

# Fashionable Society Returns to Its Old Home on East River

## Colony of Wealthy People Has Found Homes in the Shadow of Queensboro Bridge

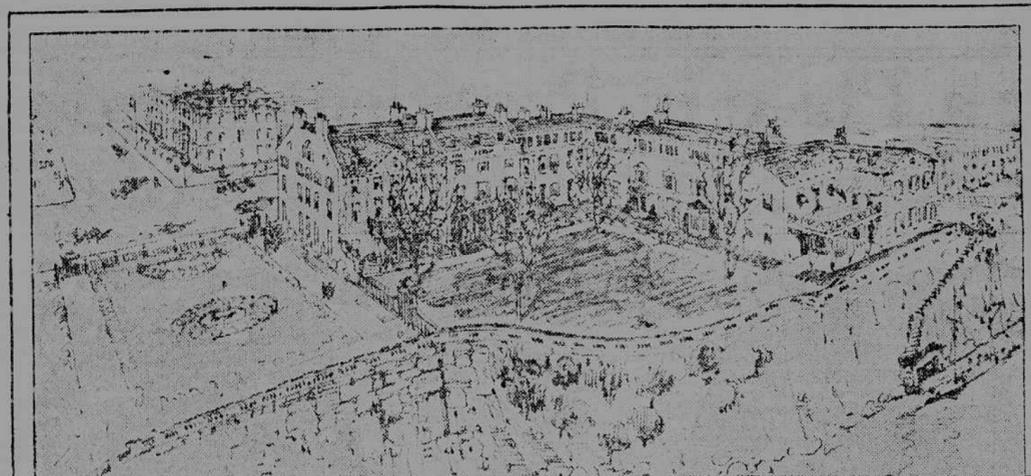
**A**FTER an absence of more than three-quarters of a century from the far East Side, well-to-do folks, residents of the Fifth Avenue district, are once more setting up fireplaces on the very brink of the East River.

When James Monroe was the Chief Magistrate of the country, and for many years before and after his stay at the White House, a home on the East River front was a mark of affluence. It was not until commerce began to crowd the peaceful waterway to the Long Island Sound that attention was directed to inland home locations, especially Fifth Avenue, which had been designed particularly for fine home development. Now, after all these years of Fifth Avenue, interest in living on the east waterfront of Manhattan has been revived in a small way. Of course it is out of reason to suppose that this deflection will result in the residential preeminence of the East River waterfront as in the days of long ago.

tion or great "L" of brownstone high stoops, brick and mortar.

**Had Known Better Days**

The area behind the formation, instead of being subdivided back yards, is an open space, once a beautiful garden, fronting on Fifty-seventh Street and the East River. The wooden gate in the iron fence built along Fifty-seventh Street and the faded, refined appearance of the houses compel the impression that once upon a time conditions in



## Sutton Square, After Many Years of Eclipse, Is Again To Be a Center of Social Life

ment not to be had in any other section of the city. Fifth Avenue itself cannot present such possibilities, even if folks were willing to stand the great expense of acquiring the necessary land. These exceptional advantages were strong factors in bringing Fifth Avenue folk to the East River.

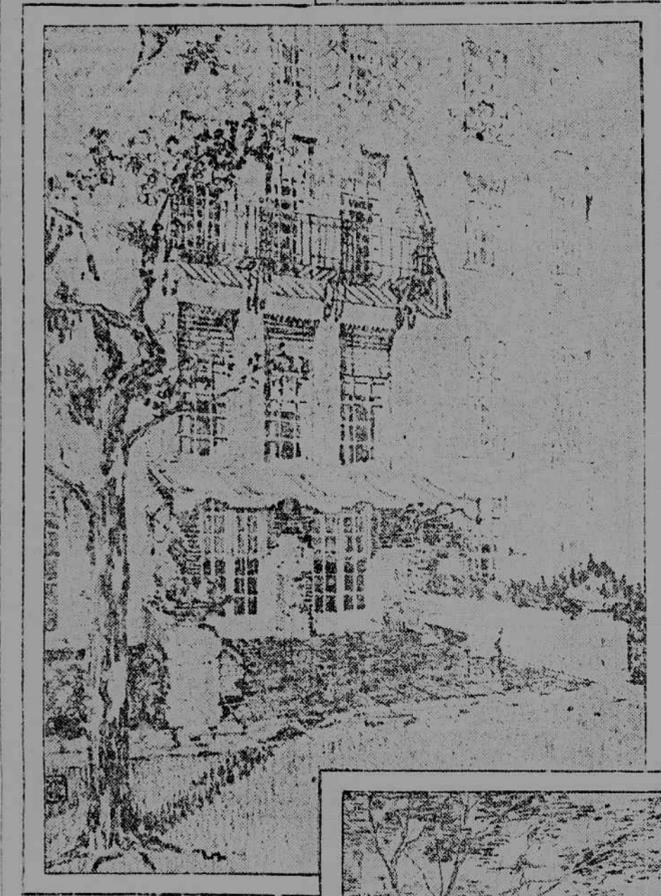
The mallowness of centuries is to be put into the garden side of the houses. Some of the most noted house designers in the country have been commissioned to wrap the dwellings in an atmosphere of de-

