

# AUGUSTA

---

Authors James W. Garvey and Lee Ann Caldwell ♦ Photography by James R. Lockhart



**MCKINNE-WILDE-VERDERY HOUSE**  
 c. 1811; enlarged and renovated mid-nineteenth century; reoriented c. 1890s  
 Pickens Road, Summerville

THIS SAND HILLS COTTAGE was built about 1811 as a summer home by Barna McKinne. He had recently married Ann Galphin at the nearby home of her uncle and aunt, John and Martha (Galphin) Milledge. The McKinnes lived in Savannah at the time, but Barna had extensive business dealings up and down the East Coast with his brothers Felix, John, and Joseph Pope McKinne. Among their assets was the Bridge Bank in Augusta. Following the financial panic in 1819, the bank failed, and the McKinnes lost many of their holdings to the Bank of the State of Georgia, including this property.

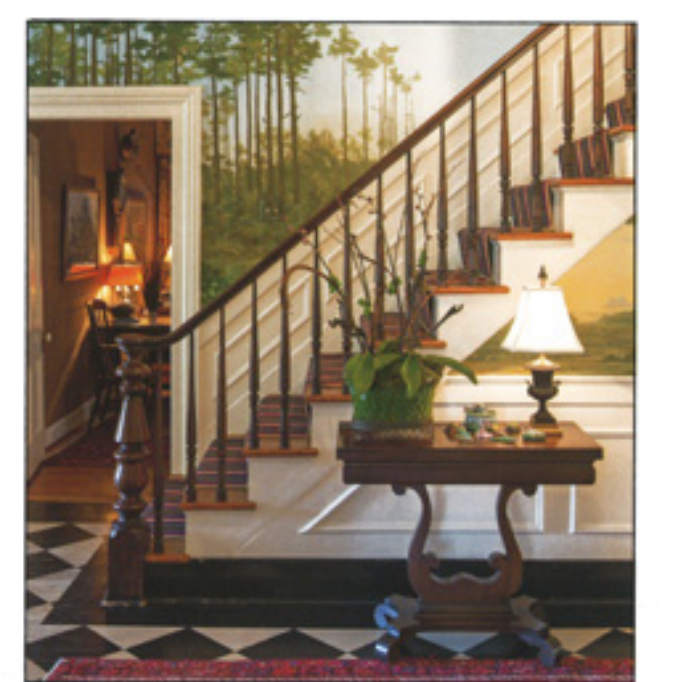
Irish-born Richard Henry Wilde moved to Augusta in 1802 and bought the property in 1828. Wilde was the state attorney general from 1811 to 1813 and was elected to Congress six times from 1815 to 1835. He then traveled in Europe for a time and moved to New Orleans in 1843, where he practiced law and taught jurisprudence at Tulane. He died there in 1847, but his remains were reinterred in the back yard of his Augusta home and later in Augusta's Magnolia Cemetery. Wilde is best known in Georgia as a poet, and a monument to his memory stands on Greene Street. His best known works were "Hesperia," about the geography of the United States, and "Summer Rose," a memoir of a brother who was killed in a duel.

In the mid-nineteenth century, side wings were attached to the house and the signature Augusta millwork was added to the front porch. Several prominent Augusta families were owner-occupants later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the Millers, the Verderys, and the Cranstons. Between 1892 and 1896 the Verdery family moved the house off its raised brick basement and reoriented it from its original location, which faced Milledge Road. Now happily situated to face Pickens Road, the house boasts landscaping and gardens unsurpassed in beauty and charm, making this the quintessential Summerville cottage. \*

*Top: Augusta millwork embellishes the porch of this Sand Hills Cottage. Bottom: Living room with view into den.*



*Above: The stair hall is decorated with landscape murals of native trees and familiar scenery. Below left: Back porch. Below center: Rear garden and folly. Below right: Stair hall detail.*



GARDNER-HARDY HOUSE  
1812; renovated 1913  
Milledge Road, Summerville



AUGUSTA'S EARLY MERCHANT CLASS was able to achieve a degree of material wealth that allowed them to have second homes on the Sand Hills, where they retreated with their families and house servants during the hot Georgia summers. Although the lot upon which the Gardner-Hardy House is located had previously been owned by such early Augusta luminaries as George Walker, John and Louisa Howard, and John and Clara Forsyth, the latter sold the large lot to James Gardner for \$3,000 in 1812, suggesting a structure was already there.

Traditionally, however, it has been believed that Gardner built the existing house in 1812. Born in Glasgow and immigrating to the United States in the 1780s, James and his brother Thomas became very successful merchants. Married to sisters, Elizabeth and Ann McKinne respectively, they joined various other relatives who also had summer homes on The Hill.

The Gardners annually moved from downtown to The Hill in June and returned in about October. James died in 1847, and his venerable wife



followed in 1872. Their main home downtown was "Ware's Folly," the fine Federal style townhouse at 506 Telfair Street. Children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren continued to occupy their Sand Hills Cottage until 1912, 100 years after the family first made it their summer home.

