

To: The Pioneers of MCCW who have been active in the Pioneer Class Legacy Project

From: Geraldine Burchell Dwyer-Riverio

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Research Uncovers Links into 915 No. Village Avenue

On October 18, 2014, members of the Class of the 1959 Planning Committee gathered in the Board Room of Kellenberg Hall for a meeting to discuss the Pioneer Class legacy. This included the Cameos, picture of The House (915) with the hope of getting an architect that might be able to copy the house on a small scale (doll-house size). But all that is in the minutes of that meeting. What was most interesting to me was the search for pictures of The House. Sometime during the meeting it was suggested that since I still lived in Rockville Centre, I could be the one to find out about pictures, previous tenants, etc. I agreed, thinking I would search local records and ask older residents for information. This seemed like a simple task. I spoke about starting a search and keeping the committee up-to-date with any info I could find.

I was led to believe that no one had any information about the house. This almost proved to be true. After trips to the Rockville Centre Building Dept., and the Nassau County Clerk's office I had reached a dead end. Then one day, I approached a friend who had lived in Rockville Centre his whole life and lived on the north side of town, so I asked him if he knew anything about the House. He immediately answered that the Ripp family lived there in the 40s and early 50s, that there were two girls in the family, Kathryn and Frances and they both played the harp. Kathryn was our age. That made me very excited and started my search.

In February 2015 I located a Kathryn Ripp Sisley living in Florida. I wrote to her and she responded with as much information as she could remember. But, she had no pictures of the house – all her pictures had been lost in a flood in Wilkes Barre, PA where she lived. She did have one bit of information, that the house was owned by a Dietz family who made lanterns. With that information I was able to trace the Dietz family and find out how all the land for Molloy College and Mercy Hospital was acquired. I have been to the Nassau County Clerk's office a couple of times and no one can find any information about the registering of deeds or sales of the property at 915.

My last effort to find out anything about the missing years of the history of the house was to visit the Rockville Centre Archivist, Marilyn Devlin, at Rockville Centre's museum, the Phillips House. She had nothing to add to my search. She did have phone books from 1938, which had both directories by name and address. 915 was not included in the listings. I think that is because that property was considered Hempstead until the 1940s even though it is on the Incorporated Village maps. She also had some very old books with pictures of "Historic Houses of Rockville Centre". I searched through the book and the Dietz houses were not in this book. Again, maybe they could be found in a book about the Village of Hempstead. If there is any such book. This is when I decided to end the search.

And thus concludes my active search since the essence of this project has been uncovered.