with Applewood's McIntosh apples (recipe at right).

Margaret's Apple Pie

6 cups sliced McIntosh apples, peeled and cored

1 2/3 cups sugar

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

Pinch salt

1 tablespoon tarragon vinegar

4 tablespoons flour

1 tablespoon butter

2 pastry pie crusts

Mix all ingredients together and pour into a pastry shell. Cover with a second pie crust and flute the edges. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 50 minutes.

Pie Crust

2 cups unbleached flour

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1/2 cup butter

1/2 cup lard

1 egg

Cold water

1 tablespoon vinegar

Mix together flour, salt, butter, and lard until it resembles coarse cornmeal. Beat egg in a 1-cup measuring cup. Add cold water to beaten egg to make 1 cup. Add the vinegar. Use as much of the liquid as needed to form a smooth pie dough.

Longtime memories and a heartfelt thank you

In November 1991, Ruth received a letter from Ray Bunker, a former employee, wishing her a happy ninetieth birthday. Ray had worked for the Motts from 1946 to 1948. Four and a half decades later, happily married and retired, with grown children and two grandchildren, he recalled his experiences at Applewood as a “junior butler” as he edged toward adulthood:

You had a major role in this formation as I recall your grace and warmth to me and all of those on “the staff.”

Memories flood back as I recall Harriet and Jettie. Ms. Rubel was so thoughtful as I assisted in preparing outgoing packages for the holidays in the 3rd floor “package room.” It was next door to the “luggage room” with all of those steamers [trunks] with stickers of trans-Atlantic crossings.

Harriet was very supportive even when I over-waxed the main table in the dining room. We had to call in a professional to strip the wax.

I remember you assisting when we cleaned and “quick-froze” the strawberries. Jettie would make those outstanding brownies and we would stop for brownies and milk . . . the memory of the laundry room below the kitchen with a lady that came in four days a week. Also, I saw [my] first calf born in the barn—a truly lasting memory.

Mrs. Butler would come for a summer visit. She would sit outside to smoke. Strange—but in those days, a smoker was not a big deal . . . the fun of reading all of those famous people in the guest book. Remember, I was just a 16- or 17-year-old young man that lived a very average life. . . .

Susan wanted to learn to drive a car . . . she advised me you agreed for me to help her learn “on the estate.” I used the old Chevy convertible and later found out you had NOT agreed she should be given any driving lessons.

Most of all, I remember when I went off to the Navy you sent me a Christmas card in Korea. You will never know how important that was to me.

Let me thank you for your major role in my life during a period of real growth. You may not have a vivid memory of me but, rest assured, you have never—and never will—be just a memory for me. You stand tall as a true lady that loved her family and her fellow persons. C.S. remains in my memory as a true hero—a role model for those things that are important in our country today.

Opposite: At work in Applewood's kitchen, Harriet Martin, second from left, and Jettie Williamson, second from right. (The other two women, not identified here, were hired for special occasions.)



It was the cook's job, working in concert with the gardeners and farmhands, to make sure that to the greatest extent possible, most of the food served at Applewood came from Applewood, year round.

THE HOME OFFICE AND GENERAL MOTORS CONNECTION

In capable hands

C.S.'s home office was a handsome paneled room off the front foyer with four walls of overstuffed bookshelves and a partners' desk which he shared with his personal secretary. While he commuted for years to his office at General Motors in Detroit and later kept a busy office in downtown Flint at the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Mr. Mott began and ended his work day in his home office whenever possible. It was here that his secretary assisted in maintaining records for the estate and took shorthand while he dictated personal correspondence and his daily diary. In later years, he liked to listen to the radio in his office. The Mott children enjoyed having the run of much of the house, but they knew the office was off limits.

Ellen Rubel was Mr. Mott's secretary at Applewood for twenty-nine years and proved to be a remarkably capable and accommodating assistant. She was skilled in all the traditional secretarial duties and was an especially excellent typist. When she transcribed Mr. Mott's dictation for his diary, she used carbon paper between each of the dozen or so sheets of white paper to produce the number of copies her boss wanted to send to family and friends—all in the days before electric typewriters, erasable paper, white correction fluid, and computers!

And much more was asked of Miss Rubel than shorthand and typing. In 1932, one of her chief tasks was to complete a catalogue of all the plants at Applewood—evergreens, deciduous trees, vines, shrubs, fruits, plants in the greenhouse, biennials, vegetables, perennials, and annuals with both common and botanical names and descriptions. From that list, Mr. Mott had labels made so everyone would be able to identify and be acquainted with the plants.

When the Motts were traveling, Miss Rubel kept in touch with frequent letters, passing along news of visitors, business, and farm operations to keep them connected with Applewood. She purchased groceries for the home when needed—especially when Mr. Mott noted a sale with good prices that shouldn't be missed. She was occasionally asked to drive her boss downtown to a meeting or to obtain a recipe for a tasty dish he had been served in someone's home. And when Mr. Mott was hoping for an afternoon game of tennis, she called his sports buddies to see who was available.

Miss Rubel had the pleasure of celebrating Mr. Mott's happy marriage to Ruth Rawlings in 1934. She watched their three children grow up, along with the children and grandchildren from Mr. Mott's first marriage. She knew the grandparents and in-laws, the Motts' friends, business partners, colleagues, and anyone who came through the front door. The house staff was not under her supervision, but she kept an eye on them, becoming both a trusted employee and a family friend.





C.S. in his hula outfit,
July 1935.

Before Miss Rubel retired on September 1, 1957, she searched for a suitable replacement and hired the very capable Betty Maeder. Sadly, whatever plans the versatile Miss Rubel may have had for retirement, they were cut short when she died little more than a week after she left Applewood.

Betty was a skilled secretary, but she admitted that she was *scared to death* on her first day. *Mr. Mott was very kind*, she remembered in an interview years after she retired, and *he expected perfection*. Betty arrived at the office at nine a.m. and generally worked until five p.m. Mr. Mott usually came into the office about nine thirty a.m., and his first task was to dictate his diary so he could provide a record of the activities from the previous day. After mail and other items were taken care of and Betty had her assignments for the day, including errands, household accounts, and payroll, Mr. Mott headed to his office at the Mott Foundation. He returned home in the late afternoon to sign letters and finish personal business.

No one was allowed to touch anything on Mr. Mott's desk except myself while I was working there, Betty recalled, *because although it looked cluttered, he could put his hand on everything. He knew right where it was.*

She also observed of her boss, *He loved his house, but anything that could be repaired was repaired. It wasn't replaced unless absolutely necessary. . . . One time he came home with some graphite that you put in locks to make them open. He went over the office doors and the front door and fixed them himself.*

One evening after work, when Betty was at home with her family, Mr. Mott called and invited her to come back to the house with her husband, Bill, and daughter, Pam, to see the night-blooming cereus. It was flowering in the greenhouse, as it did twice a year, and the blooms would last only one night. When they arrived, Mr. Mott took the family to see the two beautiful flowers. To Betty's surprise, he cut one and handed it to her.

C.S. loved to be funny and tell jokes, and Betty was used to her boss's sense of humor. Still, even she was astonished and quite entertained when he appeared at the small side door of his office one morning dressed for work but sporting a hula skirt over his suit. He began the day with a little hula dance and a big smile!

Sylvia La Rocque came to the United States from Wales at the age of eight and passed through Ellis Island, New York, with her family. She came to work for Mr. Mott in 1963, and the two hit it off immediately. She could remember only one stumbling block during all the years she worked for him. Mr. Mott would bring her back little mementos from the Republican conventions he attended, and she was uncomfortable with him not knowing she was a Democrat. One day, she told him, *You know, you and I don't belong to the same party.*

They talked politics for about thirty minutes, and Sylvia thought she might lose her job over the issue. But Mr. Mott asked, *We can still be friends, can't we?* She replied that she hoped so and that having a difference of opinion didn't have to interfere with their friendship. *We never had a word of discord at all*, she said. *It was wonderful.*

Sylvia enjoyed the diversity of her work and handling calls and questions regarding all the businesses her boss was involved in, including the sugar, water, and cattle companies. And she loved the easygoing relationships she had with the other staff. *We were very relaxed after I came here*, she remembered. *We moved around as one group . . . a very happy group.*

When Mr. Mott died in 1973, Sylvia stayed on to work for Ruth Mott. The two had become friends by then, and the transition was seamless. When Mrs. Mott created the Applewood Advisory Board in 1977, Sylvia served as recording secretary.

Following Sylvia's retirement in 1982, Mrs. Mott hired Dora Anderson, who worked at Applewood through the end of 1995. Dora's recipe for a moist sour cream coffee cake became

Sylvia at her desk,
February 19, 1982.



Maryanne Mott's favorite breakfast, and the staff prepared it frequently. On a brutally cold December morning in 2014, housekeeper Elena Kondrashin filled the home with the welcoming scent of cinnamon when she made Dora's coffee cake again, just as it had been prepared in Applewood's kitchen for decades, and served it to the staff to warm them from the inside out.

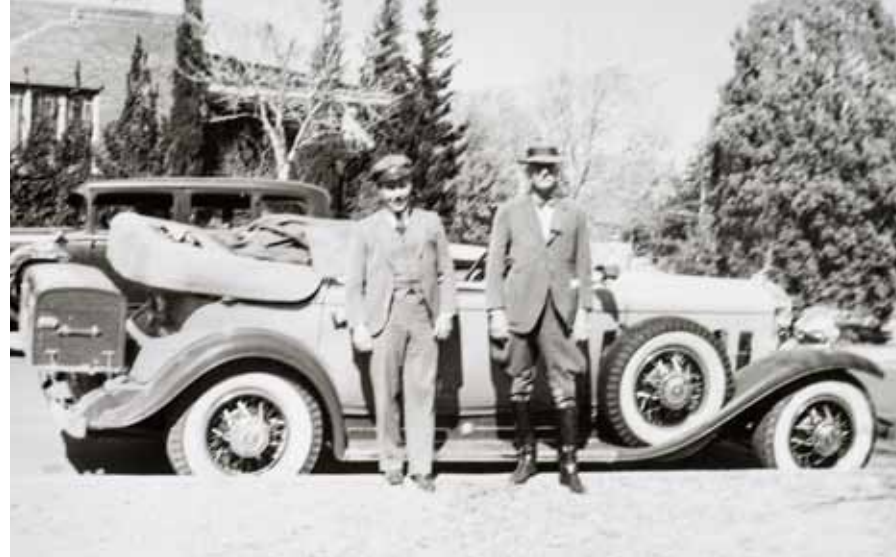
Sarah Warner followed Dora as personal assistant to Mrs. Mott, bringing to her work her charming and vivacious southern style and a passion for making the world a better place. The Arkansas native shared Mrs. Mott's love of the arts and concern for the welfare of women and girls. She had served with distinction in a number of leadership positions with Flint organizations including the Greater Flint Arts Council and the Flint Institute of Arts.

Sarah's warmth and graciousness and her belief in the power of good endeared her immediately to Mrs. Mott and to the other staff. After Mrs. Mott's death in 1999, Sarah became estate and special events coordinator for Applewood. She worked at the well-used partners' desk in the office until she died in 2001 after battling cancer for more than a decade.

In loving memory of their friend and coworker, the staff established a butterfly garden in the courtyard on the north side of the greenhouse, just outside the kitchen, and filled it with brightly colored flowers—favorites of both Sarah and butterflies. A chalk portrait of Sarah adorns one of the brick walls that surround it. They also wrote a story called "Hugs Around Your Neck," about a girl named Sarah Beth who loves flowers and bright butterflies, which is used as a part of Applewood's youth programs.

An illustration from "Hugs Around Your Neck."





C.S. with his chauffeur, James Warfield, who traveled with him on road trips all over the country.

Big cars, little cars, and a love affair with the Corvair

In the early years of Applewood, the Motts' cars were often big and elegant. C.S. referred to taking the Cadillacs ("CAD 12" and "CAD 16") in his notes about his road trips, and there was always a chauffeur close at hand to drive members of the family—especially the ladies—where they needed to go. A close look at the brick wall in Applewood's carriage barn reveals nearly two dozen penciled notes left by the chauffeurs from 1934 to 1936, recording their maintenance on the cars housed there, including these:

April 10, 1934

Changed Oil 16260 miles

Bought

New Buick 7268 miles

Oct 1 1935 35-41 model

Oct 10 '35 changed oil

& Greased car 8420 miles

Chk Botig & Brakes

6 qts 10 20 oil

In the fall of 1933, Applewood was selected as the backdrop for a photo shoot to introduce the sleek 1934 Buicks, and Mr. Mott's secretary, Miss Rubel, briefed her boss on the events of Wednesday, September 27:

A Picture outfit spent the afternoon here taking pictures to advertise Buick cars. I placed the girls in the ballroom for changing clothes and the boys in Harding's room. Mr. Dick Allen, one of the men

who appeared to be managing things, told me that they were experimenting with a new theory of taking still pictures while the subjects moved about and talked much the same as they do in movies. He said the photographer, Mr. Wolff, is outstanding in his line. They will be in Flint Thursday and possibly Friday and I hope you will get a chance to see them before they go. I am sure you will be most interested. They will be back here in the A.M.

He was, indeed, interested to see them and noted events of that next morning:

The Picture outfit arrived at 8:00 A.M. Besides Mr. Wolff, the photographer, his assistant and helper, there were six good looking girls and as many men, also several 1934 Buick cars with drivers. They spent the day taking pictures on the place in all sorts of locations. In some of the pictures they even used the saddle horses. Aside from the regular still pictures they have been taking some still pictures which show motion. That sounds funny. But you may have seen pictures of this sort on billboards or in magazines. It is obtained by having the camera on a tripod and making a regular still picture, and then by tremendously decreasing the size of the diaphragm and making exposure while the car backs up from its original position, thus giving a faint blur of a car in motion and a finished picture of a car not in motion.



Opposite: Advertising photos of 1934 Buicks taken at Applewood, 1933. The cars are difficult to identify without interior views, but the top two are most likely Model 91 club sedans. The vehicle in the foreground at bottom left could be a Model 97 five-passenger sedan, a Model 90 seven-passenger sedan, or a Model 90L limo. The vehicle in the background is likely a Model 91. At bottom right is a 50, 60, or 90 series.

Below: C.S. and Ruth pose in 1968 with one of their much-enjoyed Corvairs, along with Peanuts, their Chihuahua, and Toby, their Labrador retriever.

There were other photo shoots for new-model cars at Applewood through the years. To keep the soft ground from being dented with tire tracks, the cars were driven onto sheets of plywood placed on top of the lawn.

Mr. Mott became an advocate for smaller cars, which were gaining popularity in Europe, but General Motors didn't seem interested until it released the ground-breaking 1960 Corvair late in 1959. Curious about the sporty new vehicle, the Motts drove to Applegate Chevrolet so Ruth could test-drive the car for the first time. She was pleased with its appearance and performance, so they ordered a royal blue model for her and a silver model for C.S. Both were six-passenger sedans with automatic transmissions and all the extras. They appreciated the Corvair's maneuverability and comparatively good gas mileage. In April of the car's inaugural year, C.S. noted that while driving at 50 miles per hour, he used four gallons of gas and covered 93 miles, getting 23 miles per gallon.

The Corvair turned a lot of heads. *Time* magazine put GM vice president Ed Cole and the Corvair on its cover, and *Motor Trend* named the Corvair the 1960 Car of the Year. The Motts bought a new one every year they were produced.

But the Corvair had flaws. Despite its revolutionary design, it fell out of favor with the public, especially after Ralph Nader featured it in his book about American cars called *Unsafe at Any Speed*. C.S., however, was smitten. He test-drove the new Chevrolet Camaro in 1966 and declared that it would be popular, but for him, nothing would take the place of the Corvair.





C.S. at his desk, 1930s.

The diary

C.S. set aside time to chronicle his life, and the lives of those around him, day by day, and in some cases hour by hour, throughout much of his adult life. He sent frequent letters to family and friends and wrote volumes about his thoughts and experiences in the first three decades of the twentieth century. But on March 16, 1930, as he and close friend Bill Huey were departing for an extended trip to the Southwest, C.S. launched the diary that he would write faithfully for more than forty years.

Usually, he dictated the diary, which was typed by his personal secretary using several sheets of carbon paper to make copies. Pages were sent to close friends and family members, which reduced the need to write them individual letters, an efficiency equal to sending the same e-mail to groups of people. Those first diary pages recording his travels through the Southwest were sent to his mother, daughters Aimeé and Elsa, son Harding, and Bill Huey's wife, Louise, after whom C.S. named a dairy cow.

The diary gave the observant Mr. Mott a platform to sing praises, blast ineptness, wax philosophic, indulge in whimsy, and leave a remarkably detailed trail. He often recorded the quantity of meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products from his farm animals; the state of the gardens and greenhouse; the vegetables and fruits being prepared and served by Applewood's cooks; and the comings and goings of children, grandchildren, friends, business acquaintances, and staff.

He gave equal time to the acquisition of new hens and the purchase of a new painting and noted his frequent conversations with Applewood's gardener and farmer, John Mair and Arthur Hatherly.

Card games, tennis matches, and games of squash were logged and often included a description of the clothes worn for the event. Radio news and drama programs were mentioned and, later, favorite TV shows. Mixed in were business reports, political commentary, current events, the particulars on philanthropic projects, announcements of births and deaths, and his take on the everyday routines at Applewood.

C.S. was also quite comfortable reporting on the health of everyone at Applewood, including the family's dogs.

If you stopped by the residence for a casual visit, attended a private party or business meeting there, dated one of the Mott children, or spent the weekend, it was likely that your name would appear in the diary. Individuals and small groups of visitors were always mentioned. Dinner-party guests were usually listed along with the menu and after-dinner activities. On September 20, 1934, C.S. listed all thirty-five individuals to whom James Warfield, the chauffeur, was delivering bouquets of dahlias cut fresh at Applewood that morning by Mr. Mair.

C.S. pretty much wrote wherever he was, whether on one of his annual trips to the Southwest, traveling in Europe, attending meetings in Detroit, vacationing at the family home in Bermuda, working in his office at Applewood, or resting in the sun porch on a quiet Sunday afternoon. If he was traveling, entries often included notes on his methods of transportation, local weather conditions, and the names and relationships of those accompanying him. If he was motoring, he documented the total miles covered, average speed, gas and oil used, occasional hitchhikers he picked up, and mishaps. When he skipped a day in the diary, it was usually noted, along with the reason, and he made a good effort to recall the events.

