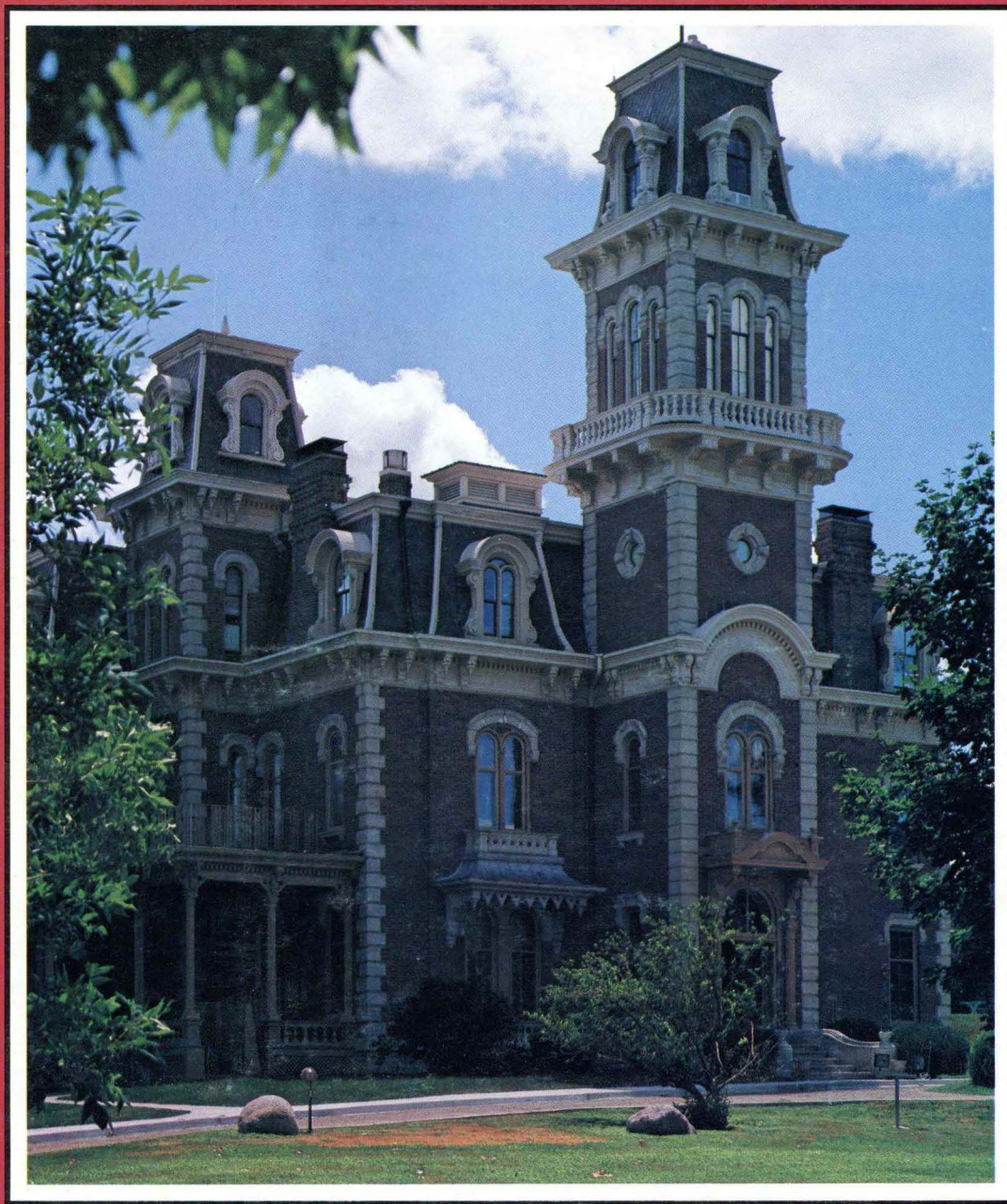


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TERRACE HILL



The Home of Iowa's Governor

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TERRACE HILL

The Home of Iowa's Governor



***S**ince 1976, Terrace Hill, a landmark nineteenth-century home in Des Moines, has been the official residence of the first family of Iowa. Built in the late 1860s by a pioneer businessman and entrepreneur, and for many years the home of one of the state's prominent families, Terrace Hill has undergone extensive restoration to become a showplace of Victorian elegance.*

Countless individuals have contributed to the renovation effort, including the more than 1,000 members of the Terrace Hill Society, a group organized in 1973 to promote the interests of Terrace Hill. The following is the story of a magnificent and impressive home that, thanks to the generosity of many, is a splendid treasure for the people of Iowa.

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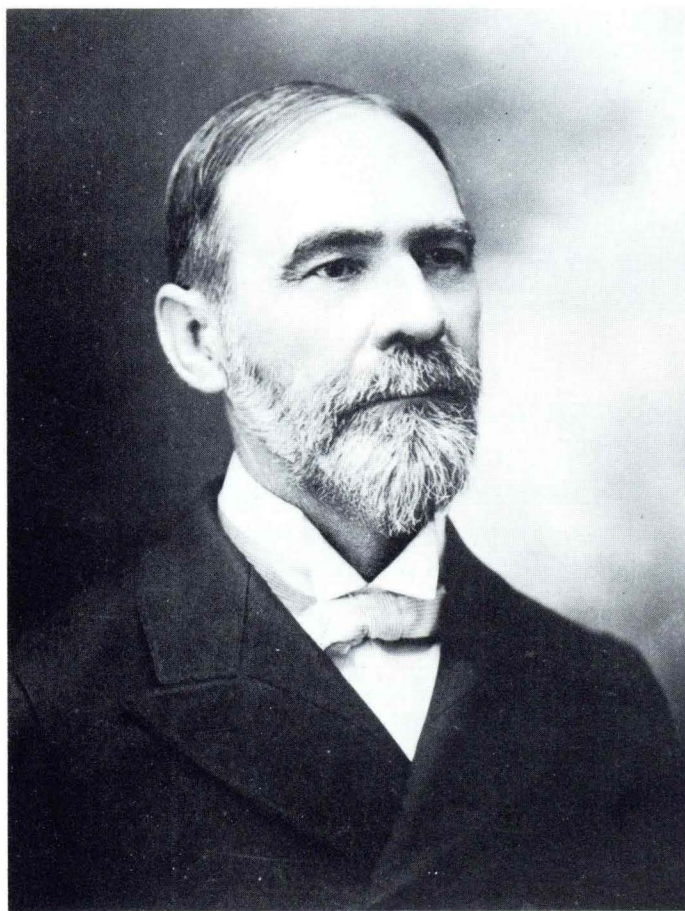
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Photograph above: Child and Seagull Fountain, Terrace Hill

