

**ADDRESS: 419 W CLAPIER ST**

Name of Resource: Service Buildings for the Dodge Estate

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Shelby Lane LLC

Nominator: SoLo Germantown

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, [jon.farnham@phila.gov](mailto:jon.farnham@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 419 W. Clapier Street, near McKean Avenue in southwest Germantown, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the property satisfies Criteria A and J, owing to its association with the prominent Dodge family. The nomination describes four structures at the site, a “gardener’s cottage” and the interconnected “garage,” “stone building,” and a “solarium.” The structures were service buildings associated with the Dodge family, who resided in a large house at 5000 McKean Avenue, adjacent to the property in question. The house and service buildings once stood on the same parcel, but it was subdivided into 5000 McKean Avenue and 419 W. Clapier Street in the mid-1950s. The property with the Dodge family house is not designated and is not proposed for designation.

The nomination provides very little information about the design, construction, dates, or uses of three of the four structures at 419 W. Clapier Street. The nomination reports that the cottage was designed by architect J.L. Connaroe and erected in 1923 for use by a gardener. The nomination speculates that the garage “may contain a workshop or other non-car storage functions in addition to car storage.” It notes that “the date of construction is unknown, but the building appears in a 1930 photograph.” The nomination observes that “the construction date or purpose of the [stone] building is unknown, but it was likely a barn or carriage house.” The nomination proposes that the structure called a solarium “was likely constructed sometime in the early twentieth century... The building’s purpose is unknown but it could have been a solarium and/or artistic studio.”

The nomination asserts that the property is significant owing to its connection to the Dodge family, husband and wife James Mapes Dodge and Josephine Kern Dodge and their son Kern Dodge. The nomination states:

The Dodge family made international impacts in engineering and children’s literature. James Mapes Dodge and his wife Josephine owned 5000 McKean Avenue (then including the subject property of 419 W. Clapier Street) from 1890 to 1954; their son Kern Dodge lived at 425 W. Clapier until 1958.

The nomination is unclear about several key facts. For example, the Dodges purchased the property on September 19, 1891, not 1890 as the nomination claims. Husband James died in 1915. Wife Josephine died in 1953. James and Josephine did not own the property in 1954, as the nomination claims. Son Kern resided at 5000 McKean Avenue from 1891 until 1901, when he graduated from the Drexel Institute. No records indicate that Kern lived at the property in question after 1901, when he would have been 21 years of age. Kern purchased 5135 Pulaski Avenue, several blocks away, in 1906, and records indicate that he resided there during the formative years of his career until he sold the property in 1922, but this fact is not mentioned in the nomination. Kern eventually moved to 425 W. Clapier Street, a property adjacent to the nominated property, about 1930. The nomination implies that Kern moved directly from his childhood home to the adjacent property at 425 W. Clapier Street; he did not. Kern did not live at the nominated property as an adult. Moreover, his residence at 425 W. Clapier Street does not bestow any significance on the nominated property at 419 W. Clapier Street.

The nomination documents the Dodges' neighbors and neighborhood as well as their family members and business associates in great detail. The nomination provides a biography of the mother of James, Mary Mapes Dodge, who was a prominent children's author and editor, but who resided in New Jersey, not at the property. The nomination provides information on the careers of James and Kern, who were prominent engineers, but fails to document or explain how the service buildings might relate to their engineering careers. Kern lived at the property for approximately one decade, from age 11 to 21, before he launched his engineering career. After his mother's death in 1953, when he was about 73 years of age, Kern inherited the property at 5000 McKean Avenue, subdivided it into two properties including the property in question, and sold them. If any significance vests in a property owing to its association with James and Kern Dodge, it is the house at 5000 McKean Avenue, where James lived from 1891 to his death in 1915 and where Kern lived during his teen years until 1901, not the service buildings at 419 W. Clapier Street including the gardener's cottage built in 1923.

The nomination provides little information about the service buildings, when and why they were built, and how they were used, but implies that they somehow represent the extended Dodge family and their network of friends, associates, and neighbors and can somehow convey the historical significance of the disparate group of people. The implication is untenable.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 419 W. Clapier Street satisfies any Criteria for Designation.

**NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT**  
**PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)  
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

**1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE** *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: 419 West Clapier Street

Postal code: 19144

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: Service Buildings for the Dodge Estate

Current/Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition: ☐ excellent ☐ good ☒ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☐ occupied ☒ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: Private residence

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

*Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.*

**6. DESCRIPTION**

*Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.*

**7. SIGNIFICANCE**

*Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.*

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1860 to 1954

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1890, 1905, 1923

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Mantle Fielding

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: H.H. Hudson (solarium, porches)

Original owner: Louis Clapier, Benjamin Godfrey, Hampton L. Carson

Other significant persons: James Mapes Dodge, Kern Dodge

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☒ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- ☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☐ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- ☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☒ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*Please attach a bibliography.*

**9. NOMINATOR**

Organization SoLo Germantown Date August 22, 2025

Name with Title Allison Weiss Email awfromhh6@gmail.com

Street Address P.O. Box Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: August 26, 2025

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: September 11, 2025

Date of Notice Issuance: September 11, 2025

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Shelby Lane LLC

Address: PO Box 7163

City: Wilmington State: DE Postal Code: 19806

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: October 15, 2025

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: November 14, 2025

Date of Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected





NOMINATION OF

**419 W. CLAPIER STREET**

**former Service Buildings from the  
James Mapes Dodge estate**

TO THE

**PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

AUGUST 2025

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION



Fig. 1. Parcel map of 419 W. Clapier Street from the website of the Office of Property Assessment, City of Philadelphia. The original parcel extended in the same length and breadth northeasterly to McKean Avenue. The buildings in the subject property were once in service to the existing parcel at 5000 McKean Avenue. The deed incorrectly references McKean *Street*, which is in South Philadelphia.

All that certain lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected. Situate in the 59<sup>th</sup> Ward of the City of Philadelphia and described to wit: Beginning at a point on the Northwestern side of Clapier Street (fifty feet wide) at the distance of One hundred Fifty feet measured South Thirty-seven degrees, Ten minutes, Thirty-four seconds West along the said Northwestern side of Clapier Street from the Southwesterly side of McKean Street [sic] (fifty feet wide); thence extending South Thirty-seven degrees, Ten minutes, Thirty-four seconds West along the said Northwestern side of Clapier Street One hundred Forty Six feet, Eight inches to a point; thence North Fifty degrees, Nineteen minutes, Thirty-two seconds West One hundred Forty nine feet, Eleven and One-eighth inches to a point; thence North Thirty-seven degrees, Ten minutes, Thirty-four seconds East One hundred Forty-eight feet, One inch to a point; thence South Forty-nine degrees, Forty-seven minutes, Four seconds East One hundred Fifty feet to a point on said Northwestern side of Clapier, being the first mentioned point and place of beginning. Being known as 419 West Clapier Street.

The property is known as Parcel No. 047N040066, Office of Property Assessment Account No. 133066700.





Fig. 2. Aerial photo of 419 W. Clapier Street from the northwest. Source: Pictometry, the Office of Property Assessment, City of Philadelphia. Accessed March 29, 2025.



Fig. 3. Aerial photo of 419 W. Clapier Street from the southwest. Source: Pictometry, the Office of Property Assessment, City of Philadelphia. Accessed March 29, 2025.

## 6. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The subject property at 419 West Clapier Street contains buildings dating from approximately the mid to late nineteenth century through 1923: a cottage, a garage (workshop and vestibule), a stone building, and a solarium. They were purpose built as service structures for the associated main residence on the adjacent and once-combined parcel at 5000 McKean Avenue in the Germantown neighborhood of Northwest Philadelphia. The oldest of the buildings seems to date from the mid-nineteenth century, based on the flagstone patterned stonework and roof overhang depth and details. The small collection of buildings on a large, verdant south parcel are remnants of an era when this location near Fernhill Park contained houses on large lots with outbuildings for greenhouses, garages, and staff residences. (All photos this section by author.)



Fig. 4. Main entrance to the subject property from Clapier Street. A bluestone sidewalk extends from the driveway all the way to McKean Avenue to the north (right side of photo). Date: March 28, 2025.

### Site

Situated on the northwest side of West Clapier Street, south of McKean Avenue, the resource is one half acre in size with two distinct building footprints surrounding a brick motor court, all situated in the southernmost corner of the property. The remainder of the parcel currently



contains a yard that as of August 2025 has been largely cleaned of its overgrowth. Several dozen tires have been collected from the yard and placed against the south and west perimeter walls of the property, perhaps awaiting removal. There remain some specimen trees and shrubs, including a weeping cherry, a large crape myrtle, and a European beech.<sup>1</sup> A brick path meanders through the space defined by the L-shaped footprints. The subject parcel was from 1863 until 1954 one half of a full acre parcel, connected to the existing half-acre parcel at 5000 McKean Avenue.<sup>2</sup>

There is a schist wall at the south end of the property, at the boundary with the driveway of an adjacent apartment building. The wall turns from that driveway up along West Clapier Street, opening briefly with simplified newels - and without gates - to the brick-paved motor court, and extends along Clapier and the adjacent property at 5000 McKean where it terminates; the greenhouse construction extends from the schist wall where the wall is incorporated as a foundation or water table. Along the entire Clapier Street frontage, there is a bluestone slab sidewalk that extends from the driveway opening to the corner with McKean Avenue.



Fig. 5. A view of the subject property along Clapier Street with the motor court in front of the 1923 cottage to the left, the garage, a stone building, and a solarium. There is a schist perimeter wall at the south and along the street that terminates at McKean Avenue, underscoring the once unified parcels of 5000 McKean. There is photographic evidence that the wall was constructed after the 1910 solarium was built and that the perimeter was enclosed previously by a metal hairpin fence which was used throughout the neighborhood in the late nineteenth century. Date: August 9, 2025.

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<sup>1</sup> John T. McNeill, "Great and Historic Trees of Philadelphia County." *Germantowne Crier*, Vol. 20, Number 1, March 1968, p. 21-29.

<sup>2</sup> Deed dated May 24, 1954, Lot 66 (subdivision of 9), 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward. Grantee: Kern Dodge and The Pennsylvania Company for Banking and Trusts, Trustees; Grantor: O.C. No. 566, Estate of Josephine Kern Dodge by will.

One enters the property today via the West Clapier Street motor court in the southeast corner of the lot around which the buildings are huddled, allowing for a panoramic view of the expansive grounds. As of early August 2025, most overgrowth has been removed.

### Buildings

#### **1923 Gardener's Cottage**

The building at the southernmost part of the parcel was designed in a simple, cottage revival style in 1923 by J.L. Connaroe, two and a half stories tall with walls treated in stucco above a schist water table that matches the height of the adjacent, and earlier, schist wall that surrounds the property. It is relatively unadorned in architectural detail but its massing with sharp vertical peaks in its roof cross gables faintly expresses the spirit of a small, Gothic revival cottage. Maps and anecdotes indicate that this cottage replaced an earlier one in about the same location, but no demolition permits were found for a construction that predated the 1923 Cottage.



Fig. 6. East elevation of 1923 Cottage with motor court and schist entry newels in the foreground. At the far left are the Erringer Place apartments and a driveway that corresponds to an access easement from the Godfrey ownership era.<sup>3</sup> Date: March 28, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Deed Book T.H., Vol. 29, page 253-54, dated November 2, 1863, between Benjamin G. & Emeline M. Godfrey (grantor) and Hampton L. Carson (grantee). "A certain Twenty-foot-wide Lane or street hereafter mentioned land ...for the use and benefit of his [Godfrey] lots adjoining same," allowing Godfrey access to his adjacent property fronting Manheim Street from Clapier Street behind and to the south of the subject property.



### *East (Motor Court) Elevation*

The east elevation of the 1923 Cottage faces the brick-paved motor court off Clapier Street. As the last construction on the property, it appears to have been designed to acknowledge the garage extension by wrapping around it and allowing a narrow passage between the motor court and the garden beyond.

The side gable facing the motor court recounts three levels, with a small, vertical window at the third level, a tripartite “Chicago-style” window at the second level, and a single-leaf entry door at the ground level. This lower level may be the cellar level the architect called out as a \$500 change order to the contract in a 1924 pay application. The windows all have brick sills. The door opening is cut into the tall, schist water table and is covered by a wall-mounted, metal awning. Beyond and to the north of the side gable of the main L-shaped volume, and past the gate separating the buildings from the garden can be seen a chimney and a small cube volume with pyramidal roof; there is a rectangular window near the eave in the cube volume.



Fig. 7. North elevation of 1923 Cottage by J.L. Connaroe sited at the southernmost edge of the subject parcel, facing the garden and the “big house” now at 5000 McKean Avenue. Date: March 28, 2025.

### *North (Garden) Elevation*

The north elevation of the cottage reads as a two-story building since the lowest level, expressed in schist, is barely visible above the ground plan. This elevation shows the variety of the massings with the main L-shaped volume that faces the east motor court expressed here at the north side similarly with a small, vertical casement window at the top level and a window



opening with three, equally sized windows at the lower level; all opening have brick sills. The lower windows are 6/6 divided light and double-hung.

To the east, in the crux of the L-shaped main volume, is a one-story cube with pyramidal roof; within the wall with its head abutting the roofline is a small, vertical window with brick sill. Between the cube volume and the north-facing side gable of the main volume is a chimney covered in stucco with brick trim at the opening.

To the west of the side gable of the main volume is a one-story lean-to with a single-leaf access door to the west of a boarded-up window opening.



Fig. 8. West elevation of the 1923 Cottage. Note the brick footpath that extends from the motor court access gate along the north side of the building and around to the rear lean-to. Date: March 28, 2025.