evergreens and other hardy berry are being planted to prevent slides. The beach at the foot of the decline is to be restored and beautified. The old life-saving station under the cliff which has been there for many years also may receive some attention from the folks who will make their homes on the heights.

The station was established to watch over treacherous Hell Gate, which is a short distance down the river. It is estimated that the land value of the garden and the cost of landscaping will total \$200,000.

Under the agreement which has been reached by the members of Sutton Square each house owner may build a tearoom in the garden extending not more than twelve feet from the house. Overhanging windows will be permitted above a certain height provided that they do not reach out so far as to interfere with the architectural appearance of the ensemble.

The houses are literally to be turned around, that what is rear today is to be the front to-morrow. This is to be accomplished by rearranging the interior. When the houses are turned over to the new owners living rooms, dining rooms, drawing rooms and master bedrooms will face on the garden and not on the street, which is conventional.

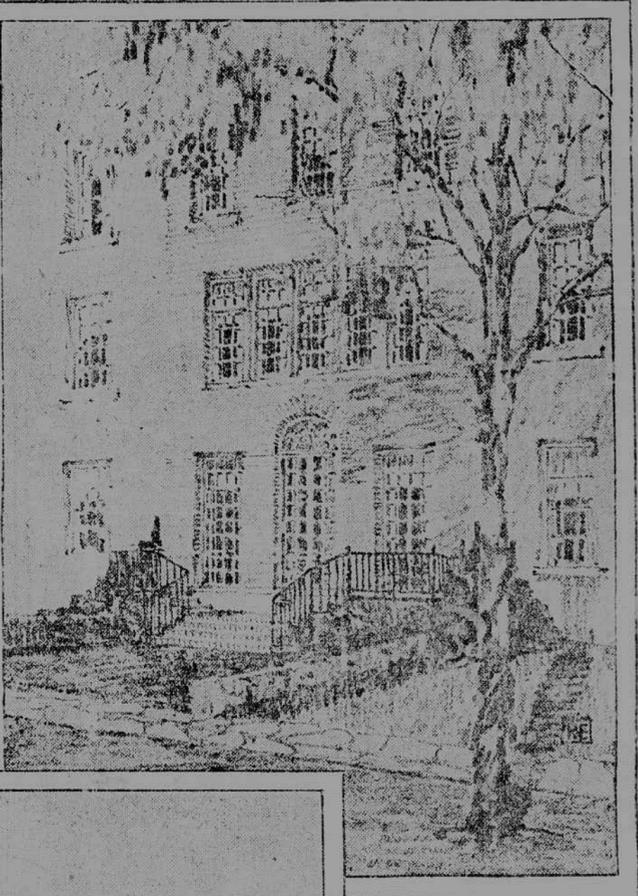


**A** GENERAL view of Sutton Square, on the East River, the houses of which have been purchased as homes by a number of persons now living in the Fifth Avenue district. Years ago Sutton Square was the home of the city's best known families, most of which joined the exodus to Fifth Avenue

**THE** house on the left will be the home of Mrs. Elisabeth Marbury

**AT THE RIGHT** is the prospective home of Mrs. Lorillard Cammann

**BELOW** are shown the gardens of Sutton Square as they will appear after their rearrangement for their new tenants. The houses will be turned around to face the garden and river instead of the street



