

Welcome to Hale House



Now its site is just a little rise of ground between the Community Medical Center and Peachtown School, and the old well is covered by concrete. No one has seen Hale House, one of the village's loveliest homes, for over ninety years.



But today you are the guest of David and Mary Hale, meeting their family and friends, enjoying the beautiful setting and admiring the souvenirs of their travels. Your tour guide is Catherine McCausland, their great-great-granddaughter.

David Austin Hale (1823-1892) and Mary Isabella Simonds Hale (1829-1913) were married in 1849 in Athol MA. Their two little sons died in 1855 and 1863. In 1867, David retired from *The New York Journal of Commerce* and he and Mary set out for an extended stay in Europe. Their daughter Mary Agnes was born in 1869 in Dresden.



photos 1870,
Dresden



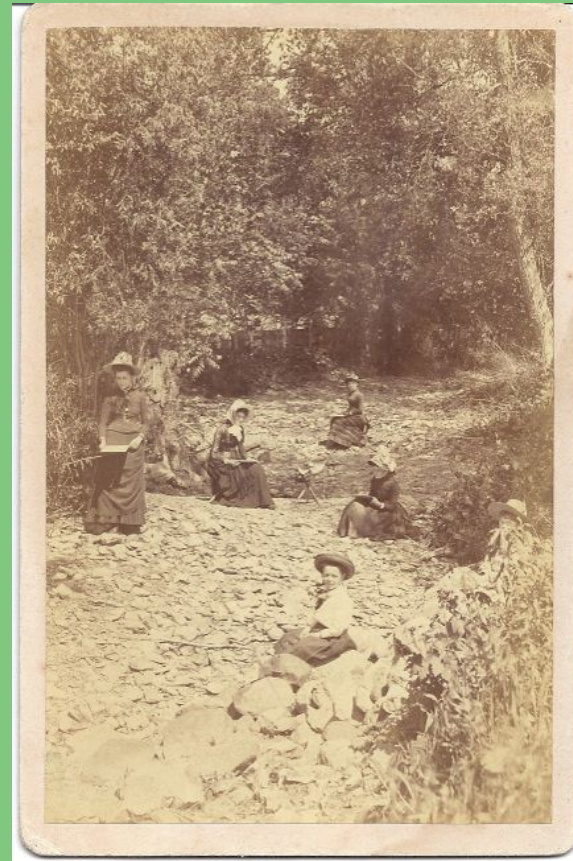
In 1878 David, Mary and Mary Agnes returned to America. They knew Aurora, having often visited David's brother Richard who, with his wife, Julia Newlin, lived on Pumpkin Hill.

The house just north of Glen Park was available. Built in 1835-6 by Samuel Mandell, it originally belonged to John Morgan, younger brother of Edwin B. Morgan. The Hales were delighted to make it their home.



Mary Agnes, fluent in German, French and Italian and a skilled pianist, entered Wells College as a special student at age 12 or 13.

In these 1881 photos, she is reading with her mother on the back porch and sketching with classmates in art class.





ca. 1880



the view today

A hammock on the porch awaits you.

1893



You are walking toward the house from the direction of Glen Park, shaded by elms, maples and a linden tree.



early 1880s

Perhaps you will join the archery club for the afternoon. Many of the members are associated with Wells College; David Hale serves on the Board of Trustees.

Like almost everyone in the village, the Hales keep a rowboat on the lake and especially enjoy those days when the water is as calm as glass.



ca. 1893



As a first-time guest you would be entertained in the formal south parlor, filled with many fascinating mementoes of the Hales' travels.

1880s





There is so much to see in the beautiful north parlor as well. David's favorite reading nook is just beyond the fireplace; Mary has a similar little sitting room off the bedroom above. The elegant square grand piano, by Hallet and Davis of Boston, is for Mary Agnes' lessons.

Max Piutti, then teaching at Wells College and living a short walk away, is the natural choice of piano teacher for Mary Agnes. They enjoy conversing in German, Mary Agnes' first language and Max's native tongue. He and his wife Anna Adams are beloved family friends.



Oct. 1884



In 1892, Mary Agnes married Sebastian C. Jones, who had been the principal of Cayuga Lake Military Academy a few years before. Their wedding took place in the Aurora Presbyterian Church, where the family had been members since 1881.

In this 1893 photo of the church, Mandell's original session house is just out of sight to the left.

Just three months later, David Hale died suddenly at home. His funeral was held in the same church and he was buried in Oak Glen Cemetery. Mary stayed on for many years, remaining as involved with the Aurora community as she always had been.

In the winter of bereavement, 1892: Mary Hale dressed in black, on the front steps. The front door is protected for winter with a temporary vestibule.