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On a chilly evening in January, 1869, a man paused to gaze out a window of his new home, his eyes following the tree-lined slope eastward. There, beyond the trees, where dusk was settling over the confluence of two rivers, faint clusters of light pinpointed a small pocket of civilization that called itself Des Moines. The man at the window knew intimately the strivings of the growing town. He had lived in that valley, he had shared the townspeople's struggles, and he had made much of the progress in the new community possible.

The man at the window, Benjamin Franklin Allen, had nurtured dreams exceeding those of other men. The fulfillment of those dreams had made him the richest man in



Benjamin F. Allen

Terrace Hill, once described as "the finest residence west of the Hudson River," was the vision of Benjamin F. Allen (1829-1914). An early Iowa settler who amassed a fortune through speculation in various business ventures, Allen lavished an estimated \$250,000 on his Victorian showplace, completed in 1869. Photo courtesy of the Iowa State Historical Department.

Iowa and had placed him in a mansion unimagined by others. This night, some six hundred of the wealthiest, most influential people in Iowa and America would pass through the massive entrance of the home he had built to symbolize his vision and his accomplishments.

The invitations were compellingly simple. They read:

Mr. & Mrs. B.F. Allen

At Home

Friday Evening January 29, 1869

7½ O'Clock

Terrace Hill

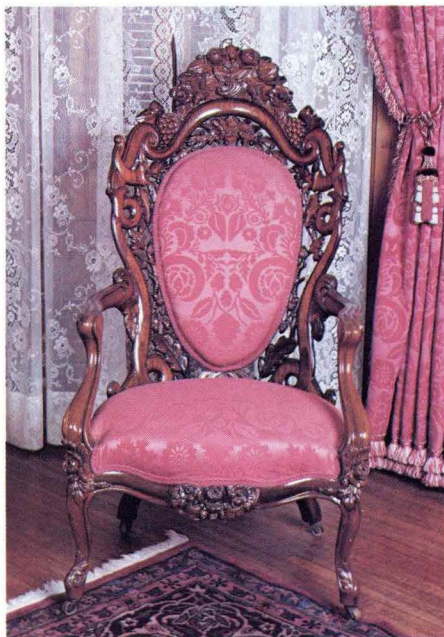
In the succeeding years Iowa has seen few, if any, parties equal to B.F. and Arathusa Allen's that night. Allen claimed to have spent \$8,000 on the food, flowers, and musical entertainment, a sum equivalent to about \$55,000 today. The invited dined on oysters, boned turkey in jelly, two twenty-five pound fruitcakes, and ice cream fashioned in the figure of George Washington.

While the amount of money spent might have seemed unusually large, Allen's guests quickly realized it was merely in keeping with the home's proportions. Architect William W. Boyington of Chicago had designed the Italianate-style residence on a palatial scale. Twelve-foot arched doorways set against fifteen-foot ceilings above rooms thirty-feet deep beguiled observers' eyes.

The flooring and woodwork — in cherry, walnut, maple, oak, butternut, rosewood, and pine — were magnificent. The New York firm of Jacob Ziegeler had designed the costly furniture, mirrors and other decorations, again on a deceivingly grandiose scale. Carpet, curtains, bronze and marble statuary all were specifically made for Terrace Hill. The four downstairs marble mantel-pieces, called "masterpieces" by Chicagoans who saw them on exhibit there, were supposed to have cost \$2,500. Much of the material for the construction was hauled in by sixteen-mule teams from the railroad terminus on the Mississippi River.

Boyington's exterior plan was no less imposing. Three stories high, spanning more than eighty feet across its greatest width and depth, the home was conceived in a bold three-dimensional style set off by octagonal and circular projections, a turret, and a front tower stretching almost ninety feet high. Even the woods surrounding the mansion had been thinned and shaped by the English landscape architect, J.T. Elletson, to increase the imposing effect.

For it all, B.F. Allen spent an estimated \$250,000 to \$400,000, a vast sum, to be sure, but those who knew Allen considered it a well-spent fraction of his almost legendary worth.



The Drawing Room

The drawing room is a showcase for handsome Belter furniture; a magnificent silver and crystal chandelier (containing 1,308 prisms) installed by the home's second owner, F.M. Hubbell; and a seventeenth-century Flemish allegorical tapestry purchased by F.M. Hubbell's son, Grover Hubbell, in the 1920s. Other highlights include an oriental rug acquired by Grover Hubbell, a white Italian marble fireplace, and matching wool damask draperies and upholstery. The gentleman's chair of laminated rosewood (opposite) is the work of John Henry Belter, a New York furniture maker who, in the 1840s, pioneered the use of a steam process to mold thin sheets of wood into ornate shapes. It was in the drawing room that Beulah Cooper Hubbell, daughter of F.M. and Frances Hubbell, married a Swedish nobleman, Count Carl Wachtmeister, in 1899.

