

Special Places

The Resthaven Colony: Mary Emery's Social Experiment

How would you like to retire to a cottage on a wooded hillside, with a clubhouse, your own garden, a working farm supplying fresh food and rich milk, with a hospital and convalescent home right out your back door? This was the intent of Mary Emery, who wanted to reward loyal employees of the Emery concerns with gracious retirement living. She purchased over 25 acres on the southern slope of Indian Hill and began establishing the Resthaven Colony as an experiment in social science and welfare. This was a separate undertaking from the development of Mariemont. Resthaven was under construction before any building started in the Village. In fact, two gray horses from the Resthaven barn were used to mark the outline of the church, which was the first building begun in the Village proper.

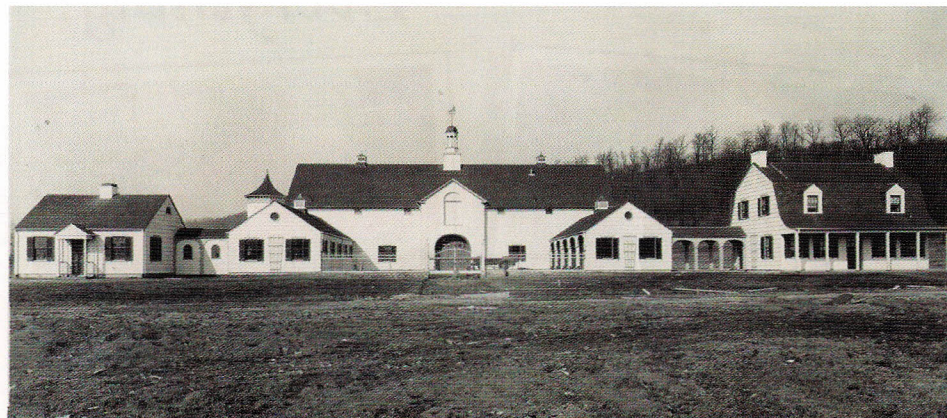
Unfortunately, Mrs. Emery's innovative vision was never realized. The Resthaven barn group and Resthaven Hospital (now St. Theresa Center) were the only components of the colony that were built. The hospital, begun in 1924, took a long time before serving the populace. No group of doctors could be found to operate it until the Sisters of Mercy purchased it in 1942. In the 1990s, it became a resident care facility, similar to the Convalescent Home envisioned in the original plans.

The farm was initially more successful than the hospital, but it soon became expensive and impractical for The Mariemont Company to manage. In 1929 the area reserved for pensioner's cottages was divided into lots and sold for private homes. The farm and dairy operated until 1940, when the Thomas J. Emery Memorial voted to discontinue operations.

Hubert E. Reeves of New York, a leading architect of the time, designed the attractive grouping of buildings. The Resthaven barn group consisted of the farmer's cottage, a barn with hangars for farm tools, a courtyard, the stables, and a model dairy. It was here

in 1933 and 1934 that Carl Lindner Sr. began Lindner Quality Milk. The small building was the milk plant, where milk from farmers in the Goshen and Milford areas was processed. All three of his young sons, Carl, Robert, and Richard, helped run the dairy operation. This enterprise ultimately led to the formation of United Dairy Farmers. The rich milk so prized by the Lindners and Mariemont residents alike was produced by

75 cents each. By Thanksgiving of 1923, there were over 2,500 trees established in the nursery. A full-time nursery manager, Mr. Fred Peck, was employed to care for the stock and oversee the transplanting. In order to transform the pastures and fields into the leafy neighborhoods we love today, a total of 80,000 trees and shrubs were brought in. A wide variety of species were chosen in order to create, "distinctive planting for each of the



The Resthaven Barn began as a social experiment, then led to the beginnings of United Dairy Farmers (UDF).

a herd of thoroughbred Guernsey cows. The Mariemont Company estimated that in 1932 at least 6,000 people purchased milk, some coming from as far away as Ft. Thomas, Kentucky and Price Hill. In the rear of the buildings were the silo, cow yard, and lots of chicken coops. Part of the Resthaven Colony concept called for the farm to supply poultry, milk, and vegetables to the hospital, convalescent home and residents of the cottages.

Another notable aspect of the Resthaven development was a large nursery. Charles Livingood, Mrs. Emery's agent, established the Mt. Vernon Nurseries in order to provide trees and shrubs for Mrs. Emery's new town of Mariemont. Mr. Livingood was an ardent admirer of George Washington, and Mrs. Livingood served as Vice Regent (from Ohio) of the Mount Vernon estate in Virginia. In 1922, Livingood ordered 650 trees from Mount Vernon, at a cost of about

neighborhoods." Trees were selected for their quick growth and shady canopies, as well as their beauty in spring and fall. Some early varieties included sycamores, sugar maples, oaks, lindens, lace bark elms, ginkgoes, dogwoods, and red buds. The Mariemont Company also planted virtually every variety of shrubs that grows in this climate, notably forsythia, lilac, spirea, and privet hedge.

An article from the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, dated April 23, 1922, described the unique concept of the Resthaven Colony as follows: "Every want of the pensioners in the matter of their living accommodations will be placed at their disposal...It is expected that many... will desire to have the satisfaction which goes with the wish of the average man - that of spending the evening of life on a little farm." Though Mrs. Emery's concept was compassionate and innovative, it was simply too impractical.