

The distinguished Fernald family: nature or nurture?



"History & Heritage" is a series on Montclair history, written by representatives of the Montclair History Center and the Montclair Public Library. Mike Farrelly is a trustee of the Montclair History Center, and has been the official township historian, a volunteer position, since 2004.

Montclair has produced some wonderful families, where the parents and most of the children manage to become leaders in their respective fields. One has to wonder if there is something in the genetic makeup of the family, or if the parents instill a work ethic that drives the children to achieve success. Perhaps a little of both is necessary.

Montclair has been blessed with quite a few families like that, including the Fernald Family.

James and Nettie Fernald retired here. Four sons moved with them, although one moved away. Their daughter Mabel lived in New York, Minnesota and Ohio. Their daughter Grace lived most of her life in California.

Rev. James C. Fernald (1838-1918) was born in Maine. He studied at Harvard and the Newton Theological Institute, and was ordained a Baptist minister in 1864. He married a member of his congregation, Mary Griggs, who was a graduate of Vassar. After Mary got sick and passed away, he married Nettie Barker, also a college graduate. Nettie graduated from Shepardson College in Granville, Ohio. It was unusual for women to be college graduates at the time. In fact, many men did not go to college. James and Nettie may have passed a love of learning down to their children.

James became an editor for the Standard Dictionary published by Funk



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& Wagnalls, and went on to edit several of their other publications. Rev. Isaac Funk, owner of Funk & Wagnalls, lived at 22 Upper Mountain Ave. James was an expert on the English language: He was dean of the English department at Intercontinental University, and a lecturer at Dickinson University. He wrote several books, including "The Home Training of Children," published in 1898.

NOT FAR FROM THE TREE

James and Nettie came to Montclair about 1910, moving into 207 Lorraine Ave. Their children all had significant accomplishments. Was it nature or nurture, or some combination of both? Among their achievements: practicing law before the Supreme Court, serving at the United Nations, earning doctorates. These achievements were not limited to the boys.

James and Nettie's oldest son, Charles Barker Fernald, and his wife, Olga, lived at 102 Lorraine Ave. Henry Barker, next in line, and his wife, Emma, lived at 145 Lorraine Ave. Luther Dana, the third son, and his wife, Harriet, lived in several places in Montclair



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before finally settling at 53 Lloyd Road. James Gordon lived with his parents for a while, then with his mom after his father died. He married Effie Miner and moved to Verona.

• Charles Fernald studied law at the Pittsburgh Law School, the New York University Law School and at the Sorbonne in Paris. He worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad, then went into private practice in Paris. He stayed in Europe until World War I broke out. He returned to the United States and became a high-powered New York attorney. He was admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court and was president of the American Foreign Law Association.

• Henry Fernald was a partner in his own accounting firm until it merged with Lybrand, Ross Bros. and Montgomery, which became Coopers and Lybrand, which in turn, merged with Price Waterhouse to become Price Waterhouse Coopers. He was selected to be on the short-lived financial committee of the League of Nations, and was later asked to be on the financial committee of the United Nations. He frequently appeared before Congress

on behalf of organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Institute of Accountants. He was named as a special financial assistant to New Jersey Governor Walter Edge, in charge of budgeting. In 1935, then-Governor Harold Hoffman asked Henry to review the state taxation system. (We can blame Henry for suggesting a state income tax and sales tax.)

• Luther Dana was the advertising editor for several periodicals during his career, serving longest at The Farm Journal. His brother, James, the last of the brothers to move to Montclair, was the director of research for the New York Herald-Tribune. He served in the Army in both world wars and was one of the first Army Air Service pilots. He retired as a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force Reserve.

Daughters Grace and Mabel Fernald both went on to become psychologists after receiving their doctorates from the University of Chicago.

• Mabel became well known for her studies of "delinquent" women. Her research on female criminals in New York state served many years as guide for prison psychologists. She finished out her career as the director of the psychological laboratory vocational bureau in the Cincinnati Public School system.

• Grace Fernald focused on childhood learning, developing a method sometimes called the "Fernald technique," to teach students to read whole words rather than sounding out syllables. After retiring from the University of California, she set up a private clinic in Brentwood. She received many honors for her work.

While not all of the careers mentioned here may be considered exciting, there is no question that each of the children rose to the top of their fields. Were the kids lucky to have such abilities, or did James and Nettie serve as role models?

ArtPride New Jersey Foundation announces awards

The 2019 People's Choice Awards sponsored by Jerseyarts.com were announced last Thursday, March 7. The ArtPride New Jersey Foundation, in partnership with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, honored 19 groups, from 115 nominees. Nearly 14,000 people cast ballots, ArtPride wrote in a release. Montclair organizations won eight awards.

The 2019 Montclair JerseyArts.com winners are:

• Favorite Small Theatre: Luna Stage Company, West Orange

(with a Montclair Artistic Director, Ari Laura Kreith)

• Favorite Art Gallery: Studio Montclair, Montclair

• Favorite Opera Company: Opera Theatre of Montclair, Montclair

• Favorite Music Festival: Montclair Jazz Festival, Montclair

• Favorite Film Festival: Montclair Film Festival, Montclair

• Favorite Adult Art Class: Montclair Art Museum Yard School of Art, Montclair

• Favorite Visual Arts Camp: Montclair Art Museum's Sum-

merART Camp, Montclair

• Favorite Performing Arts Camp: Jazz House Kids Summer Workshop, Montclair

• Favorite Downtown Arts District: Montclair

"The thousands of fans who come out and vote every year for their favorites are further proof that the arts matter in New Jersey," Allison Tratner, executive director of the State Arts Council, said in a release. For detailed results and more information, visit JerseyArts.com/People'sChoice.

Richard Barone at the Outpost

Rocker Richard Barone presents "Music + Revolution: Greenwich Village in the 1960s" at Outpost in the Burbs on Friday, March 29, at First Congregational Church, 40 South Fullerton Ave. Special guest Mary Lee Kortez opens the evening with songs and readings from her recent book "Dreaming of Dylan." Outpost writes: "From the 'beatnik riots' to the summer of love, NYC's Greenwich Village was the epicenter of a revolutionary movement in the history of American music." Richard Barone will pay tribute to that era with an eclectic roster of friends, including Eric Andersen, Jeff Gaines, The Kennedys, and others. For information visit outpostintheburbs.com