

Life as the First Kentland's Child

By Marie O'Donnell

My grandfather worked for Mr. Kent, who I called "Uncle Otis," from around 1949 until his (my grandfather's) death in 1971. His name was David Bean, and he built many of the lakes on the estate including Lake Lynette, Lake Helene, and the one that the National Geographic building was located on. Only Inspiration Lake was there at the time we moved onto the estate.



We lived there, in the "manager's house" just down the hill from the mansion, from the time I was about 2 years of age until my great-grandmother became sick and we had to move in and take care of her.

My favorite rooms were the library and music room. I loved the library because of the beautiful blue oriental rug. Uncle Otis had his law books and many of the other books in the library rebound to match the colors in the rug. We would gather in the music room and he would play the organ. I used to sit on his lap and he would play "Beautiful Dreamer" for me. He was a very accomplished musician.

That is another reason that I am glad that music is part of what you all have done with the estate. He would be very pleased with that and with the protection of wildlife. He had a soft spot for animals. One of the things I remember fondly was helping my grandfather feed the

dogs in the kennels near the "big house." Uncle Otis always had lots of cats. I especially remember "The General," a huge gray tom cat who used to lay on his desk while he was working.



The Sentinel — located behind the blue curtain at the top of the stairs.

While looking through the pictures of the renovations done to the manor house I did have a question about the information given for what some of the rooms had previously been used for. Entering the house from the front door, the first room to the left from the entry hall was Uncle Otis's office. To the right was the music room, which had a beautiful red oriental rug. When you went through this room and just to the left of the fireplace you entered the library. I remember when he had this room redone. He bought the beautiful blue oriental rug, and was very particular about having the floor refinished so that what showed around the border of the carpet would be a complementing color. As I had mentioned before, Uncle Otis had his law books and the other books re-bound to match the colors in the carpet. The lighting in the ceiling was recessed and the transition from the ceiling to the walls was done so there were no corners and the light reflected off and down into the room. I was a beautiful room, and, as I said before, it was my favorite.

When coming into the entrance hall, if you went forward and to the left of the grandfather clock into the small hallway, just to the right was the "chocolate" bathroom. At least that's what I called it. In the early 50's there wasn't that much choice of color in plumbing fixtures, and it was unusual to see anything but white. The chocolate bathroom was done in a color that was about the same shade of brown as chocolate milk.

I didn't notice in any pictures on the website of the stain glass window at the first landing, and was wondering if it is still there or not. It was beautiful and Uncle Otis had it installed because there was no window there and he wanted it to appear that there was. The window was installed with fluorescent back lighting. He took great pride in showing this to visitors. One of the Christmas cards I have from him is a picture of the window.