2/84 left

Allen, an orphan, had first come to Fort Des Moines in 1848 on the advice of an uncle, Captain James Allen, who had established an outpost where the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers met. Young Benjamin was aided by an inheritance from his bachelor uncle, James, and an education in basic capitalism from his Uncle Robert, an army quartermaster. Business in frontier Des Moines was a rough-and-tumble affair. Eager for development capital and ready to embrace new ideas, the city fathers embraced Allen, who had plenty of both.

By the late 1860s, Allen, not yet forty, was at the peak of his career. He owned 35,000 acres of land in thirty-five Iowa counties and held important blocks of stock in five railroads, three insurance companies, a steamboat company, a gas company, and mining, milling, and meat packing firms. He was Iowa's premier banker, with controlling interest in eight institutions. Allen's achievements awed his contemporaries, and he knew it. In building Terrace Hill high above Des Moines, Allen announced to the world that he had planted his flag of success on the state's symbolic mountaintop.

Ironically, Terrace Hill, built as the visible symbol of Allen's empire, also proved its most enduring element. Earlier in his career, Allen had gained a reputation as a trustworthy banker. During the "panic" of 1857, for example, Allen's Bank of Nebraska conducted business

longer than any other bank in the two-state area. When the firm finally did go under, Allen redeemed all its paper with gold. Allen's integrity would thus have made him seem a logical choice to manage the \$641,000 Trust of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad until disputes between creditors and purchasers of the defunct line could be settled.

But by 1867, when Allen assumed the M&M's trusteeship, he had seriously compromised his reputation, unbeknownst to others. Records would later reveal that Allen had begun "plunging" — and losing heavily — in a number of wildly speculative ventures. Late in 1871, Allen realized repayment of the railroad trust was imminent, and that the court order directing repayment would doom him, for he had squandered the whole amount. Mercifully, without apparent reason, the final order was delayed, and Allen scrambled for survival. He desperately shifted funds from his other banks to purchase a successful Chicago bank, whose cash and other assets he promptly drained to cover his immediate debts. Then to hide his financial condition, he obtained a secret, illegal "blanket" mortgage on all his real estate. Allen eventually borrowed over \$900,000, but even this amount proved too little.

And it soon proved too late. In January, 1875, the Chicago bank failed. Less than a month later, Allen's

The Reception Room, circa 1895

The reception room, with its Bengal Tiger rug, Japanese vases, and porcelain statuary, was an impressive introduction to Terrace Hill visitors of the 1890s. Many of the art objects in the home were obtained by the Hubbell family during travels abroad. The light fixtures are gas; the home was not electrified until the 1920s. Photo courtesy of William Wagner.





The Reception Room

Among the furnishings of the Reception Room are pieces that once belonged to prominent Iowans, including James Savery and Senator Jonathan P. Dolliver. The settee and windows are decorated with fabric that approximates a French tapestry chosen by B.F. Allen for the setting at the time of Terrace Hill's construction. The ornate brass chandelier, now electrified, dates from the Allen era. The brass fireplace screen (right) stands in front of one of eight working fireplaces in the home. These were used mainly for ornament; for comfort, Allen equipped Terrace Hill with a steam heat furnace.



creditors began bankruptcy actions against him that would continue for the next nine years.

Terrace Hill's fate hung fire for nearly as long. The key issue was whether or not the mansion was Allen's official residence. Iowa law granted a bankrupt person undisputed title to his homestead, whatever its size. Allen, however, had moved to Chicago when he purchased his foredoomed bank there, and he had stripped Terrace Hill of many of its luxurious furnishings. Moreover, he had offered Terrace Hill for sale to the Presbyterian Church as the nucleus of a proposed "Allen University". Iowans praised Allen for his magnanimity and educational vision, but the Presbyterians were unimpressed. The deal fell through. In November, 1874, Terrace Hill was included in the infamous blanket mortgage.

Early the following February, only a few days before his creditors' bankruptcy petition was filed, Allen attempted to re-establish residence in his cold, barren "Prairie Palace." The petitioners howled when Allen claimed exemption for the house and a forty-acre "home-

stead". They had telling evidence to dispute his claim, but Allen was somehow able to engage them in a legal tug-of-war that lasted until 1883.

Life at Terrace Hill during those eight years bore little resemblance to its majestic beginnings. Many rooms were closed off, rented furniture replaced most of the sumptuous Ziegeler originals, and five acres of Elletson's landscaping gave way to a vegetable garden. Yet, there were moments when Terrace Hill heard echoes of its former brilliance, as when Allen's daughter Kitty married Col. H.L. Swords in December, 1875. Allen and his children grieved there, too, when in January, 1877, forty-year-old Arathusa's body was brought back to Des Moines from Chicago for burial.

Had B.F. Allen succeeded in selling Terrace Hill to the Presbyterian Church, or had its creditors seized its title, it is probable the "finest residence in the west" would exist only in yellowed photographs or as the most prominent entry in a long list of vanished landmarks.

But Terrace Hill has always seemed to possess, as the sum of all its qualities, the ability to hold the imaginations of succeeding generations, inspiring them to preserve its beauty and sense of spirit. Thus, it happened that in 1883, when the financially exhausted Allen finally regained title to Terrace Hill, the one man who could keep it was ready to buy it.



Frederick M. Hubbell

One of Iowa's leading citizens and the second owner of Terrace Hill, Frederick M. Hubbell (1838-1930) accumulated his vast wealth through holdings that included real estate, railroads, and the Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa. Hubbell and his wife, Frances, raised three children at Terrace Hill. Photo courtesy of Iowa State Historical Department.

