

Garret Augustus Hobart, Jr.



Portrait of Garret A. Hobart Jr., *Courtesy of the Passaic County Historical Society.*

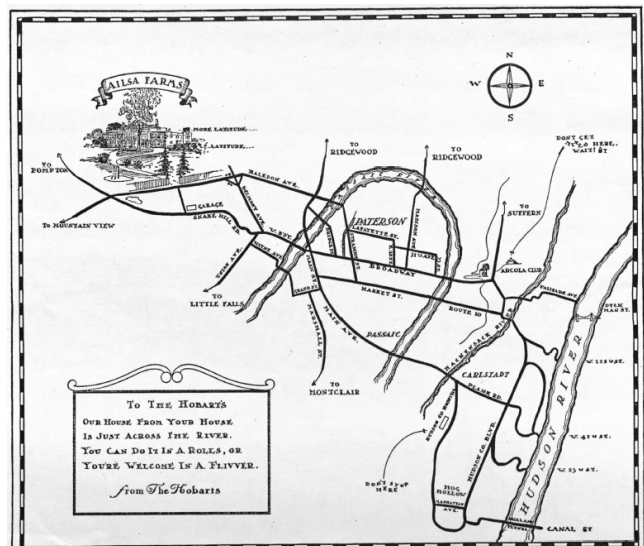
On August 31, 1884, Garret A. Hobart Jr. was born in Paterson, New Jersey to parents, Garret A. Hobart and Jennie (Tuttle) Hobart. The young Garret was named after his father, who was the 24th Vice President of the United States under President William McKinley, and lived at the Hobart family home Carroll Hall on the corner of Carroll and Ellison Streets in Paterson. Hobart had a private pilot's license and did considerable flying. Late in his life Hobart took up the hobby of photography. He was also credited with owning one of the first automobiles in Paterson and was said to have given President McKinley his first ride in an automotive vehicle. The vehicle was said to have been powered by electric batteries. Hobart married Caroline Frye Briggs on June 6, 1906 and they had three children, Garret A. Hobart III, Catherine, and Elizabeth Hobart.

Hobart was appointed by Justice Charles C. Black to the preliminary Passaic County Parks Commission. Hobart pushed for the commission to hire the most prestigious landscape architects and planners in the United States, the Olmsted Brothers Association. This Commission had the authorization to spend up to \$10,000 in the creation of a survey to certify the public need for a park system, evaluate potential sites to be acquired for parkland, and prepare a report that could be used to generate public support.

The firm's report was submitted to the commissioners on July 9, 1927. In the report, they identified the purpose for the investment of public funds in the creation of Passaic County's Park system was "to provide for the happiness and well-being of people..." and that "no other public expenditure tends to appreciate in value...with the passage of time, as do other public works."

Following the adoption of the park referendum in the General Election held on November 8, 1937, Hobart was once again appointed to the permanent commission and was elected Vice-President. On September 14, 1937, he became the President of the Passaic County Parks Commission following the death of Robert Dix Benson.

Garret A. Hobart Jr. died at the family estate Ailsa Farms in Wayne on September 29, 1941. Hobart Manor remains a prominent feature on the campus of William Paterson University.



Map of Ailsa Farms, *Courtesy of William Paterson University Archives.*

²Paterson and Its Environs, p 149-150

³Newspaper Article: "Private Funeral Rites Wednesday for G.A. Hobart", The News (Paterson, NJ) September 30, 1941 pg 25; 36.