October 27, 1942 (discussing steps being taken to accommodate fuel rationing): *C.R. and I had dinner together and later rigged up some makeshift storm windows by sewing white cotton flannel over screens. . . . We are keeping the house . . . averaging not over 65 degrees. The maids find their sitting room very drafty and uncomfortable and we shall probably have them sit in the dining room with fire in the fireplace in the evening.*

We have instructed Mair to shut off the domestic hot-water heater except from 7:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., that is ten hours each of three days, Mondays, Wednesday, and Saturdays, or a total of 30 hours out of 168. People in this house will have to take their baths, etc. when the heat is on, and if meanwhile hot water is needed, it will have to be heated on the kitchen stove.

January 1, 1953 (New Year's party): *The dining room table was laid with platters of delicious cheese, ham, tongue, orange bread, and other dainty pastry forms, as well as salted nuts and Christmas and New Year's cookies.*

We were very happy and delighted that both Susan and Stewart voluntarily stood in line with us for awhile to greet and be introduced to many of our friends. We were very happy to have Elsa here for our party as she is always a delightful addition to any gathering.

Stewart looked very handsome in his 1934 cutaway with a large white carnation in his buttonhole and wearing a Christmas necktie which had on it a tiny little black and gold old-fashioned automobile.

It was lovely having the Rawlings, the Harding-Motts, and the Kleinpells and their children here for most of the afternoon and evening to share this lovely New Year's Day with us.

August 13, 1967: *Just before retiring, C.R. had me go out to the greenhouse where eight of our Night Blooming Cereus had opened. They were beautiful and gave off an exotic perfume. There are three buds which have not yet opened but will open tomorrow night.*

Getting the news of the day

Newspapers were the most common source for news at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the Mott household received several. Daily papers, usually designated as morning, afternoon, or evening publications, ran everything from quick notices of who was who and what they were doing to in-depth stories of national interest on politics and business. There was a bit of lag time between an event happening and the story about it appearing in the paper, yet the remarkable speed at which reporters and printers worked made it possible for a big story to break in the morning and show up in the evening paper, even if the article was no bigger than a sizable headline, a sensational photo, and a few sentences.

Telegrams were used extensively, both for urgent personal correspondence and to communicate news of critical or time-sensitive events. The Motts sent and received hundreds of Western Union telegrams in the early years at Applewood, especially to share information about travel arrangements, to announce the passing of a friend or relative, and to send expressions of congratulations and sympathy.

The first amplitude modulation—or AM—radio news program was broadcast August 31, 1920, by station 8MK in Detroit, known today as the CBS station WWJ. That day, our relationship with the news changed forever. Radio reporting was fast. A story could be transmitted to the public soon after a reporter relayed it to the broadcasting station. Within a short time, the news became more than just words. The sounds of news—from shelling on the battlefield to voices on Broadway—could be heard in homes and offices across the country, and the radio as entertainment followed.

When they listened to the radio in the office or on the sun porch at Applewood, the Motts and their guests could feel they were sitting in the audience at a live concert or in the courtroom of a murder trial. They tuned in to performances by favorite entertainers, including their friend Louise Bernhardt, and to follow serial dramas. They also marveled at hearing speeches being given around the world. From C.S.'s diary:

Monday, November 3, 1930: *Last Thursday afternoon 4:45 o'clock, I tuned in my office radio to the League of Nations dinner being*

held in London and heard a speech by the Prince of Wales which I presume was written by someone else but it was quite interesting to hear him talk so far away.

The radio also brought World War II close to home. On Sunday, September 3, 1939, Ruth wrote in her diary:

War declared early this morning by Britain on Germany. France expected to do same very soon. Everyone glued to their radios—news broadcast from London, Paris & Berlin. Hitler determined to take Polish Corridor & Warsaw. Dreadful state of affairs.

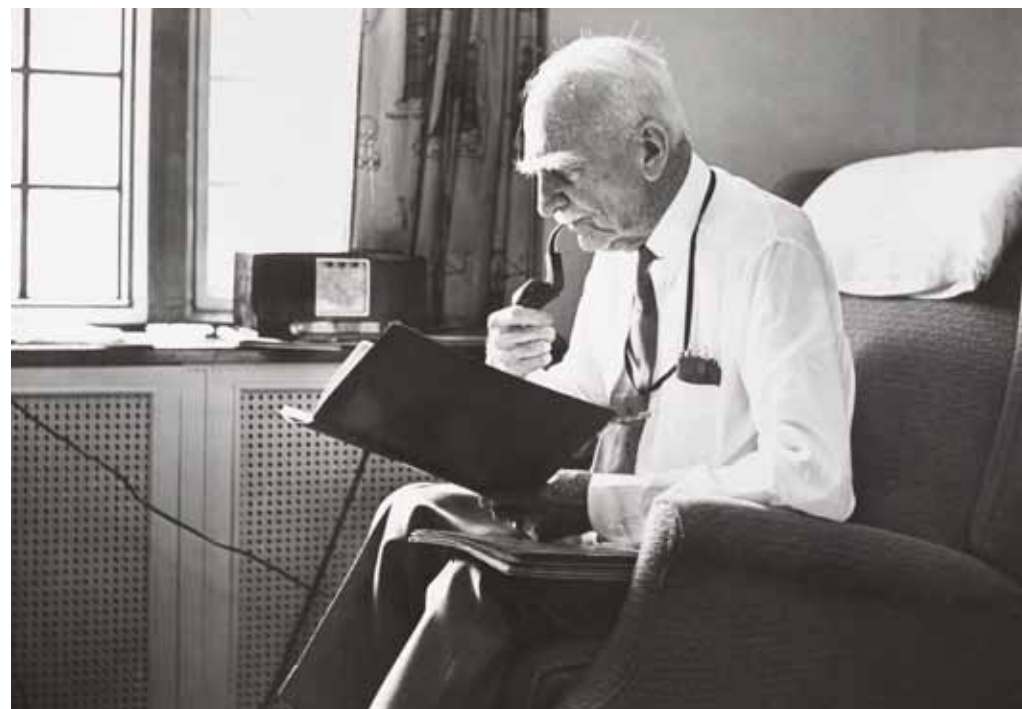
Radio news partnered well with newspaper reporting, and the Motts were loyal to both. On January 2, 1942, C.S. wrote: *Over the radio last night and in the newspapers this morning, we note that sale of new automobiles and trucks by dealers has been stopped and they are to be rationed the same as the previous order on tires. I expect this will cause some trouble and inconvenience both to dealers and prospective car purchasers.*

When TV came on the scene, the Motts purchased a large black-and-white set and put it in the basement recreation room. Daughter Maryanne was permitted to watch a few programs by herself occasionally. The one she remembers best was *The Web*, a series that featured a different drama and cast of characters each week. The plots were adaptations of stories written by members of the Mystery Writers of America, and they featured everyday people in scary situations. The show also introduced many actors who became future stars, such as Grace Kelly, Paul Newman, Jack Palance, Eva Marie Saint, and Joanne Woodward. But the stellar acting was lost on young Maryanne. In order to best see the TV screen, all the lights in the room had to be turned off.

Think of being seven or eight years old . . . watching this program in this black basement when nobody was near to hold your hand, Maryanne recalls. It was a terrifying experience!

By the 1950s and '60s, the Motts' favorite programs included *Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*, *The \$64,000 Challenge*, *Alfred Hitchcock*, and *Bonanza*. Eventually, a TV was installed in the sun room.

Technology had come a very long way by July 20, 1969, when Ruth and C.S. relaxed at the Lausanne, Switzerland, apartment of Maryanne's in-laws, Charlie and Renee Meynet, and watched television news of American astronauts landing on the moon.



Above: C.S. listening to the radio, August 1960.

Below: Watching TV in the sun room, January 1965.



A FAMILY OF ATHLETES AND LOVERS OF GAMES

Game on!

Riding horses was a favorite activity at Applewood, and many members of the family were accomplished equestrians. The Motts kept fine saddle horses for several years and enjoyed riding in the fields and rural lanes around Applewood, away from news of politics and economics.

Before TV, card games were nearly an everyday pastime at Applewood. Bridge, canasta, hearts, and gin rummy were popular. C.S.'s mother also liked cards, and her visits to Applewood often included being delivered by the Motts' chauffeur to the homes of friends where she spent many afternoons playing bridge. She was also very good at whist, an English card game of trick taking that was popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mother Mott's great-granddaughter, Joan, called her a whist whiz and observed, *she had medals from one end of the room to the other!*

Anagrams was a challenging after-dinner game that Applewood guests enjoyed. It required them to rearrange the letters of a word or phrase to make a new word or phrase.

Following a formal dinner party on the evening of February 10, 1950, C.S. and Ruth proposed a relatively new game, similar to charades. They began by dividing the guests into two teams. Each team wrote on slips of paper the names of people, places, slogans, and similar recognizable things. One member of a team was then given a slip from the other side and was challenged with getting his or her teammates to guess the words written on the paper by acting out, all while still wearing their tuxedos and formal gowns. The guests must have loved it, because the party didn't break up until two a.m.

Poker was a popular after-dinner game for men, and C.S. usually led in small stakes. According to his son, Harding, if you wanted to play for more, perhaps a dollar a point, his father would agree but often added a caveat such as *if you give the winnings to charity*.

During warm-weather weekends especially, Applewood swelled with visitors, and sports and games filled the days and evenings. Activities began shortly after breakfast and were sometimes paired with walks around the estate to observe the trees and flowers in bloom and new additions of livestock in the barns.

C.S. noted the events of Memorial Day weekend in 1932, when guests included daughter Elsa; son Harding and his wife, Gerry, who were living in Detroit; and their friend Nell Medbury:

Saturday, May 28: *I was at work in the library when Harding, Gerry and Elsa arrived at 3:00 p.m. in the blue Buick, loaded with handbags, etc. Elsa was looking fine and I was delighted to have her with me again at Applewood. Harding had to beat it to the dentist for an hour—on his return we played English croquet. Nell Medbury arrived for dinner and spent the evening with us.*

Sunday, May 29: *Pajama breakfast, newspapers—then a couple of games of tennis. Court is in good shape. Dinner—croquet—then our first game of badminton which took well with all of us. After supper we played hearts.*

Opposite: Ready for a game of tennis at Applewood are, from left, C.S., June Pitt, Frances Pierce, and Frank Manley, July 27, 1941.





Ruth contemplates her next move playing Russian Bank, July 1934.

Later in June, the weekend guests included Harding and Gerry and good friends Louise Huey and Lucille and Nolte Ament:

Saturday, June 25: As soon as Louise Huey arrived from Detroit with Harding and Gerry, I took the girls around on a regular inspection trip. The Pearl bush is still in full bloom and very handsome. The roses in the sunken garden are in profusion. Lots of ripe cherries. The dahlias are coming along beautifully . . . several of the ramblers at the tennis court are in blossom.

After the inspection, Nolte put on his bathing suit and I my trunks and we had two good sets of tennis. Then dinner and the usual games.

Sunday, June 26: Pajama breakfast as usual, about 10:00. Then six of us went out and played badminton and bowling on the green for an hour or more, changing about. The bowling green is in marvelous shape with the bent grass and it is a pleasure to play with it in that condition. After dinner we played croquet and after that Nolte and I had two sets of tennis. Then supper, radio and games.

C.S.'s tennis partners and opponents came from all walks of life. When he teamed up with Frank Manley, superintendent of Flint Schools, to create the nationally acclaimed Community School Programs, the two discovered they were good tennis players together, and they both liked gin rummy.

The pretty blond Texan whom C.S. had married in 1934 shared his enjoyment of games. When the newlyweds came home to Applewood from their honeymoon on November 27, 1934, they enjoyed a fine dinner prepared by the staff and relaxed afterward with coffee and a card game called Russian Bank, a form of double solitaire they played for many years. When Ruth was hospitalized briefly in 1935, C.S. brought decks of cards with him to the hospital so they could continue playing.



Ruth was also a skilled athlete and a worthy tennis opponent. She and her partner Margaret L. Sutton had taken runner-up in women's doubles at the Southwestern Tennis Championship in 1927. A year later, she and partner Aurella "Chella" Phillips placed first.

On September 7, 1940, Ruth spent the morning at Applewood preparing her entries for the annual garden show, and in the afternoon, she and C.S. played tennis to a score of 6-6.

The next day, they played more tennis in the afternoon and quit when the score was 5-5. C.S. observed they were playing *quite evenly*.

Maryanne once asked her father if he minded that her mother was such a strong player. He replied, *Not at all, I was very proud of her!*



Above left: Ruth lines up her croquet shot.

Above: Ruth and C.S., well matched on and off the court, circa 1932-1934.



APPLEWOOD THE GATHERING PLACE

Winter fun



Above: Elsa Mott and a friend.

Top, right: Mott family and friends skiing at the estate.

Opposite: Applewood in the stillness of new snow.

Ethel and C.S.'s children loved playing outside with their friends in the wintertime. Their son, Harding, recalled with fondness the years they dammed Gilkey Creek so they could skate on it and the ramp they built at the top of Applewood's hill so they could coast on a toboggan across the snow-covered vegetable garden.

Aimeé, the Motts' firstborn, was a student at Emma Willard in Troy, New York, when the family moved to Applewood. She kept up with everything going on back in Flint through frequent letters from Elsa and Harding.

On January 23, 1918, well into the family's first winter in their new home, Elsa sent Aimeé a newsy update on their dog, Pepper, and the snowy fun around Applewood that week. The toboggan slide was done, and they had been sledding down it with the gardener's children. She noted her efforts for the war and shared the details of a party she hosted with Harding:

I am crocheting a "Douglas French Cap" for the soldiers because I am so sick of knitting. Mother is on her third cap and Miss Allen is making one too.

Last Sat. Harding and I had a sleigh-ride party. We had about twenty boys and girls. We started from here about four o'clock in our big bob [sleigh] with some hay in it, and drove all around town till about 5:30. Then we came back here and had supper. We had meat (some kind of stew) and mashed potatoes, jam, and buttered rolls, and coco with whipped cream in it, and ice cream and fancy crackers. After supper we played games till about 8:30 and then they went home. We had an awfly good time. Mother said it was the last party we could have till the end of the war.

Write me and tell me when you want Aunt Clara and I to come and visit you.

Pies full of love and cakes full of kisses:

Your loving sister—

Elsa

P.S. I won't write you another letter till you write me one—EM



Left: Elsa ready to ride, 1922.

Right: Tea under the trees, circa 1916–1920. Mother Mott is third from right.



Having a fine time at Applewood

Family, friends, and business associates visited Applewood often, and whether they came for an hour, a weekend, or a month, they found plenty to do around the estate and an abundance of good homegrown food at mealtimes.

C.S. frequently had his horses saddled so he could take guests for rides through the nearby countryside. And he had fun introducing them to his farm animals, especially visitors who were better acquainted with city life and had never seen a litter of piglets or the source of the butter on their toast.

The Motts and their guests spent many hours listening to dramas such as the murder trial of Vivienne Ware on Detroit's WJR. Parties and get-togethers at Applewood often revolved around card games and sports, and a stroll around the estate with visitors could be as much an enlightening lesson in botany as a peaceful way to pass the afternoon.

On April 4, 1930, while C.S. was in the Southwest, he received a letter from his son-in-law, Hamish Mitchell, describing a gala weekend at Applewood that he and Elsa hosted with C.S.'s oldest daughter, Aimeé, and her husband, Pat Butler. Friends had come from Detroit to join them, and a buddy named McDougal ("Mac") was there. Hamish noted, *everything went along swimmingly*.

As I have already inferred, Mac has been around quite a lot recently. One nite the four of us held a "Partie Carte Francais" in the kitchen. Mac was chef, I was chief bottle washer and the two girls represented some comic opera or other, presumably of French extraction although much more Turco-Spanish in effect.

Elsa had toured Flint and obtained a red and white table-cloth, a 2½' long French loaf, garlic and two gallons of olive oil. Mac selected and purchased the meat, cooking it and the potatoes which Virginia had sliced in her usual clumsy manner, with perfection and a touch second to none. He also produced a surprise dessert of brandied pears, and before dinner pulled out of the snow then in front of the house, a bottle of Dubonnet. The final and most realistic effect was produced by the elimination of the electric lights and the substitution of a candle stuck in a whisky bottle over which the girls had dropped various colored candle wax for many hours earlier in the day. Later we all signed our names on the table cloth and your clever daughter has since embroidered these names in black thread. You missed a good party.

Young Stewart Mott attended the red brick Kearsley School from kindergarten through the fifth grade, just as his sister Susan had done before him. Because it was only about half a block from Applewood, his buddies often walked home with him after school to play. And what a great place to play! In the basement recreation room, the children could choose from ping-pong, bowling, and billiards. Outside, there was lawn bowling, croquet, a swimming pool, and tennis courts. The regulation squash court was adjacent to the garage. Stewart recalled that even when he was a child, Applewood felt to him like a country club in the city.

Pajama mornings, busy days, and lively nights

In April 1932, C.S. received a letter from his friend, actress Hedda Hopper, with whom he shared a birthday. She wrote, *Come hell or high water, I expect to be in Chicago for the [Republican] Convention and come to Flint afterwards.* C.S. had visited Hedda many times while in California, and he was greatly disappointed when she sent a wire June 2 wishing him happy birthday and advising that she would not make it to Chicago or Flint: *had counted terribly on it—doing two pictures. Beginning another tomorrow and in these days jobs win always.*

Later that summer, C.S. noted all the comings and goings during three days in August packed with typical warm-weather activities at Applewood when he had a full house. He was not married at the time, but his life was busy, and he greatly enjoyed the frequent company of family and friends. That weekend, he was joined by his mother, his son Harding and Harding's wife Gerry, Gerry's sister Claire and her friend Betty Best, and his daughter and son-in-law Aimeé and Pat. Daughter Elsa and her Scottish husband, Hamish, were not present, but they were remembered, as always, when tea was served. Martha Lorber, who was also staying at Applewood, was a friend and an accomplished singer from New York.