The Hubbell Years

Frederick M. Hubbell had known a rapturous fascination with Allen's mansion since his first visit there, on that glittering January night in 1869. Hubbell shared Allen's sense of Terrace Hill's beauty and symbolic purpose, and like Allen, he wished to safeguard the home and all it seemed to represent. He possessed the financial ability and the desire to preserve Terrace Hill — and to transmit the home and the vision, largely intact, to his children. On May 9, 1884, Allen, Iowa's first "merchant prince," sold his home for \$60,000 to the man who would one day claim title to Iowa's financial kingship. F.M. Hubbell and his descendants would cherish Terrace Hill as their own for more than eighty years.

Hubbell's rise had begun in 1855 when he and his father, Francis, arrived in Fort Des Moines to do some speculating in the newly opened prairie lands of central and western Iowa. After concluding a number of profitable transactions, the senior Hubbell returned to Connecticut, but young Frederick remained. He worked for a time in the U.S. Land Office, then transferred to Sioux City where virgin land was more plentiful. He became a lawyer and



The Sitting Room

The sitting room is considered the brightest and most private room on the first floor, thanks to its sunny, out-of-the-way location in the southeast corner of the house. Furnishings include a painting that is a copy of Raphael's Madonna of the Chair, an original Turkish pierced brass chandelier (electrified in the 1920s), and a small round Lincoln sewing stand, one of ten made by prisoners in Fortress Monroe, Virginia, about 1865.



The Dining Room (Detail)

When F.M. Hubbell moved into Terrace Hill in 1883, he undertook extensive remodeling, including the addition of wainscoting and a built-in sideboard in the dining room. Carved in oak, the wainscoting and sideboard feature patterns of wheat, sunflowers, and grape leaves, plus the traditional egg and dart design.

a general land agent, and later, in 1860, was elected Clerk of the District Court in Sioux County. In 1861, Hubbell returned to Des Moines to clerk in the law firm of Phineas Casady and Jefferson Polk. A few months later, he invested \$1,200 of his growing fortune to secure a partnership. Hubbell felt confident that he had "arrived". He was twenty-three.

Over the next several years, Hubbell followed a course similar to B.F. Allen's. Records from the 1860s and 1870s show he participated in more than 2,000 central and western Iowa land transactions. He invested in utility companies and narrow-gauge railroads. Later, with his partner Jefferson Polk, he went into banking. But Hubbell, while paralleling Allen's early success, possessed a shrewdness and a careful, patient temperament that Allen did not. The year 1867 marked a crucial turning point in both their careers.

In that year Allen began building Terrace Hill. While the awesome building project was to mark the apex of Allen's power, the railroad trusteeship he accepted on October 31 of that year would eventually precipitate his downfall. Meanwhile Hubbell had begun a careful study of certain corporate practices and actuarial tables. On February 6, 1867, he helped oversee the creation of the Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa.

As the state's first life insurer, Equitable quickly grew from its modest beginnings (\$200,000 of insurance in force at the end of 1867), and Hubbell astutely linked the company's success with his own. While careful managers handled day-to-day activities, Hubbell quietly went about acquiring virtually all of the company's stock. The arrangement satisfied Hubbell because it enabled him to apply his sagacity and energy across the broad front of his already sizeable financial empire.

By 1888, Hubbell controlled over ninety percent of Equitable's 4,000 shares. The obvious logic of his success impelled him to the company presidency, but he still preferred to name Cyrus Kirk chief of operations. He once told Kirk, "... I learned that a successful enterprise is mainly a marriage of men and money, especially good men. So from the first I have tried to get men to work for me who are smarter than I am. I then make it my business to support them with the money and other things they need to get on with the job."

Hubbell served as Equitable's president for nineteen years. During that time the company's assets grew twenty-fold, to \$14.4 million, while its insurance in force topped \$35 million. Hubbell's other major interests enjoyed similar success. In 1898 he sold his principal narrow-gauge railroad for more than \$1,800,000. He traveled the



The Dining Room

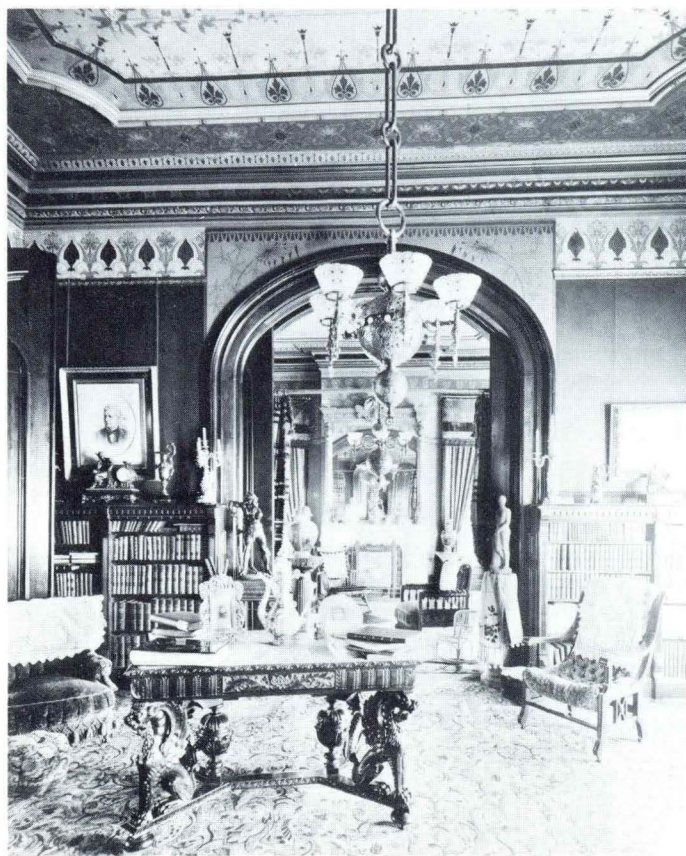
A Chippendale table and chairs, a silver and brass chandelier, and green and gold damask draperies highlight the dining room, the frequent setting for state dinners and other official functions. Iowa's state tree, the oak, inspired the pattern for the needlepoint chair seats, designed by nationally-known needlepoint expert Maggie Lane.

country selling bonds for his Des Moines Water Company. Through F.M. Hubbell, Sons and Company, he controlled many of the best commercial and industrial sites in Des Moines.

