

## JACOBS CASTLE

By

Dorothea E. Abbott

Dr. J. Bay Jacobs purchased an acre of land on the west side of Chain Bridge Road in Arlington County on January 16, 1931. Upon completion of a log house built on this site in 1932/3 the Jacobs moved from an apartment in the Chastleton, Washington, D.C. to Arlington.

Several years later Dr. Jacobs and his wife, Eva, decided that their next house would be built of stone. Toward this end they searched through books, looking at pictures and designs, getting ideas for what became their castle.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Jacobs, a prominent obstetrician and gynecologist, on the staff of Georgetown and Arlington Hospitals, was much too busy to look for property. His instruction to his wife was to find land an equal distance between Arlington and Georgetown Hospitals so he could easily reach either place.<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Jacobs was most fortunate in locating the "Spring Lot" of the former Thomas B. Dawson Estate which was for sale. The location of this property was just what the Doctor ordered. It was on a bluff of the Palisades overlooking the Potomac River near Rosslyn. Dr. Jacobs commented during one of our telephone conversations a few years ago that Georgetown Hospital was in full view when the leaves were off the trees.

Bessie Iola Dawson Bailey, a daughter of Thomas B. Dawson, sold her "Spring Lot" to Dr. Jacobs. The first deed, December 22, 1936, was for 2.342 acres with the understanding that this could change when the survey was completed. On January 8, 1937 another deed was recorded showing the acreage to be 2.39.<sup>3</sup>

An Arlington County building permit #6603 was issued for 2223 North Scott Street, the Dawson Terrace Spring Lot, on July 20, 1938. The builder's name was W. C. Kremkau. Mr. Frank Segretti, one of three Segretti brothers, all professional stonemasons, whose business was at 5050 River Road in Bethesda, Maryland, likes to tell of the story of how Mrs. Jacobs sat on a tree stump in the rain under an umbrella sketching the design for the castle. Frank Segretti along with four other stonemasons said it took them three months to cover the exterior of the "Bay-Eva" castle using stone from the Stonyhurst Quarries on River Road in Bethesda. The name "Bay-Eva" is chiseled in stone at the entrance of the castle.<sup>4</sup>

The front door of the castle faces the Potomac River and opens into a reception/party room with a large bar and fish pool. The hallway off the reception area leads to the rear entrance of the castle. The furnace room with a walk-in vault is off this hall. A powder room and maid's room is on the opposite side of the reception area.



The spiral staircase with its unusual wrought iron railing rises up into the turret. The turret is close to the center of the castle and opens on to a foyer on each of the floors. The castle has casement windows throughout; the walls are twelve to eighteen inches thick; the roof is slate, the gutters are copper, and the floors are oak. Three-quarters of the castle was built on rock. A cement base was made over the rock and it became the first floor of the castle.

The castle was furnished with beautiful and unique Jacobean and French antiques. A representation of the furnishings has been selected for each room. On the first floor there was a Charles II style and parcel gilt mahogany high back open armchair; two carved white marble benches; a pair of antique neo-classical ormolu-mounted marble urns and pedestals; an Italian glazed pottery amphora in wrought iron stand; an Anglo-Indian carved hardwood octagonal table; an antique Imari Temple jardiniere; a 19th century Satsuma temple vase with floral decorations; a 19th century Jacobean style carved oak court cupboard; a late 19th century German porcelain figure of the Goddess of Victory; a Louis XV style ormolu and carved white marble candelabrum; a French 19th century bronze bust of a maiden with flowers in her hair by J. Ceusse.

The second floor foyer had a 19th century Louis XV style ormolu mounted parquetry inlaid marble top serpentine and bombe commode; a 19th century Sevres porcelain tall vase; a pair of 19th century gilt bronze winged figural

three-light sconces, and a 19th century Spanish style wrought iron lyre-base upholstered bench. The oak flooring in the foyers, library, dining room and living room was covered with oriental rugs.