### *West (Rear) Elevation*

The west elevation of the 1923 Cottage has the pyramidal-roof lean-to in the foreground with the roof plane of the L-shaped main volume in the background with a small sliver of the wall of the main volume shown at the north. The west wall of the lean-to mostly contains four window openings, all with jalousie windows (though one is boarded-up from the exterior), within a wall of side shingles. The stucco from the wall plane of the main volume is visible on the north or garden side of the elevation.



Fig. 9. South elevation of the 1923 Cottage showing the driveway and brick wall (left side of photo) of the Erringer Place Apartments to the south. Date: March 28, 2025.

### *South Elevation*

The south elevation of the 1923 Cottage abuts the south property line. The schist water table meets the height and plane of the earlier schist property wall construction that surround the motor court to the east (Fig. 9). The L-shaped main volume is expressed with two different roofs: a central side-gabled bay with an extension to the east that reads as one-story tall under its tall roof. A lower level is indicated by two small window openings (one in each bay) at the upper part of the schist foundation wall, which itself gets smaller the further west it goes. In the side gable, a similar pattern is found to the other gable-front elevations: a small, vertical window in the peak of the gable at the upper level, and a window opening with two, 6/6 divided light, double-hung windows; both openings have brick sills. The eastern side wall has two window openings under a slight roof overhang that has been patched; a tv-satellite dish is mounted here.



Fig. 10. South elevation of the service buildings from the Erringer Place Apartments driveway. Peeking over the top of the roof ridge of the stone building is 5000 McKean Avenue. Date: August 9, 2025.





Fig. 11. The garage with L-shaped footprint wrapping the motor court. The roof of the earlier stone building containing three skylights is beyond. Date: March 28, 2025.

## Garage

The garage has an L-shaped footprint around the northern part of the brick motor court and may contain a workshop or other non-car storage functions in addition to car storage; given the engineering hobbies of the property's Dodge residency, a workshop is probable. The date of construction is unknown, but the building appears in a 1930 photograph in the motor court.



Fig. 12. A photograph from the *Evening Ledger* dated May 12, 1930. The caption reads: "This picture shows Robert Dodge, 12, at the wheel of his self-built racing automobile, Three Horse, accompanied by Mintz, mascot, and William Andrews, 10, who aids as a mechanic. The young automotive engineer, son of Kern Dodge, former president of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, lives at 425 W. Clapier and his mechanic at 5024 Schuyler Street." Source: Historical Society of Pennsylvania.





Fig. 13. West elevation of the garage's workshop, taken from the garden. Date: July 27, 2025.

### *West (Garden) Elevation*

The west elevation of the garage faces the garden side of the property. It is a one-story construction with weathered wood siding and a metal-seamed pitched roof with a brick chimney extending up from close to the eave. There are four window openings of various sizes, three of which having high sills giving cause to think that this leg of the garage was used more as a workshop. The building is connected to the earlier stone building which intersects the roofline.



Fig. 14, left. The junction of the north elevation of the stone building and the garage's workshop extension. Date: July 27, 2025. Fig. 15, right, the southernmost window opening in the west elevation of the garage's workshop extension showing what may be an original cased wood window with divided lites. Date: August 9, 2025.

### *South (Motor Court) Elevation*

The south elevation of the garage's workshop extension is narrow and nearest the cottage. It is covered in wood siding with one window opening that has contemporary infill windows installed behind security bars. The roof extends only slightly over the wall plane.



Fig. 16. The south and east elevations of the workshop portion of the garage. This leg of the L-shaped construction extends toward the cottage (left side) into the brick motor court. The wood gate on the left between the garage and the cottage leads from the motor court to the garden. Date: March 28, 2025.

The south elevation of the garage portion of the building has had only superficial changes since 1930 when it was in the background of a photograph of the owner's grandson that appeared in the *Philadelphia Evening Ledger* (Fig. X). Moving from west (at the extension) to east (at Clapier Street), there is a single window opening, a door, a car door, and another window. While the doors and windows themselves have been replaced, the configuration of these openings has not changed. This may have been a car vestibule to a garage in the stone building due to its size.

### *East (Motor Court) Elevation*

The east elevation of the garage faces the brick motor court and is an extension of the workshop portion of the garage. It is covered in horizontal wood siding and has one window opening with a replacement window. The east elevation of the vestibule part of the building faces the schist wall at the perimeter of the property and has two window openings each divided into four lites with a high sill. This part of the garage connects flush to the corner of the stone building to its north.



Fig. 17. A view along West Clapier Street looking westwardly toward the outbuildings. Left to right, the 1923 cottage, the garage with workshop extension, the stone building, and the solarium, all huddled against the schist perimeter wall opening to a brick paved motor court at the southeasterly corner of the subject property. Date: August 9, 2025.

## Stone Building

This building is a rectangular volume that is one and a half stories in height under a pitched gable roof with deep overhang exposing rafter tails at all elevations. The east and west elevations are the gable ends that face the street and garden, respectively. The building is entirely clad in schist configured in more of a flagstone pattern and doesn't resemble the masonry patterning at the schist wall or the cladding the house at 5000 McKean Avenue. The construction date or purpose of the building is unknown, but it was likely a barn or carriage house with a south facing entry.<sup>4</sup>

### *East (Street) Elevation*

The east elevation of the stone building faces West Clapier Street and the perimeter schist wall along the sidewalk. There is one opening centered in the masonry at the second or loft level of the building that is infilled with a wood frame and a door made of vertical wood boards with long, metal hinges at the south side. In the center of the door is a six-lite window above a protruding air conditioning unit. To the north, the solarium wall connects in an overlap of a few inches deep from the corner of the stone building.

### *North (Solarium) Elevation*

The masonry wall of the north elevation is only barely visible above the roof of the solarium and under the overhang of the roof. The field of the roof (covered in asphalt shingles) is pierced by three skylights, matching somewhat the configuration at the south elevation.

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<sup>4</sup> In a letter from James Mapes Dodge to his mother dated May 12, 1890, he mentions visiting the new house (subject property) and mentions "I expect [son] Kern's pony this week..." indicating a barn use to the building. From the Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University.





Fig. 18, left. The east elevation of the stone building between the garage to the south and the solarium to the north. Fig. 19, right. The east elevation of the solarium to the north of the stone building. The shingled panels are not original; they cover windows. The east perimeter wall is the base of the east solarium wall. Photos dated August 9, 2025.

### *West (Garden) Elevation*

The west elevation of the stone building faces the garden and is the gable end of the pitched roof, like the east elevation. The first level of the masonry contains two window openings neither of which appear to have been altered from door openings (thereby implying access to the building was always from the north or south through the existing constructions). There is a non-historic wood, switchback staircase that leads to a door centered in the second level of the building.



Fig. 20. The west elevation of the stone building facing the garden and showing the connections to the garage to the south (right) and to the solarium to the north (left). There are two window openings at the lower level which do not appear to have been altered from door structures; each contains wood frames and divided lite windows. Date: March 28, 2025.

### *South (Garage) Elevation*

The south elevation of the stone building is only visible above the roof of the garage structure below. The roof plane, covered in asphalt shingles, overhangs this connection. In the roof plane, three square, evenly spaced skylights can be seen.

### **Solarium**

This one-level construction to the north of the stone building was likely constructed sometime in the early twentieth century, judging by both its presence on maps and on the brick base and pilasters creating a frame for several divided lite windows under a shed roof. There is a reference in the Nov. 1, 1905, Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide for a "carriage house" in brick and glass by H.H. Hudson (who constructed the porches at the main house in 1902) at the southwest corner of Clapier and McKean. The building's purpose is unknown but it could have been a solarium and/or an artistic studio because of its primary orientation to the north and windows in the roof structure and unfinished interior.



Fig. 21, left. The north walls of the stone building and the solarium intersect with each other, and the solarium wall rises from the perimeter schist wall. Fig. 22, right. The north wall of the solarium showing the extensive fenestration along this elevation with low sills in the brick wall and a couple of brick pilasters breaking up the window openings. An access door is located closer to the east side of this elevation. The roof field of the stone building beyond can be seen with skylights. Far left foreground is the top of the perimeter schist wall. Photos: August 9, 2025.

### *East (Street) Elevation*

The east elevation of the solarium faces West Clapier Street. The perimeter schist wall of the property provides a base for the east wall of the structure; the half-round capping stones of the



wall in front of the stone building give way to the corner brick pilasters that frame the wall. There is a central brick pilaster that historically divided the window openings, two on each side. Only the pair of windows on either side of the central pilaster are exposed today; the other two openings have been infilled with plywood over which are wood shingles. This elevation shows a gentle slope to the shed roof as it extends down to the north.

### *North Elevation*

The north elevation of the solarium faces the rear of the house at 5000 McKean Avenue. The corner brick pilasters frame another window wall which is subdivided by two additional brick pilasters. All windows meet the low brick wall base that encircles the structure. There is an access door placed between two pairs of windows at the northern section between the pilasters. Several of the windows seem to be original wood, double hung sashes with divided lites, but access was limited for closer inspection. The roof can barely be seen since the slope toward this elevation is low, but there is a gutter extending the length of this elevation.

### *South (Garden) Elevation*

The south elevation faces the garden and, like the other elevations, contains mostly pairs of windows framed by brick pilasters and a brick base. There is a pair of contemporary French doors that open to a patio of slate blocks over which is a contemporary pergola structure. It is from this elevation that interior photos were taken of this structure. It have an exposed frame ceiling, concrete floors, and what seems to possibly be a plumbed planting bed and sink of some sort under the roof skylight at the north side of the roof.



Fig. 23. The west elevation of the solarium faces the garden and a pergola structure under which currently is a hot tub. There are double doors between a slate patio and the interior. Date: August 11, 2025.





Fig. 24. The interior of the solarium from the garden-facing windows. There are skylights at the northern side of the roof (right side; left side shows reflection of the exterior pergola structure) and below it what seems to be a piped structure. There are exposed concrete floors and rafters. The east side (opposite) shows the windows on each far end boarded up by plywood (and faced at the exterior by shingles). There is a parge coat on the interior side of the east perimeter schist wall with a more structured sill. Date: August 11, 2025.



Fig. 25. The yard facing north toward the main house (5000 McKean Avenue, peeking out beyond) from the Cottage with the garage and barn to the right and the garden laid out beyond. Date: July 27, 2025.

## Evolution of the Site and its Buildings

The site sits in a well of West Clapier Street at the base of an incline in either direction. From the subject property's gate, the street rises swiftly northward toward McKean Avenue and more gently in a southward direction. The site corresponds with the valley at the uppermost reach of a branch of Fall's Run, a tributary of the Schuylkill River, as seen on early maps.

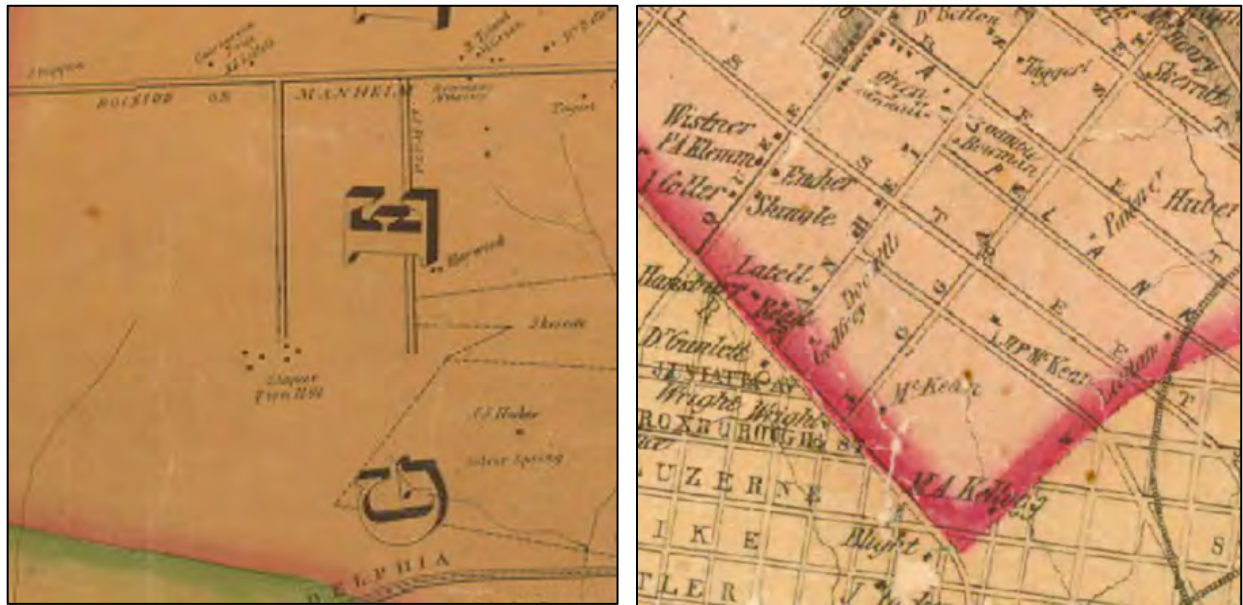


Fig. 26, left. The 1848 J.C. Sidney map indicates Clapier's enduring presence at the end of a street (presumably what would become McKean Avenue) joining Fern Hill to Manheim Street to the north. Fig. 27, right. The 1855 Barnes map shows that H.P. McKean has taken on ownership of Fern Hill and the city is planning through-streets around it. Benjamin Godfrey's homestead on the south side of Manheim is noted and it is part of his property that he sells to create the subject property above W. Logan Street.