Yet Hubbell did not confine himself to his profitable financial dealings. He was a noted and honored civic leader, and a generous contributor to charitable causes. A Democrat, Hubbell publicly supported Albert Cummins for Governor, and he introduced presidential candidate Woodrow Wilson to Des Moines in 1912. He was president of the Des Moines Home for the Aged for nearly forty years. He headed the drive to acquire land for Camp Dodge and played a major role in the 1913 expansion of the State Capitol grounds. Avenue Frederick M. Hubbell has helped speed traffic diagonally across Des Moines for more than fifty years because of his foresight and generosity in developing this important thoroughfare.

The Library, circa 1895

Books, family pictures, and ornamental urns and statuary decorate the library of Terrace Hill around the turn of the century. Photo courtesy of William Wagner.



Through it all, Terrace Hill flourished as the proud bellwether of Hubbell's ever-ascending fortunes. Some of the most memorable social events of Des Moines' first century were held there. In 1895 Hubbell looked fondly back to his arrival in Fort Des Moines forty years earlier as he hosted his old friends and fellow pioneers — including his first partners, Polk and Casady, Hoyt Sherman, and James Savery. Two years later he looked toward the future as he and his wife, Frances, staged a brilliant reception for several of America's leading suffragettes and nearly 500 of their followers. There were family parties and celebrations — memorable occasions for the Hubbells and their three children, Frederick Cooper, born in 1864, Beulah, born in 1874, and Grover, born in 1883.

One such occasion occurred in 1899 when the Hubbells' daughter, Beulah, married a Swedish nobleman, Count Carl Wachtmeister. Only B.F. Allen's 1869 housewarming rivaled the ceremony's opulence. The bride, attired in the white satin brocade gown she had worn when presented at the Court of St. James, descended the grand staircase, which was intertwined with smilax and carnations, and proceeded through the rose-lined great hall. She and her groom stood beneath the parlor's huge crystal chandelier before an altar of ferns and lilies. The 700 invited guests presented a lavish spectacle in themselves. European nobility and American "aristocrats" mingled in a glittering display of decorations, medals, and precious jewels.

The Hubbells knew other moments of joy at Terrace Hill. Their first grandchild, Frederick Windsor Hubbell, was born there in 1891. In another flower-bedecked affair, F.M. and Frances celebrated their sixty-first wedding anniversary on March 19, 1924.

Two months after that anniversary party, Frances Hubbell died. Her passing was to bring a dramatic change in life at Terrace Hill, as Grover Hubbell, his wife Anna, and their three young daughters moved in to care for the aged patriarch. F.M. Hubbell would die some six years later, at age ninety-one, but he had long before assured himself that his vast fortune would safeguard his family and his home for generations to come.

Hubbell's certainty was based on a trust that he had established in 1903. The trust drew nationwide attention because, in the opinion of some, it was the most perfectly drawn document of its kind up to that time. As part of its provisions, all of the Hubbells' principal holdings were protected from sale until twenty-one years after the death of the last surviving family trustee. The trust could not be "broken" by other, distant relatives. Terrace Hill was singled out for special attention. Hubbell dictated that his mansion was to "remain the homestead of the Hubbell



The Music Room

A tete-a-tete and an H.M. Higgins square piano brought to Iowa by oxcart in the 1840s dominate the music room. Magnificent, twelve-foot-high walnut and butternut pocket doors offer privacy for Terrace Hill's principal downstairs rooms. Each door weighs approximately 400 pounds and operates on a double track (top and bottom) of heavy iron rollers.



The Library

A plush nineteenth-century setting for study and repose, the library contains many volumes that once belonged to the Hubbell family.



Upper and lower halls, the Grand Staircase, circa 1895

Until it was covered over in the 1920s, elaborate stenciling adorned ceilings, cornices, and walls of Terrace Hill's major rooms. It has since been reapplied as part of the ongoing restoration of Terrace Hill. Photo courtesy of William Wagner.

family, and in the possession of the eldest male lineal descendant so long as any such descendant lives during the whole of the trust period."

At the time of Hubbell's death in November, 1930, his oldest son, Frederick C., declined to move into Terrace Hill, so the lot fell to Grover, who had been living there for six years. Had the senior Hubbell known that outcome, he might have had some misgivings. Grover, recalls his daughter, Mary Belle Hubbell Windsor, "... loved Terrace Hill as much as my grandfather did," but the father and son differed significantly on what "maintaining and preserving" Terrace Hill meant. When Grover undertook modernizing the house in the mid-1920s, F.M. wrote peevishly, "A lot of men are tearing the house to pieces, according to Grover's wishes. They claim to be improving it. I don't like it."

But improving it they were — and preparing it for its next quarter-century. Electricity replaced outmoded gas lamps; the heating plant was moved from the carriage house to the basement; an elevator was installed; and a swimming pool was dug southeast of the house.

Mary Belle Hubbell Windsor grew up during the years her father, Grover, was assuming Terrace Hill's mastery. Her memories of a girlhood spent there are tinged with affection, delight, and an almost inherent awareness of Terrace Hill's extraordinary place above the realm of common things.

"When I first moved to Terrace Hill, the house seemed enormous, cavernous, mysterious — even a little frightening," she recalled. "But I had the freedom to explore and to play as I wished, and so my fears were gone quickly.

"All children found their 'special places' like mine," she continued. "My bedroom seemed like a princess's, and from the small tower where my friends and I had our club, you were far above everything; you could see for miles."

