

# MOST LUXURIOUS COUNTRY CLUB in the WORLD

**McCALL MANSION, PALACE OF TRAGEDY TO BE MADE A RICH MAN'S OUTING RESORT**

AMERICA has now the most beautiful, the most luxurious and—without hyperbole—the most magnificent country club in the world. It is the home of the Brook Lawn Club, at Norwood Park, near Long Branch, in New Jersey. In its architectural beauty, in its splendor of appointment, in its more than classic elegance, and in the sweep of the broad acres amid which its marble grandeurs glow whitely against the sapphire of the sky, it is like some jewel of man's most ambitious art—one of those triumphs possible only for a monarchy or for those families whose resources were dynastic, like their antiquity. A jovial, gay clubhouse today, the walls have had barely time to lose from their echoes the footfalls of the man who made it what it is, and then died of his reverses and his chagrin.

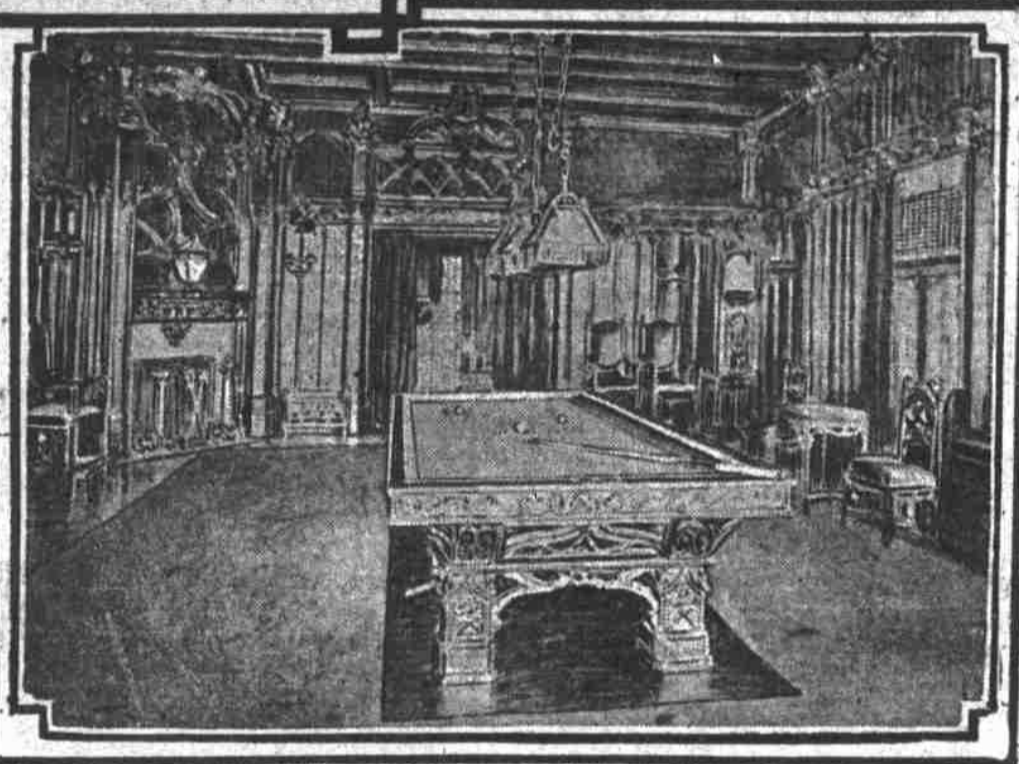
"He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."  
—Old Testament.

THERE was a lad named John A. McCall in Albany, N. Y., in 1867, who, like most other Albany-boys, had to hustle for a living. His peculiar bent for hustling took him promptly into that field which all its devotees deem the sovereign repent for the hustler. Politics gave him a \$15 a week job as a clerk in the old assortment house for state currency, at Albany. In 1869 politics advanced him to \$800 a year as messenger in the State Insurance Department. He had a wife and child dependent on him and his little clerical salary, when one of the New York overturns in politics, which have kept it among the most influential as well as the most doubtful states of the Union, put in a Republican Governor, with a Republican superintendent of insurance as the natural corollary. The clerk, McCall, was a Democrat, but very wide between the eyes, as physiognomists constantly remarked later in his career. The new superintendent signed dismissals for all the Democrats, and devoted himself to other details of official cleanliness with the ardor characteristic of the new political broom. He discerned a reprehensible waste of gas at night in the offices, and went down one evening to investigate personally. He found McCall, obnoxious Democrat, poring over the books and wrestling with the office work like Gutch holding down a Hackenschmidt on the mat. The guilt of the gas was solved. But—"What are you doing here, this time of night?" the superintendent demanded. "Everybody's gone home long ago." The wide McCall brow turned toward him, impatient of the interruption: "Well, there's a good deal of work to be handled here. I want to feel, when I quit, that it's done." "Hm! You're about the only man on the force who tries to earn his wages. Seems to me I'd better rescind my order for your dismissal."