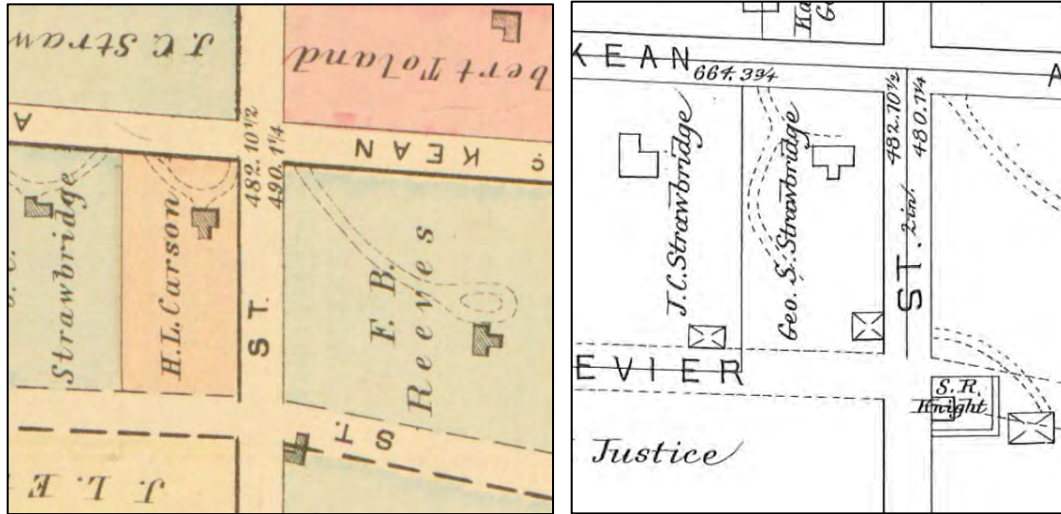


Fig. 28, left. The 1871 Bromley map does not show any service buildings on any neighborhood properties. During H.L. Carson's ownership of the subject property, only the main house at 5000 McKean and its governor's drive are indicated. Fig. 29, right. The 1885 map of the property under George Strawbridge's ownership shows a structure in the rear of the one-acre parcel just above Sevier Street that is likely the stone building. With a branch of driveway indicated in its direction, this may indicate that the building was a carriage house. The Reeves property across Clapier Street has a rear, service drive indicated toward a carriage house behind the Knight property, underscoring Clapier as the informal and service access to both properties.



Fig. 30, left. In the 1889 map, still under Strawbridge ownership, three rear, service buildings appear huddled at the southeast corner of the property just as the buildings today huddle around the brick court, accessed from Clapier. According to the map key, brown indicates a stone building and yellow, frame, lending credence to the assumption that the flagstone building is the earliest building and purpose built as a carriage house accessed from the south; that the workshop extension of what later became part of the garage structure (perhaps as a vestibule to the stone building) was constructed first; and that there was a cottage within the footprint of today's 1923 cottage at the south end of the property. The service entry is across from the service driveway to Francis Reeves' property across Clapier Street, underscoring Clapier as the less formal access point for McKean Avenue facing properties. Fig. 31, right. The 1906 Smith map indicates no changes to the subject property buildings between the Strawbridge and Dodge ownership save for front and side porches at the main house.



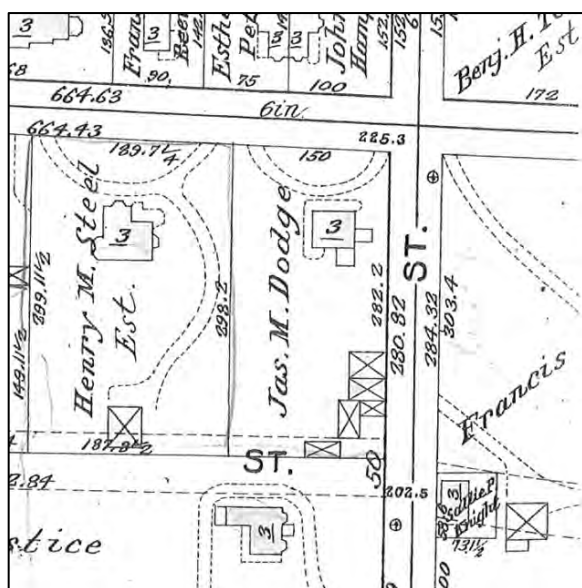


Fig. 32, left. The 1911 map of the subject property shows the arrangement of service buildings. The building to the southernmost location on the property, adjacent to the still-planned Sevier Street easement, seemed to have been demolished in 1923 when the present cottage was constructed. It may have been the building referenced in a book on Bill Tilden (of 5015 McKean) “James Mapes Dodge...owned a mansion across the street with a skating pond and a small house beside it where children could warm themselves.”<sup>55</sup> The solarium had been constructed just north of the stone building by 1911, a date matching its construction style. Fig. 33, right. In the 1866 Tax Assessment List, H.L. Carson is noted as the owner of 2 carriages, giving support to the theory that the stone building acted as a carriage house.

**Fig. 34, left. The 1923 Census reports the subject property is occupied by a gardener during Hampton L. Carson's ownership.**

|    |          |                                                              |  |  |         |
|----|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|---------|
| 14 |          | Jackson Leonard 26 M. Co. Gardener                           |  |  | Prima   |
| 15 | 1923 217 | Carson H. L. 60 M. In Reg. Gross Receipts 28,000             |  |  | "       |
| 16 |          | E. M. 56 F. Co. "                                            |  |  | "       |
| 17 |          | J. 58 M. In Reg. Gross Receipts                              |  |  | "       |
| 18 |          | M. M. 30 F. Co. "                                            |  |  | "       |
| 19 |          | Hale, E. 47 F. Co. "                                         |  |  | "       |
| 20 |          | Morgan William 47 M. Co. Gardener                            |  |  | "       |
| 21 |          | M. Foster Raymond 28 F. Co. Housewife                        |  |  | Ireland |
| 22 |          | Agnes May 45 F. Co. "                                        |  |  | "       |
| 23 | 1923 217 | Hampton L. Carson 32 M. In Reg. Gross Receipts 28,000 40,000 |  |  | Prima   |

**Fig. 35, right. A report in the August 13, 1938, Philadelphia Inquirer indicates that the Dodge family employed a gardener, presumably in the 1923 Cottage since his address is listed as 419 W. Clapier St. The family also employed several chauffeurs throughout their residency at the subject property, documented through Kern Dodge's photographic record of automobile ownership.**

**Woman's Screams Rout Fifth Bandit**

Some day, perhaps, bandits will learn that the little grocery conducted by Mrs. Emma Zahn, northwest corner of McKean and Abbottsford ave., Germantown, is to be avoided.

The fifth bandit to try his hand at robbing the place was routed early yesterday by Mrs. Zahn.

An hour and a half later a suspect who said he was Frank Phingon, of Chicago, was captured on the grounds of the estate of Mrs. James Mapes Dodge, mother of former Director of Public Safety Kern Dodge, 3600 McKean ave.

**STUCK ON HER HEAD**

Other bandits who have tried to raid the store, one succeeded in making off with \$30. After that Zahn, who has since died, bought a pistol. Another bandit was shot and killed by Zahn, another was wounded and had his arm amputated and

still another was captured and sent to prison.

Mrs. Zahn, who is 50, was alone in the store when a man wearing khaki trousers and a white shirt entered.

As she turned her back toward him, the bandit struck her on the head with a series of pipes, knocking her to her knees.

**FAINTS IN CHASE**

Screaming, she struggled to her feet and chased the bandit a half-block down the street, fainting on the sidewalk as others took up the chase. Six stitches were required to close the wounds in her scalp.

Among others who searched the neighborhood for the man were Dodge and Richard Titcomb, 27, of 419 W. Clapier st., a gardener at the home of Dodge's mother.

After Dodge left the scene a man appeared out of the bushes of the estate and asked Titcomb for work.

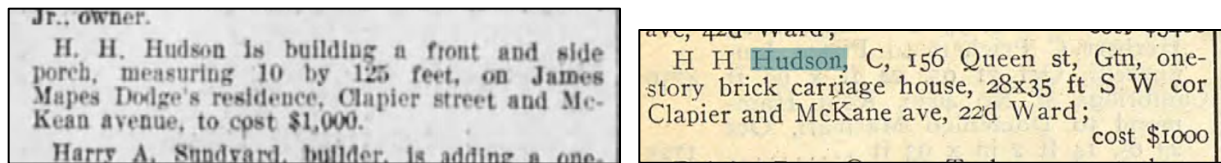


Fig. 36, left. A notice in the *Philadelphia Times* from February 2, 1902, indicating H.H. Hudson had been contracted to build “a front and side porch” at the main house at 5000 McKean Avenue. The 1906, 1911, and 1923 maps indicate a wrap-around porch along the street elevation turning down the west elevation. Fig. 37, right. A notice in the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* from November 1, 1905, indicating that Mr. Hudson, a Germantown carpenter, had been hired for a one-story brick carriage house at the southwest corner of Clapier and McKean Ave. The description and location, if not the use, matches the one-story brick solarium at the subject property.



Fig. 38. A photo of the front and side porches from the governor's drive indicates they are two separate porches. The front porch is currently intact; the side porch roof structure is no longer intact although the slab still exists. Photo: “Kern Dodge: Pioneer Automobilst” by Barron H. Bohnet. *Antique Automobile*, November-December 1978.



PERRY T. MCCLUSKEY  
CONTRACTOR AND ENGINEER  
419-21 LURAY STREET

PHILADELPHIA  
Nov. 3rd,  
1923.

Requisition #2

Estimate of work performed and material delivered to Cottage located at Clapier Street, and McKean Ave., Germantown, for Mrs. James Mapes Dodge.

CONTRACTOR \*\* PERRY T. MCCLUSKEY \*\* 419-21 LURAY STREET \*\* PHILA. PA. \*\*

| Item | Nature of work    | Contract price | Amount performed | Less 15 % | Previous payment | Amount due |
|------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------|
| 1    | Demolition        | 25.00          | 25.00            | 21.25     | 21.25            | 207.40     |
| 2    | Excavation        | 364.00         | 364.00           | 309.40    | 102.00           | 311.10     |
| 3    | Stonework         | 366.00         | 366.00           | 311.10    |                  | 382.50     |
| 4    | Concrete tile     | 450.00         | 450.00           | 382.50    |                  | 127.50     |
| 5    | Brickwork         | 150.00         | 150.00           | 127.50    |                  |            |
| 6    | Cement work       | 115.00         |                  |           |                  |            |
| 7    | Plaster & Stucco  | 500.00         |                  |           |                  |            |
| 8    | Iron work         | 25.00          | 25.00            | 21.25     |                  | 21.25      |
| 9    | Metal work        | 80.00          |                  |           |                  |            |
| 10   | Rough lumber      | 450.00         | 450.00           | 382.50    | 382.50           | 127.50     |
| 11   | Millwork          | 475.00         | 150.00           | 127.50    |                  | 63.75      |
| 12   | Paint & Glazing   | 275.00         | 75.00            | 63.75     | 6.50             |            |
| 13   | Rough Hardware    | 10.00          | 10.00            | 8.50      |                  |            |
| 14   | Finished Hardware | 15.00          |                  |           |                  |            |
| 15   | Flg. & Heating    | 950.00         |                  |           |                  |            |
| 16   | Electric work     | 55.00          | 450.00           | 382.50    | 127.50           | 255.00     |
| 17   | Carpenter labor   | 1000.00        | 25.00            | 21.25     | 21.25            |            |
| 18   | Permits           | 50.00          | 40.00            | 34.00     | 21.25            | 12.75      |
| 19   | Insulating        | 50.00          | 50.00            | 42.50     |                  |            |
| 20   | Seaflooring       | 50.00          | 10.00            | 8.50      | 2.13             | 6.37       |
| 21   | Insurance         | 55.00          | 224.40           | 55.25     | 102.15           |            |
| 22   | Profit Etc.       | 5000.00        | 2904.00          | 2465.40   | 754.13           | 1804.27    |

APPROVED BY *J. L. Connaroe*

*Received payment 11/15/23 Perry T. McCluskey Mary Dodge*

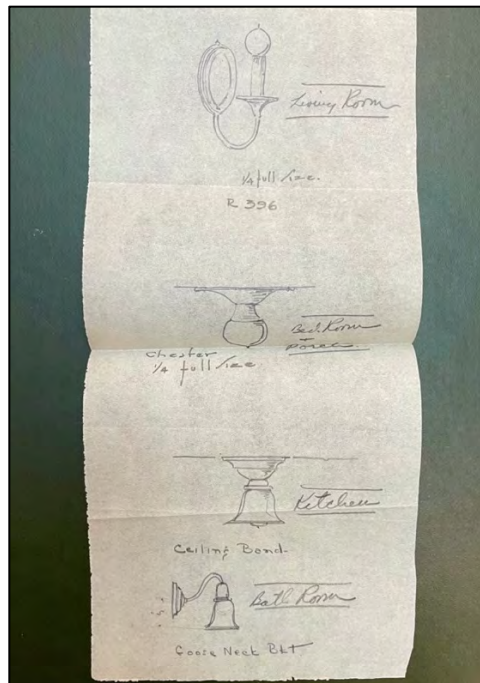


Fig. 39, left. A Pay Requisition (#2) from contractor Perry T. McCluskey for work performed at the Cottage for Mrs. Dodge, signed by architect J. L. Connaroe and dated Nov. 3, 1923. Fig. 40, right. Sketches of light fixtures from the office of Connaroe for the Dodge Cottage included in his Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> letter to Mrs. Dodge. Connaroe and Kern Dodge were classmates at both Germantown Academy and Drexel. Source for both: Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University.