Friday, August 19: *Up at 9:00 for pajama breakfast and lazed around until 10:30 when we played croquet and Badminton. It was a little cool today but we got in quite a lot of tennis, doubles and singles. After lunch Pat, Miss Lorber and I went downtown for shopping—a skimmer for the pool at the Ten Cent Store, cigars at the United Cigar Co., a tango record and a tooth-brush for Pat. Afterwards some swam in the pool and then tea. We delivered Mother at Mrs. Medbury's at 1:30 and she played cards all afternoon and went out to dinner and played all the evening. After dinner Mrs. Medbury came up and we had a table of contract [bridge] and five of us played Hearts. Retired early.*

Saturday, August 20: *Gerry and Harding made an early start to get to business at 8:30 in the morning. The rest of us had breakfast shortly after 9:00. Claire and Betty played tennis. Pat, Aimeé, Miss Lorber and I [played] badminton and then bowling on the green. After lunch went down to the Capitol and saw the four Marx Brothers in "Horsefeathers." It was rather funny but I am not very strong for it. Got home shortly after 3:00 and found Harding and Gerry had returned.*

Andy Hotchkiss and a friend, Hooper Bennett, of Memphis, have arrived and we have had various mixed doubles of tennis and Badminton. Bennett knows the Richardsons of Memphis and also the Woods family. The afternoon we spent playing tennis, badminton, croquet and bowling on the green, and as we had ten participants we kept the balls rolling lively. After dinner the evening was spent with games, radio and dancing. Some of us retired at 11:00. Harding came out on my porch to sleep about one half-hour later, but Andy and Hooper, Claire and Betty apparently stayed up until 1:00. The radio was still going when I passed into the arms of Morpheus.

Sunday, August 21: *Pajama breakfast as usual. Inspection of Applewood and then an assault on all of our lawn athletics started. There was some backgammon on the terrace. After dinner more sports, swimming and photography. Tea aux rum at 4:30 carrying out the precepts of Hamish and thinking about him. As a matter of fact, we do usually remark about him each day when having tea, for we think he would be enjoying the party if he could be here. After tea Andy and Hooper went to Detroit. One of the edibles we had at tea was peppers prepared by Miss Lorber the day before. She selected some peppers about half the size of a coconut, put them over a low open flame of gas and practically broiled them. The outside skins burnt black and looked like burnt paper. She then took them to the sink and in water skinned the black film off, cut them into large slices and sprinkled them with olive oil. This was served on bread or toast and was most appetizing. Cards, etc. for the evening.*

On Monday morning, C.S. noted, *The gang got up at 6:00 A.M. I came down 15 minutes later and found seven of them in the kitchen cooking and eating breakfast. By seven, the guests began departing.*



Ruth with her father, Dr. Junius Rawlings; her mother, Sarah Rawlings; and C.S., with two huge squash harvested from Applewood's garden, circa 1935.

Overleaf: The family gathers around the dining-room table to celebrate C. S. Mott's seventy-fifth birthday on June 2, 1950. Pictured on page 142, going clockwise from the foreground, are Kate Butler, Stewart Mott, Sarah Rawlings (Molla), Pat Butler, Jr., Gerry Mott, Pat Butler, Ruth and C.S., Harding Mott, Laura Rawlings, Harding Mott, Jr., Maryanne Mott, and Boynton Rawlings.

Pictured on page 143, going clockwise from left on the far side of the table, are Harding Mott, Jr., Maryanne Mott, Boynton Rawlings, Claire Mott, Peter (Pekka) Butler, Susan Mott, Reggie Wells, Aimeé Mott Butler, C.S., Elsa Mott Mitchell, Junius Mott Rawlings, Joan Mitchell, Kate Butler, Stewart Mott, Sarah Rawlings (Molla), Pat Butler, Jr., Gerry Mott, and Pat Butler.





Garden clubs, Junior League, and a hostess with pluck

After marrying C.S. and moving to Applewood, Ruth immersed herself immediately in the daily functions of her new home. Head gardener John Mair taught her the names of the flowers around the estate, which fed her appreciation for beauty and all growing things which had been passed on to her as a young girl from her mother. By the following spring, Ruth had taken on the title of botanical secretary and completed her first detailed report on the state of the gardens, the flowering shrubs, rhubarb and asparagus, and lettuce from the hotbed.

She noted that many plants were late in blooming because of excessive frost and hard winds and also that the house was filled with beautiful flowers and potted plants from the greenhouse. In less than a year, she developed an excellent grasp of the names of plants, and she won many ribbons when she began entering her

arrangements in the Flint Garden Club's annual show.

Ruth also had an eye for setting a fine table. She wanted to know what flowers were in season, and then she selected the dishes and linens to be used so that the flowers matched the table service. One set of dishes was designed with a different flower in the center of each plate, and she liked to have her guests guess what the flowers were. Often she placed a different fresh flower by each plate and gave each guest a place card with the name of the flower on it. To find their seats, they had to match the name of the flower on the place card with the real one.

All this was planned well in advance of the event so that the occasion rolled out smoothly and looked effortless. Armed

with her remarkable skills for entertaining, Ruth comfortably hosted frequent gatherings for friends and family, in addition to bridge and canasta parties, meetings of clubs and organizations she belonged to such as the Twentieth Century Club and Junior League, and luncheons for bridal and baby announcements.

In June 1938, the Flint Junior League held a concert on Applewood's south lawn. They brought in a grand piano for the event and had it set up on the terrace. Seats were placed alongside the pool. Spotlights were rigged in the trees, and ferns and flowers decorated the area. Both the Junior League and the Elks Glee Club performed, and the evening was pronounced a big success.

Thousands of people were invited to Applewood for dinners and parties over the decades—presidents of universities, banks, and associations; high-level General Motors executives; government officials; and entertainers such as Vincent Price and Helen Hayes enjoyed Ruth's engaging hospitality. She was bright, confident, and genuinely interested in what others had to say.

Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Bill Mauldin, whose family had been friends with Ruth's since their days in Mountain Park, New Mexico, was among those who signed Applewood's guest book.

On a cold winter day in February 1964, Bill attempted to fly his mother and her husband in his private plane from Chicago to Flint so they could visit with the Motts, but bad weather set in.

When Bill saw his plane start to ice up, he put down in Belleville, Michigan, and called Ruth at Applewood. He said he would call again after lunch and would try flying when the ice on the plane's wings thawed. Several hours later, hearing nothing from the travelers, Ruth drove to the Flint airport to await their arrival. They finally touched down there at five thirty. Unruffled by the delay, Ruth happily collected her weary guests and took them back to Applewood for dinner.

Ruth arranging flowers, 1945.



Those wonderful dinner parties

Elegant dinner parties were part of the busy social life at Applewood. They came in all sizes, and with a dining-room table that would accommodate twenty-four, a guest list of two dozen or fewer made for easy serving and an intimate setting. For larger parties—and there were many—guests could be seated at tables set up for the occasion in the gallery and sun room and outside in good weather, with tents as backup if it looked like rain.

Children were not usually present for dinner parties unless the gathering was for family. When they were, the youngest were usually served together at a table separate from the grown-ups.

Ruth and C.S. hosted their traditional New Year's Day open house with 150 guests in attendance on January 1, 1939. It was a gala affair, with plenty of good food and several gallons of the Motts' signature homemade eggnog, courtesy of Applewood's cows and chickens, but they were disappointed at the turnout. Almost half of the people they invited had to stay home because of bad weather, difficult roads, and illness.

On Tuesday, January 10, the busy couple hosted a dinner party for twenty. Included at the table were Mr. and Mrs. John Pierce. Mr. Pierce was with the Flint School Board and one of C.S.'s frequent tennis buddies.

Ruth used her best table runners and silver, and guests were treated to roasted homegrown goose. Following coffee and cordials, the party split into groups for various games. C.S. joined six other men in the dining room for poker.

Just four days later, on Saturday, January 14, the Motts entertained another twenty guests. Chevrolet colleagues Harry Coen and Arnold Lenz attended with their wives, along with Dr. Fred Miner, head of the Children's Health Camp for youngsters with tuberculosis, and his wife. As usual, C.S. was in charge of putting together everything necessary for cocktails before dinner.

The group adjourned to the basement recreation room after dinner. Ruth had hired two pinsetters, so several guests engaged in a friendly bowling tournament while others played ping-pong and Chinese checkers. It was after midnight when everyone went home.

Twenty years later, the dinner parties were still lively, elegant, and frequent. The Motts no longer raised farm animals, but the fruits and vegetables served were often from the estate's orchards and gardens, and the meals were always good, thanks to Ruth's impeccable planning and the cook's skill.

On August 15, 1960, the dinner party included Gertie and Gaston Mack and their son, Manfred, a General Motors Institute student from Geneva, Switzerland, who caught Maryanne's eye; Mott and Laura Rawlings; and Anthony and Jo DeLorenzo. There were ten in all counting Ruth, C.S., and Maryanne. Dinner was described in French, in honor of the Swiss guests. It included potage champignon, filet mignon, pomme de terre, asperge avec hollandaise, vin du pays, glace fraise avec meringue and café demi tasse—or mushroom soup, steak and potatoes, asparagus with hollandaise sauce, local wine, strawberry ice cream with meringue and coffee.

Dinner was followed by conversation—the men in one room and the women in another. And on this evening, a small change in the routine brought a thrilling discovery. C.S. noted:

After dinner we went back to the living room for conversation, and as usual the girls got together with their type of conversation while the men discussed what they considered more serious matters. The DeLorenzos left to go back home to Birmingham about 10:30 P.M. The Macks remained a little longer when C.R. came up with the idea of looking for the balloon satellite. And we went out on the front lawn about 11 o'clock and were lucky in locating it overhead. It was clearly visible as a light star . . . traveling from the northwest to southeast at a rate of 15,000 miles an hour. . . . It was the first time that any of us had observed a satellite in the sky. The satellite is described as a ten-story aluminum coated sphere which remains visible for more than 10 minutes. I'd say quite a bit more than 10 minutes.

Their perfectly timed sighting was of *Echo 1*, the first passive communications satellite designed to reflect microwave signals. It had been launched just three days earlier. After it reached a low orbit around the globe, it would be used to bounce communication signals from one location on earth to another.



Stamp commemorating the *Echo 1* satellite, issued December 15, 1960.



A group of boys enjoying Applewood's pool on a summer day, circa 1918–1920.

Camp staff visits Applewood

Among the many who enjoyed activities at Applewood were staff from Mott Camp, the boys' camp at Pero Lake run by the Mott Foundation in conjunction with the Flint Board of Education. It came under the leadership of Floyd Allen, a longtime friend of C.S., beginning in 1934. On a bright, sunny Monday, August 31, 1942, twenty-two members of the staff arrived at Applewood in the early afternoon to celebrate the end of the summer season. They scattered about the estate to play tennis, croquet, lawn bowling, paddle and deck tennis, badminton, and other games. C.S. noted:

At 5:30 I started the fire out on the lawn and in about 20 minutes had a good bed of coals and cooked about 50 hamburger steaks. Other good things to eat were brought out and put upon the camp table and the boys gorged themselves, finishing off with a very fancy dessert consisting of a large ring of cantaloupe with home-made ice cream and peaches.

As soon as it became dark after supper, the boys went down to the basement where they bowled, played pool, ping pong and otherwise enjoyed themselves.

Mother Mott

Among the much-anticipated visitors at Applewood was Isabella Turnbull Stewart Mott, C.S.'s energetic and social "Mother Mott." For many years, she made an annual trek in the summer from her apartment in New York City to Applewood and stayed for several weeks. She played cards with the local ladies and enjoyed cultural events and being a guest at luncheons. Before returning to her apartment in New York, she usually picked up a new Buick and made plans to come back to Applewood at Christmas. She was close to her son and enjoyed a great many years with her family, watching her grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow up and teaching them how to play bridge.

When Mother Mott's health began to fail in early March 1941, C.S. and Ruth invited her to come to Applewood, and she accepted. She was given the large bedroom at the west end of the second floor, and a nurse was brought in to assist with her care. While much attention was paid to her health and comfort, the busy schedule at Applewood continued uninterrupted, with dinner parties, visits from friends, earnest sets of tennis, business appointments, and tending to the needs of young Susan and Stewart and a fully functioning farm. Children splashed in the pool beneath Mother Mott's windows on hot days, and Ruth's mother, Sarah, came for a brief visit.

On May 9, Mother Mott celebrated her eighty-ninth birthday, and though she hoped to regain her health and return to New York, she died peacefully at Applewood on July 29, with her son and daughter-in-law close by. C.S. wrote in his diary:



She who was always so extremely well and active, and had been able to do whatever she wanted to for over 80 years, was very much unreconciled and unhappy when she was unable to carry on as usual . . . and while the parting of one's parents is always a great heartpull, we cannot but feel it was a blessing to her, and we shall always have a very affectionate memory of her.

For years, C.S. noted in his diary on May 9 that it was the anniversary of his mother's birth. In 1971, he wrote, *Mother Mott's birthday. She was born in 1852 and would have been 119 years old. Wonderful old gal.*

Mother Mott poses in the garden with her great-grandchildren, 1934. From left on the bench are Patrick Butler, Jr., Charles Stewart Mott III, and Peter Butler. Joan Mitchell sits at her feet.

Ruth admires the variety of Easter flowers growing in the greenhouse, 1982.



APPLEWOOD IN CELEBRATION

A year of festivities

The Motts loved celebrating holidays and hosting special events. The new year was often ushered in at Applewood with a big open house and a formal receiving line so Mr. and Mrs. Mott could individually welcome each of their 150 or more invited guests. As the children got older, they joined the receiving line for part of the evening, to the delight of their proud parents.

On these gala occasions, the house was still decorated with a big Christmas tree, and dozens of potted flowers—especially poinsettias—filled the home. The guests were a diverse mix of old and new friends, family members, General Motors colleagues, local officials, and civic leaders. Food was plentiful, and beverages often included Applewood's special eggnog, a particularly wonderful treat when the milk and eggs came from the family's cows and chickens. On New Year's Eve, 1939, the staff readied six batches of eggnog in preparation for 150 guests and made three more batches before the end of the evening—a total of forty-five quarts. C.S. did not drink alcohol, but he pronounced the recipe to be excellent and included it in his diary:

1 dozen eggs of which whites and yolks are beaten separately.

1 pound of sugar added to the yolks and well stirred. Then add whites and stir.

¼ cup Jamaica Rum followed by 1 full quart of 100 proof Bourbon.

1 quart cream and 1 quart milk thoroughly stirred and put in cans in cold place.

All ingredients should be cold to start with.

Budding Easter lilies and spring-blooming bulbs filled the greenhouse as the days got longer. They were moved into the gallery and other areas in the home when the buds began to open, and their sweet perfume filled the rooms. Dozens of lilies were also grown as gifts and were delivered by staff to family, friends, and associates around town.

Ruth gathered her large extended family for outdoor picnics on Memorial Day, July 4, and Labor Day. She was a marvelous organizer, and these kinds of celebrations especially delighted her. They were held under the beautiful elm trees on the back lawn, and when the weather was good, croquet and other lawn games filled the day. Each member of the family was expected to sign Applewood's guest book, just as all visitors did, and they often left notes to their hostess. In June 1968, Charlie Webb, second husband of Susan Mott, signed in at Applewood and added, *Am enjoying my semi-annual visit. It's good to be back!*

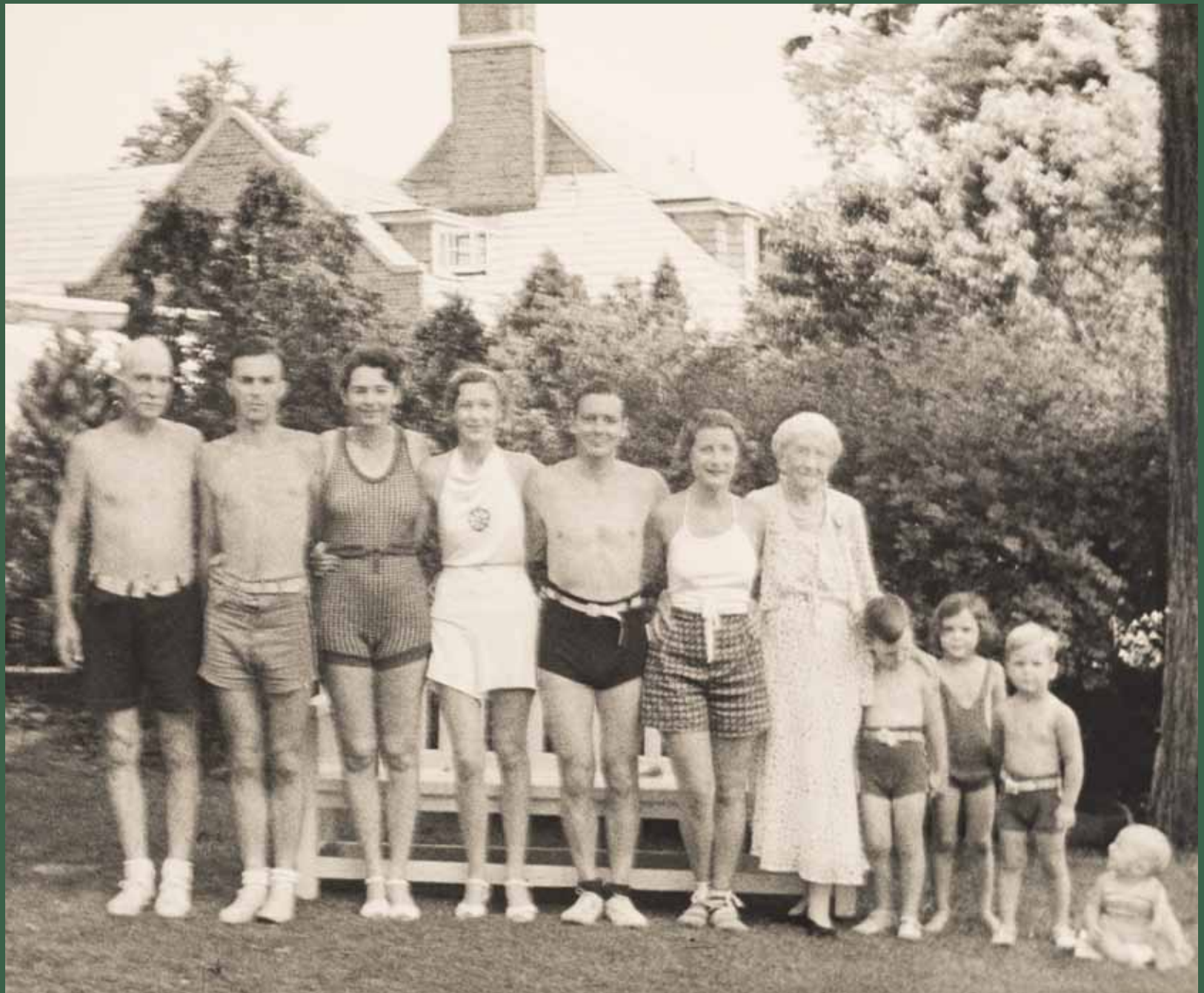
The time-consuming work of preparing the many Christmas cards to send often began in October. In 1945, C.S. joked that the Christmas card, which was a photo of the family, had *stirred up a lot of favorable comment . . . at least three of the letters which we received were bids for adoption for Maryanne.*

October also brought Halloween and, along with it, opportunities for silly fun. Ruth took daughter Susan to her first Halloween party when she was three and a half years old. After the party, the children went from house to house, where they recited a verse or sang a song, for which they were rewarded with candy.



