

Continuation of *Preservation Summer 2023*, p. 3, 1298 N. Green Bay Road, Carry Playhouse, ca. 1915, 1918; Howard Van Doren Shaw, Architect; Residence of Ned and Sigun M. Kimbrel

The Carry Playhouse small theater and the one-act play were aspects of a sub-movement of the Chicago Literary Renaissance, 1911-17, with other tiny theater locations in town on the Aldis Compound, 1911, at Deerpath, Green Bay, and Illinois Rd, and at the Shaws' *Ragdale*, with its outdoor Ragdale Ring, 1912. These settings for dramatic productions were offspring of Chicago's 99-seat Little Theatre, Fine Arts Building, 1911-16, the genesis generally of modern American drama. Frances Wells Shaw and Mary Reynolds Aldis (Mrs. Arthur) also wrote, as well as acted in, many one act plays. Mrs. Aldis's *Plays for Small Stages* was published in 1915.

By 1929 Edward Carry, by then living in the city, had died, and Ermina was divorced from her husband of over a decade. She too passed away in 1932, age 34. She was buried in Calvary Cemetery, Evanston. Still to be located, information on Ermina and Capt. Nicholson's two children and their birth and death dates, with any descendants. One can conjecture that the dates of the couple's marriage, July 1917, and the birth of the first child might be too close together for decorum.

The Carrys' second daughter, Margaret (1899-1942), was one of the still legendary "Big Four (the four most attractive and socially desirable young women in Chicago) which included Ginevra King, Edith Cummings, and Courtney Letts," according to Margaret's Find a Grave page. Two years after her sister's nuptials, in 1919, Margaret married also fifteen-years-older Edward A. Cudahy, who outlived her almost a quarter century to 1966. The couple lived in the 1910 Norman Scott house also by Shaw at 904 N. Green Bay, a few blocks south. Their sons were Edward Cudahy III of Montecito, California (1923-2006) and Anthony (1925-2003). Edward III's children with his spouse Nancy Cochrane Cudahy (d. 2019), were Michael (deceased 2006), Edward IV (deceased by 2019), Kathleen, John, and Carry.

This 1298 N. Green Bay Rd. property includes most of the terrain west of Shaw's 1896 Dr. Nathan Davis, Jr. house (extant, 1296 N. Green Bay), purchased early in the 20th century by Edward Francis Carry and his spouse, Mabel D'Andelot Carry (born Underwood). In 1916 the 1898 house was known as *Broad Lea*, for its view then south across a wide open, grassy field.

Edward Francis Carry was vice president and general manager of American Car and Foundry Co. when he built the playhouse, a surprise for Ermina, then away at Westover with Sylvia. In 1916, Carry was elected president of Haskell & Barker Car Co., northwest Indiana. He served as Chicago's Pullman Co. president, from 1922 until his sudden death in April of 1929, the Pullman Co. under chair John Runnells having acquired Carry's firm to gain his services. American Car and Foundry was a trust era consolidation of several smaller car builders, many then wooden rail car manufacturers. During the 1917-18 war, Carry gained valuable experience heading up crucial boards relating to trans-Atlantic shipping and harbor management. Pullman, in the 1920s, had just reached its peak producing and operating sleeper, dining, lounge, and related cars for express cross-country trains. In 1926 the system of numbered U.S. highways with coordinated federal and state funding signaled the eventual doom of inter-city train travel. But Edward Carry was a leader in the rail equipment and service industry as it reached for and achieved its pinnacle of success. As quoted in a Pullman Co., obituary, 1929, "If it runs on wheels, Carry can build it," with Pullman factories building bodies for Packard automobiles in the later 1920s.

The 1898 Davis/Carry main house, 1296 N. Green Bay Rd., next became the home of Mrs. Charles Holt, her attorney husband having grown up in early Lake Forest, and that couple's son and his spouse, McPherson and Mary Minott Holt, lived in the expanded playhouse, with a famous southside

sunny spring garden designed with the landscape by Annette Hoyt Flanders and Roy West (shown in *Planting with Purpose*, 41). It lives still on a lantern slide in the Smithsonian Archives of American Gardens, on the web there, and in books. By the time the Kimbrels found the place, though, this garden had been given over to shade plantings for privacy from the 1929, 1300 N. Green Bay Rd., French styled house to the south, *Windswept*, by Chicago architects Puckey & Jenkins. Now the expanded playhouse faces west over expansive lawns, gardens, and grasslands with the Skokie River Nature Preserve of Lake Forest Open Lands beyond.

The original *Broad Lea* property, 1898, had been part of a subdivision by Shaw, Davis, and a third partner (house demolished) who acquired a former Swanton farm, with Shaw developing houses on fine wooded parcels for his two partners, and himself taking the open farmland third parcel, south, for his family's summer place, *Ragdale*, now almost entirely owned by the City, 1230-72 N. Green Bay, and leased back to the Ragdale Foundation, a leading Midwestern artists' community.

Kimbrel family files show copies from the Shaw family collection at the Chicago History Museum of Shaw's sketches for the playhouse ceiling and chandeliers, a photo of Sylvia and Ermina together perhaps in "The Far-Away Princess," and a letter to Sylvia from her father, Howard Shaw telling her not to mention the playhouse to Ermina, likely a surprise, and suggesting that she too was at Westover.

Caption, Capt. W.F. Nicholson photo: Shown at Fort Sheridan, 1917, are Col. Nicholson and his son Captain W.F. Nicholson, engaged in training officers for World War I, April 1917–November 1918. Adams and Girton, 204.

Caption, "Broad Lea" photo, from Lake Forest..., 1916: The photo of Broad Lea, 1296 N. Green Bay, and of the 1915 Carry playhouse, now 1298 N. Green Bay, from the south across the grassy field, subdivided off, that gave the 1898-built house at 1298 Green Bay its name. The accompanying 1916 short description by R.R. Root mentions Mrs. Shaw's "presentation" of "The Far-Away Princess" by Sudermann.

Some Sources:

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"Death of President Edward F. Carry Causes Nation-wide Sorrow," *Pullman News*, VIII, No. 1 (May 1929), 3-[4].

Find a Grave web pages for Margaret Carry and her spouse and descendants and for William Corcoran Fenlon Nicholson (1896-1981; Arlington Cem.) with his second spouse, Thora T. Nicholson.

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MyHeritage webpage for Ermina Nicholson (born Carry), 1897-1932.

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James L.W. West, *The Perfect Hour: The Romance of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ginevra King, His First Love*. NY: Random House, 2005. See frequent listings for Margaret Carry (Peg) in the index, but especially pp. 8 and 81; for Westover School more generally, see 10-13.