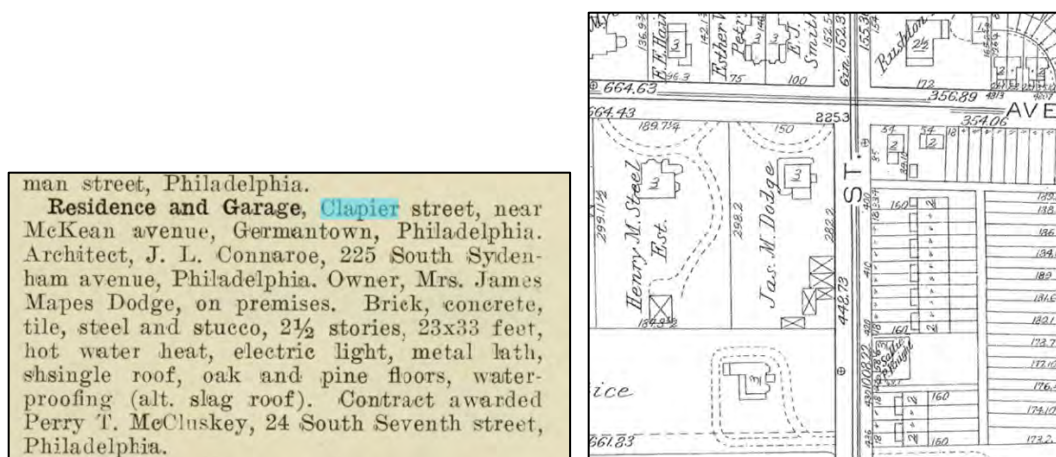


Fig. 41, left. A notice in the September 12, 1923, Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide, for a new residence and garage. This would refer to the Cottage that housed (concurrently or alternatively) the family's gardener and chauffeur. The mention of a garage is surprising since the Cottage doesn't include a garage within its footprint. Since the footprint of the extant L-shaped garage is on the 1911 maps in that configuration, perhaps "garage" refers to a renovation of the existing structure, if it was not deleted from the project (the Pay Requisitions only refer to the cottage). Fig. 42, right. The 1923 map shows the full extent of buildings including Kern Dodge's house to the immediate south of the subject property, creating a sort of family compound. Note the Reeves estate has yielded to dense rowhouse development, although the Knight house remains.

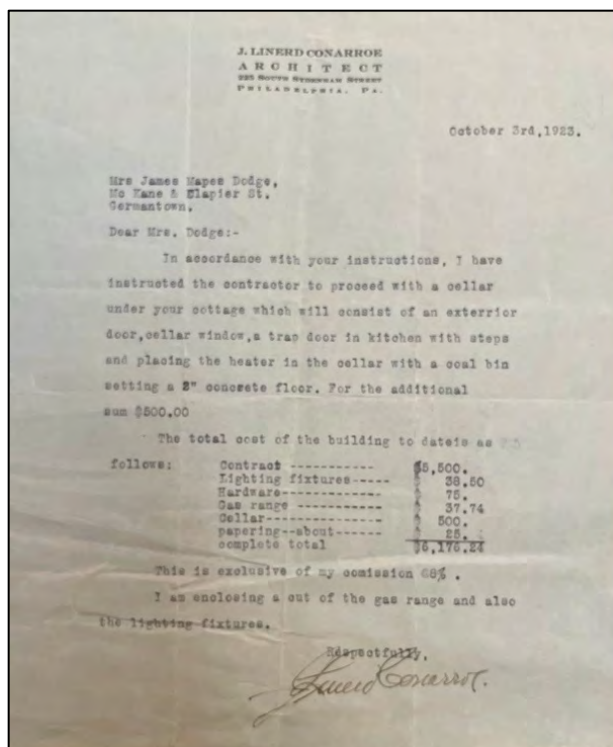


Fig. 43. A letter from J. Linard Connaroe, Architect, to Mrs. James Mapes Dodge, dated Oct. 3, 1923, confirming a Change Order to include a cellar in the Cottage with exterior access.

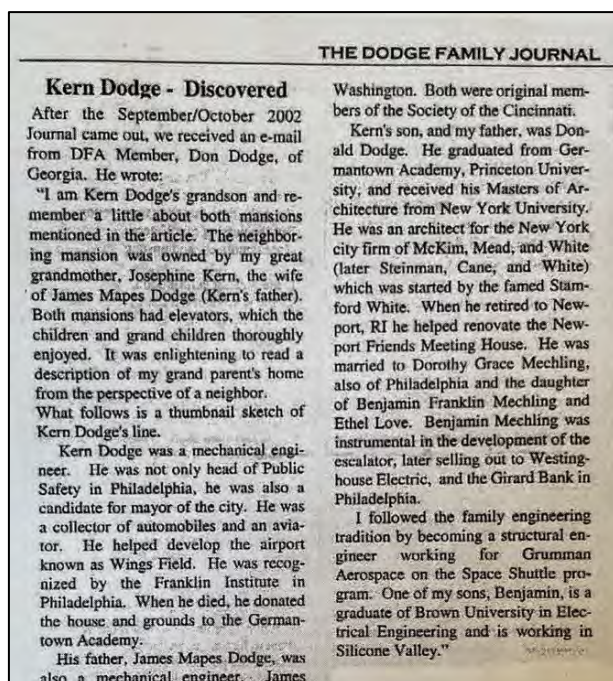


Fig. 44. A 2002 entry in the Dodge Family Journal with an email from a Dodge descendant who remembers the properties at 5000 McKean (including the subject property) and 425 W. Clapier, "Ingleside," Kern Dodge's house. As befitting a family of mechanical engineers, both houses had elevators.





Fig. 45. This photo of a Dodge family automobile from 1915 may have been taken in the rear, service driveway of the Reeves estate, across Clapier Street from the subject property, perhaps positioned to get some of the Dodge buildings in the background. The solarium from the subject property seems to be in the left background with its brick pilasters on a schist base. The extant schist perimeter wall which is in the same plane as the solarium's schist base is not seen in this photo, suggesting it was constructed after 1915. There seems to be a slight "fisheye" distortion to the photo that widens the foreground and narrows the background which would explain how the rear of the Dodge house, to the right, seems outside of the plane with the solarium. While the rear extension at the cellar and first floor levels are no longer extant, the house's main volume is intact.

## 7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

419 West Clapier Street is a significant historic resource in Philadelphia and meets Criterion J for designation on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia zoning code:

**(a) Have significant character, interest, or value as a part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation or be associated with the life of a person significant in the past;**

**(j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.**

The subject property is most closely associated with the Dodge family over three generations of occupation at the subject property. The Dodge family made international impacts in engineering and children's literature. James Mapes Dodge and his wife Josephine owned 5000 McKean Avenue (then including the subject property of 419 W. Clapier Street) from 1890 to 1954; their son Kern Dodge lived at 425 W. Clapier until 1958. The life they lived while in ownership of the subject property is well-documented as one of professional excellence, elite social pursuits, and civic involvement.

Additionally, the property stands as a surviving example of an estate that emerged in lower southwest Germantown with its stone messuage and service buildings, most of which have long been removed in favor of denser housing development. It represents the taste even among the Philadelphia elite, for altering existing properties to continue their serviceable life and use. As an architectural palimpsest, it reflects the evolving history of the neighborhood, from a pastoral setting of sparsely spaced country seats to an increasingly dense enclave of the merchant class to one of post-Victorian-era businessmen and civic leaders.

### Neighborhood Context and Evolution

This corner of Germantown was far enough away from the main Avenue to have avoided the narrow and deep lot partitions that defined those located along Main Street. Instead, the subject property had been whittled down over the course of the nineteenth century from larger plantations. In 1777, far southwest Germantown had been owned by members of the powerful Shippen family to the north, and mariner John Ashmead to the south and adjacent to James Logan's land, according to the Duffin map. In 1817, William Shippen sold most of his property in the area to the French-born marine merchant Louis [alternately Lewis] Clapier (1765-1837), who then became the chatelain of Fern Hill.<sup>6</sup> According to an entry in *American Aristocracy* online, Fern Hill "lay four miles northwest of the city limits, beautifully situated on the first ridge of ground of that long succession of ridges, which, mounting constantly higher, run parallel with each other with short undulating intervals through Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill, some five miles distant on the west and north, where the ground then falls away to the beautiful

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<sup>6</sup> Deed dated December 6, 1817 Grantor William Shippen et. ux. to Grantee Louis Clapier, Deed Book M.R. Book 17 page 294.



White Marsh Valley.”<sup>7</sup> Clapier’s land holdings extended from Fern Hill up to (and in some cases, past) Manheim Street between Township Line Road (Wissahickon Ave.) and Morris Street.

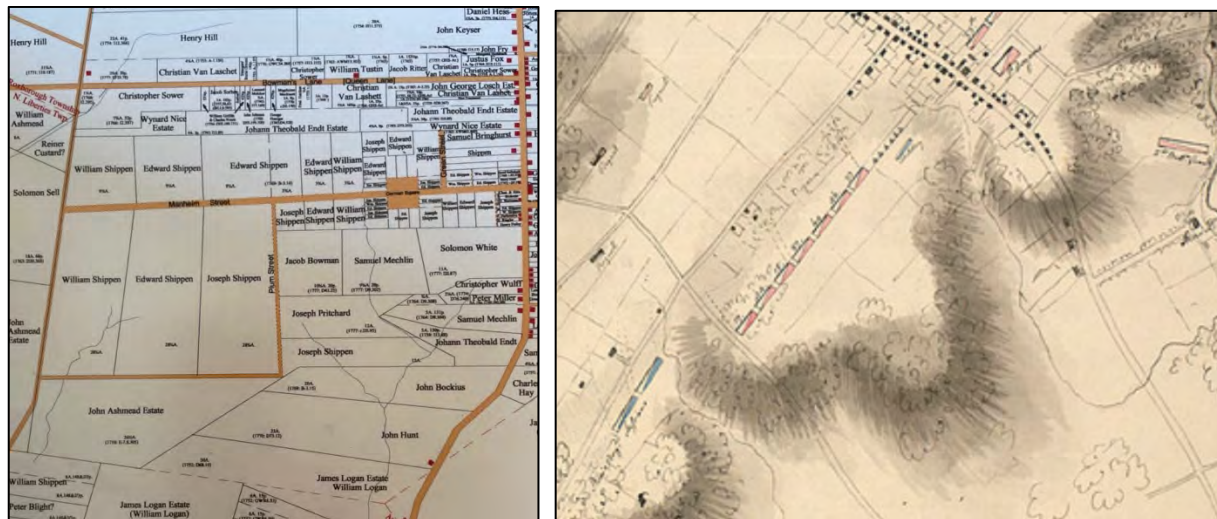


Fig. 46, left. The 1777 Duffin map of Germantown land ownership. The Shippen family had a hold on the land south of Manheim Street and east of Township Line Road (now Wissahickon Avenue). William Shippen’s parcel to the east is the site of the subject property. Source: Germantown Historical Society. Fig. 47, right. The 1777 map of the Battle of Germantown by Archibald Robertson showing the extreme topographical ridge between the area that became Nicetown and its industrial zone (including the Link-Belt Engineering and Midvale Steel Companies) and the plateau of the first rise where Fern Hill is still located. The Hessian encampment extending from the Avenue west toward the Township Line Road was along Manheim Street. Source: Royal Collection Trust online, accessed August 20, 2025.

Over a decade after Clapier’s death, his widow Mary (née Heyl) and four daughters (Theresa Clapier, Caroline [Mrs. Henry] Chancellor, Dorothea [Mrs. Charles] Norris, and Mary Louise [Mrs. Edward Jenner] Coxe) sold the southern parcel – south of approximately what is now Abbottsford Avenue - to Henry Pratt McKean who kept the boundaries of the large parcel more or less intact south and west of Morris Street.<sup>8</sup> He retained Clapier’s barn, “which from its size and unique character, and great ship which acts as a vane above it (was) one of the best-known features of the country round about” located close to Morris Street, in recognition, it seems, of its notable presence in the neighborhood, but demolished Clapier’s residence in favor of a remarkable Italianate stone dwelling designed by John Notman in 1852, setting his own taste standard. The new Fern Hill was described by Nancy Holst as “a model of modern taste and beauty – a showcase built to satisfy the highest ideals of the American villa.”<sup>9</sup> Based on Richard

<sup>7</sup> [www.americanaristocracy.com](http://www.americanaristocracy.com), “Fern Hill Germantown,” accessed July 27, 2025, based upon the Henry McKean obituary in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 6, 1894, p1, accessed August 10, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Deed dated June 4, 1851 Grantor Mary Clapier et. al. to Grantee Henry Pratt McKean, Deed Book T.H. Vol. 71 page 150.

<sup>9</sup> Nancy Holst (2008), PhD diss., “Pattern Books and the Suburbanization of Germantown, Pennsylvania, in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” University of Delaware, 2008, 354.

Upjohn's designs for the Edward King Villa in Newport, Rhode Island, the grand house nonetheless took somewhat of a backseat to the gardens and vistas of the estate. The former were tended by Martin Baumann and his sons, including Louis Clapier Baumann, named after the previous sire. Opened to the public on Sundays and public holidays, this first rise in the Atlantic Fall Line in Northwest Philadelphia was known for its imported pear trees and rare plant species.

Germantown between 1837 (Louis Clapier's death) and the 1850s when his heirs' partition and transfer their land holdings was widely recognized as a desirable location for city residents of certain means to establish country seats. The landscape was open, green, and pastoral in feel, providing a rural counterweight to the city five miles to the south. According to Holst, the pre-suburbanization of Germantown "indicate[d] a complex process of interaction between old and new patterns"<sup>10</sup> forging a tension between nostalgia for the romantic landscape with market realities. Real estate transfers were made locally with a relative few controlling the ownership of several parcels. Equally, stone messuages and other dwellings were modified to suit new tastes, a renovation priority that combined ideas from the era's popular pattern books with, perhaps, a frugal Quaker ethic even if several of the area's residents identified otherwise religiously. This unique arrangement of existing buildings and landscapes with local control is a theme of the subject neighborhood's development, including especially at the subject parcel.