Susan at Easter, 1941.

A summer day at Applewood with, from left, C. S. Mott, Harding Mott, Aimeé Mott Butler, Elsa Mott Mitchell, Hamish Mitchell, Gerry Specht Mott, Mother Mott, Pat Butler, Jr., Joan Mitchell, Peter Butler, and Charles Stewart Mott III, circa 1934.





Fall decorations in the gallery.

The first time up, Susan was persuaded to sing “Little Jack Horner,” and Ruth reported that once she got the hang of it, she had a good time.

Applewood’s kitchen buzzed with activity in October and November, as the last of the fruits and vegetables, picked in Applewood’s orchards and gardens when perfectly ripe, were put up and stored so they could be enjoyed at end-of-the-year festivities and through the winter. Various animals were selected for holiday dinners.

Son Harding and his wife, Gerry, often made the trek to Applewood, where they gathered with others at the big dining-room table for a well-attended Thanksgiving feast. Ruth eagerly welcomed the children from her husband’s marriage to Ethel, along with old and new friends. Like Ethel, she also invited those she knew who had nowhere else to go on Thanksgiving. The parties grew over the years with the addition of Ruth and C.S.’s children, plus spouses, grandchildren, and in-laws.

Family members, including Mother Mott, began to arrive as Christmas neared. Personalized stockings were hung on the fireplace in the living room, and on Christmas Eve, preparations were made for Santa’s visit. In 1940, C.S. noted the activities of the family’s miniature black dachshund:

An amusing thing happened last night after the children hung their stockings at the fireplace in the living room. Susan left a glass of milk for Santa’s refreshment and after she had retired, Bizzy [the dog] came along and proceeded to empty the glass. It was easy for him at the start when the glass was full, but quite amusing when he got down to the bottom—he had to do some hot work with his tongue, but he made it.

Right: Stewart, Maryanne, Susan, and Stewart's boxer, Jill, at Christmas, 1945.

Below: Christmas stockings hung on the fireplace, 1993.

Christmas Day was a happy affair. Stockings were the first to be opened. Breakfast followed. Then everyone headed back to the sun room to begin opening the huge mound of presents under the tree, which included gifts for the staff.

In the 1940s and '50s, it fell to the two youngest children, Stewart and Maryanne, to decorate the enormous Christmas tree set up in the sun room. Young Stewart was delighted on Christmas morning in 1947 when he heard radio music coming from somewhere. After investigating, he found the tiny three-way portable radio that he had requested.

When the Mott children grew up, they often returned for Christmas with their spouses and sometimes in-laws and, later, their own children. Jean-Charles, the son of Maryanne and her husband, Alain Meynet, spent his first Christmas in the living room at Applewood, sleeping in a large wicker laundry basket decorated in red and white. His sister, Marise, remembers the fun of going to Applewood at Christmas when she was little and being surrounded by family and friends. *The tree seemed enormous, she recalls. From a little kid's perspective, it was huge and decorated perfectly.*

Stewart Mott Dansby, son of Susan Mott, remembers waking up in a room on the third floor at Applewood on Christmas Day, 1964, *to see a fresh blanket of snow . . . magical . . . especially to an eight-year-old boy from Alabama.* Later, he and his sister, Suzanne, slid down the snow-covered back hill on their Christmas-gift sleds.

Christmas Day included visits *to* friends and visits *from* friends, cups of eggnog, a fine meal, board games and card games, and, often, a nap. The year rolled to an end, and with preparations for the Motts' big New Year's party under way, the cycle of holiday celebrations at Applewood began anew.





Top left: Aimeé Mott in her wedding dress, May 29, 1926.

Top right: Maryanne Mott on her wedding day in front of the living-room fireplace, August 10, 1963.

Below: The marriage of Harding and Gerry Mott's daughter, Claire, to Bill White, July 1, 1961.

We are gathered here . . .

Ethel and C.S.'s oldest child, Aimeé, married her beloved Patrick Butler on the back terrace at Applewood on May 29, 1926. It was a stunning spring day. The lilacs were in bloom, and the air was sweet with the scent of their blossoms. With its lush gardens and well-tended landscapes, Applewood offered a lovely, romantic site for weddings and receptions through the decades, and Aimeé's was the first of many.

While Ethel and C.S.'s second child, Elsa, was on a grand tour of Europe, Hamish Mitchell, who worked for General Motors at the time, was assigned to show her around London. Hamish was a smart, ambitious Scotsman who had been born in Burnt Island, Fifeshire, in 1899. The two young people hit it off quickly, but Hamish was sent to South Africa for two years to help start General Motors there. He made Elsa promise not to marry anybody else, and he sent letters to woo her.

The two were married October 22, 1927, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Flint and held their reception at Applewood, where Elsa had been living since her mother died. Her father missed the event because he was on a months-long business trip and honeymoon with his new wife, Mitties. Elsa and Hamish didn't want to put off the wedding until C.S. returned because Hamish had only a brief window before he had to report to his new position in Australia, and he wanted Elsa, as his wife, by his side.

The Mitchells' daughter, Joan, was born in Detroit two years later. She spent part of her first year living at Applewood with her mother while her father was overseas, and she was christened in the marble fountain in the formal garden. On June 29, 1951, Joan married Peter Kleinpell, son of good friends of the Motts, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and the reception was held on the back lawn at Applewood. The pool where she had learned to swim as a child





Peter Kleinpell, left, and Stewart Mott, right, at the reception for Maryanne and Alain Meynet.

was painted a pretty light turquoise for the occasion. Gardenias floated across the surface, and flowers were planted around it.

Harding and Gerry Mott's daughter, Claire, married William White at Applewood in an elegant garden ceremony on July 1, 1961. Joan's son, Arthur, was the ring bearer, and her daughter, Kathleen, was the flower girl. An organ was set up in the tea house to provide music.

It had been a warm week. The temperature was in the high 80s that day, but the shade of the trees kept guests cool. C.S. hadn't been feeling well, so he stayed in bed and asked his secretary, Betty Maeder, to closely watch the event and write a report for his diary. She noted the attendants' white organza gowns with hand-embroidered pink wild roses and their bouquets of pink sweetheart roses and pink ribbons and many other sweet details:

Claire's gown was of silk organza over taffeta with a portrait neckline edged in Alençon lace. From under a huge butterfly bow in the back of the waist, the bouffant skirt swept into a cathedral train. An Alsatian bow of the organza held her veil of French illusion. . . . After the ceremony, guests were received in the garden, and from the receiving line we walked over and signed the guest book. From there we went into the formal garden where we were served punch. A four-piece combo provided music also. Then we went to the patio where the collation tables were set up with white organdy over pink satin and centered with epergnes holding fan-shaped arrangements of pink roses. The buffet supper was delicious. We were seated under canopies, and the tables were covered in pink damask and centered with arrangements of snapdragons and carnations. During the time we were eating, the musicians strolled among the tables and played our requests. The bridal party dined in the dining room. Truly, it was the most beautiful wedding I have ever attended and I feel very fortunate that we were included in the list of guests.

Maryanne recalled that her wedding reception at Applewood was *another one of Mother's phenomenal planning events—she had everything ready to go in case it rained*. And that was a good call, because the day before had been dark and rainy, but Saturday, August 10, 1963, dawned bright, sunny, and cool.

Maryanne and Alain Meynet were married at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The father of the bride wore a twenty-nine-year-old Marshall & Renchard suit—older than the bride!—which, he noted with pride, fit him perfectly. After the ceremony, festivities commenced at Applewood. Champagne was offered to the hundreds of guests as they made their way toward the receiving line, and supper was served under an enormous tent. A three-piece orchestra played, and guests danced on a portable floor installed on the lawn.

Stewart Mott Dansby remembers the reception well. He, age seven, and his cousin-accomplice Art Kleinpell raced all over Applewood's freshly watered gardens, and when it was time to take family photographs, they—and their dress clothes—were soaking wet.

As the celebration was coming to a close, the single women in attendance gathered for the traditional tossing of the bridal bouquet, but it was caught by a young child. The bouquet was fetched and thrown again, and it was caught, again, by a girl much too young to think about getting married. Before Maryanne threw it a third time, the children were herded away, and the bouquet was caught by an enthusiastic eligible lady. The bride and groom left Applewood that evening under a gentle showering of rice and rose petal confetti.

Ruth was delighted to host a wedding reception for Susan Lyon and Scott Lantz when they were married September 13, 1986. Susan is the granddaughter of Ruth's brother, Junius Mott Rawlings, and Laura Boynton Rawlings.



Deborah Elliott and Anthony Carriveau marry under the maple tree.

Bill and Claire White's daughter, Tiffany, married Bob Lovett at Court Street United Methodist Church on August 31, 1991. Before the wedding, Ruth hosted a lovely outdoor luncheon at Applewood for sixty people including members of the family, the wedding party, and out-of-town guests. It was a perfect summer bridal celebration, complete with pink tablecloths and napkins.

Applewood was a place of beauty and meaning for Deborah Elliott. After working there for more than twenty years, first as an intern and eventually as estate manager, she knew every inch of the gardens and landscaped grounds. So when she and Anthony Carriveau became engaged in 1999, Applewood was the first place she thought of for their wedding. She received permission from the Mott family, and the planning began.

The couple wanted to be married under Applewood's huge sugar maple tree and scheduled the ceremony for May 27, 2000, hoping for a sunny and fragrant spring afternoon. But the day before the event, forecasters predicted rain. Undaunted, Deb consulted with her maid of honor, Ila Kelley, who had worked as Applewood's floriculturist since 1987, and they agreed that the wedding should be moved up to that evening, while the weather was still clear.

Deb called the pastor, the quartet, family, and friends, and the ceremony took place a few hours later under lovely dry skies and the spreading canopy of the grand old sugar maple. Quick thinking made Deb's dream possible, and she and Tony became the only couple not related to the Motts to be married at Applewood.

The last wedding at Applewood was, fittingly, that of Ethel and C. S. Mott's great-grandson Ridgway White and Shannon Easter. Ridgway is the son of Claire and Bill White and the fourth president of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.



The Motawi tile designed by Shannon Easter for her marriage at Applewood to Ridgway White on July 6, 2007.

Shannon treasures the memory of their romantic engagement. She was working at an architecture firm just down the street from Applewood when she was told she had a visitor. She went to the reception desk and was given a handmade envelope with the first clue to a scavenger hunt. The note told her to walk to Applewood. When she got to the estate, she found another clue with a single rose attached. *I followed a romantic trail of two dozen roses, each with another clue, she recalls. The last clue took me to the tea house, where Ridgway was waiting, and he proposed.*

In tribute to Applewood, Shannon and Ridgway sent invitees a small save-the-date package with a fresh apple to announce their upcoming wedding. Shannon remembered that Ruth Mott had wished for a couple to hold their wedding at Applewood in the spring when the crabapple trees were in bloom. While they couldn't fulfill her wish for a spring date, each invitation included a sprig of blooming apple blossoms in a tiny glass vase.

July 6, 2007, was a beautiful day for their garden wedding. The late-afternoon ceremony was held on Applewood's lush back lawn, among arrangements of flowers in vibrant colors, with the fountain and residence as the backdrop. A receiving line and cocktail hour featured tray-passed hors d'oeuvres in the perennial garden. Later, guests made their way to a large tent in the lower garden for the reception. The crabapple trees were lit by tea lights through the evening, and a chandelier made of colorful flowers hung over the dance floor. Large glowing balls provided a festive area for picture taking during the reception, and a seating area with sofas was set up away from the band so friends could chat. At the end of the night, guests were given handmade tiles with an apple design that had held their place cards, created by Shannon and replicated by Motawi Tileworks, as a reminder of the magical occasion.

Perfect place for a birthday party

The Motts loved celebrating special occasions, and those included their children's birthdays. They put on well-organized parties that were creative and fun. When the parents had to be out of town, details were handled by the staff, who adored the children.

Ann Burroughs, daughter of Ruth's good friend and tennis partner Mary Helen, was born a day apart from the Motts' son, Stewart, and the two celebrated their birthdays together at Applewood for many years. In December 1940, they turned three and were joined by three more friends and Stewart's sister, Susan, for playtime in the snow and a ride in the sleigh pulled by the Motts' team of draft horses.

Ann remembers that as they grew older, they dressed in their finest, and there was always a photographer handy. The birthday cake was usually presented at the large dining-room table on a musical platter before everyone was ushered downstairs to the recreation room for games.

In 1941, Susan was recovering from being sick and looking forward to her fifth birthday on February 13. Her father noted in his diary that she had recently spoken about her birthday and said it was near the birthday of *some other man*. *According to the newspapers*, he said, *this seems to be Abraham Lincoln*.

On Saturday, February 10, 1945, a few days before Susan's ninth birthday, Ruth kept her daughter upstairs until her surprise was set up, and when Susan came downstairs, she found the thing she wanted more than anything else that year: a new bicycle. She also got nine new one-dollar bills from her grandmother Rawlings.

Several girls arrived for Susan's party in the afternoon and were treated to a sleigh ride around the farm, an exciting first for many of them. Afterward, they piled into the basement, and Ruth



Barlow, from the Flint Children's Library, entertained them with stories. They had cake and other treats in the upstairs dining room, and it was after seven p.m. before the last of the children headed home.

Susan's sixth birthday party.

Two weeks later, February 27, was Maryanne's third birthday. She received many presents from friends and family and the staff, but her mother was in New York, and Maryanne would not acknowledge that it was her birthday. She put the presents, unopened, in her closet to await Ruth's return and stated to everyone, *My birthday is when mommie comes home*.

The week before she turned thirteen, Maryanne presented her mother with a wish list for birthday gifts. In addition to games and skis, she requested a dog, either a female boxer or a male Chihuahua; a trip to South America or Europe; and to have the pool widened and deepened and the cracks filled in.

Her birthday fell on a Sunday that year, and the Friday before, she entertained several girlfriends, who spent a busy afternoon playing games and stayed over for a slumber party.





C. S. Mott, 1930s.



Bizzy, one of the Motts' pups, poses on the antique marble wellhead in the garden.

FOR LOVE OF DOGS

Decades of wonderful dogs

The Motts loved dogs and were seldom without the companionship of at least one at Applewood. It may have been more calculated than coincidence that Mr. Mott's favorite tobacco was called Barking Dog. In the early years of their marriage, he and Ethel had two Boston terriers, followed by tiny black Chihuahuas named Fifi, Pepper, and Snuffy. Many of the larger dogs in later years lived in an outdoor kennel constructed in the courtyard outside the kitchen.

On April 20, 1931, C.S. wrote: *Apparently Snuffy did not have an easy winter. She is, of course, getting old—will be eleven years old next Fourth of July. They had the Doctor for her and he extracted three teeth, which leaves her only one, and they say it greatly improved her condition and she is ever so much better now than three months ago, but still has nothing like the pep she used to have, in fact, she has slowed up a lot since last summer.*

But Snuffy still had good years ahead of her. On April 9, 1933, C.S. wrote: *Pajama breakfast alone about 9:00. We turned on the radio on sun porch and Snuffy and I reclined on the couch near window in living room and protected ourselves with a blanket and read the newspapers until 12:30.*

While in New York in February 1934, C.S. was introduced to a fine six-month-old dachshund that Harding and Gerry bought for him. He named the pup Bizzy, short for Bismarck, and noted that he would make a fine pet in addition to being a good mouser and ratter, adding, *we certainly need something to keep the rodents out of Applewood.*

Back at Applewood, C.S. sorted out sleeping arrangements:

I left Snuffy sleeping in her basket in my room and put the "pooch" in the kitchen where he sang for awhile but later quieted down. However, sometime in the middle of the night he opened two doors and wandered around the house until at last he found me on the sleeping porch and nothing would do but to let him sleep on top of the bed with part of the blanket over him. Otherwise, I should have had to take him downstairs. Later on, Snuffy got to meandering and before morning, I had a bed full of dogs but there were no accidents during the night. Snuffy does not appreciate the new arrival and is rather disdainful and sometimes shows where her teeth were, but they seem to get along fairly good and in the course of time Bismarck will quit trying to make Snuffy play with him.

Bizzy lived up to his name and was devoted to his owner. When the dog was little more than a year old, C.S. observed, *At dinner an odd thing happened. Harriet had passed me the meat and I took a chop and put it on my plate. Then I got up for moment to adjust the radio and when I got back there was no chop. I looked around and under the table and found Bizzy with it.*



Top left: Maryanne and Claire with Jill, the boxer.

Top right: Ethel with the Motts' two bulldogs.

Bottom: Ruth and C.S. with Toby and Peanuts, 1972, taken by Don Owens, Flint Board of Education, in August 1972 for the Christmas card.



Maryanne with Lady Tabu and Prince Valiant of Grandstyle.

Before leaving for Bermuda on April 10, 1936, C.S. wrote of him, *Tomorrow morning the dog in this household will miss me. Every morning he waits patiently at the door, and when allowed to come in, he comes right for me, but tomorrow I won't be there.*

Ruth appreciated her husband's love for animals, especially dogs, and recognized it when she first visited Applewood. *He had a little Chihuahua, and that Chihuahua went to the movies with us,* she said, laughing. *It went every place with us!*

In 1940, Ruth and C.S. acquired a brown and white Irish wolfhound from a kennel near Kalamazoo. Tamara was about five months old when they brought her home, and she already weighed 75 pounds. Judging from the size of the kennel's mature females, they anticipated she would reach 150 pounds when full-grown. But she died just nine months later from a kink in her intestines.

The family's appreciation for boxers may have begun with Muggins, who belonged to granddaughter Joan. He lived at Applewood for two years and was there when son Stewart was given a boxer puppy named Jill for his sixth birthday. Jill and Muggins were great pals, but their time together was cut short when Muggins died the following summer. Expressing the family's sadness, C.S. wrote in his diary, *We all feel mighty bad about it for we were very fond of the old fellow, and I shall long remember my associations with him both here and in Bermuda.*

In August 1950, the Motts received an eight-month-old boxer named Prince Valiant of Grandstyle as a gift from friend and business associate Hugo Krave, who raised and showed championship boxers. Maryanne had accompanied her father to several dog shows and watched Krave's animals win top honors. She was delighted when her parents presented her with the beautiful dog.