In 1913 it was acquired by Helen Young Hardy, wife of Edward K. Hardy, winter resident from Chicago. Mr. Hardy's parents, Francis and Mary Hardy, had built "Twin Gables" nearby in 1911. With the help of Augusta architect Henry Ten Eyck Wendell, Helen and Edward updated the house, enclosing the original front porch and converting a breezy summer place into a cozy winter one with lovely gardens.

In 1932 the Hardys sold to another winter resident, Jeanne Wallace of New York, wife of New York stockbroker William H. Wallace Jr. They were famous for their parties for winter tourists and local socialites during the Great Depression years. Other owners followed, each preserving and enhancing this gem and the gardens that have enfolded it for more than 200 years. \*



*Opposite, top left: A 1913 renovation included enclosing the front porch. Bottom left and top right: The porch opens into connecting living spaces. Above: The elevated sitting room and dining area. Left: Kitchen.*

## BRAHE HOUSE

1850; renovated for adaptive use 1987  
Telfair Street, Downtown

FREDERICK ADOLPHUS BRAHE, a jeweler and silversmith, emigrated from Prussia to Albany, New York, in 1839, but the brutal northern winters brought him south to Augusta in 1845. He opened his silver and jewelry shop at the corner of McIntosh (Seventh) and Broad. He and his wife Wilhelmine, also born in Germany, lived above the store with their growing family. In 1850 Brahe drew up specifications for a story-and-a-half Sand Hills Cottage on a raised brick basement to be built on Telfair Street and “completed by the first of September 1850.”

Brahe specified that his house have “4 fire places in basement, two with good modern stile mantelpieces . . . 4 rooms with a passage throu the centre . . . paved with brick and a good floor to be tongued and grooved of boards not exceeding seven inches wide. . . . The body of the house to be covered with good Cyprus shingles . . . all the windows to have good Venetian shutters.” The construction of the other two stories were described in equal detail. He paid \$2,900 in cash and jewelry for the home’s construction.

In the 1850s and 1860s, Brahe also served as Keeper of the City Clock. Some years later he was the first Augustan to install electric lights in his home using a battery-powered system.

Wilhelmine died in 1863, and a year later the Brahes’ daughter Mary married George Leonhardt, another German immigrant, whom Frederick had brought into the business. Frederick returned to Germany about ten years later, leaving his 27-year-old son Henry to manage the business with brother-in-law George. While going to visit Frederick in 1874, George, Mary, and their daughter Jenny all drowned when their ship sank.

The house remained the Brahe family’s home place for 118 years, and sometimes several generations occupied the house at once. Of Henry Brahe’s three daughters, two never married and lived their entire lives in the home, while daughter Alma and her husband Robert Watson raised their children there.



*The Sand Hills Cottage is a timeless design that easily lends itself to many variations. Right: Greek Revival trim accents the stair hall.*

The last family member to live in the house was Brahe’s great-granddaughter, “Miss Polly” Watson Mathewson. She and her sister Loretta Stanford and brother Henry Brahe Watson, who were co-heirs, decided to donate the house to the Augusta Museum of History. The notable house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, but the museum was unable to provide funding for appropriate maintenance, and it sold the property in 1987. It was soon renovated for adaptive use as offices. ❁



SALUBRITY HALL TEA HOUSE  
1928  
Montrose Court  
Summerville



IN 1800 ENGLISHMAN THOMAS SANDWICH and his wife Margaret opened a successful female school on The Hill near the Overton estate of John Milledge. Because of the healthy Sand Hills environment, the Sandwiches named their institution Salubrity Hall. The name was resurrected when John Warne and Olivia Antoinette (Etta) Helme Herbert, who had spent fall and winter seasons in the area for almost three decades, opened their new home at the corner of Cumming and Johns Road.

John Herbert was a very successful New Jersey businessman and investor, and wife Etta and her sisters inherited their father George Helme's fortune. The Herberts bought the property for Salubrity Hall in 1926, had it landscaped, and hired the Augusta firm of Scroggs and Ewing to design their English style home. Construction was under way by 1927, and in the winter of 1928 the Herberts moved in.

Scroggs and Ewing also designed the charming tea house on the eastern side of the property. Originally accessed by a garden wilderness walk meandering from the main

house, the English Tudor style structure was envisioned as a place for entertainment. Mrs. Herbert often opened the extensive gardens that covered the estate for her guests, and she invited them to join her for refreshments and conversation in the tea house.

Following a garden tour in April 1930, the *Augusta Chronicle* noted, "Stately old oak trees twined in purple wisteria stand like sentinels



over the beautiful scene and to the east is a charming little tea house, surrounded by huge pines and colorful bushes of azaleas." In 1933 Salubrity Hall and its tea house were included in *Garden History of Georgia, 1733-1933*.