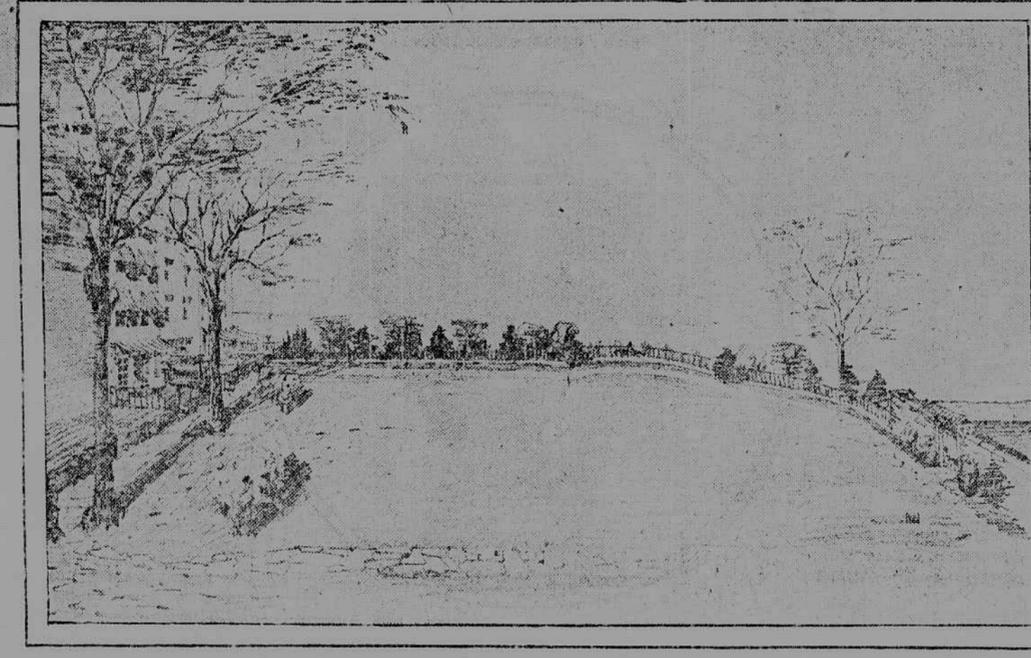
**Members of the Colony**

A group of well known folks, including W. Seward Webb jr., whose mother was Lila Osgood Vanderbilt, and who married a daughter of Mayor Gaynor; Elbot Cross, well known architect, who recently married Martha McCook, daughter of Colonel and Mrs. John McCook, of Tuxedo; Robert C. Knapp, Frederick Allen, of Lee, Higginson & Co.; George M. Osborn, Rosecrans Baldwin, Donald Frothingham, Walter Damrosch, Mrs. Lorillard Cammann, F. D. Griswold, Mrs. Chauncey Smith, Miss Elisabeth Marbury, H. H. Sprague, Dr. Edgar Stillman, of the Rockefeller Institute; Professor J. P. Chamberlain, of Columbia University, and Dr. Foster Kennedy have become interested in a little cluster of homes in the shadow of the massive Queensboro Bridge, on Sutton Place, a little byway of the city known by comparatively few New Yorkers.

**Opposite Blackwell's Island**

If you will walk east on Fifty-seventh Street to the very end you will come up at the side entrance to houses which society folks have taken for a social center. A brick wall built across the street will halt your progress and necessarily so, because forty feet below is the swift current of the East River. To your left as you neep over the wall at the water below or at Blackwell's Island across the stream is the dwelling group, which has been taken for development into a Mayfair colony of homes that will represent investments totaling \$1,500,000 at least. Aside from emphasizing the truism that current events are repetitions of history, the settlement will be one of the most interesting, as well as attractive, dwelling neighborhoods in New York.

There are eighteen houses in the cluster acquired forming the east front of Sutton Place from Fifty-seventh to Fifty-eighth Street and the south side of the Fifty-eighth Street block from Sutton Place over to the river, a right angle forma-



Sutton Place were not always so, which indeed is correct.

Although the property was acquired from the Phipps estate several months ago, it was only through the formation recently of Sutton Square, Inc., by Mr. Cross and Mr. Webb and others for \$100,000 that the anticipated deflection from the Fifth Avenue section was discovered. Folks in the vicinity of Sutton Square have no idea that the houses from which friends have had to move are to be occupied by persons whose names are listed in the social directory, or in Who's Who, the Director of Directors or other registers of folk high in business, professional or social affairs.