An early shot of the Motts' dogs on the birdbath.



Susan and Stewart with Tamara.



Susan with Tamara.

Many years ago in El Paso, Texas, when I was a very young girl, the front door bell rang and there stood a young boy with a very pretty black and white puppy. He said he would like to sell it, so I said, "How much?" The answer was fifty cents. This I could not resist. The black and white puppy became Snoocums, and was the beginning of my love and joy of animals especially dogs and horses.

RUTH RAWLINGS MOTT,
in a speech to the
Humane Society in April 1993

Ruth with her dog Toby,
September 1974.



Lady Tabu “Boo” joined the pack in 1952. The little photogenic cream-colored Chihuahua was a birthday present to his father from Harding, and Dad was mighty pleased. Boo had a great life at Applewood and lived to the fine old age of twelve. Personal secretary Betty Maeder arrived at the home office one morning while the Motts were traveling and learned that Boo had died hours before, just outside C.S.’s door. She recalled, *He really loved her.*

C.S.’s next dog was delivered just before New Year’s Eve, 1963. The seven-month-old female Chihuahua was another gift from Harding and his family. As with many of the Motts’ other dogs, beloved Peanuts appears in family photos, usually comfortably nestled in the crook of her master’s arm. Granddaughter Marise Mott Meynet Stewart remembers that she wanted to play with Peanuts, but the six-pound pup was *fiercely devoted to my grandfather and terrifying to everybody else!*

Toby arrived at Applewood in September 1966. The four-month-old black Lab was a gift to Ruth from her niece Jeanette Robinson Shaw of Yorkshire, England. Toby was followed by a yellow Lab named Taffy, a gift to Ruth from her daughter Maryanne. By that time, however, Ruth was not prepared for the in-the-home companionship Taffy was selected to provide, so the sweet pick-of-the-litter pup was soon returned and enjoyed a long, happy life with Maryanne and her husband, Herman Warsh, whom she married in 1980.

The last dog to call Applewood home was Scooch, a shiny black female Labrador retriever puppy, who was a present to Ruth from her staff and Maryanne. When Ruth passed away in 1999, Scooch stayed on at Applewood and was well cared for by the estate’s long time security guard and handyman, Doug MacArthur. When Scooch died in 2009, she was buried near the perennial garden, attended by her very best friends, the Applewood staff.

C.S. sitting with Prince Valiant, Lady Tabu, and Jojo, from the cover of the *Detroit Free Press Magazine*, August 21, 1960.



Doug MacArthur with Scooch, December 1996.





New Roles for Applewood

My intention is that Applewood be made available to the public for various activities and uses . . . an oasis in the midst of buildings, parking lots, and highways.

Ruth Rawlings Mott, welcoming Applewood visitors, June 11, 1981

5

APPLEWOOD TRANSITIONS IN THE POSTWAR YEARS

Closing down on the farm operation

When C. S. Mott brought his bride, Ruth, to Applewood in 1934, the gardens were mature and glorious. The farm animals were providing meat, milk, and eggs, and there was an abundance of homegrown fruits and vegetables. Ruth recalled that her husband was very proud of everything Applewood produced, and he loved serving what he called *an Applewood dinner*, for which all the food was grown and raised on-site.

By 1937, life around Applewood was beginning to change. Gravel roads where the Motts and their guests had frequently ridden horses were being paved, and as other matters took priority over horseback riding anyway, they decided to sell their saddle horses.

The family was grateful to have a ready supply of fresh meat, milk, and eggs from their farm animals when food rationing was implemented during World War II. C.S. noted in his diary in 1945, *Last year we had 1,000 pounds of very fine pork which was made into fine hams, bacon, sausage and other pork products which lasted us 12 months—of course all of the above was unincorporated in the ration process.*

That same year, C.S. turned seventy, and he wrote: *Having now reached the mature age of three score and ten I suppose I am expected to be put up on the shelf, but I have many friends from 10 to 25 years older than I am who are still hustling around, so I don't expect there is much chance for me to quit.* While he wasn't ready to slow down much, the projects that caught his attention were changing. The Mott Program, which became known as the

Community School, was taking shape, and philanthropic and business activities were consuming a good deal of his time and interest. As wartime food restrictions and rationing ebbed, so did C.S.'s rationale for farming.

By the end of the 1940s, the Motts were ready to close up farming operations at Applewood altogether, and Arthur Hatherly, head farmer since Applewood was built, was nearly eighty and ready to retire. But Mr. Hatherly's son, Glenn, who had been raised at Applewood and worked side-by-side with his father for many years, wanted to continue the work. He submitted a proposal to Mr. Mott on March 26, 1949, asking to lease farm operations and all the barns and farm property in exchange for \$1,000 for one year. He offered to provide the Mott household with one hundred pounds of milk daily and to furnish John Mair, the gardener, with thirty loads each of horse and cow manure plus a team of horses whenever needed for plowing and tending the gardens during that year.

Two days later, Mr. Mott wrote back accepting the proposal, but for reasons unknown, a hand-penned note at the bottom of the letter acknowledges in script, *Deal did not go thru.*

That same month, the Motts were surprised and saddened when they learned that Floyd Soule, who had built Applewood, had died at the age of only seventy-four. Mr. Mott had been planning to contact him about another small job for which they wished his skilled assistance.

Mr. Mair with his twin girls, Jean and Joan, at Applewood in June 1942.





Looking across the large vegetable garden toward the barn and chicken coop, photographed sometime between the 1930s and the 1950s.

On June 8, 1949, C.S. described the state of the farm:

Press of other work has not given me time to make an inspection of Applewood where a number of changes have occurred. The first of June, we started closing down on the farm operation and dispensed with the services of Hatherly and Glenn (his son). Hatherly will still occupy the cottage near the entrance of our drive. He is nearly eighty years old and has had a number of heart attacks, and we are not likely to disturb him. We have no pigs at present and we have disposed of four of the cows, leaving for the moment only two cows for milking, but are not likely to retain them a great while.

Regarding chickens: I have given instructions to continue feeding the hens which are laying well, but all others to be dressed and put in the freezers, and these to be followed by the others when they stop laying.

What remains of the farm is being taken care of by old John Lannon and a boy who are under the jurisdiction of gardener Mair.

We still have the fine big team [of horses], weighing about a ton apiece, for which we have been offered \$150, which is about one-half what we got for a cow. We shall undoubtedly keep the team until we get a tractor or make other arrangements for doing certain work on the place. At any rate, based on the above offer for the team, there is not much capital investment involved.

At the end of that summer, an agreement was reached with a farmer on the sale of the draft horses:

The horses are a beautiful pair and an ornament to the place, but we have very little work for them to do and it probably takes about \$50 worth of feed per month besides the cost of shoeing, veterinarian and other incidentals, plus time of a man to look after them. At present, we have been using one of Mair's assistants, but he lives some distance from Applewood, consequently to feed the horses on Sunday and holidays, he stays on the place and puts in a full day, so the total cost of keeping the horses runs up considerably more than value to us. The price we get for them is almost ridiculous, but they are a glut on the market now. I expect to get a 5 H.P. tractor which Mair can use to do the work heretofore done by the team. There is a bit of sadness or nostalgia in letting the horses go, but I believe it is for the best interest.

Thus, in an orderly fashion, the barns were emptied, the back fields were left uncultivated, and Applewood ceased to be a working farm.

Ruth and C.S.'s daughter Maryanne remembers walking over to the gatehouse to visit the genial Hatherlys in their retirement when she was a young girl. They were still living there when Mr. Hatherly had another heart attack at the age of eighty-three. He died a few days later, on July 5, 1953.

The Motts' draft horses in 1942 (left) and 1943 (right).



From back pasture to University of Michigan and Mott Community College

In 1950, a seventy-fifth birthday party was given for Mr. Mott, and more than 5,000 people attended to celebrate the man who had been profoundly instrumental in the development of Flint and had given so much to better the lives of its residents. If those attending thought that the grandfatherly man with the bushy eyebrows and ready handshake was going to announce his retirement and fade into the background, they were way off the mark. Since he'd phased out farming operations at Applewood the year before, C.S. had more time to get involved in community issues and plenty of vision and energy to make things happen.

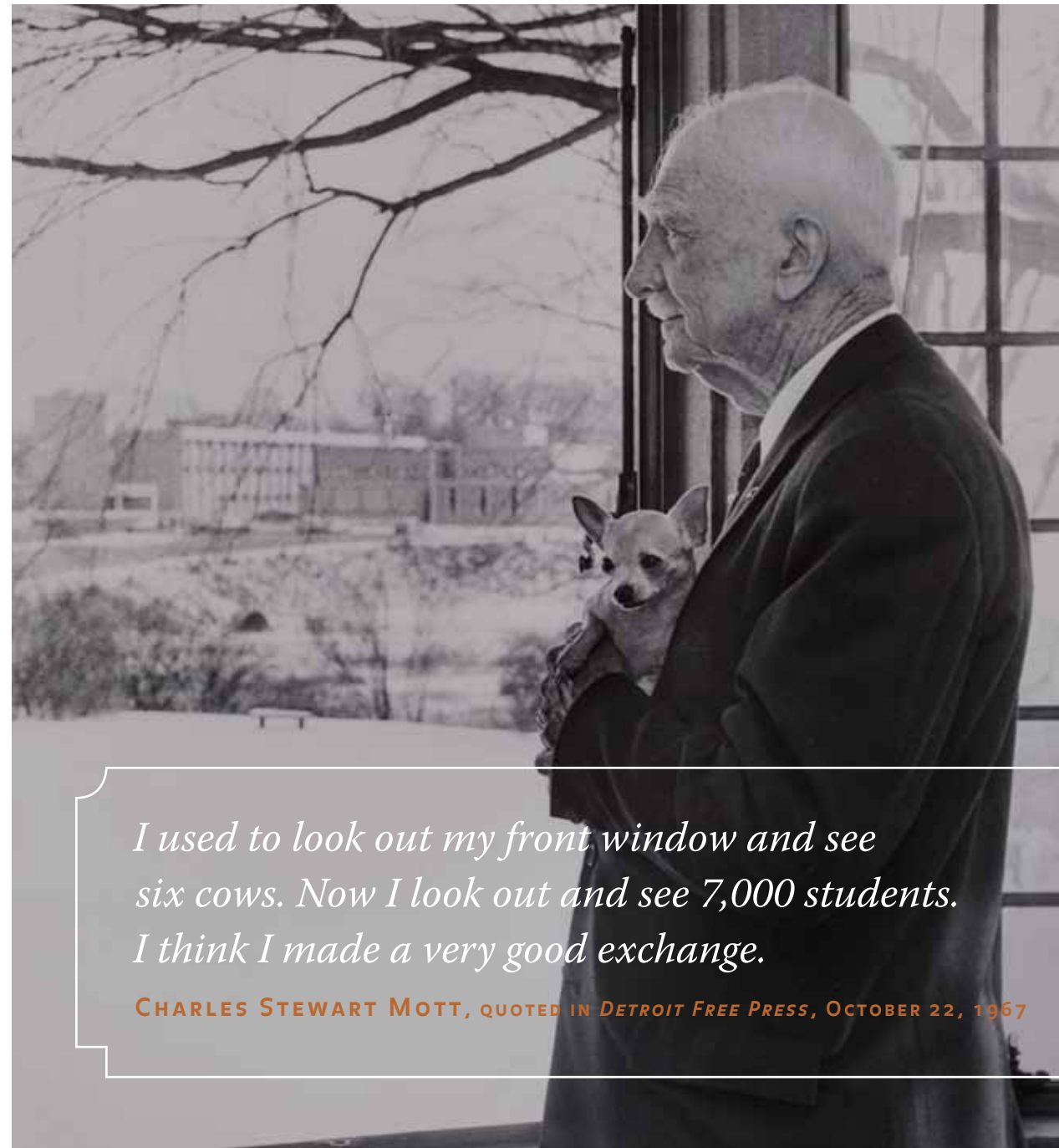
He took the microphone and thanked everyone who had helped make the Mott Program of adult education and after-school activities a huge success. Then he pledged \$1 million to develop Flint Junior College into a four-year institution, in collaboration with the University of Michigan, provided that the public would also pass a millage vote to support it. The Motts' generous grant helped create the College and Cultural Center adjacent to Applewood, along Kearsley Street, which would eventually include the DeWaters Art Center, the Flint Institute of Arts, Longway Planetarium, Bower Theater, Sloan Museum, Whiting Auditorium, Flint Institute of Music, and the main branch of the Flint Public Library.

A year after Mr. Mott's announcement, William Ballenger, Sr., set aside \$200,000 for the construction of an athletic field house, plus a trust of several million dollars that made possible the hiring of top-quality instructors. The Motts then donated to the Flint Board of Education thirty-two acres of Applewood's back fields and pasture and additional funds to the Flint Board of Education to build a new campus for the community college. In 1957, the University of Michigan–Flint was established on the community college campus. The two institutions shared that location until the mid-1970s, when U of M–Flint built its own campus closer to downtown.

When Mr. Mott died in 1973, the thriving Flint Community College was renamed Charles Stewart Mott Community College, usually shortened to MCC. The school has a student body of more than 12,000 and offers more than 100 degree

and certificate programs. Situated along the south bank of Gilkey Creek, it occupies land where the Motts' prized Holstein-Friesian cows once grazed and their field corn grew straight and tall.

C.S. holding Lady Tabu, looking out toward the campus of Mott Junior College. (Photo by Peter Mahan, Associated Press.)



I used to look out my front window and see six cows. Now I look out and see 7,000 students. I think I made a very good exchange.

CHARLES STEWART MOTT, QUOTED IN DETROIT FREE PRESS, OCTOBER 22, 1967



The blush on the roses begins to fade

Within a few years of selling off the livestock and donating the back pastureland to the Flint Board of Education, John Mair, head gardener at Applewood since 1928, began planning for his retirement. He trained another man to replace him when he left in 1955, hoping for a smooth transition, but the fit wasn't quite right. In 1959, Mr. Mott asked Mr. Mair to consider coming back to Applewood temporarily until a permanent gardener could be hired. John agreed to help out, and the frequent and amiable conversations between the two old friends resumed for a short time.

On August 16, 1960, Ruth stopped by for a visit with the Mairs. Janet Mair was recovering nicely from a recent surgery, and Ruth observed that John Mair appeared *full of life and energy*. But the gentle man, who had lovingly and skillfully tended Applewood's gardens for nearly three decades, had a heart attack the next day and passed away.

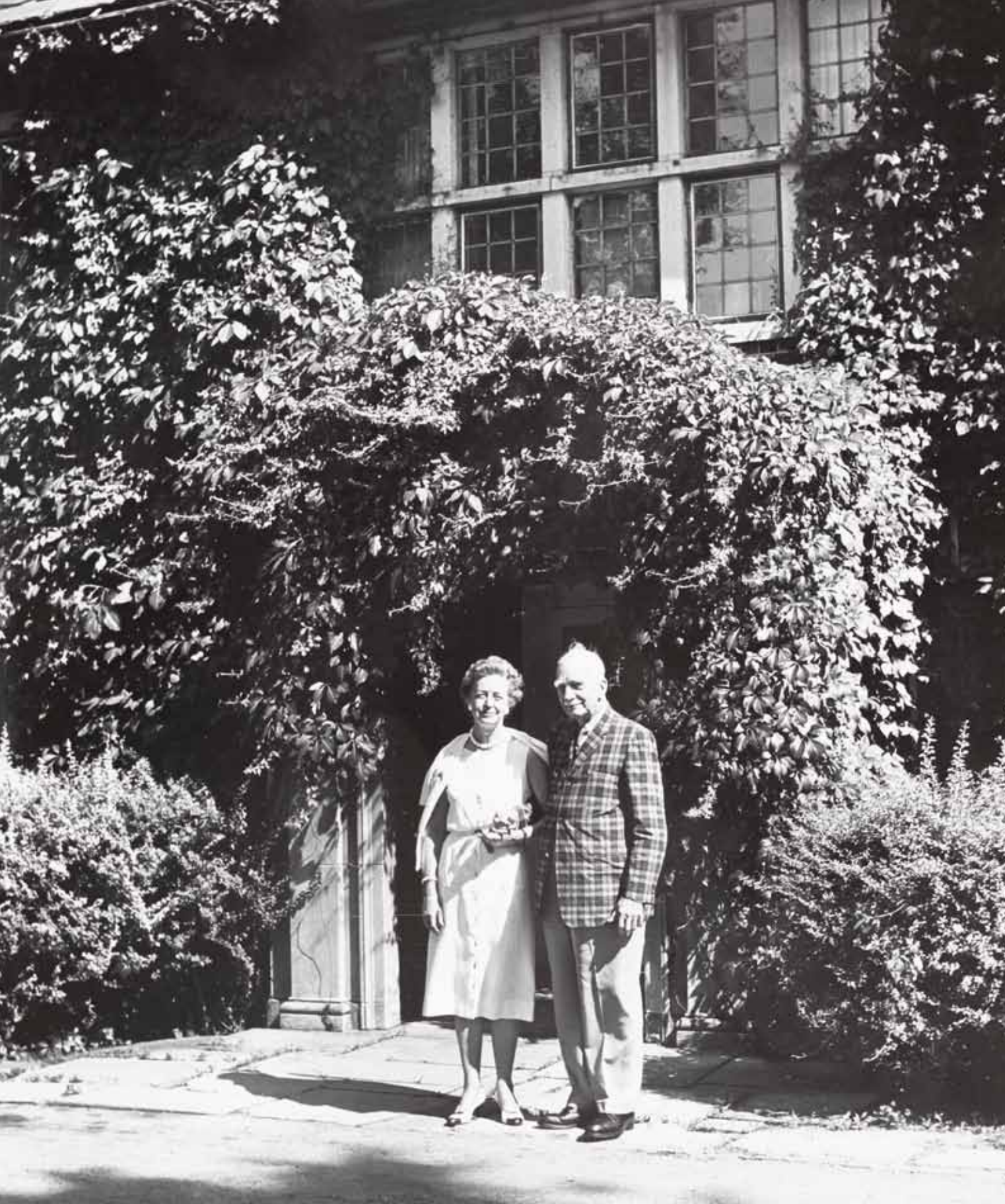
Gardener Herman Alexander at work in the greenhouse in March 1977.