After the loss of her daughter Gertrude in 1933 and her husband just over a year later in 1934, Etta Herbert sought to memorialize them in Augusta with a major 1935 gift to equip the new Milton Antony Wing of University Hospital in memory of her son, John Oliver, who died when he was ten, and her daughter and husband. In 1937 she purchased and renovated the Nicholas Ware house on Telfair Street and created the Gertrude Herbert Institute of Art as a memorial to her beloved daughter.

A few years after Mrs. Herbert's death in 1945, the tea house lot was separated from the larger estate. Frank Robinson Jr. and his wife Clara purchased the lovely house and made it into a comfortable home in 1959. With additions for a kitchen and bedrooms, there was room for their family. It remains in the same family today and, after more additions in 19-



cent years, is a substantial dwelling place. Nestled on the side of a hill, the setting provides a surprising vista that looks out over the Savannah River Valley into South Carolina.

Happily, the additions did not change the integrity of the original tea house, which remains completely intact, with English Tudor details inside and out. The main house still stands within an amazing garden

setting that would be pleasing to Mrs. Herbert and her original concept for the Salubrity Hall estate. ❁

*Opposite bottom: Salubrity Hall. Opposite top left: The charming English Tudor tea house is now a comfortable family home. Opposite top right and above: The living room has a massive stone fireplace and diamond-shaped leaded panes.*



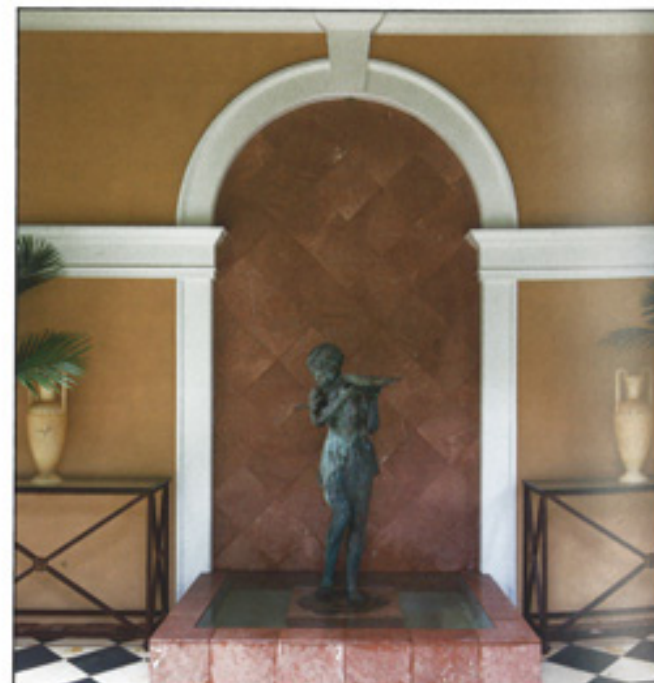
**CLARK HOUSE**  
1928  
Milledge Road  
Summerville

IN 1928, AFTER HAVING WINTERED in Augusta for several years, J. William Clark of New York decided to build a permanent seasonal residence on The Hill. He hired Augusta architect Willis Irvin to design the handsome Georgian style home.

C. Brandt Holley constructed the house on part of the former lot of Major Joseph B. Cumming, necessitating demolition of Inverness, the Cumming home where President William Howard Taft had once been entertained. The new house cost \$43,000. Other improvements brought the total budget to about \$50,000.

Clark was the president of the Clark Thread Company, the American branch of an extensive and international corporation that began in Paisley, Scotland. The Newark, New Jersey, based business merged with J. & P. Coats Company in 1896, keeping their separate identities for a time. Eventually the two became Coats & Clark, still a notable household name.

Sadly, before Mr. Clark was able to enjoy his Augusta home, he died on July 15, 1928. His wife, Margaretta Cameron Clark, com-



pleted construction and continued to spend winters in Augusta until illness forced her to return to New York before her death in 1941. She was the daughter of U.S. Senator Donald Cameron of Pennsylvania and was survived by three sons.

By 1943 the Clark house had become the home of Finley Frederick Kennedy, a local attorney, former city councilman, and judge of the Superior Court in the Augusta Judicial Circuit. He and his wife Evelyn McDaniel Kennedy lived there with their son Fred Kennedy Jr. During this time the Kennedys saved the handsome fence at the old Benjamin Holmes Warren mansion downtown and moved it to the Clark house. The Warren mansion was demolished for the Municipal Building park-

ing lot in the 1950s.

After the death of Judge Kennedy in 1980 and his widow in 1992, the house became the home of the present owners in 1994. Albert F. Cheatham of Augusta designed a folly at the back of the lot and an enlargement to the house. William Smith of Atlanta designed the landscape plan. \*

*Opposite top: Architect Willis Irvin's Georgian design for a country house. Entrance elevation. Opposite bottom left: Rear elevation. Opposite bottom right: Detail of the modern garden folly. Above: Stair hall.*



*Far left: The living room opens onto a garden landscape designed by William Smith. Above: Dining room. Left: The garden folly is a design by Albert F. Cheatham.*