Entrance and Stairway

"I'm willing," answered McCall, smiling. He continued to be so willing that, what with the strong friends he speedily made among influential Republicans and the thorough study of insurance law and the department's management which he made for himself, he rose to the post of examiner, of deputy superintendent, and, in 1884, of superintendent. Two years later he became comptroller of the Equitable Life, at \$15,000 a year. Within six years he was president of the New York Life Insurance Company, with a salary of \$75,000, increased to \$100,000 in 1901. They say that, from the time he first surmised the possibilities of his career, he cherished the vision of the home he should live in when he should



The Billiard Room.

that near abode, in all the calm and peace of its palatial security. It rises up, enduring in its marble whiteness amid the solidity of the granite pillars that bound the estate, a place of admirable loveliness, its broad piazzas, its many balconies, its roof garden and its promenades affording inimitable views of the countryside, inspiring to day dreams with its visions of the ever mutable sea.

At night stately electric standards light the ways, with great Italian lanterns, in bronze, glowing in the porte-cochere. The reception hall, in Italian renaissance and hung with Nile green silk richly embossed, gives upon the great central court, soaring to a superb glass dome at the roof, sixty feet above. It is, in reality, a vast apartment, seventy by eighty feet, whence springs the flying stair, twenty-five feet in width, which rises to the mezzanine floor that served the first owner as a lounging room.

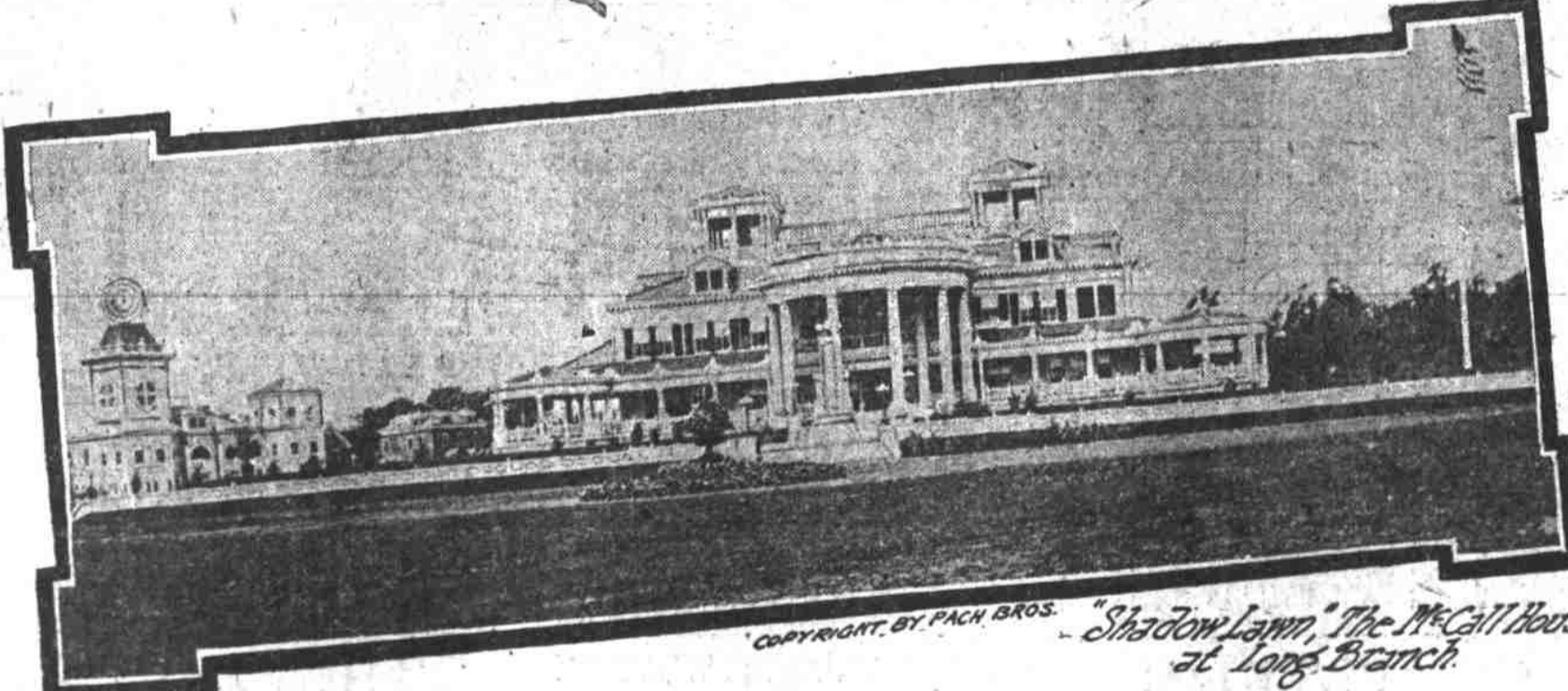
To the right and left the stair ascends, up to the promenade balcony on the second floor, with a second promenade surrounding the court on the third floor, the two promenades affording access to the suites of sleeping apartments, each with its bedroom, dressing room and bath. A soft ivory tone predominates throughout the great hall, tinting the large, sustaining, fluted pillars and the many arches and balustrades. At the right and left are immense fireplaces, framed under mantels of deeply toned mahogany, twelve feet in width and fifteen in height. The woodwork throughout is mahogany—the bookcases included, which are built into the wall—while the electric lighting is in fixtures of pale-green Pompeian bronze, with amber glass shades.