The library contained a 19th century French Empire mahogany desk with a red velvet upholstered stool; a red leather upholstered matching club chair and a late 19th– early 20th century carved mahogany red leather upholstered three-seat sofa; also a country style oak hinged top commode cabinet. Back of the library there is a breakfast room and kitchen. The deck over the garage was built in 1951, and can be reached from a door in the pantry.

The dining room is located at the rear of the foyer. It was furnished for elegant entertaining with a 19th century Jacobean oak drawer table; carved oak leather side chair; Charles II carved oak highback side chair, and a carved walnut highback open armchair; 19th century Jacobean carved oak press cupboard, a two-part side cabinet, a pair of walnut spindle back open armchairs, an oak drop-leaf pedestal table; Louis XIV gilt bronze six-light wall sconces; Louis XV gilt bronze chandelier; two Louis XVI high back mahogany chairs.

The spacious living room has a large stone fireplace. This room contained several antique rugs, a Kirman and Bidjar; an Edwardian red velvet upholstered three cushion sofa; a Jacobean oak chest with figural carving; a Schubert baby grand piano. Off the living room there was a screened porch, later enclosed and used as a family room.

The floors are worth noting because of their unusual construction. The floors are made of oak boards which are dovetailed together with darker wood, possibly walnut, in the shape of a man's bow tie.

There are three bedrooms and a nursery on the third floor. The master bedroom with an adjoining bath had a 19th century Jacobean four-drawer oak chest; a double bedstead; a night table; a dressing table and matching stool; a linen-fold three-drawer chest; a 20th century oak flat top desk with three drawers on one side; a 19th century French gilt bronze mounted Kingwood parquetry bureau; Louis XV walnut chaise longue.

The guest room had a pair of 19th century Jacobean oak single bedsteads, a Queen Anne cherry pink velvet upholstered armchair; Louis XV bronze mounted parquetry slant front lady's desk, a marble top and bombe three-drawer commode.

The nursery was designed for the Jacobs' son John who was born in 1939. The upper panel of the nursery door was glass so the Jacobs could check on their son without disturbing him. They also had the room wired so that the baby could be heard crying from any part of the house. When John was older he had a bedroom off the same hall, and in this room a staircase led up to the top floor. In fact from the first floor to the third there was a second staircase.

Dr. Jacobs' study was a capacious wood panelled room with a handsome stone fireplace. Undoubtedly it was at his desk in this room that he wrote many of his published articles on his medical research. There are two bathrooms in this wing of the castle and a storage room off the study.

Mrs. Jacobs used the room on the top floor as a studio where she painted. This room opens on to the flat roof of the castle. A great place for a sun tan!<sup>5</sup>

In 1942 Dr. Jacobs had a masonry barn built on the property.<sup>6</sup> The attached garage was extended to twelve feet in 1951, and the roof around the parapet walls of the castle were also repaired.<sup>7</sup>

When Dr. Jacobs purchased the property on North Scott Street he said there was an old metal sign hanging on a tree by one nail at the driveway entrance identifying the spring where Civil War soldiers got their water. He related that the old spring house was in need of restoration, and he employed his stonemason, Frank Segretti, to restore it. Mr. Segretti removed the rectangular brick structure which enclosed the spring. The building had a deteriorating metal roof and a locked door. Mr. Segretti designed an open hexagonal shaped spring house using the left-over stone from the castle. The roof was covered with slate. A raised cement flooring surrounds a small overflow pool that contains outlets for a run-off. A brick arch is over the spring. Slate steps lead down to the spring house from the driveway. A stone table and benches were added nearby for family picnics.<sup>8</sup>



Tulip poplar tree next to springhouse.



During the Civil War when Union soldiers camped near the spring they cut down many of the trees for firewood. Mrs. Bailey told Dr. Jacobs that her father would visit the soldiers bringing them black walnuts from the trees near his home. At the time of his visits he prevailed upon the soldiers to spare the tulip poplar tree which shaded the spring because it would keep the water cool. This tree still stands today guarding the spring. An historic plaque has been placed on the tree by the Notable Tree Committee under the Community Beautification Division, a citizens group, of Arlington County.

