

History of the Yankauer Nature Preserve and the Yankauer Family

Dr. Alfred and Marian Yankauer purchased the property that now constitutes the Yankauer Nature Preserve in the early 1960's, while Dr. Yankauer was serving as an advisor at the World Health Organization's Pan American Health Organization in Washington, D.C.

The couple used the property as a weekend getaway, camping there whenever they had the opportunity.

After they relocated to Massachusetts in 1966, they donated the property to The Nature Conservancy.

In 1984, the Potomac Valley Audubon Society agreed to assist in the upkeep of the property. In 1994, PVAS signed a formal agreement with the Conservancy to co-manage the property. That arrangement continues today.

The Yankauer Nature Preserve's boundaries include parts of two early land grants made by Thomas Lord Fairfax in the mid 18th Century. Roughly the northern half of the preserve was originally part of a 400-acre parcel granted to Thomas Caton on October 20, 1750.

The southern half was part of a 236-acre parcel that Lord Fairfax granted to John Carlyle on August 24, 1761. (Carlyle had also received a grant of 1,651 acres that included all of the rest of what is now known as Whiting's Neck, except for the land owned by Caton.)

Not much is known about Caton but both he and Carlyle had associations with George Washington.

Caton was a captain of foot in the Frederick County militia under Washington's command, and a contemporaneous reference in Washington's correspondence suggests Caton took part in General Edward Braddock's ill-fated expedition to Fort Duquesne in 1755.

John Carlyle (1720-1780) was a Scottish merchant who immigrated to Virginia in 1741. One of the founders and leading citizens of Alexandria, VA, he became a close friend and business associate of George Washington and owned thousand of acres of land. General Braddock used Carlyle's home as his headquarters in early 1775, and planned his Fort Duquesne expedition in Carlyle's living room.

Coming back to modern times, the Yankauers were both remarkable people in their own right.

Alfred was born October 12, 1913 in New York City, the son of Alfred Yankauer Sr. and Teresa (Lowey) Yankauer. His father, who had been born in Germany, was an attorney.

Alfred received his bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College in 1934, his MD degree from Harvard Medical School in 1938, and master's of public health from the Columbia University School of Public Health in 1947.

A well-known authority on maternal and child health, Yankauer was a professor of family community medicine and pediatrics at the University of Massachusetts' Medical School and remained an active member of the faculty until a few weeks before his death.

A prolific writer, Yankauer authored more than 200 publications, writing on issues such as epidemics and alternative medicine.

He was also a lover of poetry, and his translations of poems by the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda have been reproduced widely.

Yankauer's positions during his long career included service as a health officer for the New York City Department of Public Health (1947-50); assistant commissioner of health at Rochester, NY (1950-52); director of the state of New York's Bureau of Maternal and Child Health (1952-61); professor of child health at the Madras Medical School in India (1957-58); regional maternal and child health advisor at the Pan American Health Organization in Washington, DC (1961-66); and senior research associate at Harvard University's School of Public Health (1966-73).

From 1973 until he retired, he was a Professor of Family and Community Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. From 1972 until 1979 he was also a professor of family and community medicine and pediatrics at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester.

He served as a major in the U.S. Army Medical Corps during World War II.

He was a member of the board of sponsors of the Federation of American Scientists and was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1999.

From 1975 to 1990, Yankauer served as editor for the American Public Health Association's American Journal of Public Health. He received APHA's Award of Excellence in 1990.

He died June 10, 2004 in Amherst, Massachusetts, at the age of 90.

Marian was born in New York on September 9, 1914. Her parents were Harry W. Wynn and Marian (Martin) Wynn. The family lived in Flushing, Queens, New York, and she graduated from Flushing High School.

She earned a bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in public administration from New York University, and a law degree from Brooklyn Law School.

After she graduated from law school in 1943, she took a job in the Wage and House Division of the U.S. department of Labor.

In 1945, she joined the legal staff of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, which was then headed by Thurgood Marshall, as an Assistant Special Counsel.

An account of the civil rights law effort during this period, *Making Civil Rights Law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1936-1961*, by Mark V. Tushnet (Oxford, 1994), describes her as follows:

Two other lawyers joined the staff in 1945. Marian Wynn Perry, a 1943 graduate of the Brooklyn Law School, had worked in the Wage and Hour Division of the US Department of Labor, but "derived the greatest satisfaction out of [her] work" as secretary of the Constitutional Liberties committee of the New York Chapter of the National Lawyer's Guild. Perry had concluded "during the early days of the depression that if progressive causes were ever to achieve a strong foothold in American they would have to do so within the framework of our legal system." Because, as she put it, good-looking women with Anglo-Saxon names were "as scarce as hen's teeth" in the New York left, she rapidly became prominent in the Lawyer's Guild. Her work with the Guild involved lobbying for fair employment legislation in New York, and during that effort she worked with [Thurgood] Marshall and [Edward] Dudley. Perry was hired to work on employment and housing discrimination issues and sustained contacts with leftist organizations in the New York region until she resigned from the legal staff in 1949 to accompany her husband to his new job in upstate New York.

While in Albany, she worked with the Citizens Union, which monitored the New York legislature.

When she and Alfred moved back to Washington, she worked as an urban sociologist at the Housing and Home Finance Agency, now the Department of Housing and Urban Development, in Washington, DC.

In the mid 1960s she was deputy director of the Federal Programs Division of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.

After moving to Newton, Massachusetts, with her husband, she served as director of relocation in the state Department of Commerce and Development in Boston, and was a visiting lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's School of City Planning in Cambridge.

She retired from the state government in 1969 to be an officer of Urban Planning Aid in Cambridge. As such, she involved community groups in eastern Massachusetts in urban renewal, mass transit, and highway development projects.

When the Yankauers moved to North Brookfield, Massachusetts in 1973, Mrs. Yankauer became active with a committee of lawyers working on federally subsidized housing through the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute.

She also helped launch the Central Massachusetts Legal Action Network and conducted research and planning for Worcester's water conservation program.

She was chairman of the local Finance Committee and a volunteer for the North Brookfield Historical Society.

She was active in the Massachusetts Audubon Society and received its "A" award. In 1988, she and her husband donated 150 acres of land in East Brookfield MA to the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

She and Alfred had three children: Kenneth, Douglas, and Rebecca.

She died in Worcester MA on January 29, 1994.

—Prepared by Peter Smith, PVAS, updated 8-25-14