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AULDWOOD



ALL ABOUT RUMSON AULDWOOD

The beautiful gates that span the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Auldwood Lane are historic Rumson landmarks that date to the turn of the last century. Part of the impressive main entrance to *Auldwood*, they have long outlived the glorious mansion and estate that they once showcased. Joseph C. Hoagland purchased the 175.48 acre portion of the Jose P. de Navarro estate for \$69,860 in 1892. This parcel of land ran river to river between Bellevue and Buena Vista Avenues. The firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge served as the architects, and construction began on the Tudor Revival style mansion in 1893. Completed in 1894, Mr. and Mrs. Hoagland's summer residence included a massive center tower that was four stories high and was crenellated in the style of a medieval castle. There were thirteen bathrooms in the mansion. The grounds were designed in 1896 by landscape architect Warren H. Manning of Frederick Law Olmsted's firm. Photos of the elaborate and elegant gardens appeared in *American Gardens* by Guy Lowell in 1901, and news of the magnificent mansion was reported in the November 16, 1895 issue of *American Architect and Building News*. There were three farms on the estate. The lovely carriage house on Edgewood Drive is the remaining half of the original stables.

The Hoagland's main residence was in Brooklyn where Mr. Hoagland's business, The Royal Baking Powder Company, was located. Between 1881 and the completion of what was referred to as their "Seabright House," they summered in Shelter Island where they were founding members of the Shelter Island Yacht Club in 1886. Mr. Hoagland was a Director of the Shelter Island Grove and Camp Meeting Association and was President of the Board from 1881 until 1889. The home on Shelter Island was sold in 1892 when the Rumson property was purchased. The Hoagland family also spent time at their Jekyll Island "cottage" where they were

members of the elite Jekyll Island Club located on a barrier island off the coast of Georgia. In 1904, *Munsey's Magazine* called the Jekyll Island Club, "The richest, the most exclusive and most inaccessible club in the world." Founded in 1886 as a hunting club, its membership included members of the Morgan, Astor, Rockefeller, Vanderbilt and Pulitzer families. American history was changed by the deals that were ironed out there by the most influential men of their time. When the family made the trip to Jekyll Island, three private train cars were used. One took the family; one took the servants and another took the linens and silver necessary for elegant entertaining.

Joseph C. Hoagland and his older brother, Dr. Cornelius N. Hoagland, were descendants of Dutch settlers who emigrated to New Amsterdam in 1634. Their ancestor, Cornelius Dirksen Hoogland operated a ferry between New Amsterdam and Long Island until 1643 when he sold the business and a house in Long Island to William Thomassen. In 1836, their father moved his family from a farm in Somerset County, New Jersey to Miami County, Ohio. Joseph was born there in 1841 and served in the Civil War as a quartermaster. His brother served as a Surgeon with the 71st Ohio and took part in many famous battles. After their discharge from the Army, the brothers moved with their wives to Brooklyn to go into business together. In 1866, they formed a partnership and began a baking powder company. They brought in investors William Ziegler and John H. Seal and incorporated as The Royal Baking Powder Company in 1873. Through astute advertising and public relations coups ("The Baking Powder Wars"), the company became the pre-eminent supplier of baking powder in the United States. By the early 1880's, both brothers were able to enjoy the fruits of their labors and had lives of wealth and privilege. Yachts were Joseph C. Hoagland's delight, and he commuted to Wall Street from his dock at the foot of Bellevue Avenue on his own four funnel steamer with a crew that served him on fine linen with crystal and silver. The tender boat that took him out to his steamer was one of the first ever built by the Electric Boat Company. In 1882, on his yacht, *Lagonda*, he welcomed the French vessel, *Isere*, to New York Harbor where she delivered parts of the Statue of Liberty. Mr. Hoagland was included in the 1895 book *America's Successful Men of Affairs: An Encyclopedia of Contemporaneous Biography* edited by Henry Hall. Noted in his time as a discriminating collector of paintings, he was an active participant in the founding of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences and the



building of the Brooklyn Museum. In 1899, only five years after the completion of Auldwood, he suffered a stroke here in Rumson and later died at his Manhattan residence; he was only 58 years old. The Hoaglands had four children, Joseph C., Jr., John A., Raymond and Frances Matlack, who later married E. Drexel Godfrey and built the Popomora mansion. After his death, his widow, Caroline, passed the mansion over to Joseph, Jr. and built herself a home at 16 Bellevue Avenue. Raymond, another son of the Hoaglands, built his own home at 20 Bellevue Avenue. *Kristofeldt* has had major renovations in the past twenty years.

Joseph C. Hoagland, Jr., a founder of Sea Bright Beach Club, spent summers at Auldwood with his wife, Eleanor Prentiss Hoagland, and their children Joseph C, III, Carol (O'Connor) and Eleanor. Mrs. Hoagland was the sister of Sheldon Prentiss who founded the Seabright Lawn and Tennis Club. Joseph, III and his wife, Kiku, once resided in the Tredwell House on Ridge Road. Eleanor met her husband, Gerald Balding, at a polo match held at Rumson Country Club. She was 18, and he was 30 and a world renowned polo player. Jock Whitney was the best man at their society wedding in New York City, and the couple moved to England where Gerald continued to play polo and worked as a horse trainer until his untimely death. An acrimonious divorce between Joseph and Eleanor and Joseph's subsequent marriage to his second wife, Charity, resulted in the removal of all of the Hoaglands from *Auldwood*. Both Joseph and his new family (A son, Raymond, was born to this union.) and Eleanor remained in Rumson, but they did not return to the mansion.

During the years of the Great Depression, Joseph remained solvent. He sold the Royal Baking Powder for a great sum and began investing in Manhattan real estate. Auldwood was left vacant, and the property tax bills were not paid. Some say that Joseph allowed the house to fall into disrepair and did not pay the property taxes on it in order to avoid sharing any profit from its sale with his ex-wife. Whatever the explanation, after five years of non-payment totaling \$36,000, the Borough of Rumson took over the property for non-payment of taxes. This was the only one of Rumson's mansions that was taken over due to property tax default. It was around 1932 and Auldwood, unoccupied and unguarded, was systematically looted. Every mahogany staircase and everything that could be pried out of it was stolen. Eventually, it fell victim to vandals and arson and was demolished. As the property was subdivided, many Rumson streets were created. Auldwood Lane, Circle Drive, Popomora Drive, Edgewood Road, Circle Drive and Orchard Lane were all once parts of the Auldwood Estate.