Dr. Jacobs purchased contiguous parcels of land from 1940-1956. On December 15, 1940 he purchased 2.1 acres of land from Thomas D. Chumasero and his wife Ema; (sic?)<sup>9</sup> December 2, 1940 Lots 20 and 21 at 2200 North Rolfe Street from Agnes Fredrika and Harriet Elsie Garrels;<sup>10</sup> June 1, 1956 Lots 39, 40, 41 and an existing house, 1813-21st Street North, circa 1924, from Ralph and Allie Gene Kennard.<sup>11</sup>

Mrs. Jacobs died in 1979.<sup>12</sup> Four years later on December 20, 1983, Dr. Jacobs conveyed all his property with existing buildings, two houses and the castle on five and a half acres to The American Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Foundation, reserving, however, to himself the grantor, a life estate therein. The plat for this deed indicates that a pool existed north of the spring house. Excavation proved there was a swimming pool which has now been filled in and is used as a volley ball court. Mr. Kremkau designed the pool and Mr. Segretti built it. Mr. Segretti also built the large barbecue near the pool.<sup>13</sup>

Dr. J. Bay Jacobs died on March 3, 1988, and was buried next to his wife at Columbia Gardens Cemetery.<sup>14</sup> Subsequently all the beautiful Jacobean and French antique furniture, oriental rugs, porcelains, marble urns, etc., were sold at auction by C.G. Sloan & Company, Inc. in 1988.<sup>15</sup>

On April 25, 1989 The American Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Foundation, a Michigan non-profit corporation and John Julian Bay Jacobs, II, in his capacity as the sole heir-at-law of J. Bay Jacobs, and as Administrator of the Estate of J. Bay Jacobs, were the Grantors of their interests in the properties in the Grantees, the Palisades Venture Associates, a Virginia Limited Partnership. Conrad Cafritz, President of Palisades Group, Inc. is Managing General Partner of Palisades Venture Associates. The county assessment for 1991 of \$1,385,600.00 includes the Castle and its contiguous parcels of land. The houses on North 21st Street and North Rolfe Street were razed in 1989.<sup>16</sup>

The Spring Lot and the other parcels of land Dr. Jacobs purchased were just a small part of the original Northern Neck land grant to Thomas Owsley, also spelled Ousley, of Stafford County for 640 acres on March 24, 1696/7. (Arlington County was in Stafford County between the years 1664-1731).

The next owner of the Owsley grant was George Mason. Owsley's land was regranted to Mason with an additional 65 acres in 1767. When George Mason IV died John Mason, his son, received Owsley's tract of 705 acres.<sup>17</sup> (Arlington was part of Fairfax County at this time.) As a result of John Mason's financial difficulties in 1833 the Bank of the United States in Washington, D.C. from whom he had borrowed heavily, eventually took over his properties in Washington, D.C. and 1822 acres he owned in Virginia.<sup>18</sup>

In 1835/6 Lewis Carberry was employed to survey the bank's holdings of the former Mason land. Carberry divided the 1822 acres in Virginia into 26 lots and 43 quarry lots. Thomas B. Dawson purchased Lot 13 with 81 acres, 3 roods, 5 perches, at auction on March 26, 1859, for \$2,378.00, from the Commissioners, Albert Stuart and Charles E. Stuart, appointed by the Circuit Court of Alexandria.<sup>19</sup>

The division of the Thomas B. Dawson estate took place in 1898. His daughter Bessie received Lot 1 consisting of 16 acres and Lot 8 with 2 acres, 2 roods, and 35 perches.<sup>20</sup> Not until 1936 did Bessie Dawson Bailey sell the "Spring Lot" part of the 16 acres to Dr. Jacobs.

