

READER SCRAPBOOK

Garver's Castle on the Hill

A 1928 Gordon-Van Tine bungalow shines on thanks to respectful, appreciative homeowners.

BY PHIL AND SUE BISHOP

WE WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WE ENJOYED ROBERT SCHWEITZER'S REVEALING article on Gordon-Van Tine homes, "The Bungalows of Gordon-Van Tine," in *Cottages & Bungalows* (Spring 2008)—especially since we live in one.

Of particular interest was that "in the 1920s [Gordon Van-Tine] became the supplier for Wardway Homes of Chicago, which was the Montgomery Ward home division."

We thought your readers might enjoy seeing one such G-VT house—ours. Of course we can't compare with the grand renovation done by the two filmmakers on their Craftsman home in the same issue ("The Right Direction"), but we are on our way to restoring our house and its gardens pursuant to two guiding ideals: elegance in simplicity and the sentiments of Abraham Cowley (1618-1667) in his poem "The Wish":

*Ah, yet, ere I descend to the grave,
May I a small house and large garden have;
And a few friends, and many books, both true,
Both wise, and both delightful too!*

Cowley's sentiments were reflected in William Morris' writings. And, indeed, we enjoy the Arts and Crafts library and other book collections throughout our home, the gardens and visits by friends.

Home is Our Castle

Originally dubbed "Garver's Castle on the Hill" by local residents, our home has a five-mile view of the Cocalico Valley from the north side of Ephrata Mountain. A fine example of a "ready-cut kit house," this catalog bungalow was ordered from the Gordon-Van Tine Company of Davenport, Iowa, and shipped to Ephrata via railroad boxcar. Its purchasers custom-merged two G-VT house designs: the Reynolds and the Redwood. The prominent Palladian window and turned-under eaves (mimicking a thatched roof) are partly inspired by the English cottage style also in vogue at the time, making this an unusual example of American period architecture to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In the summer of 1928, Rolland H. "Muckle" Garver (1885-1954) built this house for his second wife, Anna "Nan" Marie. Garver was a prominent Ephrata entrepreneur and civic promoter who



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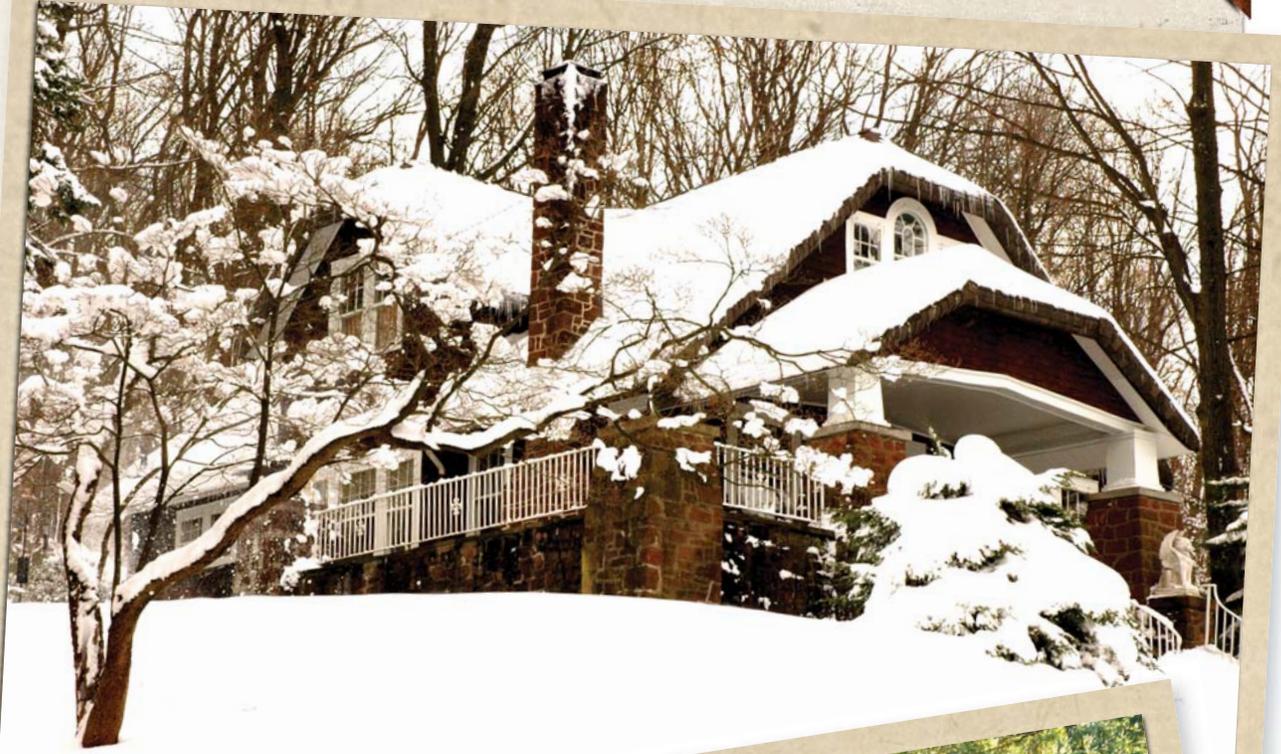
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owned Garver's Ice Cream Company, among other enterprises. Other ventures included establishing an early photography and postcard shop, co-owning a restaurant, managing Ephrata's semi-professional baseball team and a basketball team, running a nightclub, operating a baseball lottery, and even conducting a traveling medicine show replete with singers and dancers. A man of colorful character, during Prohibition (1929) Garver was arrested by federal authorities for bootlegging and operating a beer brewing plant as secretary/manager of Ephrata's historic Owls' Club. Yet only five years later, he would participate in a formal reception on the White House lawn in recognition of his fundraising for polio treatment.

Garver's Castle on the Hill passed through four owners before we bought it. Now we are in the process of restoring it to period style and developing its gardens. We have renamed our castle Acorn Cottage. **CB**

Phil and Sue Bishop of Ephrata, Pennsylvania, will receive a one-year subscription to Cottages & Bungalows. Look for the couple's renovation story in an upcoming issue. -Editors

