

HISTORY OF 51 GILLETT STREET in HARTFORD

In 1853, John Hooker and Francis Gillett had purchased Nook Farm and soon thereafter construction began of large homes for substantial Hartford families began. The farm lay to the south of Farmington Avenue and east of the Hog (Park) River and incorporated Forest Street. Original owner occupants included Harriet Beecher Stowe who in 1871 had moved to a house on Forest Street, just off Farmington Avenue and Mark Twain who in 1874 built his now famous house on Farmington Avenue just west of Forest Street.

Gillett Street runs north from Farmington Avenue within sight of both the Stowe House and the Mark Twain House. The street is no doubt named after Francis Gillett, who was likely the original developer, the land being directly adjacent to Nook Farm. Against this backdrop, Gillett Street saw a series of large houses built during the late 1880's coming on the heels of the nearby development at Nook Farm. The mansion at 51 Gillett Street in Hartford was constructed in about 1890.

The original owner, who presumably had the home built, was Edwin E. Marvin. He was born in Tolland, Connecticut in 1838. By 1858, he was admitted to the practice of law having studied under Judge Loren Waldo. He served in the Civil War rising to the rank of Captain. Upon his return, he married Judge Waldo's daughter. When Judge Waldo was elevated to the United States District Court as Chief Clerk, both families moved to Hartford. Captain Marvin became the assistant Clerk. Upon the retirement of Judge Waldo, Captain Marvin was named Chief Clerk, a position he then held for the next 40 years until his death. He died at his residence at 51 Gillett Street in 1914.

The next owner was Philip D. Bunce, a Hartford born physician and surgeon. Dr. Bunce graduated from Hartford Public High School (now located in Nook Farm coincidentally) and Yale University. After several years in New York, he returned to Hartford where he then practiced for over 30 years, retiring as the medical examiner for the City. He died in 1931 at his residence at 51 Gillett Street.

Other prominent owners and occupants include Bertrand McNamara, a real estate agent and appraiser who lived at 51 Gillett Street until his death in 1957. Following his death, a series of professionals set up their offices at the property including:

Dr. Paul Kingston, a radiologist in 1959;
Dr. Philip Stent, a general surgeon in 1961; and
Dr. William Healy, a neurologist in 1967.

Dr. Michael Egan took ownership in 1970 setting up his dental practice there which he continued until his sale in 2014 to the present owners, Gale McNair, LLC.