Dr. J. Bay Jacobs<sup>21</sup> was born in New York City on November 25, 1898, and had a distinguished medical career. He first started his medical studies at Columbia University, New York City. During World War I he served as a Medical Officer in the Marines. After the service he continued his education and graduated from Georgetown University School of Medicine in 1921.<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Jacobs served his residency at Sloane Hospital for Women and Misericordia Hospital, both in New York City. In 1929, at the age of 31, he invented and patented a number of devices pertaining to obstetrics, and conducted a research project designed to be an absolute method of newborn baby identification, thereby eliminating the mother's worry about "taking home the wrong baby." Through his independent research he altered many age-old theories about childbirth.

During the Depression years of the 1930s, Dr. Jacobs, aside from tending his private practice, headed, without pay, a program that provided free prenatal and delivery services to needy women in the Washington, D.C. area. He continued in this humanitarian role for 30 years.<sup>23</sup>

Dr. Jacobs was a professor at Howard University Medical School, and a professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Georgetown University where he also served as Director of Obstetrics and Home Delivery Service for about 25 years. He taught biology at Georgetown Preparatory School in the 1940s. He held the position of Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Arlington Hospital for 22 years. A plaque honoring Dr. Jacobs can be seen today at Arlington Hospital in the Ob/Gyn Department. He was director of the Maternity Service, Health Department, District of Columbia; a founding Fellow

of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons (formerly the American Academy of Ob/Gyn).<sup>24</sup>

The J. Bay Jacobs, M.D. Library in the American College of Ob/Gyn, located in Washington, D.C. is the first of its kind to be developed in North America from an original donation of \$35,000.00 given by Dr. Jacobs in 1983. The library contains in excess of 700 rare books and journals, some of which were collected by Dr. Jacobs. The books date as far back as the 17th century. The library, which had been a dream of Dr. Jacobs for years bears his name in recognition of the legacy he has left behind.<sup>25</sup>

The Jacobs Institute of Women's Health, a nonprofit organization was founded by the American College of Ob/Gyn's, to advance knowledge of women's health issues. Funding was partially provided through a gift from Dr. Jacobs.<sup>26</sup>

Eva Harris Jacobs was born in Bluefield, West Virginia, in 1901. She met Dr. Jacobs at Georgetown University where she attended the School of Nursing. She graduated with highest honors in 1921. She was the first Lay Teacher at Georgetown University School of Nursing, later as a nurse with the War Department, and a nurse and welfare worker with the Department of State. At the Department of State she started the first emergency medical clinic which has now grown to a Medical Department staffed by several physicians.

Mrs. Jacobs served as President of the Business and Professional Women's Club of Arlington. She authored a book titled *Feather on the Dart*, a combination of fiction and historical fact, gypsy prophecy and romance. This colorful novel is beautifully interwoven about her family, the Faulkners of Virginia, who came from England shortly after the American Revolutionary War and became landowners.<sup>27</sup>



Dr. J. Bay Jacobs



Eva Harris Jacobs

In each of their professions Dr. and Mrs. Jacobs were innovators, devoting their lives for the betterment of humanity.

## Notes and References

Dorothea E. Abbott is a historical researcher and regular contributor to The Arlington Historical Magazine.

<sup>1</sup>*Arlington County Deed Book* 318 p. 350; Telephone Interview with John J. Bay Jacobs II, June 1991.

<sup>2</sup>Telephone Interview with Dr. Jacobs 1987.

<sup>3</sup>*Arlington County Deed Book* 403 p. 410; 404 p. 90.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Mr. Segretti, Bethesda, Maryland, 1989.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Clara Miley, Arlington, Virginia 1991.

<sup>6</sup>Arlington County Building Permit #15909.

<sup>7</sup>Arlington County Building Permit #7341.

<sup>8</sup>Telephone Interview with Dr. Jacobs; Interview with Frank Segretti.

<sup>9</sup>*Arlington County Deed Book* 489 p. 65.

<sup>10</sup>*Arlington County Deed Book* 524 p. 494.

<sup>11</sup>*Arlington County Deed Book* 1252 p. 236.

<sup>12</sup>Obituary *Northern Virginia Sun*, March 5, 1988.