Herman Alexander was hired in 1961 as head gardener and later took on maintenance for the operation of Applewood and the grounds. He and his wife, Margaret, moved into the apartment over the garage, and Margaret became Applewood's cook. Ruth's granddaughter Marise remembers the earthy smell of the greenhouse, mixed with Herman's pipe smoke, and the fragrance of gardenias and a lemon tree growing there in the middle of winter.

When a back injury prevented Herman from completing his tasks, Ruth offered to move him into the position of estate superintendent with responsibility for security and light maintenance. Though his workload decreased, Herman's salary stayed the same, and he continued on at Applewood until 1980.

Over time, the gardens and landscape began to suffer from the lack of focused attention and vision that John Mair had provided. Business, philanthropy, and travel consumed the Motts' attention and frequently pulled them away from Applewood, and the once elegant, show-stopping grounds of the estate began turning into a tangle.



The plantings and gardens at Applewood were lush and overgrown when Ruth and C.S. were photographed at the front entry on August 21, 1960.

THE PASSING OF CHARLES STEWART MOTT

The end of an age

Charles Stewart Mott had begun to slow down in his mid-nineties, but he had no plans to stop. His daily diary was still full of observations and commentary, notes of business meetings, and details about his visits with family and friends. He read newspapers and listened to both radio and TV news to keep abreast of current events, and his little Chihuahua buddy, Peanuts, was a constant companion.

In 1971, C.S. remarked on the one-hundredth birthday of Sam McLaughlin, a General Motors colleague and friend, reported to be the only man in the automobile business at the age of one hundred. Sam and C.S. were competitive—mostly when it came to fishing Sam's native Canadian waters—and C.S. commented that he'd have to live three and a half more years to beat his friend's age record.

But it was not in the cards. On February 18, 1973, C.S. passed away peacefully at St. Joseph Hospital, within view of his beloved Applewood.

A funeral service was held three days later at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where he had been a long-standing and supportive member. The family gathered afterward at Applewood to greet out-of-town guests and then attended a memorial service at the Whiting Auditorium just a block away.

Opposite: This classic photo of C.S. with his pipe and his dog Peanuts was developed in September 1968 and used in a promotion for his ninety-fourth birthday, courtesy of Don Owens and the Flint Board of Education.



Clarence H. Young, who cowrote a 1953 biography of C.S., wrote a stirring tribute to his friend, which is excerpted here:

The last great automotive pioneer,
Charles Stewart Mott, is dead. An age is ended.
There are no living legends anymore.
He moves to history he helped to make;
His place there is secure while men remember
Courage, goodness, genius, honor, strength,
And that compassion which illumines lives.

Great men pay final tribute to him now;
Flint people feel the loss a personal thing.
And in the silent house at Applewood
A tiny dog, her muzzle gray with years,
Toes clicking on the marble floor, seeks for
The man who always held her on his lap.

He had the farmer's love of home and family.
He never lost the simple common touch;
His friends were equally among the great
And humble, valued for themselves alone—
To them his loyalty was absolute.

As pioneer, patriot, as son, as father,
Husband, friend—as strong man among strong men—
As opener of doors of opportunity—
Charles Stewart Mott shall be remembered well
While wheels shall turn on axles, and while men
Shall honor great endeavor shared with all.



The wall of Mott family photos in the sun room.

Remembering a life well lived

Ruth Mott gathered friends and family at Applewood on June 1, 1975, to celebrate what would have been the one-hundredth birthday of her cherished husband. Children from Eisenhower School were there to talk about the tree they had planted in Mr. Mott's honor. His grandchildren dedicated in loving memory of their grandfather a collection of crabapple trees planted around the back lawn of Applewood, which continue to bloom each spring.

C.S. had loved to tell funny stories, and on this day, there were plenty to tell about *him*. Granddaughter Joan Mitchell recalled the day her grandfather was asked about his participation at the Episcopal church. *You used to pass the plate, didn't you?* C.S.'s son Harding had quickly stepped in and replied, *Yes sir. That's how Dad got his start.*

There was the time the Motts had friends visiting from Bermuda. Ruth was sitting with them at the breakfast table when she heard someone walking down the hall. It was her husband, wearing a Beatle wig and glasses with weird eyes and a big beaklike nose, and Ruth began to laugh. *Stewart*, she asked, *where did you get that wig?* He replied, *There's a little store next to the YWCA down there on First Street.* Ruth asked, *Stewart, what did the girls in the shop say?* He answered, *Oh, they didn't know me.*

And this: C.S. was sitting in a chair at the barber shop in New York City where he had gone for haircuts for years and had never let on who he was. A young man there had been staring at him and finally asked, *Has anybody ever told you that you look just like Mr. C. S. Mott of General Motors?* C.S. replied, *No.*

As toasts and stories continued and accolades were showered on the husband she loved so much, Ruth added, *I can't believe that I was married to a man like that. How was I such a lucky person?*

Daughter Maryanne read a poem about her father at his one-hundredth birthday celebration, which she had written in the early 1960s. It was inspired by a story her mother told of a time she and C.S. were in New York City on business. The two had gone separate ways, Ruth to shop and C.S., who was recovering from illness, to attend a meeting. When Ruth was walking back near Columbus Circle, she was shocked to see her elderly husband fighting his way across the traffic in a heavy wind, without seeking assistance from General Motors staff or anybody on the street.

Message of Respect

Old man listen to me.
I see you step awkwardly
And stiff into the wind
Unwilling to unbend
Your stern rigidities.
You meet the gusts
Headlong and still you seem
Both frail and steel
As you make your painful way.
Each day I see you greet the wind
And know in you there's
No retreat. Though
Someday wind will sweep
You from this street
And blow you out of time,
Today you'll hear me speak
Some muttered praise,
Pugnacious paradigm.



Opposite: Applewood today, looking west across the back lawn past the perennial garden to the marble wellhead and the fountain beyond.

RUTH MOTT AT THE HELM

A vision for preserving Applewood

A few years after Mr. Mott passed away, I thought, “What am I going to do with this large home?” I decided to have a lot of restoration done . . . and have it opened as a memorial to my husband. He loved Applewood. He created Applewood. It was a gentleman’s farm with everything you could think of in it (Ruth Rawlings Mott).

In the mid-1970s, after her beloved husband died, Ruth looked around the grounds of Applewood and realized she had some big decisions to make. The gardens were overgrown from inconsistent attention and lack of a plan. And the barns had not been used for their intended purposes for twenty-five years. As the story goes, C.S. had advised Ruth not to put a penny into Applewood after he was gone and, when she was done with it, to tear it down, but she had other ideas. On June 11, 1981, she described the work she had been doing and her vision for the estate:

Mr. Mott passed away in 1973 at the age of ninety-seven. I spent about four years going over papers, memorabilia, lists of detailed accounts, such as every egg that was laid, every quart of milk that was produced by registered Holsteins named Lucille, Elsa, May or Louise. This all was very fascinating, time consuming and, for an amateur historian, quite mind-boggling and difficult. Fortunately, in time, I had the help of Karen Young in sorting and filing . . . later on, Dick Scharchburg of General Motors Institute processed the papers, and these are now preserved in the archives of GMI, available to students and the public.

Now came the question: What to do with Applewood? I became imbued with the idea of making Applewood a memorial in Mr. Mott’s honor . . . the idea being to preserve his home with very fine architecture, unique and interesting features, to recall a way of life . . . fast disappearing and to restore and revitalize the once beautifully landscaped grounds, to be a beauty spot and, if you will, an oasis in the midst of buildings, parking lots and highways.

My intention is that Applewood be made available to the public for various activities and usage—this to occur as soon as possible after my death.

To get started on her plan, Ruth conferred with her stepson, Harding, and other advisors and asked Margaret Stewart, who had recently retired as head of the Girl Scouts in New York City, to work with her on the project. Ruth, Harding, and Margaret met on September 22, 1976, to begin planning for Applewood’s future, and they embarked on visits to other historic estates and museums to see how their managers handled renovations and restorations. A year later, on October 7, 1977, they recruited an effective mix of consultants to help create a vision for Applewood and launched the group as the Applewood Advisory Board.

An eighteen-acre oasis of beauty in the city. RUTH RAWLINGS MOTT





Far left: A drawing of the renovation planned for the rose arbors in the 1990s.

Left: Construction of the solar greenhouse.

From vision to action: A bright new future for Applewood

Fueled with enthusiasm and ideas, members of the Applewood Advisory Board engaged Johnson Johnson and Roy (JJR), a respected landscape design firm with specialties in environmental analysis and historic preservation, to create a master plan for the estate. The consensus was that the grounds and landscaping should be *renovated* rather than *restored*. They would be brought back to a state of lush, artistic beauty and balance but not necessarily with the same plants as those in the original landscape plan. It was a practical approach that would honor the original footprint of the landscape created in 1916 and 1917, while incorporating newer varieties of plants with characteristics such as being better suited to Flint weather conditions, being easier to care for, and reflecting the trend toward more color and a longer blooming season. JJR hoped to inspire visitors to try the plants in their own gardens.

The plan also called for adding places of special interest for visitors, such as a demonstration garden and a walking trail plus open space for installing tents and tables. A gorgeous rose garden and collections of daylilies were added.

The original greenhouse linking the residence and the garage needed repairs. It was also still covered with its original lead-based paint, so it was completely demolished and removed, and a new one was built in its place. Plants that had been residing in the original greenhouse were removed for safekeeping until they could be resettled in the new structure. Special plants and flowers were added, and the new greenhouse evolved into another room for visitors to enjoy. Ruth often cut a blossom from the rambling old night-blooming cereus climbing across the east wall and stored it in the refrigerator overnight so her staff—especially the interns—could see it and smell its delightful lilylike fragrance the next day.

In 1979, Applewood was granted a listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Robert Bowden was hired as estate superintendent in 1982 and lived on the grounds with his wife, Gailann. The subtle challenges of Robert's work required that he strike a balance between maintaining Applewood as the happy home Mrs. Mott had enjoyed for so many years and planning for the public memorial to Mr. Mott that she envisioned.

Years later, when Robert accepted a position in New York, Ruth's son, Stewart, observed, *Robert brought to Applewood a sense of fun and adventure and professional expertise which we had never before experienced. He enlarged our horizons and imposed a managerial discipline which brought the quality of landscape design and oversight to unexpected and challenging (to us) accomplishments.*

Deborah Elliott was hired as a full-time horticulturist in 1980 and promoted to estate manager in 1987. She had developed a deep respect and great fondness for her boss, Mrs. Mott, and helped guide Applewood through its big rebirth. She recalled her early years at the estate:

We had all the old landscape plans and we knew what had been planted, but many advances had been made in plants since Applewood was built, and there were better varieties to choose over those that were originally planted. What Mrs. Mott wanted most was a usable piece of property, and she wanted people to be able to learn things when they came to the estate. So we used modern plants. Now, when visitors see plants here that they like, they can learn about them and try them, and have more success in their own gardens.



The original Applewood sign can still be found at the main entrance to the estate.

We honored the original landscape's character immediately around the home, and we added more innovation and change as we moved out from it. We've had great fun with the demonstration garden especially. Mrs. Mott was excited about it and she got to see it completed. It is bordered on the north by the original chicken coop, and visitors love the chicken tracks in the concrete. The estate has become a tool for people to learn about historic landscapes and to understand how reviving them isn't just about making them what they were.

A large solar greenhouse was added in the early 1980s, which gave the staff production space to grow their own plant materials and accommodate the designs of the new master plan. It also increased their flexibility in plant choices because they could grow whatever they wanted to use, including plants and cut flowers for arrangements in the home.

Space adjacent to and above the solar greenhouse became offices for the growing horticulture staff and housing for interns. When that space was outgrown, a large equipment and maintenance building was added. The handsome Jacobean Revival barn and chicken coop were renovated so they could be used for hosting educational programs.

Mrs. Mott asked staff to develop public programs for Applewood that would be a reflection of Mr. Mott, the way he lived, and his far-ranging interests. *Hopefully, these plans will be well in hand, so that when I pass on, the Applewood home and grounds will become a memorial museum for the public to use and enjoy, she explained, and, that this will foster an interest in history, perpetuate Mr. Mott's memory, and preserve a gracious way of life.*

Deb remembers the time fondly:

I am so fortunate to have landed at Applewood when Mrs. Mott was planning its new future—one that those of us who worked directly for her embraced whole-heartedly. We worked for a gracious lady who loved the beauty of nature and appreciated the work involved to bring the gardens back to their glory. We were also able to share the grounds with groups Mrs. Mott invited for guided tours. It was an idyllic blend of private and public aspects.





A nimble and caring boss

Ruth oversaw a large staff, from cooks and maids to horticulturists and security personnel, and while she was assisted by able managers, she set the tone, the standards, and the priorities for workers at the estate. She hired and trained many of the staff, and her style of being generous with praise and never correcting in public earned her their devotion.


She also took on a few informal roles, including career and financial counselor, and she celebrated the milestones in the lives of those around her—their marriages, new babies, graduations, and anniversaries. Her interest in others was demonstrated in tangible ways, from helping to pay for an employee's education to watching a dance performance by the grandchildren of her housekeeper, Nancy Mechura. She shared with some of her staff an enthusiasm for collecting recipes, and she had a quick and often whimsical sense of humor. Nancy Mechura still smiles remembering the morning she and others were taking a coffee break about ten a.m., when *we glanced up to see Mrs. Mott looking at us from the other side of the door with her nose pressed against the glass. She really gave us a good laugh!*

When annual bonus checks were sent, each was accompanied by a letter of thanks from Mrs. Mott, to which she added that while the recipient was, of course, permitted to use the money in whatever way he or she thought best, she recommended that it be saved for retirement. In 1983, she approved a new policy that reimbursed Applewood's clerical and professional employees for continued education costs.

Stuart Boze, grandson of Herm Skinner, who helped care for the farm animals at Applewood in its early years, and son of John Boze, who tended the vegetable garden and worked as a handyman there, never lived at Applewood but grew up around it and was hired occasionally to park cars and set the bowling pins during the Motts' parties. He became a teacher and personnel director for the Flint Schools and worked closely with Mr. Manley, with whom C.S. created the innovative Community School program. After church at St. Paul's Episcopal one Sunday, Mrs. Mott invited Stuart and his wife to come to Applewood to see the gardens and tour the estate, *because she knew that my father had worked in those gardens*, Stuart recalled. *She was just a lovely hostess.*

Todd Bakos was hired at Applewood as a part-time gardener in 1981 and promoted in 1991 to a full-time horticulturist for the estate. Shortly after he was hired, he understood that Ruth Mott was much more than just an employer:

She was everything from a family counselor to a cheerleader for our personal achievements. She attended my wedding, and she encouraged me to get my degree in landscape and nursery management. When I graduated, she had her driver take her to Michigan State University, an hour away, so she could watch me get my diploma. My wife and I brought our kids to Applewood to swim in the pool, which Mrs. Mott greatly enjoyed. She was so sweet to them, and they called her "grandma." We took her to arts and cultural events at the nearby Whiting and to the county fair. Beyond her charm was this uncanny way she made everyone who worked for her feel they were important and treasured.



I miss morning meetings in the breakfast room following Mrs. Mott's breakfast, looking out onto the perennial garden, admiring the flowers in the bud vase on the table, and agreeing with Mrs. Mott when she asked, "Isn't nature wonderful?"

ESTATE MANAGER DEB ELLIOTT

Getting ready for guests

Floriculturist Ila Kelley remembers gathering with the whole staff, under Mrs. Mott's direction, to decorate the residence for two special holidays. At Eastertime, they made large displays in the gallery and dining room with pots of Applewood-grown tulips, Easter lilies, and other spring flowers, and they delivered lilies to dozens of Mrs. Mott's friends and family members around town.

All hands pitched in again for three to four days during the first week of December. They secured evergreen roping to the railing going up the main staircase and over the living-room fireplace and attached handmade evergreen swags above the windows and doorways. Pine cones gathered from the property were added to wreaths, and armloads of poinsettias grown in Applewood's solar greenhouse were arranged on the first floor of the house—red poinsettias in the gallery and living room, white poinsettias in the dining room, and a pink poinsettia in the sun room. Then, as with the Easter lilies, the staff spent several days delivering poinsettias to the Motts' family and friends.

Floriculturist Ila Kelley began working at Applewood in 1985 and remembers Mrs. Mott as the most appreciative person she ever met:

She loved to share other people's compliments about our work. I made flower arrangements for the house, and we grew a lot of unusual things in the greenhouse that she enjoyed sharing with guests. After every dinner party, the first thing she would say to me was how much the guests loved the flowers on the dining-room table and in the greenhouse. She led by example. She made us want to be like her—kind, caring, and very giving.

Many who worked for Mrs. Mott were amazed that they were supposed to walk into the house, without ringing or knocking, when they came to work.

Mrs. Mott was used to having people in the house, recalls Kelly Caré, who started as an intern at Applewood in 1990 and became a full-time horticulturist there in 1991. We were welcomed and trusted to take care of our chores. It was all part of the welcoming tone Mrs. Mott set at Applewood.

Kelly also remembers Mrs. Mott's sense of humor and a little pantomime act she'd do at the beginning of every staff party:

She was an amazing mime. She would go through this ritual of pretending to open a bottle of champagne, and at one point, she would put her finger in her cheek to make the "pop!" of the cork coming out. Then she'd act as though she was pouring the imaginary champagne into our imaginary glasses. With a flourish, she would pick up one of the imaginary glasses and pretend to drink down the champagne with a loud "glug . . . glug . . . glug!" She would also bend one of her graceful dancer's arms into a shape that looked exactly like a swan.

Doug MacArthur worked at Applewood from January 1994 until summer of 2010. He provided security for the estate, helped with repairs and odd jobs, took Mrs. Mott to appointments, and was a steady guide when she wanted to stroll around the estate:

On warm days, Mrs. Mott would take my arm, and we'd go for a walk, often down to the lower garden. She'd poke around with her cane and talk about how nice the flowers looked. She enjoyed getting out of the house. She was always proper and dignified, so when I took her for a ride or to an appointment, I dressed like a proper chauffeur. I looked the part in a jacket and tie and a little black hat, and I drove her old 1977 Buick. It had spent its life in a heated garage and was in perfect condition. Mrs. Mott didn't like to go fast . . . she liked to putter around. If I'd done it her way, we'd go thirty miles an hour on the freeway. We usually conferred about how to get to a place before we left. She was still driving when she was in her early nineties, and for the most part, she still knew how to get around town.

Applewood staff also celebrated Mrs. Mott's milestones, and she was always open to trying something new and fun. Nancy Mechura remembers Mrs. Mott had good laughs at one of the birthday parties staff threw for her, when they put a paper plate on her head, set small things on the plate, and had her reach up and touch them to guess what they were without looking at them.