There is a noble dining room opening from the left, its dimensions 30 by 40 feet. The heavily beamed ceiling is ivory tinted. The walls, above the high wainscoting, are paneled in silk of royal blue, the same rich color showing in the tiles of the mantel, while portieres of blue silk and leather screens in blue carry out the harmony of the scheme.

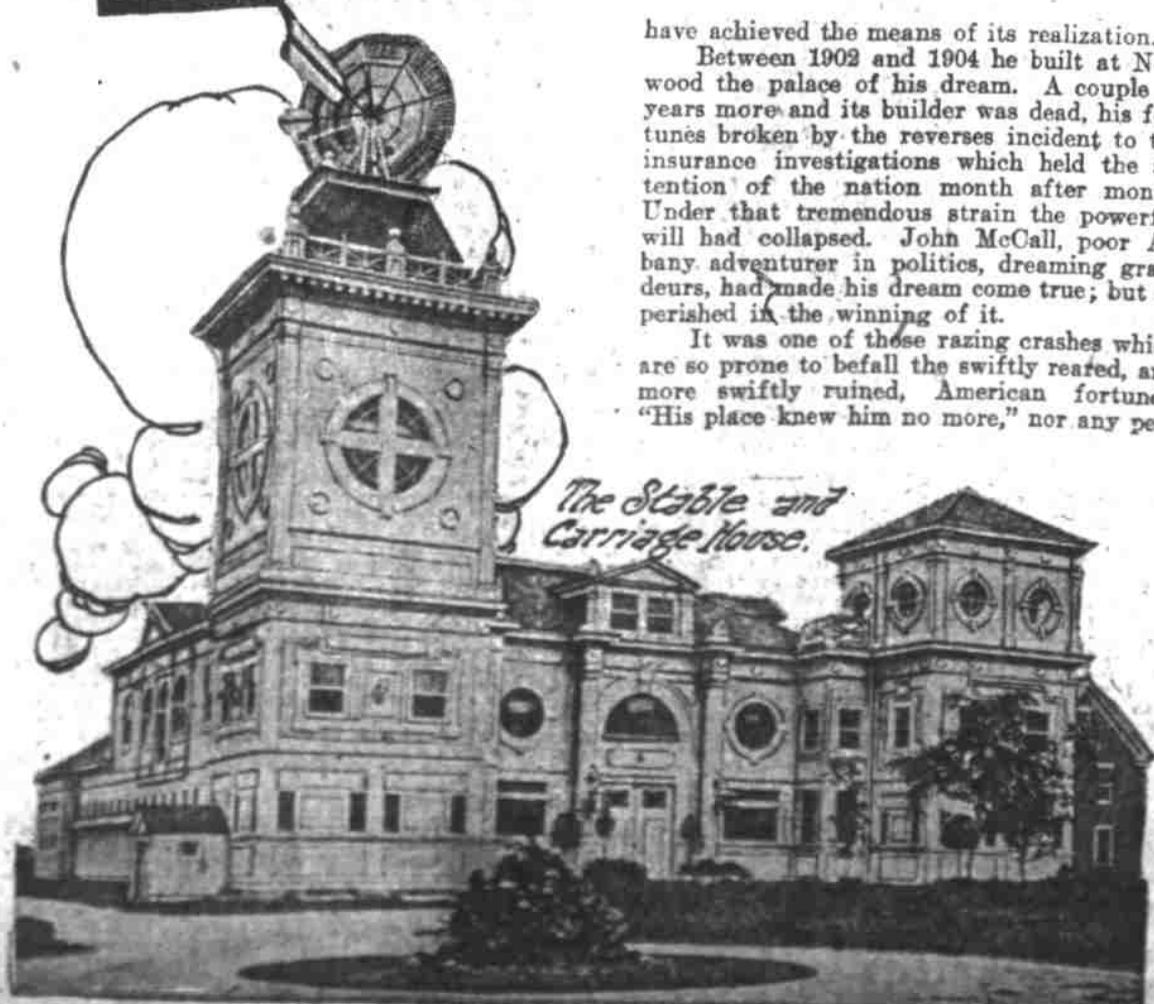
Across the hall are the drawing room and billiard room. They are in striking contrast with each other, in beautiful consonance with their respective uses. The drawing room, in Nile green, silver and ivory, with its large mirrors, its mantelpieces in Italian renaissance, and its exquisite cabinets for bric-a-brac, is almost femininely delicate in its air of dainty elegance.