Mary Hale, along with Anna Piutti, was a founding member of Thursday Club. Mary's drawing of Schloss Weiherberg, where the family lived some twenty years before, graced the Club's program in its first year, 1896.



The garden behind the house remained a source of pleasure, with its fruit trees, hollyhocks and grapes.



The grandchildren loved their summer visits. They especially enjoyed sleeping in the little room over the front porch.

Mary Agnes (center) with daughters Ethel and Isabelle. The eldest, Eleanor, might have taken the picture.



The three girls would always remember playing on the lawn and putting on amateur theatricals at Glen Park, which the College had bought back in 1906. On a memorable occasion, they were allowed to use the Wells theater costumes for "A Midsummer Night's Dream." As neighbors they were allowed to keep their boats in the College boathouse.



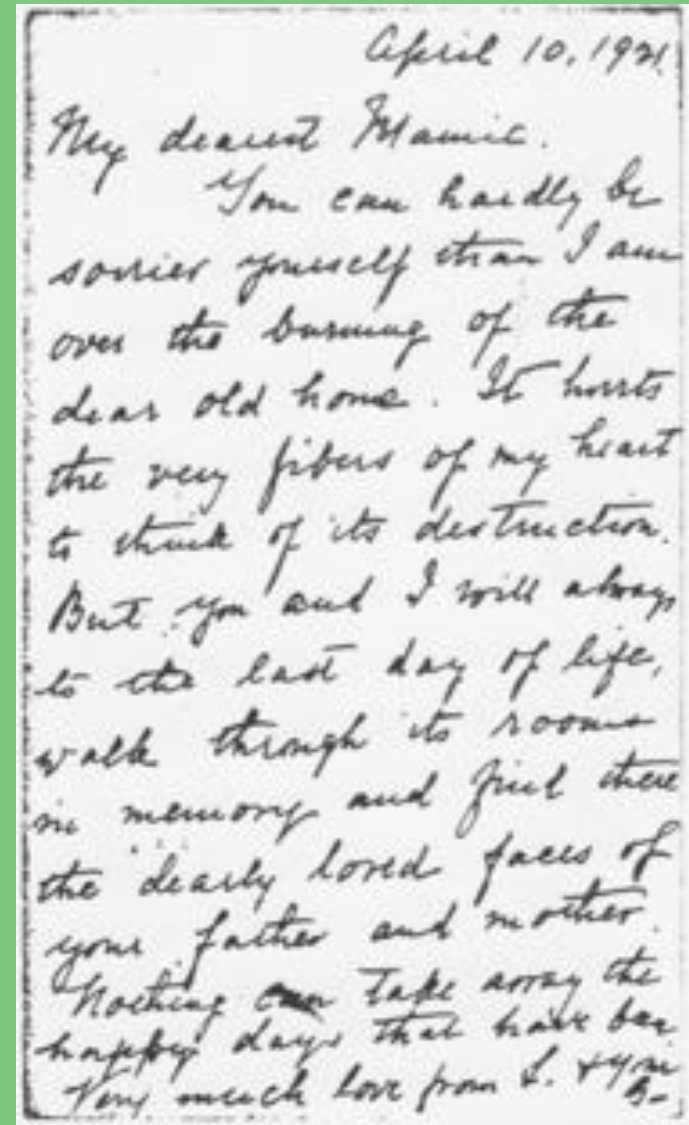
As years passed, Mary Hale spent more and more time with her daughter and family in Cornwall-on-Hudson. In 1911 she rented the family home to William B. Avery, who had grown up in the house in the 1860s.

Mary died in 1913. The family returned to Aurora for her funeral at the Aurora Presbyterian Church and burial in Oak Glen. W. B. Avery bought Hale House, as it continued to be called.

In 1921, Mary Agnes received shocking news: the old home had burned to the ground. But as this card (right) reminded her, family memories are the lasting heart of a home. She surely thought of the hymn sung at her mother's funeral by a quartet that included Samuel D. Mandell, son of Hale House's builder:

*"And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost a while."*

Hymn text: "Lead Kindly Light," Cardinal John H. Newman, 1833



April 10, 1921.
My dearest Mamie.
You can hardly be
sorrowful yourself than I am
over the burning of the
dear old home. It hurts
the very fibers of my heart
to think of its destruction.
But you and I will always
to the last day of life,
walk through its rooms
in memory and find there
the dearly loved faces of
your father and mother.
Nothing can take away the
happy days that have been.
Very much love from L. & M. B.



The well site.

Linda Schwab, Village Historian, most gratefully acknowledges the collaboration of Cathy McCausland in this display. All photos but the contemporary ones are from the McCausland collection, a priceless trove notable especially for the rare views of Victorian interior decoration.