In time, of course, those memories were succeeded by others: the visit of the darkly handsome, sinisterly captivating Ilya Tolstoy, grandson of the great novelist; moonlit dance parties on the south lawn; and then the lavish marriages and receptions for Mary Belle and her two sisters. Family traditions at Terrace Hill deepened with the coming of grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who shared in such special occasions as Grover and Anna's yearly Christmas celebration. Terrace Hill housed one last "grand" event in 1955, Grover and Anna Hubbell's fiftieth wedding anniversary. A year later, Grover died.

With Grover's death, Terrace Hill's future was jeopardized in a way it never had been before. Values and attitudes had changed, making Grover's cherished vision anachronistic. Large old homes were considered impractical for modern family use, whatever the family's financial means might be. After Anna dispersed Terrace Hill's furnishings to family members and moved to an apartment in 1957, none of the Hubbell heirs wished to make the mansion their home.

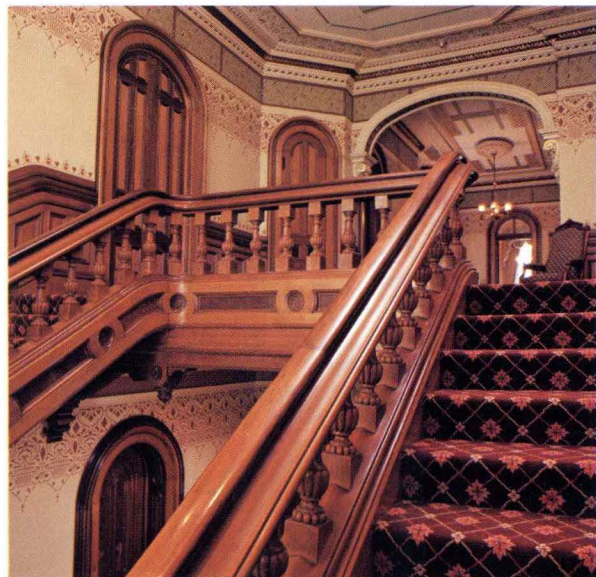
For fifteen years, Terrace Hill — B.F. Allen's dream and F.M. Hubbell's proud symbol — stood empty. The Hubbell family members paid for repairs, taxes, maintenance and insurance, but their attempts to find a suitable occupant continued to prove fruitless. Meanwhile pressure for the commercial development of properties around the mansion increased enormously.

Yet in spite of the attendant difficulties, Terrace Hill's charisma — evident in its majestic proportions, its singular beauty, its rich and storied past — touched many persons.



The Grand Staircase

The grand staircase sweeps up from the main hallway to a landing dominated by a majestic stained glass window, installed by F.M. Hubbell in the 1880s. The lamps on the newel post are original fixtures. The Wilton carpet, in the star and trellis pattern, was milled in England and installed as part of the recent restoration of Terrace Hill. A Des Moines firm, Foster Brothers, provided the millwork for the grand staircase (right).



University representatives, historic preservation groups, newspapermen, garden clubs, civic groups, art associations, and local and state officials toured Terrace Hill in the 1960s. Most agreed it should be preserved. At first, a multitude of proposals for its use were advanced, but as years passed the economics of maintaining a mansion enclosing seventeen times the volume of a typical suburban ranch house dictated that only one feasible owner existed for Terrace Hill: the State of Iowa.

The State of Iowa

Legislators had been consulted and committees formed to study the state's prospects for utilizing Terrace Hill as early as 1957, but no decisions were made. By the late 1960s, however, the situation had changed significantly. For one thing, the inadequacies of the then-governor's mansion were becoming more apparent. Robert Ray, a young politically and socially active governor, was working hard to raise Iowa's "profile" throughout the nation and the world — but the awkward logistics of his official "home" at 2900 Grand Avenue often impinged on his family's privacy, something future governors would face also.

A second factor which worked in Terrace Hill's favor was a widespread change in public opinion. Citizens in

every section of Iowa were joining battles to save and restore threatened architectural landmarks. And third, there was the generous offer by the Hubbell heirs to give (rather than sell) Terrace Hill to the state. After several weeks of study and debate, the Iowa Legislature in 1970 granted the Iowa Executive Council authorization to commence negotiations with the Hubbells.

The family's conditions were quite modest. In return for assuming the \$260,000 conveyance costs, the Hubbells required the state to preserve Terrace Hill for at least twenty-five years, retain its name, and install a plaque identifying the eight donors. The Polk District Court permitted the necessary modifications in the Hubbell Trust, and the Iowa Legislature voted overwhelmingly to accept the Hubbell's gifts.

When Terrace Hill became state property, it entered the most controversial phase of its already disruptive history. A hundred years before, when B.F. Allen attempted to save his home and himself from irate creditors, there had been questions over who would occupy the mansion and how it should be used. But the 1971-72 debate exposed a new and fundamental underlying concern. What was Terrace Hill to mean in an age that had seemingly discarded most of the dreams and values Boyington's creation had once embodied?

There were some who wished to keep Terrace Hill as

Mrs. Hubbell's Bedroom, circa 1895

A spacious retreat, Mrs. Hubbell's bedroom offered a bay-window view of the wooded Raccoon River valley. The eclectic decor represents the taste of Iowa's gentry in the 1890s. Photo courtesy of William Wagner.