In 1995, Mrs. Mott's birthday party given by staff included games and dancing and an extra boost of sweet silliness provided by Pearl Lusk and summer intern Joe Borgstrom, who dressed as clowns.



Ruth in the orchard, 1990.

New horizons open every day. Each day continues to broaden my vision, and as long as I can keep going, I shall try to meet the challenge of each day. Please don't wait until you are in your seventies to return to your community and society the benefits and privileges you have gained from your education. I feel blessed to have the good health and sufficient ancient good sense and financial resources to embark on my new life in philanthropy with an optimistic view toward the future of this world. Life can begin at seventy-five!

RUTH RAWLINGS MOTT, IN A SPEECH TO STUDENTS AT RADFORD SCHOOL, NOVEMBER 20, 1985



Ruth and visitors study the planters in the Demonstration Garden that explain in pictures how peanuts, carrots, and potatoes grow underground, 1991.

A special experience for visitors

In 1986, the Junior League held a huge and successful fundraiser on the grounds of Applewood, and soon after, other organizations and groups began asking if they could visit the gardens. Mrs. Mott wanted to share Applewood with the public, so she began scheduling tours, led by the staff, and she was usually on hand to meet the groups at the front of the house or on the back terrace. Visitors were happily surprised that she took time out of her day to welcome them.

Children's groups were a special treat for Mrs. Mott, and she liked to invite them to come to the terrace and talk with her. For eleven years, the Cedar Street Children's Center adopted a plot of ground in the Demonstration Garden and planted it with flowers and vegetables every summer. They watered and weeded it, put up a scarecrow, and in the fall, they harvested their produce. Mrs. Mott enjoyed greeting the children and sometimes rode in the golf cart to the garden so she could watch them in action.

Birth of the Ruth Mott Fund

Ruth Mott came into her own as a philanthropist in her later years. As she grew up in El Paso, her mother and father mentored her in community leadership and responding to human needs. In Flint, as a trustee for the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, she learned the formal elements of institutionalized giving. Armed with this background, she established the Ruth Mott Fund in 1979 to formalize and focus her philanthropic interests.

The pass-through foundation reflected her deep interest in the arts, beautification, and health and her belief that individuals must take personal responsibility for their world and how they function in it. It had an annual budget for grantmaking of between \$1 million and \$2 million, which was used for health promotion, to further world peace, to protect the environment, and to support the arts. Mrs. Mott kept the fund flexible so the board could respond to issues that didn't fit into existing categories.

Field experts and family members were invited to serve on the board and were challenged to anticipate, analyze, and address the needs of the times. Board members met twice a year in different locations around the country, including at Applewood, and the meetings often included music and arts events. Among the local talent that entertained at the estate was the rousing husband-wife team of Julia and Wade Mainer, talented pioneers in bluegrass music. The couple met in the mountains of North Carolina and gained national fame for their distinct bluegrass sound before moving to Flint in the 1950s.

The Ruth Mott Fund became an effective and satisfying way for its founder to support positive change around issues close to her heart and at the same time to provide philanthropic training for many younger members of her family. Before Mrs. Mott closed the fund in 1997, a number of her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews had served on the board, and many went on to create their own giving programs. *Ruth gave me a wonderful opportunity when she asked me to join the board*, remembers her nephew Joe Robinson. *I served for eight years and grew a great deal.*

Betsy Wolter, who was program officer for the Ruth Mott Fund for more than six years, observed of Mrs. Mott that she appeared as comfortable talking with Roger Smith, General Motors' conservative chairman and CEO, as she was exchanging ideas with an Argentinean head of an acting troupe who gave health information to migrant workers in the California fields.

I was most aware of her sense of humor, recalled Betsy. *She was an egalitarian . . . charming and frank.* Betsy's office was in the former Genesee Towers in Flint, and she remembered Mrs. Mott having flowers delivered to the office from Applewood's greenhouse, *sometimes for birthdays, and sometimes just because she was a nice lady.*



The Motts had this family logo created many years ago. It adorned personal stationery and is featured above the entrance to the barn. The Ruth Mott Foundation continues to use it.

Opposite: Ruth's dresser, with favorite passages and photos taped to the mirror.

A PEACEFUL PASSING AT APPLEWOOD

A Mrs. Mott kind of day

A soft and silent blanket of snow had fallen overnight, three inches weighing on each bare branch of every tree and shrub. It was an amazingly peaceful sight. Just the kind of experience that makes you feel calm and at ease with life. Nature's beauty abounded the morning Mrs. Mott passed away. How appropriate that it was "a Mrs. Mott kind of day." We knew that somehow she had a hand in this extraordinary display, perhaps even choosing to leave amidst the most glorious winter morning one could imagine (Rebecca Stack, Applewood horticulture staff).

After a very full and happy life, Ruth Rawlings Mott passed away on January 25, 1999, at the age of ninety-seven. Her adoring staff kept notes of her last few days at Applewood, the hours they shared with her and her family, gathering around her bedside to sing songs to her and hold her hand, and the graceful way she sometimes swept her arms to the music as if conducting their voices.

On the morning of her passing, a Monday, Applewood's floriculturist, Ila Kelley, and estate manager Deb Elliott gathered the wreaths they had adorned with silk flowers representing varieties growing in Applewood's gardens, in Mrs. Mott's favorite color combination of pink, blue, and white. They were placed on the main entrance gates facing Kearsley Street and remained there for ten days. At noon on January 26, several of the staff and Maryanne's husband, Herman Warsh, met in the sun room

to watch a televised report about Mrs. Mott, broadcast live from outside Applewood's main entrance. Already reporters were interviewing people who had been touched by Mrs. Mott and filing stories about the remarkable life of the woman who had adopted Flint and its residents as her own so many years earlier.

A public viewing was held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Thursday. The funeral followed on Friday, and the church filled quickly. Applewood staff had ordered packets of forget-me-not seeds, and each person attending received one imprinted with the words *Forget-Me-Not, Ruth Mott, 97 wonderful years* and adorned with a light blue bow. They also ordered fresh forget-me-nots to attach with ribbons to the pews and made a bouquet of the tiny fresh blue flowers for Maryanne to wear. A tender eulogy was delivered by Mrs. Mott's dear friend Mitties McDonald de Champlain, an Episcopal priest and granddaughter of Mr. Mott's second wife.

At the end of the day, the large extended family and staff gathered at the Applewood Café on the grounds of Mott Community College—land that once was part of Applewood—to share food and cherished memories. Mrs. Mott's grandson Stewart Dansby requested that those who had been singing to his grandmother during her last days sing once again for the group. They chose one of Mrs. Mott's favorites, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."



Learning something new every day

Ruth loved learning, whether it was memorizing the common and Latin names for all the flowers at Applewood, reading a grant proposal, or getting an update on an employee's progress toward a college degree. She also believed in making the very best of one's own life.

Through the years, when she found passages, poems, and one-liners she liked, she taped them to the mirror on her dresser so she would remember them. Some were funny. Some were well known, such as the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi that begins, *Lord, make me a channel of thy peace, that where there is hatred, I may bring love.* Others were copied from unknown sources. Taken together, they were inspiration for her life's work on herself.



The measure of a life is its donation.
Dr. Walter B. Frommeyer, Jr., who became chairman of the University of Atlanta at Birmingham's Department of Medicine in the 1960s.



The first great gift we can bestow on others is a good example.



A Greek adage: Life is a gift of nature—
but beautiful living is the gift of wisdom.



Thought for the week: When love will have
more attention than hate, then peace will
prevail over war, justice over injustice,
sanity over insanity. *B. Jordan*



Today's chuckle: Today is the tomorrow
you worried about yesterday. Now you
know why.



An investment in life is an investment in
change. . . . When you are changing all the
time, you've got to continue to keep
adjusting to change, which means that you
are going to be constantly facing new
obstacles. That's the joy of living. And once
you're involved in the process of becoming,
there is no stopping. You're doomed!
You're gone! But what a fantastic journey!



I think the loving person must return to
spontaneity—return to touching each other,
to holding each other, to smiling at each
other, to thinking of each other, to caring
about each other . . .

Hugs are good, they feel nice, and if you
don't believe it, try it. *Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D.*



A Friendship True
Is like pure gold
It won't wear out
Because it's old



Listening is the beginning of understanding.



AGE is a quality of the mind:
If you have left your dreams behind,
If hope is cold,
If you no longer look ahead,
If your ambition's fires are dead—
Then you are OLD.

But if from life you take the best,
And if in life you keep the jest,
If love you hold,
No matter how the years go by,
No matter how the birthdays fly—
You are not old.



Never believe in never! *Rev. Robert Schuller*



Not Growing Old
They say that I am growing old,
I've heard them tell it times untold,
In language plain and bold—
But I'm not growing old.

This frail old shell in which I dwell
Is growing old, I know full well—
But I am not the shell.

What if my hair is turning gray?
Gray hairs are honorable, they say.
What if my eyesight's growing dim?
I still can see to follow Him
Who sacrificed His life for me
Upon the cross of Calvary.

APPLEWOOD IN THE CARE OF THE RUTH MOTT FOUNDATION

The legacy continues

Many wondered if Ruth Mott's passing would mark the end of her generous commitment to people and programs. Instead, her legacy emerged through a new entity called the Ruth Mott Foundation, launched in March 2001.

Mrs. Mott left the foundation her estate, consisting of the family home, Applewood, and a well-diversified portfolio of investments with which to carry out the foundation's mission.

Initially, grantmaking was developed around Mrs. Mott's priorities of beautification, arts and culture, and health promotion and focused in Flint and Genesee County. The trustees also engaged in a learning process that involved consulting with community focus groups and developing new initiatives such as the Façade Project and the Beecher Scholarship Incentive Program.

At Applewood, the foundation tested on-site programs such as concerts, workshops, celebrations, convenings, history boards, storytelling, reenactments, and outreach initiatives.

We learned along the way, recalls Deb Elliott, striving for a balance between caring for the estate and sharing with the community the history, beauty, and many resources of Applewood.

Applewood, as a historic treasure, a living museum, and an outdoor classroom, has played a big role in the foundation's philanthropic work beyond grantmaking. It offers unique opportunities for adults and children to explore and discover

the natural world around them and learn about the history of the place and the people who lived there. Special events at the estate begin in the spring and end with the Holiday Walk in December. New programs are added each year, and old favorites, such as the Fall Harvest Festival in September, always draw big crowds. To help celebrate Applewood's centennial year in 2016, and in the spirit of Ruth Mott's vision for the estate, staff members prepared for opening the house to public tours for the first time, marking a new era for Applewood.

On days when the site is open to the public, visitors are invited to explore every corner of the gardens and outbuildings and to learn about this gracious gentleman's farm, built so long ago and still so relevant. Music from performers in the tea house drifts through the perennial garden and out across the back lawn. The Demonstration Garden showcases new plant varieties alongside old favorites and is full of ideas to try at home.

Adjacent to the Demonstration Garden is the garden shed, with a "green" roof, rain barrel, and rain garden—an environmentally friendly trio of practical ways to use water wisely and treat it as the precious resource it is. The green roof allows the water to be captured and drawn back into the atmosphere to become rain once again. Water that falls onto the rain garden seeps back into the earth to the aquifer below to supply pure drinking water, and water captured in the rain barrel is used in the gardens.

APPLEWOOD



To make the best use of resources, foundation staff and trustees work with local and regional partners and build strategically on strengths and opportunities already in place in the community.



The big barn has the original state-of-the-art-for-the-times equipment that was used to ease chores for the hired hands and keep farming processes sanitary and streamlined. A giant cottonwood tree behind the barn that was on the property when the Motts purchased it in 1915 is a two-time winner of the Genesee County Big Tree contest.

Beehives were added near the heirloom apple orchard in recent years, and nearby story boards explain the importance of bees and other pollinators in our food system.

Visitors love standing under the tall canopy of Applewood's old sugar maple, whose sweeping branches reach all the way to the ground. It is stunning in full leaf at the height of the summer, and in autumn, when the leaves turn orange and gold, it seems to glow.

Staff and volunteers have developed outreach programs and initiatives to extend their impact beyond the gates of Applewood. Partnering with residents and organizations, they offer guidance, training, and technical assistance, which has been especially useful with the increase in community gardens and interest in teaching children about growing and eating healthy food.

Applewood's majestic old sugar maple tree.

New roles for Applewood's historic buildings

With the Ruth Mott Foundation established and grantmaking in place, trustees turned to the home where Ruth Mott's legacy began and discussed how best to care for the aging residence and outbuildings at Applewood. To fulfill Mrs. Mott's intent that Applewood be a resource to the community, the buildings needed to be updated, preserved, and protected, all with an eye toward ensuring that they would be usable and relevant.

Trustees evaluated many options: restoring features so that they looked and functioned as they did in their original state, fixing and reconstructing the buildings, replacing them, or adapting the spaces for entirely new purposes. They also weighed factors such as the historic and architectural value of the buildings, safety issues, cost, and how the buildings would be used in the future.

They determined that the home and gatehouse would no longer serve as full-time residences and that both could be used effectively as offices and meeting space. They also provide ideal settings for community members to convene for discussions on various important community topics. The barn and chicken coop, once the heart of the working farm, would not be used again for raising animals, but they were perfectly suited for renovating in such a way that visitors could tour them to learn about their unique characteristics and Applewood's farming practices in the early to mid-1900s. And it was a priority for the trustees that the character of the buildings be preserved.



With all that in mind and so many factors to juggle, the trustees engaged the services of the SmithGroup, established in Detroit in 1853 and one of the oldest architectural and engineering firms in the country. In 2011, the company incorporated into its name its sister firm, JJR, which had developed the master plan for renovating Applewood's grounds in the late 1970s.

Some of the first work focused on Applewood's kitchen, which had seen heavy use over the years and was in great need of attention. As the renovation plan was put in place, "modern" additions to the kitchen such as the dropped ceiling and fluorescent lights were removed, and the kitchen's original character began to emerge. Dave Miller, program director for Applewood at the time, talked with caterers to determine what would be most important to have in a kitchen that could be used for preparing or staging meals for special functions in the residence. They recommended that commercial-quality appliances be installed for practical use, and while it was not possible to install a material exactly like the original linseed-oil-based floor, the new floor was in a color very close to that of the original.

Scaffolding was constructed across the front of the residence during restoration work.

A worker applies a solution to the entryway walls to draw out impurities.



Detail of the main stairway railing.

In the decades since Applewood was built, original interior walls throughout the house had been repainted in colors that were fashionable at the time. Where possible, contractors removed the newer layers of paint, then applied a poultice solution to the walls and ceilings to draw out debris such as the years of cigarette and pipe smoke that had accumulated. Many rooms were repainted to match the original colors, but where those original colors were stylishly very dark, they were documented, and lighter shades of paint were chosen instead to brighten the interior.

The original craftsmen had created a popular faux finish on the walls of the foyer and open staircase. They began by applying plaster from floor to ceiling. Then they used a scribe to replicate the look of French limestone, called Caen stone, complete with faux mortar joints. The final touch was an application of creamy yellow paint to mimic the natural color of the stone. Over time, the faux look fell out of favor, and the walls were painted over, all but obliterating the original effect. Specialists painstakingly restored the stunning faux stone design, and the remarkable transformation brought back the elegant appearance of the entryway.

Wood paneling in the living room and office was cleaned and preserved. The original travertine floors were cleaned and polished, and a new cork floor was installed in the office.

The lovely mahogany floor installed in the living room when the home was built had been replaced in 1994 when a frozen water faucet thawed and soaked the wood. The replacement floor, however, wasn't given enough time to acclimate to indoor conditions before it was installed, and consequently, it buckled. Workers removed it and installed another floor, which is in fine condition.



The trustees wanted to have a welcome area for visitors, and the tidy four-stall garage was adapted easily. On days when the site is open, visitors can stop in and view displays that explore the history of the Mott family and activities at Applewood over the decades. The original tool room adjacent to the garage was converted to an accessible bathroom for visitors.

Old carpet was removed from the two-bedroom apartment over the garage, revealing a concrete floor, which was original but in poor shape. Because of the difficulty and expense of repairing it, it was topped with a durable cork floor. New appliances and fixtures were installed in the kitchen and bath that reflect the building's 1916 character. Skylights similar in design to an original skylight in the garage were added to brighten the space.

Doug MacArthur, the estate's much-loved jack-of-all-trades and a retired police officer, lived in the apartment for fifteen years. When he retired in 2010, the space was converted to offices for Applewood's program staff who had outgrown their quarters in the solar greenhouse building.

The second floor over the potting room had once served as the gardener's office and was converted to storage space during Mrs. Mott's later years. It became office space again, this time for Carol deKalands, the estate's first archivist. When more room was needed, the archives were moved temporarily to the gatehouse. Offices for the archive staff are now located at the west end of the second floor of the residence, and archival storage is on the third floor. The wall between Carol's original office and the apartment was opened, and the area is used by volunteers and program staff.

The greenhouse is still home to a bed of stunning Birds of Paradise and a massive old jade plant descended from a fifty-cent investment that C.S. wrote about in 1937:

Three years ago this Christmas, C.R. and I were at the Butlers in Cleveland where Aimeé had a very handsome Jade tree of considerable size. Florists ask a pretty good price for these when they are large. However, we bought a small one for 50¢ and from it started a number of others with the result that we now have four good sized handsome plants, which if we had to buy at the Florists would cost us three to five dollars each, and the four of them in our loggia make quite an attractive appearance. The moral of this story is that 50¢ with a little time, trouble and patience will give you a \$25.00 result, and that is a fifty-to-one shot. Most people think of a thing today and what results yesterday instead of waiting until the day after tomorrow.

Birds of Paradise, orchids, ferns, and offspring from the Motts' original jade plant purchased in 1937 thrive in the greenhouse.





Detail of the original window hardware in the residence.

The preservation of the estate is ongoing. Everything from the buildings and grounds to the furniture and artwork in the house is carefully maintained. Staff members follow museum standards on caring for historic collections so that they can be preserved for future generations to enjoy, and skilled conservators work on items in need of repair.

Applewood's original chicken coop anchors the north side of the Demonstration Garden. Instead of restoring it to permanently house chickens, carpenters transformed it into practical work space for activities such as community art projects. It served for a time as studio space for artists who engaged visitors in helping make mosaic tile benches with designs that were based on guests' stories of what brought them joy. Visitors also worked side-by-side with artists to construct a mosaic sign for the Flint Farmers' Market and a large outdoor sculpture that also serves as a bench on the University of Michigan–Flint campus. For Applewood's one-hundredth anniversary, this space was transformed again, into an interactive exhibit on how to grow food at home—just as the Motts did for decades.