Extreme care has been exercised in forming the colony, which is to be exclusive socially and so protected legally by covenants that it will remain as planned, for the property cannot be used for any purpose other than fine homes.

**High Above the River**

The group is not to be raised but entirely rebuilt. Nothing will be left standing but the walls of the houses. The brownstone stoops, the window ledges and other protrusions are to be cleaved off, leaving a straight front to the outside world. Architecturally the facade will be of the American basement style, which has been popular in the Fifth Avenue district for the last decade. The side facing on the garden is to be far from austere in appearance. The location is unique. Aton of a bluff equal in height to six stories above the river's level, extending out into the stream like a promontory, it assures seclusion and presents an opportunity for architectural treat-

lightful cosiness such as one associates with the secluded home colonies of old London. Fan-shaped door and window tops, pilasters, broad, brick stoops of two or three steps, brass knobs on rail posts, brass and silver door knockers, extending windows, latticework, clinging vines and the skilful use of stucco, old-fashioned brick and other materials will make a picture such as artists paint of corners of ancient cities of the world.

**The Beach Decorated**

It will take several months to make the transformation. Several houses are now being cleaned out by builders. Preliminary work has been started on the garden. A walk made of irregular shaped flagging is now being laid along the river's edge. The walk has been completed along Fifty-seventh Street and in front of the row of dwellings. An iron railing is to be erected at the start of the sixty foot decline to the water edge, and on Fifty-seventh Street a brick wall of ancient design is to replace the high railing which has been standing there for many years.

On the slope down to the river

City, and the suggestion was made that it might prove a very interesting place to live. Closer investigation heightened the desire to establish homes on the bluff because of the water views and the feeling of isolation that surrounded the block. Very quietly the property was secured and associate owners selected.

**Named After George Sutton**

George Sutton acquired the property and adjoining land back in April, 1837. It was a large estate, one of many that lined the river at the time. Mr. Sutton subdivided the land into building sites and sold them off. Sutton Place was named after him. The block between Fifty-seventh and Fifty-eighth Streets was taken by persons who valued the location, and to make the most of it each gave the rear of his lot for a common garden.

Sir Edmund Andros while Governor of the province transferred the block and other land to John Danielson, Esquire, back in 1676, with the understanding that a quit rental of "one peck of good winter wheat be paid over."

# Theodore Roosevelt Was Always Santa Claus for Cove Neck School

**N**ESTLED in a clump of oaks just off the Huntington Road as you approach Oyster Bay, Long Island, is a little weatherbeaten frame schoolhouse. If you were not looking for it you might miss it, for it makes no claim to any measure of pretension. It is just a country schoolhouse, differing in no wise from any other country schoolhouse, until the inquisitive man discovers that it was the pet institution of the late Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

About a mile and one-half away is the Roosevelt estate of Sagamore Hill. Between the estate and the schoolhouse stretches the shore road, with the surf of Long Island Sound rolling in the near distance. It is real country down there, although it is within fifty miles of New York City. It is the Cove Neck school, that three of the six Roosevelt children attended until they were deemed sufficiently advanced in the rudiments of the three R's to be graduated, and it is this school that for a quarter of a cen-

tury claimed Colonel Roosevelt as its patron saint.

The schoolhouse doesn't give one at all the impression that it appreciates its unique honor. It boasts two plain rooms, lined with jack-knife-scarred desks of the old-fashioned type, with long blackboards and a teacher's desk on a little raised platform at the end, one room for the youngsters and the other for the older boys and girls. This same description might fit hundreds of crossroad schoolhouses from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but this one happens to be the school that Colonel Roosevelt loved and to which he sent his children.

This phase of the Colonel's life—the patronage of the country school—is more typical of the man, more eloquent of the homely, neighborhood, simple character that so endeared him to Oyster Bay and the surrounding countryside than any other, perhaps. And perhaps no phase is so little known, for the Cove Neck school never sought publicity. In its own affairs it never

took advantage of its distinguished patron.