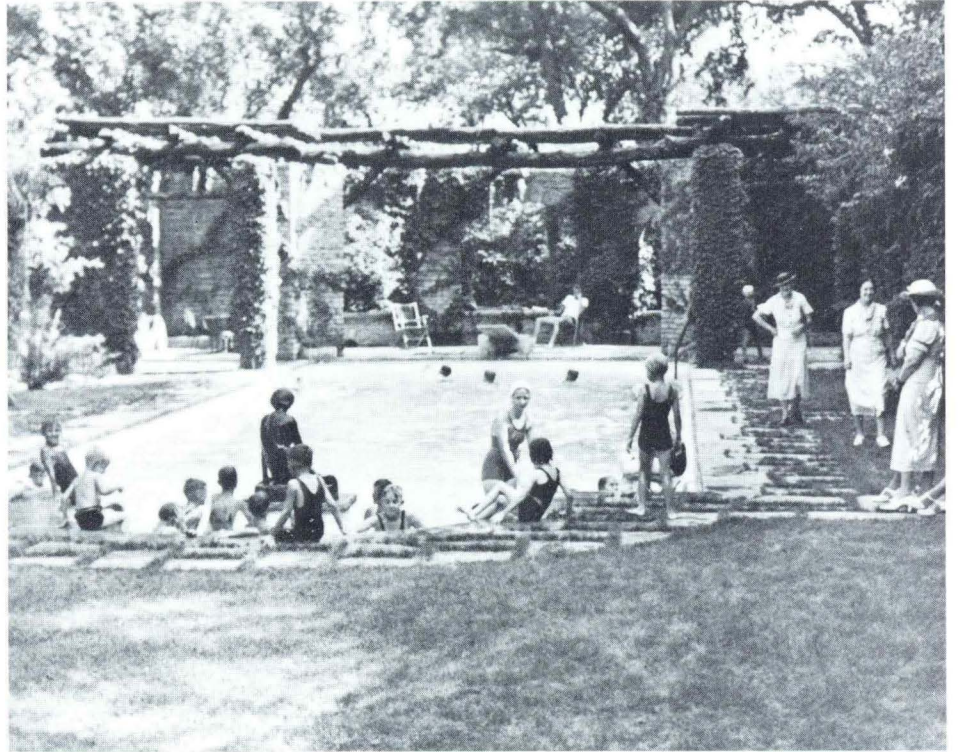


The VIP Guest Room

A floral pattern chintz and a Louis XVI side chair covered with Aubusson tapestry highlight a corner of the second-floor VIP guest room. Visiting dignitaries to Iowa are often invited to spend the night in this room. The first visitor to stay overnight at Terrace Hill, after it was opened as the governor's mansion, was the late Mrs. Lillian Carter, mother of former President Jimmy Carter, who came to Iowa during her son's term in office.

The Swimming Pool

The Hubbell family entertains friends at a pool party on July 7, 1937. One of the first private pools in Des Moines, the structure measures sixty feet long, twenty-one feet wide, and ten feet at its greatest depth. The vine-colored enclosure at the far end provided shade for swimmers. Over the years, the pool has fallen into disrepair, but there are plans for its restoration. Photo courtesy of Terrace Hill.



a museum, a grand relic frozen in time. There were others who urged that it be restored to vigorous life, one that would recall the wealth of the past and also celebrate strengths of the present. A deep sense of fascination and admiration for Terrace Hill inspired four individuals who would champion the latter position.

To Des Moines architect William Wagner would fall the task of elucidating Terrace Hill's special historical and architectural significance. Billie Ray, wife of incumbent Governor Robert D. Ray, would articulate and defend its new purpose and its contemporary function. Robert Bates, an interior designer from Albia, undertook the mammoth responsibility of guiding the refurbishing of the mansion's first floor to its original splendor. Managing the funds collected from both the private and public sectors was delegated to State Treasurer Maurice Baringer.

Mrs. Ray's influence was felt first. In November, 1971, Governor Ray appointed a 35-member Terrace Hill Planning Commission to consider the proposals for using the mansion. Acknowledging the need for a new governor's mansion, some had suggested building separate living quarters for the governor's family on the eight-acre Terrace Hill grounds. Under the plan the century-old home would serve as a museum and as a facility for hosting state functions. Others offered a variety of proposals for also including a gubernatorial home under Terrace Hill's

capacious mansard roof. Mrs. Ray sided with the second group. Terrace Hill, she argued, "should be a living home, not just a beautiful reflection of a bygone way of life."

Mrs. Ray suggested to cost-conscious legislators that true economy lay in unifying functions in one structure. After ten weeks of deliberations, the Planning Commission released its recommendations. The members proposed that Terrace Hill house the governor's family and also serve state functions. Their plan called for converting the third floor into a private gubernatorial apartment. The second floor would contain state guest rooms and private offices for the governor and his spouse. The first floor, restored to mid-Victorian elegance, would be open to the public and would accommodate official functions. The commissioners also encouraged public participation in fundraising and in donating and lending antique furnishings.

The year 1972 began optimistically for architect Bill Wagner, for it promised inception of his career-long "dream project" — the restoration of Terrace Hill. His infatuation had begun almost twenty years earlier, when Grover Hubbell sought his opinion on some repair projects. Says Wagner: "I was captivated, right from the start. Terrace Hill was like nothing I'd ever seen before, and I don't think I've seen its equal since. I vowed that if the chance came to fully restore Terrace Hill, I wanted to be able to lead the work."



The Governor's Apartment

The third floor of Terrace Hill, once servants' quarters, is the official residence of Iowa's first family. The eleven-room suite, completed in 1976, is furnished with a combination of state-owned pieces and family possessions. Pictured here are the living room and dining room.

During his long "wait" for Terrace Hill, Wagner earned recognition as an expert in nineteenth-century architectural restoration. "It isn't knowledge you can get through study alone," he explained. "You have to develop a 'feel' for the materials they used then, and for the ingenious methods they had for overcoming the comparative limitations in their technology. You almost transpose yourself backward in time as you become absorbed in the work."

Wagner's absorption had an important emotional influence as well. "I began to feel a deep sense of spiritual kinship with those men who left us such beautiful old buildings, and I felt that way about Boyington especially. You have only to look carefully and thoughtfully at Terrace Hill to realize he must have been very, very proud of it. When I started to work at Terrace Hill, I wanted to see it restored in such a way that, if he were to walk in to look around, we could both be proud of the result."