The northern part of Mr. Clapier's parcel, bounded at the west by Township Road (now Wissahickon Avenue), Abbottsford (formerly Logan) to the south, Manheim to the north, and Pulaski (formerly Plum) to the east, seem to have been subdivided from the sale of Clapier's estate. In 1853, New England-born merchant Benjamin Granger Godfrey (1822-1900) owned the subject parcel "with its stone messuage or tenements" although his own residence fronted Manheim Street, indicating the sustained acreage the subdivided northern parcels contained.<sup>11</sup> Godfrey was one of the founders of Calvary Episcopal Church having supported its building campaign to erect the J.C. Sidney-designed chapel at the corner of Manheim and Pulaski.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>11</sup> Deed dated May 12, 1853 Grantor Mary Clapier to Grantee Benjamin G. Godfrey, Deed Book T.H. Vol. 80 page 555.





Fig. 48, left. The 1851 Rogerson and Murphy Map of Germantown shows Henry McKean's Fern Hill estate on a large outcropping that rises from the city below. It is accessed from a long, tree-lined drive from Manheim Street to the north. There is a house indicated in the middle of a planned extension of West Logan Street attributed to C.W. Morgan; this residence could possibly be the extant stone dwelling at 469 W. Abbottsford Avenue. There is another building indicated to the north of Morgan's on the south side of a proposed access road near the words L. Clapier; this could possibly be the extant 424 W. Clapier. Louis Clapier's heirs owned the land between Fern Hill and Manheim where the subject property is located at the northwest corner of the two planned streets of Clapier Street and McKean Avenue. The cluster of properties on the north side of Manheim are today on the grounds of the Germantown Cricket Club. Fig. 49, right. An undated (but pre-1890) photo of tree-lined McKean Avenue looking to Manheim Street. 5000 McKean is to the immediate left (out of view) with the driveway to the Dodge residence in the foreground. The Strawbridge residence just to the north at 5008 is in partial view.

The 1851 Rogerson and Murphy Map of Germantown indicates the lower portion of Clapier's former estate is owned by H. G. [sic] McKean while the upper portion, or north of West Logan is still owned by the Heirs of L. Clapier. There is a house or messuage or tenement indicated in the middle of West Logan Street owned by C. W. Morgan which may be the property at 469 Abbottsford, eventually owned by Francis B. Reeves, Jr., or the one eventually owned by the Day family (Fig. but this is unconfirmed. Most notably, a tree-lined parkway is indicated where McKean Avenue is located today, possibly indicating the street was initially, a driveway to the Fern Hill estate, under McKean ownership from 1849. This could explain why the street is curbless to this day, giving the feel of a country lane.

In November 1863, Godfrey and his wife Emeline sold the subject parcel while apparently still retaining their residence on Manheim Street. Merchant Hampton L. Carson (1809-1874), uncle of the better-known eponymous lawyer, purchased a parcel then fronting McKean Avenue by 150 feet (South-West side of McKean Avenue) and along 298 feet of Clapier Street, matching today's parcel dimensions. But notably, the deed between Godfrey and Carson mentions "in the

rear end thereof of the South Easterly part of a certain Twenty feet wide Lane or street hereafter mentioned land by the said B. G. Godfrey and to befall often for the use and benefit of his lots adjoining the same.”<sup>12</sup> This is likely the easement that presented on later maps as Sevier Street, a planned but never platted or constructed street just to the south of the subject property, and extending from Abbottsford Avenue across from Fern Hill to Manheim Street.

The neighborhood was dotted with stone buildings, messuages, and tenements, according to deeds and to newspaper advertisements but it is difficult to establish direct connections between dots on a map with extant properties. Fig. 49 speaks to the stone residences available in 1867.

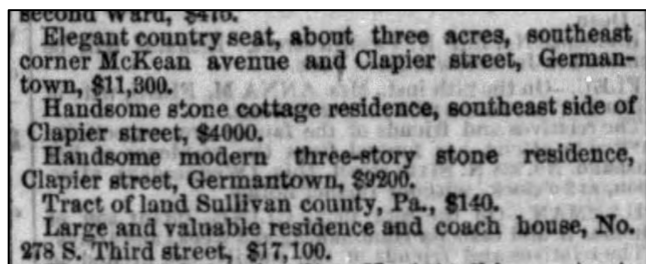


Fig. 50, left. An advertisement from the Philadelphia Inquirer dated March 27, 1867, for stone cottages and residences on Clapier Street or near its intersection with McKean Avenue. Fig. 51, right. A photo of 424 W. Clapier Street from the motor court at 419 W. Clapier. This property consists of an eighteenth century build with a nineteenth century addition. It is attributed to Sallie Knight in late 19<sup>th</sup> century maps and where she ran a school for neighborhood girls.

Mr. Carson died in 1874 but his heirs, including son Joseph, continued to live on the property until April 1882 when it was purchased by dry goods merchant George Stockton Strawbridge (1840-1923) and his wife Clara Louise née Stetson.<sup>13</sup> By this time, several adjacent lots on McKean Avenue had been purchased by members of the Strawbridge family, including George’s brother Justus, and the latter’s son Francis who owned and lived in the property immediately to the west of the subject parcel at 5008 McKean Avenue, owned during the Dodge residency by Henry M. Steele (since demolished).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Deed dated November 2, 1863. Grantor: B.G. Godfrey to Grantee: Hampton L. Carson.

<sup>13</sup> George and Clara Strawbridge were active with the Calvary Episcopal Church on Manheim. According to her obituary in 1922, her last address was 5335 Knox Street, a George Pearson-designed house.

<sup>14</sup> 5008 McKean Avenue was the birthplace of Francis Reeves Strawbridge, Jr., before the family moved to 5710 Wissahickon Avenue, on the property of Torworth, patriarch Justus’s estate. Henry Steele owned the property from approximately 1890 having converted the Strawbridge house from a Gothic style to a more modern Victorian dwelling. The house was later demolished in favor of an apartment building that is still in use.



Fig. 52, left. Undated photograph of the stone house of Justus Strawbridge at 5008 McKean Avenue in a style that incorporated elements from the Second Empire and gothic cottages. Son Francis Jr. was born here in 1876. Fig. 53, right. Circa 1900 photo of the same dwelling after it had been altered to a Colonial Revival style under the ownership of Henry M. Steele. This house was demolished in favor of a 1950s apartment building on the parcel to the immediate west of the subject property. The rear barn had been remodeled by Mantle Fielding and its schist base was used partially as the basement walls of the extant apartment building.

The area around the subject property may have largely been occupied by dry goods merchants and their family at the middle part of the nineteenth century but toward the end of that century, it was becoming an enclave for engineers. In a remembrance penned by his widow Margaret, engineer Charles Day (1879-1931) grew up in a house located between Abbottsford Avenue and Clapier Street “where the steep grades and unusual depth of the property giving just the necessary qualifications” for skiing and sledding in the winter, and kite-flying when warmer. “Germantown at that time (1888) was a true suburb, sparsely settled, with meadows, woods and streams within easy reach.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Dunning Day, “Charles Day: A Memory,” Philadelphia 1934, 3. Printed by Day & Zimmerman, Inc. Germantown Historical Society.





**Improvements at Germantown.**—Manheim street, Germantown, is now being macadamized by the Highway Department; a large portion of the expense to be paid by the property owners. A number of fine buildings are to be erected on this street the present season. A proposition is now before the Committee on Highways from the property owners on School-house lane and Tioga street. The owners along School-house lane propose to pay \$5,000 to have the lane macadamized from the Ridge avenue to Germantown road, if the city will pay the balance, and those on Tioga street will pay \$500 towards having two squares of that street put in order. West Logan street, and McKean avenue, are now being graded, the owners of property on each having agreed to pay a portion of the cost, which will amount to about \$1500.

Fig. 54, left. In this undated photograph, James Mapes Dodge and the family chauffeur are in the front seat of a 1908 Packard Model 30 while Mrs. Dodge and their daughter are in the backseat. This photograph was taken in the extant governor's driveway at 5000 McKean. The Steele house (demolished) is in the background. Source: "Kern Dodge: Pioneer Automoblist" by Barron H. Bohnet. *Antique Automobile*, November-December 1978. Fig. 55, right. A notice in the *Public Ledger* from April 10, 1860, six years after Germantown became a part of the City of Philadelphia, that Manheim Street was undergoing macadamizing or paving with crushed stone, an improvement leading to greater development and better transportation.

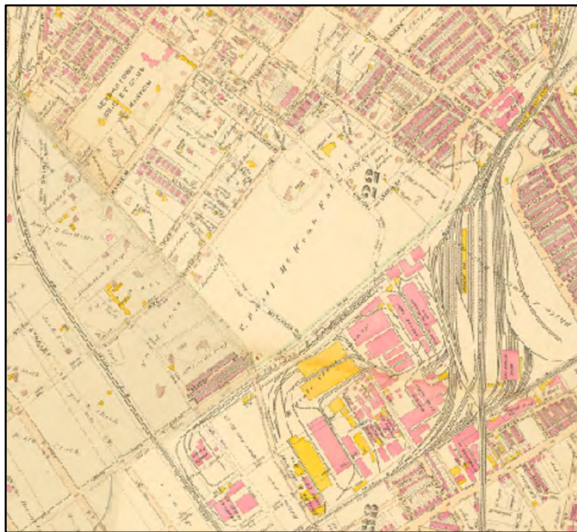


Fig. 56, left. This 1910 map shows the area between the Link-Belt headquarters on Nicetown Road (now Hunting Park Avenue) and the Germantown Cricket Club north of Manheim Street. In between is Fern Hill, the Henry Pratt McKean estate, now Park, and the subject property in its neighborhood setting north of the park. Fig. 57, right. A clipping from the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin in 1901 states that the owner of Fern Hill (Thomas McKean at this point) was suing Midvale Steel Works for damage to his gardens and trees, indicating the growing tension between the industrial area and the subject property's formerly bucolic neighborhood. Source: Campbell Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Fig. 58, left. A 1919 photograph of William L. and Charles C. Day, the sons of engineer Charles Day with a box kite-flying reel mechanism made in the Link-Belt shops, as reproduced in a typewritten memoir by their mother of their life on Abbottsford Avenue. Fig. 59, right. From the same memoir, photos of the Day family's Abbottsford Avenue house where they lived until approximately 1923. This house would likely have been near the extant stone house at 469 Abbottsford Ave. Source: Germantown Historical Society.

Margaret Day's memoir of her husband Charles reminds us that he attended Germantown Academy with Kern Dodge, his neighbor across Clapier Street at 5000 McKean Avenue. Day's interest in engineering was supported by Kern's father James Mapes Dodge who indulged the neighborhood boys' mechanical interests. Dodge later hired Charles at the Link-Belt Company in 1899 after his graduation, reinforcing their neighborly relationship. A 1930 photograph of Robert M. Dodge, Kern's younger son, shows him at the wheel of a handmade automobile with a friend from nearby Schuyler Street at his side (Fig. 12).

The neighborhood around the subject property seemed to constantly be in real estate transfer as parcels were bought, sold, and carved up, often by those who live in the immediate area. The narrow strip of land between McKean Avenue and Morris Street was owned in part by Justus Strawbridge who sold the parcels that became 5005 and 5015 McKean Avenue to Francis B. Reeves whose estate Immergrün (Evergreen) was at the southeast corner of McKean and Clapier, just north of Fern Hill and Abbottsford Road. Reeves commissioned a (extant) George T. Pearson-designed house as a wedding present for his eldest daughter Mary Primrose when she married George Hartley Deacon at 5005 McKean. The adjacent property to the northwest, 5015 McKean Avenue, was sold by Reeves after 1893 to William Tatem Tilden who commissioned Pearson to design the extant house "Overleigh." The twins at the northwest corner of McKean and Clapier were constructed in the 1870s and have had relative quick turnover among owners for their entire existence.





Fig. 60, left. 469 W. Abbottsford Avenue was once the home of Frances B Reeves, Jr., and his family. It is situated across from Fern Hill and overlooking a steep incline toward Clapier Street in the rear of the property. Fig. 61, right. The building currently houses apartments. The addition at the far right has been demolished and the wooden porch replaced by a two-story enclosed addition. Photo: August 11, 2025.

In the memoir of her husband's life, Mrs. Charles Day made a prediction about the changing nature of the neighborhood when she mentions "occasionally, however, the desire to own a permanent home arose, one in a neighborhood where there would be no anxiety for the future. After the sale of the beautiful Reeves Estate on the corner of McKean Avenue and the building of the McClatchy operation houses, things took on a different aspect. It felt definitely that this was not the place to settle permanently."<sup>16</sup>

Indeed, in 1923, a year after the death of Francis Reeves, his estate Immergrün at the southwest corner of McKean and Clapier was developed by John McClatchy with rowhouse development, in an agreement Reeves facilitated with the builder and that certainly changed the feel of the neighborhood. Although the advertising for the new houses was targeted toward middle-class buyers, the marketing pointed to the proximity of its rather Tudor-styled properties to the Germantown Cricket Club, a place that may not have been as egalitarian in its members as the neighborhood around it was becoming. Perhaps McClatchy did this to have some of the club's elite stardust fall on the new residents. The new rowhouses didn't dissuade everyone still interested in this corner of Germantown, however. Across McKean Avenue from Reeves' former estate, businessman Rushton Marot purchased the former Tatem lot in 1923 and built the extant Colonial Revival residence designed by Druckenmiller, Stackhouse & Williams.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret Dunning Day, "Charles Day: A Memory," Philadelphia 1934, 175. Printed by Day & Zimmerman, Inc. Germantown Historical Society. The Days ultimately moved to a Woodward property on St. George's Road in Mt. Airy at the Cresheim Ravine, imitating somewhat the landscape of the nineteenth century Fern Hill environs.