Of all the reminiscences of the Colonel and the Cove Neck school which the Oyster Bay people are now telling, none is so human as the stories which cluster about Theodore Roosevelt's Christmas programs. The Colonel always made much of the Yuletide season. To him it was a period essentially for holiday spirit, and he insisted that, so far as was within his power, this spirit should be extended to all about him. Also he was a firm believer in Santa Claus for the youngsters, and the legend of the good Saint Nick and his galloping reindeer never lost anything in his telling. Thus it befell that thirty years ago his attention, among the demands of his busy life, was drawn to what he considered the Christmas opportunities of the Cove Neck school.

Trudging over the country road one day early in December the Colonel held a secret conference with the teacher, the result of which left

the teacher dazed and the Colonel with a broad smile of happy anticipation on his ruddy face. He had given certain definite directions in his characteristic way as to the kind of Christmas that he wanted the children at Cove Neck to have. The following morning the teacher announced that each boy and girl was to write a letter to Santa Claus for immediate delivery, specifying just what gifts they should like most to receive; and to complete the sensation which such an important announcement might well be expected to produce, she followed with the statement that there would be a real tree in the schoolhouse on Christmas Eve, with gifts for every one. To those who knew the Colonel the answer to the riddle was easy to guess, and his methods of assuring the success of his Christmas program were the same direct tactics which he might have applied to the solving of a great public issue.

The letters to Santa Claus were "duly examined and their contents noted" by the Colonel and Mrs.

Roosevelt. Then the Colonel held another conference with the teacher, to make a hasty estimate of the expense in filling the orders, and arranged for a trip to New York, for it was out of the question to meet the demands in the village stores. Also, he added of his own accord an allowance for candy and oranges and the proper Christmas trimmings, all of which, in his opinion, should accompany any healthy Yuletide tree bearing gifts.

On the morning of the day before Christmas the Colonel, accompanied by Charles Lee, the negro who had been in his service for years, went into the woods of Sagamore Hill and there chopped down one of the finest of trees. This he carried to his home, where it lay until the time for removal to the schoolhouse, there to be decorated by the teacher.

When the much anticipated night arrived the Colonel was on hand early at the school, his arms full with the store of mysterious packages and bundles and his eyes critically appraising the last minute de-

corations. With solemn, wondering faces the children trooped in, for such an event had never occurred before in the school.

Was Santa Claus really and truly to answer their letters? The reply came soon when the Colonel, beaming from ear to ear, announced that he had been delegated by Saint Nick to act as his emissary, and began reading from the packages which crowded the foot of the tree the names of the various fortunate recipients. Not one child was disappointed, whether it was in the case of a doll for a girl or a drum for a boy, and with each package were given also the fattest sacks of candy that had ever been seen in Oyster Bay.

And such candy as that was. It was candy with a history, too, for it was the same kind of candy which the Colonel used to like best when he was a boy in New York City and which in consequence he had insisted in buying for the children at Cove Neck. It was a hard candy, the kind that lasted indefinitely,

with such an inviting flavor and sweetness that it made one hunger for more. There was only one confectionery firm in New York that made such candy (the store has since been destroyed by fire), but the Colonel never forgot it, nor did the youngsters who knew him ever forget it. Once he sent a messenger from Oyster Bay for the express purpose of buying in a stock of that particular candy.

Only three times in thirty years did Colonel Roosevelt miss his celebration at Cove Neck, once when he was President and detained in Washington, again when he was out of the country on a hunting expedition, and the last time, 1918, when he was confined in bed with scurvy. And on these occasions he was represented by a trusty agent. His son Archie acted as his father's representative in 1918, and it was a memorable occasion for him, for it was here that he attended school as a boy, with his brother Kermit and sister Ethel.

It was a peculiar experience for

Archie thus to fill his father's shoes and to point out to the children of a new generation the desk at which he sat when a youngster, and the places where Kermit and Ethel had studied their geography and arithmetic. In those days the Colonel invariably took his morning exercise by tramping with the three children to school.

Last year Colonel Roosevelt's oldest son, Theodore, took the place left by his father. This year the gifts were distributed by Mrs. Roosevelt. Perhaps it was his activities at Cove Neck which inspired the Colonel's intense enthusiasm in the cause of American education, always one of the paramount questions of his public life. In any event, the influence of the humble little country school down at Oyster Bay has radiated from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It was essentially democratic, essentially American, and both qualities found an immediate response from Theodore Roosevelt.