Unfortunately, through most of 1972, Wagner had little more than his spiritual resources to draw on in matters relating to Terrace Hill. The Legislature had allocated no funds, and money raised by the newly-formed Terrace Hill Society — a private, non-profit support group composed of interested people throughout the state — did not begin

flowing in until December. (The Society has since raised more than \$350,000 for Terrace Hill.) "The money available at the beginning of 1973 was insufficient for any major work," said State Treasurer Baringer, "and inflating construction costs, meanwhile, were making it difficult to establish firm project cost estimates."

Then, too, Wagner and the many restoration workers encountered a multitude of challenges to their ingenuity. Said Wagner: "Much of the detail in a restoration project like this involves concealing our modern technology in spaces that, of course, were never designed to accommodate it." On the grand staircase he pointed out a good example. "Terrace Hill is supplied with modern heating and air conditioning, but you won't find any vents." He paused, then gestured upward. "If you look closely at the ceiling rosette, though, you'll see it actually hangs about two inches below the ceiling itself. The vent is hidden by the rosette, and the air flows out around it."

"A worse type of problem," he continued, "and one that often bedevils us in buildings this old, is damage or defects that remain hidden until we actually start renovation." Pointing to the music room's northwest corner, Wagner said, "Boyington designed these interior walls with

Christmas at Terrace Hill, 1954

Members of the Hubbell family gather in the drawing room at Terrace Hill for the traditional Christmas celebration, hosted by Grover and Anna Hubbell in 1954.

Grover Hubbell, F.M. Hubbell's son, is seated in the foreground; his wife, Anna, is directly behind him.

Family members standing include: (from left) Patricia Ingham (Mrs. "Buzz") Davis, Phillip Weaver (holding son Jamie Weaver), James Windsor Jr., Clarence "Buzz" Davis (holding son Stephen), James Windsor III, Hubbell Ingham, Hepburn Ingham, Virginia Thorne (Mrs. Richard) Barshell, Anna (Mrs. Grover) Hubbell, Frederick Ingham, Frances (Mrs. Hepburn) Ingham, Grover Windsor, William Windsor, Mary Belle (Mrs. James) Windsor, Richard Barshell, and Anne (Mrs. Phillip) Weaver (holding daughter Wendy). Grover Hubbell is flanked by granddaughters Janey and Denny Barshell. Photo courtesy of Terrace Hill.





*The Governor's
Terrace Hill Office*

Gold and blue are the dominant colors in this office at home for Iowa's governor, located in what was once a second-floor bedroom. The second floor of Terrace Hill also contains two guest bedrooms, a small administrative office, and an office for the governor's spouse.

diagonally-running support members that help bear the enormous load above. When they installed the elevator in the 1920s, they cut a diagonal, which caused the section of wall to shift. It wasn't until we took out the elevator that the damage became apparent."

Early on, it became apparent the restoration of Terrace Hill would cost considerably more than the original \$250,000 estimate. This figure, although unreasonable, stuck in the minds of legislators and other interested Iowans. Most wanted Terrace Hill restored, but they did not want the expense to exceed the quarter-of-a-million dollar price tag.

Because little money was available, the state's Executive Council found \$25,000 in discretionary funding in 1973. The Iowa House approved a \$450,000 appropriation during the 1973 session to cover much of the third floor renovation where the Governor was to live with his family. The Senate did not follow suit, and the 1973 General Assembly adjourned without appropriating any money for Terrace Hill.

All was not gloom and doom for Terrace Hill, however. Final approval for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places meant that the house was eligible for federal funding. In 1974 the Legislature was a bit more generous, allocating \$200,000. As 1974 came to an end, the treasury boasted \$340,000. But, according to Treasurer Baringer, that was not enough to pay the bills. Work was halted temporarily in June, 1975, for lack of funds.

It was at this moment that Baringer stepped forward and displayed what Governor Robert Ray described as "a steady hand" — "the stabilizing factor" needed in the project. Under Baringer's tutelage, the Terrace Hill Foundation was created to raise money specifically for the mansion. The long range goal was \$1.5 million. Short-range needs were met by a \$250,000 loan from the Iowa-Des Moines National Bank (now called Norwest). Many people credit the establishment of a foundation as the difference between success and failure.

At the time the Rays moved into the newly-remodeled third floor apartment in October, 1976, there were still no plans to open the mansion for public viewing. Once the first family had settled in, there was increasing pressure to open the first floor of the house to the public.

In 1977, legislators tied state funding to demands that the mansion be open to the public. They allocated \$125,000 to Terrace Hill, as well as counting on matching funds which came in the form of a \$391,000 grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

In the late 1970s the Governor appointed an eight-member Terrace Hill Authority which assumed all responsibility for operation and maintenance of Terrace Hill. Today, the Authority remains the governing arm of Terrace Hill. The governor also enlisted the aid of Iowa's top business leaders in a fund drive that netted \$400,000 in commercial pledges for ongoing restoration projects.

The public's long-standing curiosity to view Terrace Hill first-hand was finally satisfied on July 2, 1978, when over 850 visitors toured the mansion. Since that day thousands of people have been dazzled by the splendors of the house.

So far, more than \$3,000,000 has been spent on the restoration of Terrace Hill. The object has been to give the home a late nineteenth-century appearance (though not necessarily the look it had when it belonged to the Hubbell family). Part of the renovation has included the re-application of stenciling to the walls and ceilings of Terrace Hill's principal rooms and hallways. This arduous labor, involving thousands of man-hours of precision brushwork, was undertaken by Jerry Miller, Iowa's official restoration painter.

Today, thanks to the dedication, generosity, and hard work of many people, Terrace Hill has regained a position of preeminence — as a home, as a showplace, and as a setting for government functions. In making a commitment to Terrace Hill, Iowans have safeguarded for future generations a proud landmark of their state's colorful and robust past. — *Bill Witt*

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