The billiard room, nearby, is virile in the impression it gives of strength and solidity. It has the old English-Gothic design, in oak of dark-green hue, with the walls hung in red tapestry. The woodwork is elaborately carved, the ceiling heavily beamed. At the fireplace colonial andirons stand, with a generous log basket, both in hammered brass.

It is, in truth, such a palace as a poor artist might have dreamed in the flush of that poverty which creates visions of luxury.



Shadow Lawn, The McCall House at Long Branch



The Stable and Carriage House.

have achieved the means of its realization. Between 1902 and 1904 he built at Norwood the palace of his dream. A couple of years more and its builder was dead, his fortunes broken by the reverses incident to the insurance investigations which held the attention of the nation month after month. Under that tremendous strain the powerful will had collapsed. John McCall, poor Albany adventurer in politics, dreaming grandeur, had made his dream come true; but he perished in the winning of it. It was one of those raging crashes which are so prone to befall the swiftly reared, and more swiftly ruined, American fortunes. "His place knew him no more," nor any peo-

ple who were his. A speculator, dazzled by the splendors the millionaire had wrought, clutched at the marble mirage, in the hope of realizing the million it had cost its creator. But the weight of the mere shadow of its possession was too ponderous for speculation's momentary, feverish strength; it reverted to the Metropolitan Insurance Company on foreclosure of mortgage when he defaulted upon the interest.

But its brilliant beauty was there, alluring others in its reality, as for so many arduous years the mere imagining of it had allured the great magnate of the insurance world. Negotiations, begun two years ago by a group of New York bankers, brokers, lawyers and others endowed with large fortune or moderate wealth, have ended in the purchase of the entire Norwood property for the purposes of the newly formed Brook Lawn Country Club.

The membership includes such well-known New Yorkers as S. R. Guggenheim, of the American Smelting and Refining Company; E. F. C. Young, president of the First National Bank; Myron H. Oppenheim and P. Sanford Ross, government contractor, with others whose activities are not centered directly in New York, like Uzal H. McCarter, president of the Fidelity Trust Company, of Newark, N. J.

The servants are already at the clubhouse, and bungalows—a score of them—costing in the aggregate not less than \$50,000, are to be built for occupancy by the families of such members as wish to have summer homes on the estate at a rental of from \$1000 to \$1500 per year.