Fig. 62, left. This undated photograph shows Immergrün, the property of Frances B. Reeves, across Clapier from the subject property. Reeves arranged for the sale of his estate after his death in 1922 to the builder John McClatchy who constructed several cottage-style rowhouses on the perimeter of the large property. Fig. 63, right. A 1922 advertisement for new, “picturesque” houses on the former Reeves estate. The houses rendered in this advertisement are extant and front West Clapier Street.

The bounds of the subject property and its northern half have remained the same since they were split in 1954. The previously mentioned twenty-foot-wide easement in the deed from Benjamin Godfrey to H. L. Carson in 1863 for Godfrey to continue to access his land was concurrently presented in maps as Sevier Street. Although Sevier was eventually vacated on city plans, it today exists as the back vehicular entrance to an existing parking lot. During the James Mapes Dodge residency, especially after son Kern and his family moved into Ingleside, the house at 425 W. Clapier on Eliza N. Justice’s property, this easement may have been convenient to access both Dodge properties and Kern’s workshop, although the latter’s location is unknown. Kern Dodge lived at 425 W. Clapier until his death in 1958 and the site was eventually developed as the Erringer Place apartments.



Fig. 64, left. The rear of 469 W. Abbottsford Avenue, the former residence of Francis B. Reeves, Jr., looking east from Ellinger Street, past West Clapier. Date: August 9, 2025. Fig. 65, right. The rear of the house at 5000 McKean Avenue, the home of James Mapes Dodge, from the garden of the subject property. The 1870s stone twins at 4951 and 4953 McKean Avenue are in the background. There was a skating rink beyond the trampoline during the Dodge occupancy period (see Fig. 93). Date: March 28, 2025. Both photos show the extreme grade changes in the immediate area of the subject property.



Fig. 66, left. The 1910 Bromley Atlas shows the subject neighborhood at a crucial juncture between the industrial nature of the Nicetown plants and railroad infrastructure to the south, the bucolic Fern Hill estate above it, and the subject neighborhood around McKean Avenue and West Clapier Street clustered below the Germantown Cricket Club. Farms and pastoral estates were quickly yielding to dense rowhouse development. Fig. 67, right. A clipping from the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin in 1901 states that the owner of Fern Hill (Thomas McKean at this point) was suing the Midvale Steel Works for damage to his gardens and trees, illustrating the growing tension between industrial Nicetown and the bucolic area around the subject property. The McKears eventually moved to Rosemont, PA.



To the south of this neighborhood bound by the Manheim Cricket Club to the north, Wissahickon Avenue (formerly Township Road) to the west, Fern Hill to the south, and Morris Street to the east was the heavily industrial zone of Nicetown, where several enterprises important to some of the residents of this neighborhood were located, including Midvale Steel Works, the Conkling-Armstrong Terra Cotta Company, and the Link-Belt Engineering Company. While the buildings that contained these businesses are mostly no longer extant, the area is adjacent to rail yards and the Wayne Junction railroad location, and still gives the impression of an industrial zone. The tension between what was described as a bucolic neighborhood near Fern Hill grew steadily as the industrial activity near adjacent Nicetown was in full swing. However, it also provided a proximity between work and home that one family in particular enjoyed.

### **The Dodge Family**

The family most closely associated with the subject property are members of a family that have earned their place in literary and engineering canons. James Mapes Dodge (1852-1915) and his wife Josephine Kern Dodge (1857-1953) were residents of the subject property when it was the rear half of the one-acre parcel at 5000 McKean Avenue. The family purchased the property in 1890 from George Strawbridge, immediately hired Mantle Fielding to remodel the main house, and took up residence on the property for over six decades. In 1954, the subject property of 419 W. Clapier was separated from the parcel at 5000 McKean by Josephine Dodge's will. James Mapes Dodge was the president of the Link-Belt Company in nearby Nicetown, and an inventor and mechanical engineer of note in addition to being the son of one of the nation's most successful editors of children's literature. James's son Kern Dodge lived at "Ingleside," a house at 425 W. Clapier Street, adjacent to the family home on McKean, creating a sort of family compound. The family's engineering, artistic, and civic pursuits meant that visitors to the property over the years included everyone from Helen Keller and Mark Twain to neighborhood children who enjoyed the outdoor lighted skating rink Mr. Dodge built for their enjoyment.

### *The Mapes Family of Newark, New Jersey*

Mary Mapes Dodge (1831-1905) was a children's book author and editor of *St. Nicholas*, a monthly children's magazine. She grew up between New York and a farm near Newark, New Jersey, where her father, Professor James Jay Mapes devoted himself to scientific agriculture and the promotion of crop rotation. Mapes was active in popularizing fertilizers including the 1859 patent for the Mapes Fertilizer, a business enterprise continued and expanded by his son Charles under the guise of the Mapes Formula and Peruvian Guano Company. Peruvian guano was very much in demand during the Industrial Age as a powerful fertilizer that fueled agricultural growth and industrial expansion, transforming global trade. The Mapes family's holdings included

meadowlands near Newark, a third of which Charles and his cousin Jim, as family trustees, would sell in 1913.<sup>17</sup>

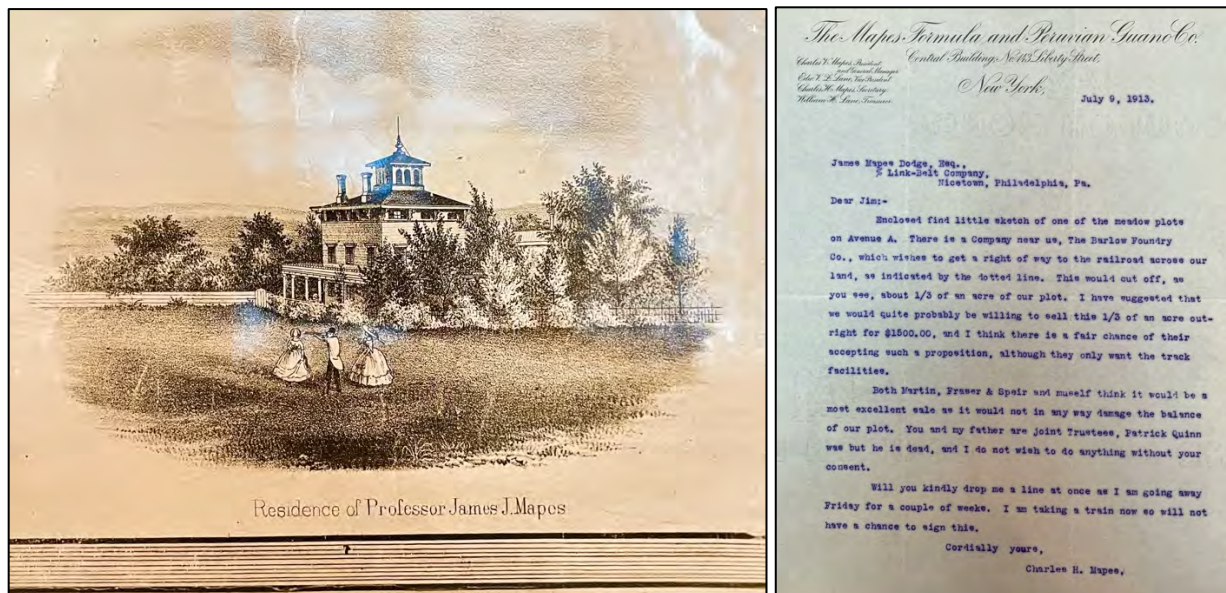


Fig. 68, left. A copy of an undated etching of the Irvington, NJ, homestead of Professor James J. Mapes, father of Mary Mapes Dodge demonstrating the still rural qualities of the area around Newark. Fig. 69, right, a 1913 letter from James's grandson Charles to his cousin Jim in Philadelphia related to the sale of family property near Newark. Both documents are from the Mary Mapes Dodge Collection at the Firestone Library, Princeton University.

Mary and her two sisters were kept out of school and instead tutored by governesses in languages, music, and drawing. In 1851, she married William Dodge, a New York lawyer with whom she had two sons, James and Harrington. Seven years into the marriage, in the wake of financial difficulties, William was found dead from an apparent drowning. Facing financial hardship, Mary returned to the family homestead near Newark with her sons and quickly devoted her time to providing for her sons' welfare and education.

Mary Mapes Dodge quickly found success writing children's stories and was prolific with her writing and storytelling. In 1865, she published *Hans Brinker, or The Silver Skates*, a book born from a nightly improvised bedtime story for her sons. *Hans Brinker* was inspired by her family's immigrant Dutch neighbors and the publication of two popular books of the day that told the story of the history of The Netherlands, previously not widely understood. It built upon early stories of a boy at a dike that had circulated in English language literature since 1850.<sup>18</sup> Mary Mapes Dodge's novel made the story of a Haarlem hero universally known.

<sup>17</sup> Correspondence from Charles Mapes to James Mapes Dodge, July 9, 1913. Mary Mapes Dodge Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University. The "Avenue A" property sold for \$1,500.00 and is owned today by Amtrak, used as the Hunter Yard for train maintenance.

<sup>18</sup> John Lothrop Motley (1814-1877) was the author of two popular books that are credited with sparking national interest in Dutch history: *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856) and *The United Netherlands* (1860). Though



However, it was in 1873, in a move that would seal lifelong financial security and usher in a golden age of children's literature, that Dodge had her most lasting influence. She was asked by Scribner & Company to edit a new magazine for boys and girls, and was given carte blanche to do so, including its title and editorial content. *St. Nicholas*, named after "the kindest, best, and jolliest old dear that ever was known, casting light on children's faces"<sup>19</sup> had a nearly 70 years run as one of the leading sources of children's literature and an effective springboard for children's authors, reaching a publication peak of 100,000 subscribers. The magazine continued publication until 1940.

Mary Dodge was associated with the magazine until her death in 1905. She was involved in all aspects of the magazine and put considerable focus on publishing work by authors such as Francis Hodgson Burnett, Mark Twain, and Louisa May Alcott, among others. Many of these authors became lifelong friends and regular visitors to the Dodge family residences. Mrs. Dodge's associate editor was William Fayal Clarke who eventually became the editor in 1881 when Mary's son Harrington died, and she scaled back some of her duties.

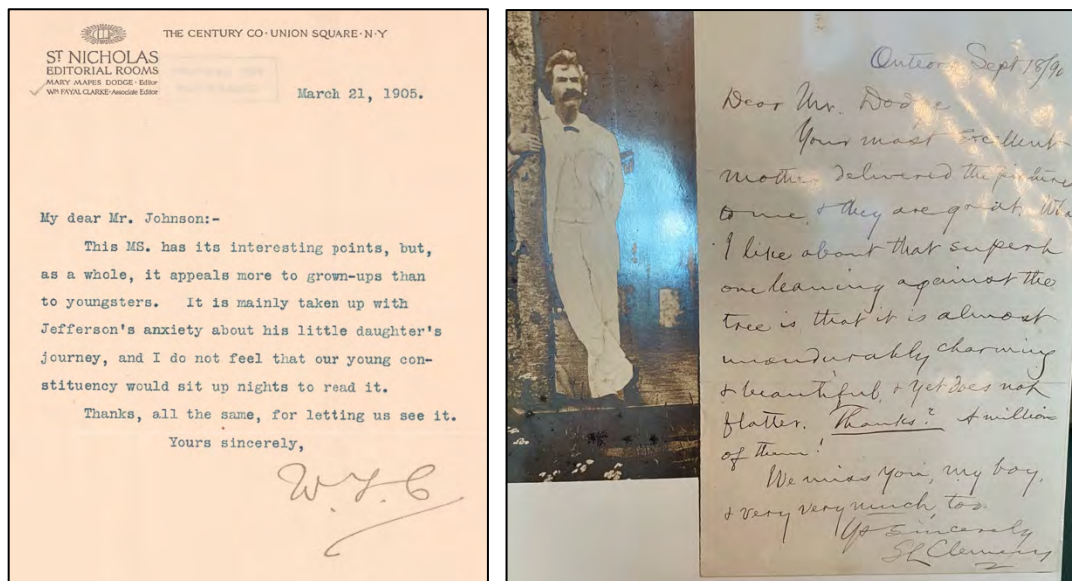


Fig. 70, left. Letter denying publication in *St. Nicholas* to a Mr. Johnson due to not meeting editorial thresholds. Fig. 71, right. 1890 note from Samuel Clemens to James Mapes Dodge with a photo taken by the latter in Ontonaga, New York, likely at the home of Mary Mapes Dodge, "Yarrow." Dodge's photo of Mark Twain appears in the frontispiece to *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894).

Both Dodge and Clarke held exacting standards for publication, prioritizing children's interests for reading and not adult themes or anxiety. *Tom Sawyer Abroad* was published in *St. Nicholas* in six installments between 1893 and 1894. Clemens, writing as Mark Twain, was not pleased with editorial decisions made when the story appeared in print. Editor Dodge had deleted

popular at the time, the books have since been assessed as overdramatized and "not excelled...for lift and thud of language" according to Robert Spiller in *Literary History of the United States* (1953), p.535.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Mapes Dodge, Introduction, *St. Nicholas*, Vol. 1, No. 1, November 1873. The Online Archive of Nineteenth-Century Women's Writings accessed August 10, 2025.

sections she thought might be offensive to young readers and made other changes to suit her own tastes.<sup>20</sup> This editorial decision did not seem to interfere with a warm and lifelong friendship between Clemens and the Dodges. According to Clarke, Clemens even declared Jamie Dodge to be the best story-teller that he had ever heard.<sup>21</sup> This humanist aspect to the engineer would be part of his professional success.