<sup>13</sup>*Arlington County Deed Book* 2117 p. 1446.

<sup>14</sup>Obituary *Northern Virginia Sun*, March 5, 1988.

<sup>15</sup>*C. G. Sloan & Company Brochure*, Bethesda, Maryland; September 16-18 Estate Auction, 1988; Interview with Mrs. Clara Miley 1989.

<sup>16</sup>*Arlington County Deed Book* 2380 p. 274; Arlington County Real Estate Assessment Office.

<sup>17</sup>Beth Mitchell. *Beginning at a White Oak*. (McGregor and Werner, 1977) pp. 230, 209.

<sup>18</sup>Dorothea E. Abbott, "The Roots of Clarendon," *The Arlington Historical Magazine* Vol. 8 No. 2, p. 46.

<sup>19</sup>*Arlington County Deed Book* U3-W3 p. 217.

<sup>20</sup>*Arlington County Deed Book* Y4 p. 487.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.* John J. Bay Jacobs, II. Dr. Jacobs was known by most people as J. Bay. The J. is purported to stand for Julius, also known as Julian. When a teenager Dr. Jacobs became a Christian when he joined the Westend Presbyterian Church in New York City, and took the name of John. The Church helped to put him through school. His mother was Rose Friedman Jacobs. Dr. Jacobs married Eva Harris of Bluefield, West Virginia, by a Justice of the Peace, in Roanoke, Virginia. Circa 1924-26. Subsequently they were remarried in the Catholic Church after becoming members of that faith possibly by 1946. Funeral services for Dr. Jacobs and his wife were officiated by St. Agnes Catholic Church, 1914 North Randolph Street, Arlington.

<sup>22</sup>Obituary *Northern Virginia Sun*, March 5, 1988.

<sup>23</sup>*Annual Report of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists*. 1988.

<sup>24</sup>*Northern Virginia Sun*. "Prominent Arlington Gynecologist Honored by Georgetown University." February 9, 1970.

<sup>25</sup>*Annual Report of the ACOG's* 1988.

<sup>26</sup>The Jacobs Institute of Women's Health, 409 12th Street SW., Washington, D.C. 20024-2188. 1991 Brochure.

<sup>27</sup>Eva Harris Jacobs. *Feather On The Dart*. (Vantage Press. New York. 1963) *Decades of Progress 1929-1979*. (Business and Professional Women's Club, Arlington, Virginia.) Page 9.



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#### WHY DO WE CALL IT?

### Columbia Pike

The abbreviation "Pike" for Turnpike, perpetuated in the name of this major thoroughfare through Arlington, traces back to its original status as a toll road.

In 1808, the Washington Bridge Company began construction of the Long Bridge, reaching from the foot of Maryland Avenue in Washington to Alexander's Island. This crossing was approximately on the site of the present Railroad Bridge. In the same year, the Columbian Turnpike Company was chartered by Congress to build a toll road from the western end of the causeway leading to Alexander's Island to connect with the Little River Turnpike in Fairfax County. By 1812, construction had been completed to the Fairfax County line (the boundary with the District of Columbia of which Arlington was then a part), and the Fairfax Turnpike Company received a Virginia charter to build the final link.

#### WHY DO WE CALL IT?

### Military Road

Military Road, which now runs between Glebe Road and Lee Highway in Cherrydale, comes by its name honestly. It was constructed in the fall of 1861 to connect Forts Ethan Allen and Marcy, which guarded the Virginia approaches to the Chain Bridge with Fort Strong which formed the right of the Arlington line of forts built by Union forces as part of the defenses of Washington. It was laid out by Captain B.S. Alexander, "mainly through broken and densely wooded country," and built by troops who completed the job in three days!

The road and the name persisted long after the forts which had given rise to its existence had been dismantled. When streets in Arlington were renamed in 1935, the citizens who lived along Military Road successfully protested the proposed change to North Chain Bridge Road, and it remains Military Road to this day although the lower part has been absorbed by Lee Highway.