The state-of-the-art slate-roofed barn was cleaned and white-washed to restore its character. It no longer serves as a permanent home for animals, though local farmers bring the history of the barn alive for visitors during special events by stabling two horses and two calves there that are breeds similar to those raised by the Motts. Visitors enjoy being able to see, firsthand, the important role it played on this working farm.

Opposite: Carpenters and craftspeople repairing and restoring the residence, 2004–2005.

The gatehouse had been modernized in many ways over the decades. As heating systems changed, carpenters had moved walls in the kitchen area. They had also replaced the original wooden window frames with contemporary vinyl windows. Workers began in 2008 to restore both the floor plan and the character of the gatehouse. They updated the bathroom with new plumbing, and they installed new finishes and hardware that reflect the period when the gatehouse was built.

Windows were replaced with a design close to the original style. New wiring and new appliances were added for safety and practical use. Original woodwork and paneling were cleaned and preserved, and staff members furnished the two-bedroom dwelling so it can comfortably accommodate guests such as visiting artists and researchers.

The estate now hosts the wireless communication systems needed in the twenty-first century, which has made possible the use of technology for self-guided experiences and to learn about many of Applewood's features.

As with all century-old structures, the buildings at Applewood need continual upkeep. In 2014, the original copper gutters and downspouts on the residence, garage, barn, chicken coop, and gatehouse needed to be replaced. The cost of the project for just the residence was nearly \$80,000, roughly what it cost the Motts to build the entire home in 1916.



La Brezza (far right)

Florentine Craftsmen, Inc.

Photos were taken of Mrs. Mott at her ninetieth birthday party at Applewood, with a basket of ninety roses close by and her arms reaching up and out, thanking everyone for coming. Later, estate manager Deb Elliott saw a photo of *La Brezza* (far right), a 43-inch-tall lead sculpture of a young girl with her arms reaching up and out to catch the wind. Deb was struck by how much the child's pose resembled the photo (near right) that she had taken of Mrs. Mott at her birthday party.

With Mrs. Mott's ninety-fifth birthday approaching, Deb suggested that the sculpture would be a wonderful present for her. The idea was a hit, and *La Brezza* was purchased for Mrs. Mott by members of the family, staff, and close friends.

La Brezza means *The Breeze* in Italian. It's the perfect description for the whimsical sculpture that graces the cover of this book and captures beautifully Mrs. Mott's gracious hospitality and inclusiveness. Every summer, *La Brezza* is placed in the Demonstration Garden, one of Mrs. Mott's favorite places on the estate.

(Photo of Mrs. Mott courtesy of Deborah Elliott.)



Outdoor art at Applewood

It is a natural pairing: the Motts' love of art and the stunning four-season backdrop of Applewood's rolling, well-tended landscape. In the past several years, a number of pieces of fine art have been added to the grounds of the estate to the delight of visitors, but outdoor art is not new to Applewood. Shortly after Ethel and C. S. Mott and their three children moved into the new home in 1917, they purchased an elaborately cast concrete birdbath, complete with vines and flowers and tiny smiling lions, from Marshall Field & Company and placed it just outside their breakfast room. They also acquired an antique marble wellhead that came from a villa in northern Italy.

The birdbath at the estate today is a replica of the original, made from Indiana limestone and installed in 1992. The wellhead, which is 32 inches high and 52 inches in diameter, was planted with flowers after it arrived at Applewood and now holds a bubbling fountain. Around its sides are carved sweet cherubs playing musical instruments and the inscription *Homines humileque mijcinas lymphae jurant*, which loosely translates to *The great, the lowly, and the tamarisk enjoy the waters.*



Friendly Frog (below)

Marshall Fredericks

Children have been enjoying this giant smiling amphibian for nearly fifty years. *Friendly Frog* was created out of terrazzo and concrete by renowned Michigan sculptor Marshall Fredericks in 1970 for the Genesee Valley Shopping Center. From there, it was transferred to the Flint Children's Museum, but when the museum moved and the new building could not support its mighty 6,600 pounds, the lovable frog was put into storage.

In 2004, *Friendly Frog* was brought to his new home at Applewood, near the east visitor entrance, where he sits happily on a landscaped state-of-the-art slip-resistant pad surrounded by water-spouting turtles and seating areas. Near him, an arching bridge spans a dry creek bed, and the sounds of frog calls fill the air.

This gentle giant is very climbable. Many parents who scampered all over him when they were young are delighted that their children can enjoy him now, too.

Columnar Construction (right)

Richard Hunt

Columnar Construction was installed at Applewood in celebration of Ruth Mott's 110th birthday. When Richard Hunt walked the estate looking for the best place to anchor the three-and-a-half-ton sculpture, he took into consideration the nearby greenspace, foot traffic, roadways, city lights, and soil conditions. He decided on a bluff overlooking Mott Community College, the bike trail, and Gilkey Creek, just a short walk from *Anvil's Reach*.

At the dedication, Ruth's daughter Maryanne said, *Even as my mother's sight was dimming, she was responsive to the beauty around her. She found joy and delight in the forms of clouds and the colors of summer flowers and autumn leaves. She was a happy, positive, optimistic soul who loved learning something new each day and seeing the best in each person she encountered. Her love of beauty evolved into a deep appreciation and passionate support of the arts. I know she would have loved Richard Hunt's work.*





Anvil's Reach (above)

Richard Hunt

Richard Hunt has been working in steel and bronze for more than forty years and is the foremost creator of public art in this country. Of his designs, he says, *One of the central themes in my work . . . is the reconciliation of the organic and the industrial. I see my work as forming a kind of bridge between what we experience in nature and what we experience in the urban, industrial technology-driven society we live in.*

His sculpture *Anvil's Reach*, on loan from the Mott-Warsh Collection, is made from Corten steel, a steel alloy with a rusty, weathered appearance. It is located in the southeast corner of the estate, surrounded by landscape designed to complement both its material and its form, including cherry-colored daylilies and tall foliage as a backdrop.



Risky Intentions (above)

Chakaia Booker

Chakaia Booker created this flowing sculpture from stainless steel and salvaged rubber, primarily old tires, which she cuts into strips and folds into fluid forms. On loan from the Mott-Warsh Collection, *Risky Intentions* is installed along the sweeping drive coming into the estate, between the gatehouse and the residence.

The Mott-Warsh Collection, initiated in 2001 by Maryanne Mott and her husband, Herman Warsh, focuses on fine art created by African-American artists and artists of the African diaspora produced since 1940. It contains works by more than 125 artists in a range of media from drawing and painting to photography and sculpture. The collection is based in Flint, and selections have been loaned—and are on tour—throughout the community and the country.

Volunteers for all seasons

Mrs. Mott enjoyed having children come to Applewood to discover the wonders of nature and learn how to grow flowers and good things to eat. In 2000, Applewood horticulturists Erin Caudell and Rebecca Stack developed those important lessons into a science curriculum for children from kindergarten through third grade and took their program into the classrooms of Flint schools. The children, in turn, came to Applewood to explore, firsthand, their newfound knowledge of birds, bugs, trees, and flowers. Several retired teachers participated in the innovative program, and they became Applewood's first volunteers.

Staff members have continued to expand programs focused on a variety of topics, including the history of the estate and the interests and values of the Motts. Trained volunteers provide tours and programs for all ages. Applewood is an exciting place to volunteer, and opportunities for engagement continue to grow.

Volunteers also receive extensive training to help with horticulture tasks in the apple orchard and share information at public events on the importance of preserving heirloom apple varieties and the successful use of integrated pest-management techniques at Applewood to reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides.

Our volunteers have a passion for Applewood! says Linda Bedtelyon, one of the estate's first volunteer tour guides and coordinator of volunteers since 2001. From the program's modest beginnings, Linda has developed a cadre of about 150 active volunteers. Members of the staff provide many hours of training each year to be sure Applewood's volunteers are confident and capable in their important roles.

Opposite: Children and adults enjoy games and activities at Applewood.





Orchard tree inventory

March 2015

70 trees, 29 varieties

Baldwin (2)
 Cortland (2)
 Duchess of Oldenburg (3)
 Early Harvest (2)
 Esopus Spitzenburg (2)
 Fall Pippin (2)
 Golden Russet (3)
 Hyslop Crabapple (2)
 Jonathan (3)
 King (3)
 McIntosh (3)
 Northern Spy (3)
 Red Astrakan (2)
 Red Delicious (2)
 Red Gravenstein (3)
 Rhode Island Greening (2)
 Snow (2)
 Stayman's Winesap (4)
 Steele's Red (2)
 Sutton's Beauty (2)
 Sweet Bough (2)
 Tolman Sweet (2)
 Transcendent (3)
 Turley Winesap (3)
 Twenty Ounce Pippin (2)
 Wealthy (3)
 Winter Banana (2)
 Wolf River (2)
 Yellow Transparent (2)

Stewards of an heirloom apple orchard

John Mott had abundant varieties of apples from which to choose when blending juices for his New York-based cider and vinegar business in the late 1800s. An estimated 20 million apple trees were growing in the United States then, and they included between 15,000 and 16,000 varieties.

Today there are fewer than 5 million apple trees, and fewer than 3,500 varieties remain commercially available. Worse, ninety percent of those varieties are at risk of falling out of cultivation and disappearing from our fruit bowls altogether. A mere eleven varieties account for 90 percent of all apples sold in stores.

If you like the taste of apples, the really bad news is that most varieties grown commercially are chosen because of their large size, appealing shape, and pretty color and for their durability when shipped and stored. Taste—the *simply perfect taste* of a fresh-picked, tree-ripened apple—once at the top of the priority list for growers, has been slipping to the bottom. And while an apple a day is supposed to keep the doctor away, its nutritional qualities are not even discussed. The apple, as it has been recognized for centuries, is in trouble.

The Ruth Mott Foundation is proud of the precious resource of heirloom apple trees planted and nurtured long ago in the one-acre orchard on the north lawn at Applewood and committed to demonstrating the importance of ensuring that old apple varieties do not disappear forever. Staff members have worked for several years to rejuvenate and preserve the rare collection. When original trees die, they are replaced with identical semi-dwarf varieties. Apples don't reproduce true from seed, so when an identical variety can't be found, staff members create an identical tree by grafting buds from the old tree onto new rootstock.

Seventy trees representing twenty-nine heritage varieties now thrive in Applewood's namesake orchard, including an original Stayman Winesap that is at least one hundred years old. The trees can be remarkably resilient but also fragile. Several years ago, an original Golden Russet died back almost to the ground from a disease called fire blight. Only a single sprout remained, and it grew into a big tree. During a mighty spring storm in 2013, the tree blew over. Staff members quickly propped it up, hoping for the best. It produced a good crop of apples that summer but died during the long, cold winter of 2014.

Anyone who has inspected an untended apple tree knows that bugs love apples as much as we do. Most commercially raised apple trees are sprayed several times a year to produce unblemished fruit and ward off pests and disease. In fact, apples are among the most heavily sprayed of all fruits.

Orchard manager Mike Belco minimizes the use of hazardous chemicals at Applewood by coordinating an environmentally sensitive approach to pest control called integrated pest management, which includes monitoring weather conditions, observing the cycles of potential pests, and enlisting the help of "beneficial insects" to control those that are not wanted.

I spray more for disease control and rarely for pests, says Mike. Our mating-disruption program against caterpillars works well and eliminates the need for many sprays. And we tolerate more insect damage than a commercial orchard because our priority is flavor, not cosmetically flawless fruit.

Volunteer Charles Bellows
picks apples in the orchard.

Applewood's trees are also given plenty of space so fresh air circulates around them, drying the leaves and helping prevent problems such as apple scab. Pruning, too, is an aid in producing healthy fruit and discouraging trouble. Each tree is grown with a central "leader" from the ground to the top. Several levels of "scaffold" branches grow out horizontally from that leader to create a pyramid-shaped tree, which promotes airflow and permits the all-important sunlight to reach the blossoms.

The result of this attentive stewardship is an annual harvest of thousands of pounds of juicy heirloom apples that taste just as they did one hundred years ago and that maintain the unique and purposeful characteristics that once made them so desirable and earned them the loyalty of Applewood's cooks. Visitors are invited to taste and compare them during Applewood's annual Fall Harvest Festival, and the apples are preserved and used throughout the year in educational programs at Applewood.

Continuing a Mott family tradition, extra apples and the varieties that ripen after the festival are shared with several organizations in Flint that provide services to adults and children.

In 2015, the orchard had a record-breaking year. All the varieties bore fruit, and by the time the last apple was picked in November, the yield surpassed four hundred bushels.





Left: Wading in Gilkey Creek are, from left, Harding Mott, Anna Devereau, Mother Mott, Aimeé Mott, Elsa Mott, Herbert Harding, C. S. Mott, circa 1908–1909.

Opposite: Gilkey Creek flows freely, meandering past native plants and serving a vital purpose in a wetlands ecosystem once again, while providing a picturesque link in Flint's progressive greenway.

Restoring Gilkey Creek

Gilkey Creek continued to flow gently through Applewood's pasture for decades after the Motts moved onto the land. Wildflowers, pollywogs, and poison ivy all thrived through the 1940s in the fertile habitat created by the creek, and young Maryanne managed to collect some of each on her many adventures there. About the worst thing Gilkey Creek did was tempt children to test the thickness of its ice in winter. Mostly, it didn't bother anybody until well-meaning planners decided to move it out of sight and turn it into a drain. They diverted it across the Mott Community College campus and into a one-quarter-mile-long culvert that ran under Horrigan Drive and the area that became the Visual Arts and Design Center.

For twenty-five years, Gilkey Creek protested by cascading over its banks and approaching previous one-hundred-year flood levels with alarming frequency. During heavy rainstorms, the culvert simply couldn't move water downstream fast enough, and sometimes floodwaters rose so fast they trapped people in their cars. Water spread across the grounds of Applewood, threatening gardens and buildings and disrupting public programs. The situation became dangerous, and damage was expensive.

Seeking a permanent solution, Ruth Mott Foundation trustees engaged SmithGroup JJR to develop an environmentally sound plan to end the flooding and restore the historic and once-scenic waterway.

Crews began working in spring of 2007 to "daylight" 1,100 feet of Gilkey Creek by digging a new channel to bring it back above ground. They also created a large wetlands meadow that would absorb storm water. All materials removed from the site, such as asphalt, concrete, fencing, and trees, were either reused, recycled, or donated to others who could use them. Construction and plant

materials needed for the project were obtained from local sources when possible or from companies within 500 miles of Flint, to support the local economy and minimize the use of fuel to ship them.

Within a year, Gilkey Creek was flowing freely again, surrounded by a natural landscape of trees, shrubs, grasses, and meadow vegetation all native to the Flint area. The plants would filter contaminants while attracting typical pond and creek dwellers—frogs, fish, birds, butterflies, insects, and small animals that all play an important role in maintaining a healthy wetlands ecosystem.

This postcard-worthy creek that once fed the Motts' ice-skating pond and terrified young Stewart when he fell through its thin ice, where Maryanne gathered handfuls of wildflowers on warm summer days, the creek that was rerouted at least twice in the past century to accommodate urban development, has a new bed—a new home. And, as with Applewood itself, it has a renewed purpose. Mirroring the Gilkey Creek of 1915, it meanders through a meadow where wildflowers grow again and dragonflies dance in the sun. Fish can be spotted, and raccoons leave their unmistakable footprints in the mud along its banks. It also runs alongside a new and popular section of trail that connects Kearsley Park's bike path to Court Street and provides a stunning link in Flint's model greenway that stretches from I-69 to the Flint River.

Gilkey Creek's successful restoration provides many opportunities for the Ruth Mott Foundation to teach wetland ecology and to demonstrate innovative ways to improve and protect precious urban waterways. It's a living classroom, as is all of Applewood, with lessons and stories taken from a private past to build a dynamic and public future in the heart of Flint, Michigan.



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SUSAN J. NEWHOF had been writing for the Ruth Mott Foundation for several years when she was offered the extraordinary opportunity to immerse herself in Applewood's archives and chronicle the estate's first one hundred years for its 2016 centennial celebration. From her base in Montague, Michigan, where she lives with her husband, Paul Collins, Susan works as a writer and communication consultant for foundations and nonprofit organizations. She is a vegetarian and animal-welfare activist and is passionate about her little flock of backyard hens. Her books, *Michigan's Town and Country Inns* and *Spirits and Wine*, a novel, are published by the University of Michigan Press.



APPLEWOOD

The Charles Stewart Mott Estate

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF STORIES, 1916–2016 • SUSAN J. NEWHOF



C. S. Mott in his home office, February 4, 1960.



The living room at Applewood today.



Children playing during a public program at Applewood.

Automotive pioneer Charles Stewart Mott and his first wife, Ethel Harding Mott, purchased sixty-four acres at the edge of downtown Flint, Michigan, and laid the cornerstone in 1916 for the family home and gentleman's farm they called Applewood.

This collection of stories of Applewood's first one hundred years reveals the private lives of a very public family, much told in their own words.

The author weaves excerpts from decades of interviews, personal letters, and C. S. Mott's detailed diary, plus recollections from family, friends, and staff. More than 250 photos, both new and historic images from the Ruth Mott Foundation Archives, give an intimate look at an extraordinary family and the place they called home.

About the cover art: *La Brezza*, by Florentine Craftsmen, Inc., in the gardens at Applewood, was a gift to Ruth Rawlings Mott on her ninety-fifth birthday from family, staff, and close friends.

In contrast to many, the Motts chose to build their gentleman's farm within walking distance of downtown Flint, not out in the quiet countryside. They saw value in raising the family's food, eating fresh vegetables, preserving for later use, and sharing any abundance with those in need. Not concerned with making grand impressions, the house is modest compared with other auto baron homes, with a level of comfort and just enough space for family, staff, and guests.

— From the Foreword by Susan Gangwere McCabe, Curator and Historian

Applewood has been carefully preserved, fulfilling Ruth Mott's wish that it be a memorial to her cherished husband and a resource for the community. Come explore the landscaped grounds and barns, take part in creative hands-on programs, gaze up into the canopy of a giant old sugar maple, and learn how to care for the environment. Sample the heirloom apples from the namesake orchard, and discover their unique flavors, just as the Motts did. And beginning in Applewood's centennial year, you can now join others on an interactive tour of the home. — From the Preface by Susan J. Newhof

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