*James Mapes Dodge, the Link-Belt Company, and engineering legacy*

That success started after James finished at Newark Academy, then pursued engineering studies at Rutgers and Cornell Universities. After a brief stint in Albany, he followed mechanical engineering opportunities that led him to Indianapolis and Chicago where he worked with burgeoning manufacturing companies. He met Josephine Kern while he was working for the Link-Belt Company in the Midwest. They married in 1879 in Chicago and the following year while still there, welcomed a son, Kern Dodge. The family arrived in Philadelphia by 1884 where Dodge founded Burr & Dodge that eventually merged with the Link-Belt Company that opened a plant in Nicetown near the Midvale Steel Works in 1889.

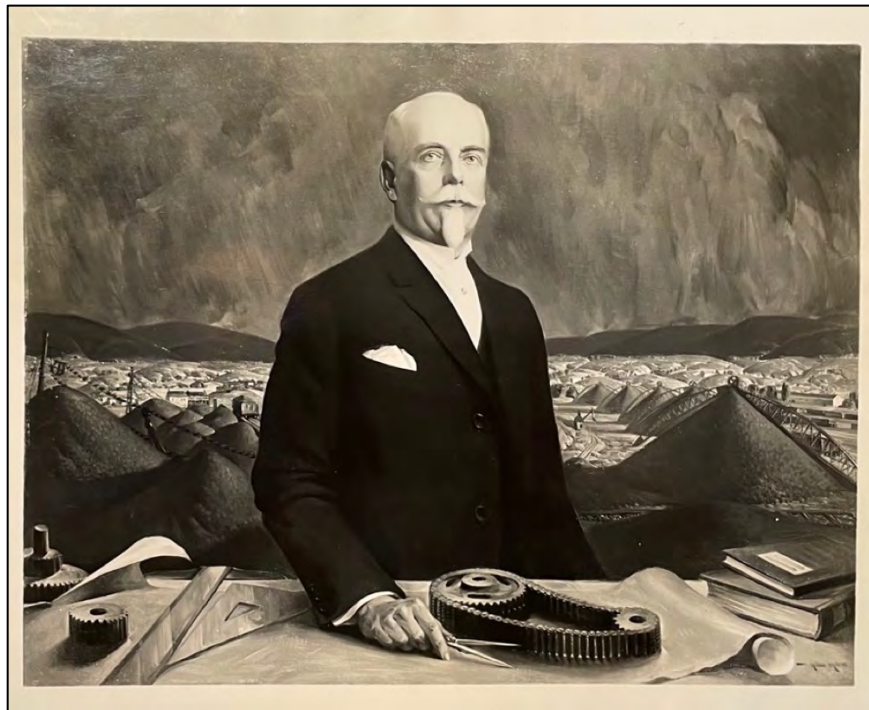


Fig. 72. In this undated portrait of James Mapes Dodge, he is depicted at his engineer's table with his patented link-belt invention in front of stylized Pennsylvania landscape of a town surrounding his innovative coal storage mounds and mechanisms. Source: Philadelphia Record Photo Morgue, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>20</sup> Barbara Schmidt, "A History of and Guide to Uniform Editions of Mark Twain's Works," Chapter 22: Tom Sawyer Abroad, 2017. [www.twainquotes.com](http://www.twainquotes.com), accessed August 10, 2025. The later 1896 publication of Tom Sawyer Abroad used Twain's original text for the 1896 red cloth edition.

<sup>21</sup> William Fayal Clarke, "James Mapes Dodge: The Personal Qualities and Achievements of a Man of Unusual Force," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, December 5, 1915. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Dodge's contributions to engineering advancements were plentiful yet perhaps most notable regarding his coal storage inventions. He conceived the idea of storing and reloading anthracite coal by mechanical means, to prepare anthracite for the market. The method is still in use today, albeit at lower rates given the reduced demand for coal. By piling the coal conically and performing the operation of stocking out and reloading mechanically, an innovative system was born utilizing the chain drive to convey coal at financially remunerative rates. Contracts were immediately procured at several railroad companies.



Fig. 73. An undated photo of Jamie Dodge's innovative coal storage mechanism with coal piles in the background. Source: Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University.

In addition to his engineering innovations and accomplishments, Dodge was a leader in softening and humanizing the Taylor system of management at the time of its installation at the Link-Belt plant. Frederick W. Taylor, a Germantown native, was a mechanical engineer at the Midvale Steel Works when he began creating and developing what became known as industrial engineering with methods to improve industrial efficiency; his 1909 book *The Principles of Scientific Management* is considered the most influential management book of the twentieth century. Taylor and Dodge were not just business associates, but also personal friends; Dodge gave the eulogy at Taylor's funeral in March 1915.

According to Piez, Taylor's mind was essentially analytical and mathematical; he was "inclined to consider workmen as wholly impersonal beings, and to disregard the effect of prejudice and sentiment on output." Dodge's contribution to Taylor's system, while not reflected in any of the forms or details, was in recognizing the human side of the management problem, and his influence with Taylor was such that the system lost its seeming asperities and harshness brought

on by the abuse of the system's application by cultivating the human factor in scientific management.

Dodge never failed to pay attention to the human side of the industrial problem. "His sunny optimism, his personal interest in every employee, and the ease with which he could be approached on personal or business grounds made him a prime favorite among the men. His office door was always open to any employee. His invariable injunction to his aides concerning the treatment of workmen was, 'in case of doubt decide against the company and in favor of the man.'" Later in his career, he was asked by a member of the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations about his relation with his workers. "Well, I do not know exactly, but I think most of them are more inclined to call me Jim than they are Mr. Dodge."



Fig. 74, left. An undated photo of James Mapes Dodge's coal storage invention showing how the mechanism can load from piles into transport containers as well as reverse to load the piles. Source: Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Princeton. Fig. 75, right. An 1898 photo of son Kern Dodge at Germantown Academy. Source: *Philadelphia Record* Photo Morgue, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Dodge was president of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers for several years. His professional interactions and work coincided with a pivotal point in the invention and development of several Industrial Era systems of management and conveyance. His employees and colleagues included people such as Henry Gantt, whose eponymous chart is to this day a mainstay of construction scheduling. Yet, his warmth and good humor was also a chief characteristic of his personality. "A stranger who listened at a dinner table would never have catalogued him as a mechanical engineer."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> "Girard's Talk," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 1, 1932.

James Mapes Dodge died at his home at 5000 McKean Avenue in December 1915, aged 63, from pneumonia that developed from a cold caught at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco a few weeks prior. He was described in obituaries as a reformer in politics, a gifted storyteller, a tireless worker, and a “pre-eminence as a lover of joy and gladness in others...his wit was never satirical, but ever instant, potent, brilliant, of a quickness and originality all his own.”<sup>23</sup>

Charles Piez was a business associate and friend to Dodge for twenty-five years who penned an elegant brochure entitled *Personal Reminiscences of James Mapes Dodge* the year after the latter's death. Piez was by then the President of the Link-Belt Company, and tenders a profile of a charming, humanistic, and mechanically accomplished man. He writes of Dodge's professional beginnings:

By 1888 Burr & Dodge and the New York office of the Link-Belt Machinery Co. had prospered to such an extent that a consolidation of the two interests was proposed by Mr. Dodge. The Link-Belt Engineering Co., of Philadelphia, grew out of this consolidation, and this company became the exclusive agent of the Ewart Manufacturing Co. for the Atlantic Coast States, the Link-Belt Machinery Co., organized in Chicago in 1880, retaining the agency for the rest of the country. Mr. Dodge was the executive as well as the engineering head of the eastern company. Under his leadership there began an era of invention and development that in the retrospect appears little short of marvelous. Over 120 patents were taken out for him.... and beginning in 1994, pertained largely to conveying problems and to transmission chains.

Residency at the subject property by the Dodge family continued after Jamie's death in 1915. Mrs. Kern lived here until her death in 1953, taking on several improvements projects such as the 1923 Cottage. Son Kern and his growing family were next door at 425 W. Clapier in a Colonial Revival house called Ingleside; he resided here until his death in 1958. Kern was a noted car enthusiast like his father before him and kept meticulous records of his successive automobile purchases including documentation photographs in and around the subject neighborhood.

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<sup>23</sup> William Fayal Clarke, “James Mapes Dodge: The Personal Qualities and Achievements of a Man of Unusual Force,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, December 5, 1915. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.





Fig. 76, left. A photo of Kern Dodge and his son Robert in their cellar tinkering with mechanical steam devices. Fig. 77, right. A 1931 photo of 14-year-old Robert, with his Scottie Mintz, seated at the wheel of the car he assembled in his father's workshop at 425 W. Clapier.

In the memoir of her husband's life, Mrs. Day describes the neighborhood of one where mechanical experimentation, whether kite flying using the steep grades of the surrounding neighborhood or horseless carriage tinkering was not uncommon. The relationships built from proximity and by shared interest were fruitful. Charles attended Germantown Academy with Kern Dodge, James's son, and they were congenial companions inside and outside the classroom. James Mapes Dodge encouraged both boys in their leanings toward engineering and by 1901, after Charles had a stint at the Link-Belt Company, he and Kern established Dodge & Day, specializing in engineering and shop management. The firm exists today as Day & Zimmerman after a stint between 1907-1911 as Dodge, Day & Zimmerman. While Kern attended the Drexel Institute and Day attended the University of Pennsylvania for their respective mechanical engineering degrees, the two were life-long collaborators.

Kern Dodge was not only a mechanical engineer, but by the time of his 1911 exit from Dodge, Day & Zimmerman, was interested in entering consulting work. In 1912, he was a sole practitioner who handled industrial problems for many corporations. In spite of being a Republican in politics, he was a member of the Committee of Seventy, a non-partisan civic leadership organization in Philadelphia founded in 1904. In December 1931, Mayor-Elect J. Hampton Moore announced Kern's appointment as Director of Public Safety, putting him at the head of the City's police and firefighting forces. Coming into this position at the onset of Prohibition, Dodge told reporters that "Philadelphia cannot be a wide-open town, and...I shall enforce all laws and neglect none." Dodge was dismissed from his position in 1933 following charges by the Philadelphia Criminal Justice Association that the city's police conditions were intolerable. Dodge charged the Mayor with forcing a resignation for political reasons. Dodge,

“his pipe clutched in one hand, said, I will not quit. You will have to fire me.”<sup>24</sup> In 1934, Dodge ran an unsuccessful campaign for Mayor of Philadelphia.

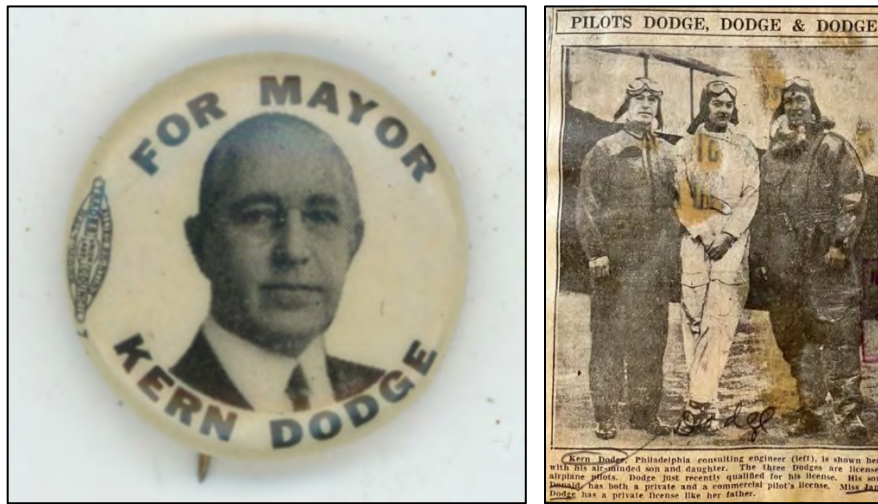


Fig. 78, left. A button from Kern Dodge’s 1934 campaign for Mayor of Philadelphia. Source: Historic Society of Pennsylvania. Fig. 79, right. A July 30, 1931, photo from the Philadelphia Record of Kern, Jane, and Donald Dodge likely taken at the Northeast Philadelphia airfield where Kern became the principal stockholder of Philadelphia Airways by 1929.

Kern’s sons Donald and Robert were engaged in play not just with the neighborhood children or at their father’s alma mater Germantown Academy, but also at their father’s workshop and their grandmother’s house next door. Donald and his sister Jane followed their father’s interest in the budding world of aviation becoming licensed pilots. Donald became an architect, entering practice at McKim, Mead & White after graduating from Princeton in 1930 (BA) and 1932 (MFA). Robert Mapes Dodge, his younger brother, was a math and science teacher at Rehobeth High School in Delaware.

In addition to automobiles, Dodge was interested in the budding field of aviation, and shared this interest with his son Donald and daughter Jane who each received their pilot’s license in 1929. Jane had been a student at Shady Hill School for girls in Chestnut Hill and a debutante the same year she passed her aviation exams.

#### *5000 McKean Avenue at Clapier Street*

The Dodge family was living on Arch Street in 1890 when Dodge was introduced to the subject property situated not far from the Link-Belt Company’s Nicetown plant. Located above Fern Hill, the Henry Pratt McKean estate in lowest Germantown, the neighborhood was rising in stature as a fashionable suburb for wealthy elites. According to correspondence, while the sale of the property was pending from George Strawbridge in 1891, Jamie – as he was called in the family – wrote to his mother already in May 1890 about the new homestead, “yesterday we visited our new home – it’s a beautiful place and I am sure you and Fayal will like it - the

<sup>24</sup> “Ousts Chief Dodge in Philadelphia,” *The New York Times*, February 25, 1933. Accessed August 20, 2025.

children are so happy when there that they don't want to come back to Arch Street."<sup>25</sup> A pony was on order for 10 year old Kern and a shepherd dog had joined the family.

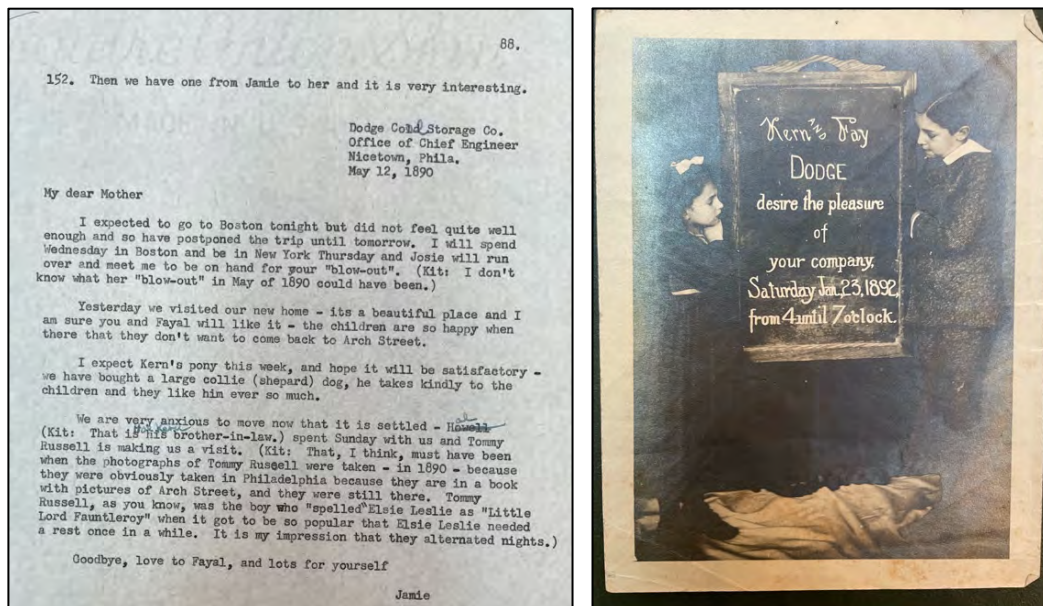


Fig. 80, left. A transcribed copy of a letter from Jamie Dodge to his mother dated May 12, 1890, confirming the sale of the subject property. Fig. 81, right. A photo invitation of Kern and Fay Dodge to a theatrical gathering at their new home. Source for both images: Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Princeton University.

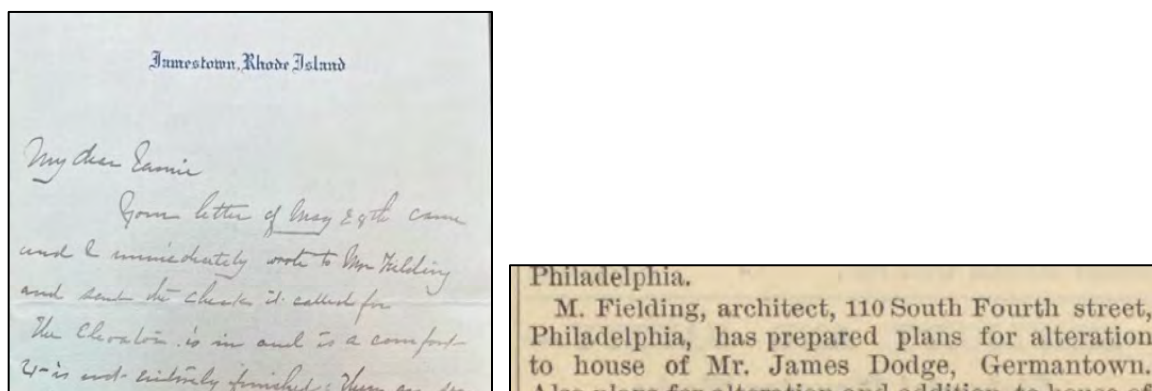


Fig. 82. Undated letter from Mary Mapes Dodge to her son Jamie written from Jamestown, RI. The letter references payment she made to architect Mantle Fielding as directed by her son in a letter to her dated May 28<sup>th</sup>, presumably 1891 based on Fielding's involvement in the alterations to 5000 McKean Avenue. The elevator referred to in the letter would be from alterations to the Jamestown property (the letter continues to address other work undertaken there), however an elevator was also installed at the Dodge's Germantown residence. Fig. 83. Excerpt from the August 5, 1891, edition of the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, announcing architect Mantle Fielding's involvement in renovations at 5000 McKean Ave. The existing stone house could be an antebellum construction. Accessed May 11, 2025.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from Jamie to his mother Mary Mapes Dodge, May 12, 1890. Signed "Goodbye, love to Fayal, and lots for yourself, Jamie." Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University.



Not long after acquiring the subject property at McKean and Clapier, Mantle Fielding was commissioned to alter the existing 3-story building of random coursed, flagstone-patterned schist. There is evidence that Mary Mapes Dodge at least helped contribute to the renovation, as a letter to Jamie indicates she sent payment to Mr. Fielding.

While James' mother Mary purchased a summer retreat in Oneota, New York, Josie purchased Red House<sup>26</sup>, a property in the historic Shoreby Hill neighborhood of Jamestown, Rhode Island where many fashionable Philadelphians spent their summers. The Dodge residences, including McKean Avenue in Germantown and Mary Mapes Dodge's Catskills retreat "Yarrow," hosted guests that included personalities like Samuel Clemens and Helen Keller.

The family asserted its place in high society, taking on the trappings of the upper classes: with a second home in Jamestown, Rhode Island; in the society pages of travels and hosted parties; and commissioning portraits of Josephine and Kern by Thomas Eakins.<sup>27</sup> However, family archives indicate this new life in a wealthy enclave of Germantown was less for others, and one made by a family whose means allowed a culture of artistry, probity, and public spirit. The family made a deliberate choice, among others, to remain in Germantown, even as the Gilded Age was swept away and a more diverse and democratic city was built around them, literally on the lots surrounding their property.



Fig. 84. An undated photograph of Josephine Kern Dodge with her two oldest children Kern and Fay in a parlor of the house at 5000 McKean Avenue from a family album where photos were printed on bound, linen pages. While undated, Kern was born in 1880 and could be between ten and twelve years old here. Source: Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Princeton University.

<sup>26</sup> Red House is located at 5 Alden Road, Plat 8, Lot 200. According to the Jamestown Historical Society Online Collection, it was designed by Creighton Withers and built in 1898 for Mrs. H.S. Potter. In the accession record for Josephine Dodge, it was called the Kern Cottage. It was owned by Josephine Kern Dodge, then by her daughter Mrs. Josephine Dodge Wharton Wilkinson.

<sup>27</sup> The two known Thomas Eakins portraits are both owned by the Philadelphia Museum of Art and neither are currently on view. "Portrait of Mrs. James Mapes Dodge (Josephine Kern)" was completed in 1896, accession number 1951-79-1. <https://philamuseum.org/collection/object/52571>, accessed July 28, 2025. The unfinished portrait of Kern Dodge, "The Young Man (Portrait of Kern Dodge)" is dated c.1898-1902, accession number 1929-184-21.. <https://philamuseum.org/collection/object/42502>, accessed July 28, 2025.



Fig. 85. An undated photograph of the interior of the main house at 5000 McKean Avenue. The woman at the mirror seems to be Josie Dodge. Source: Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Princeton University.

The closeness and affection of the family members, including to Mary's close associate at *St. Nicholas*, William Fayal Clarke, is clear through their correspondence and their activities that straddle both administrative business and the arts. The relationship between Clarke and the Dodge family became so intertwined that the name Fayal (alternatively spelled Fayelle) was given to several female Dodge descendants, including Jamie and Josie's eldest daughter, as well as the Dodge's summer boat, moored in Jamestown.

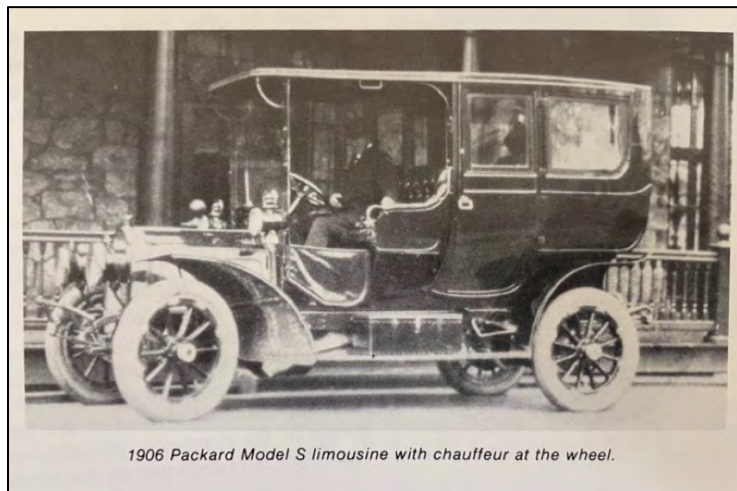


Fig. 86, left. An undated photograph of four generations of the Dodge-Kern family. James Mapes Dodge (far left, d. 1915) is seated on the side porch of 5000 McKean Avenue with two of his grandchildren, Dorothy (b.1905) and Donald (b.1907). Next to the children is their great-grandmother Mrs. Mary Ann (née Whitman) Kern who lived with the family until her death in 1919. Behind them is Josephine Kern Dodge and her son Kern Dodge. Source: Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Princeton University. Fig. 87, right. A 1906 Packard parked at the front door of 5000 McKean. Source: "Kern Dodge: Pioneer Automobilst" by Barron H. Bohnet. *Antique Automobile*, November-December 1978.





Figs. 88 & 89, left and center. Thomas Eakins portraits of Josephine Kern Dodge (1896) and her son Kern Dodge (1898-1902), both owned by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Fig. 90, right. A May 11, 1940, photograph of Josephine Kern Dodge in the garden of the subject parcel next to her hollyhocks. The house in the background on the higher grade is the Steele residence, at 5008 McKean Avenue.

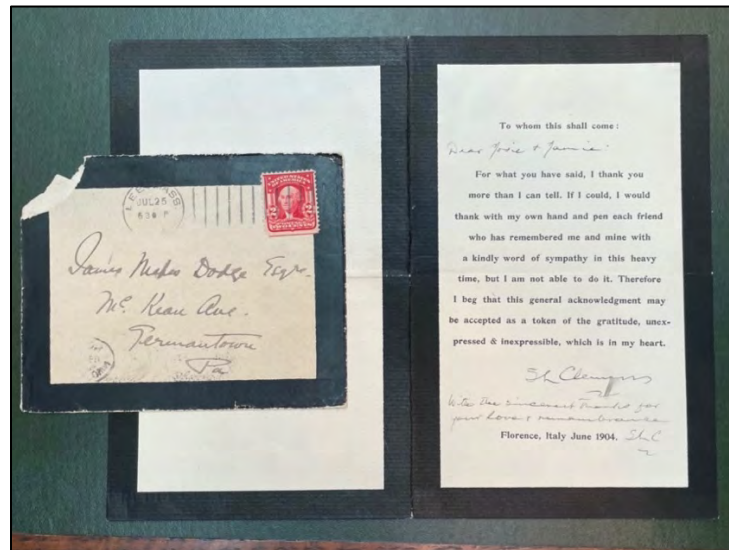
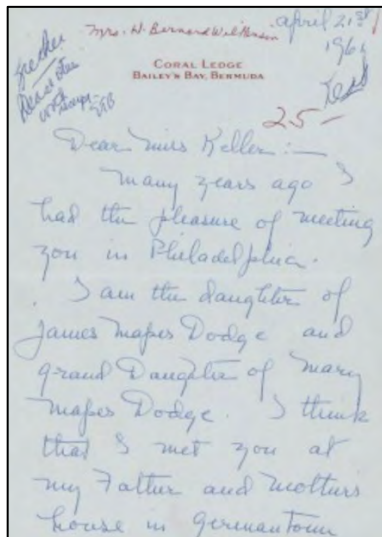


Fig. 91, left. A letter from Josephine Dodge Wharton Wilkinson to Helen Keller, dated April 26, 1961, referencing the latter's visit to the Dodge residence in Germantown. Source: Helen Keller Archive of the American Foundation for the Blind. Fig. 92, right. A letter from S.L. Clemens to Jamie Dodge, dated June 1904. It was a note of gratitude for the condolences the former expressed after the death of Clemens' wife Olivia. Source: Donald & Robert M. Dodge Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University.



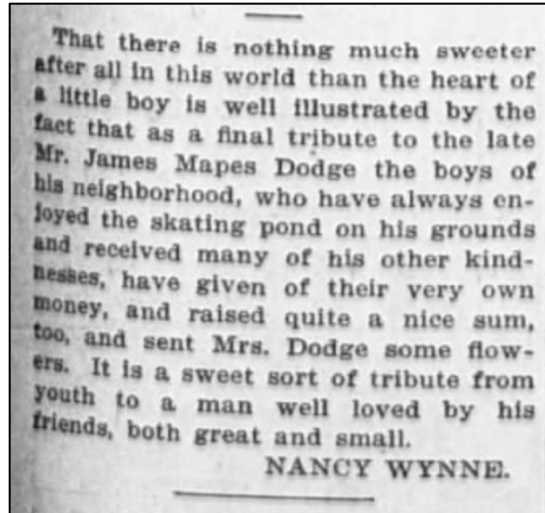


Fig. 93, left. Undated photo of "D&B at Dodge Rink." D&B may refer to Donald and Bob, grandsons of James Mapes Dodge who lived behind the Dodge property at 425 W. Clapier. The property in the right background are the 1870s-era stone twin residences at 4951 and 4953 McKean Avenue. Source: Germantown Historical Society. Fig. 94, right. From the December 9, 1915, *Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger* just after James Mapes Dodge's death, a small note from chronicler Nancy Wynne about the sweet gesture by neighborhood boys toward Mrs. Dodge in memory of her husband's kindness to the neighborhood children by building a lighted skating pond for their use.

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