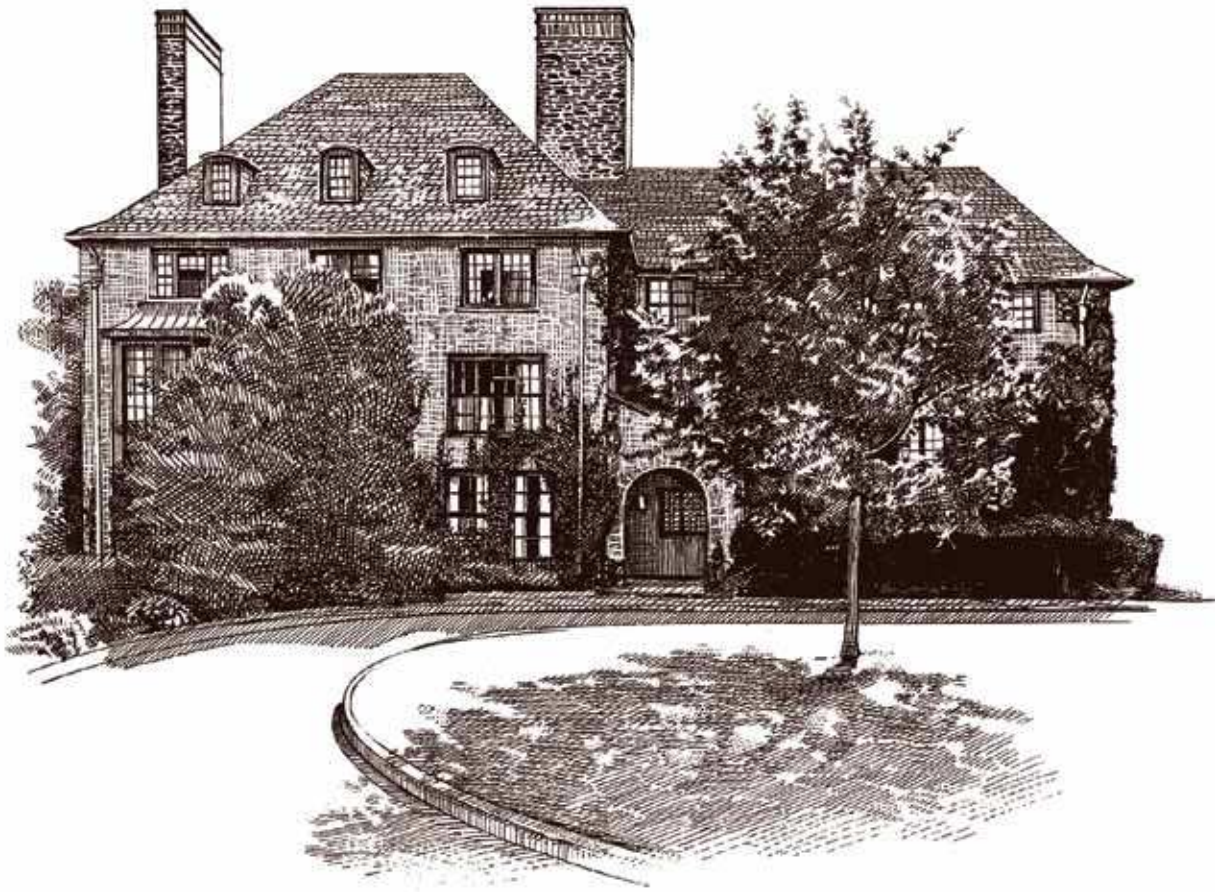


The Inglis Highlands



A Photographic History
Anne Duderstadt

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The Millennium Project
The University of Michigan
2001 Duderstadt Center
2281 Bonisteel Boulevard
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-2094

<http://milproj.dc.umich.edu>

The Inglis Highlands



Dedication

To the Inglis Family, James, Elizabeth, Jim and Betty, in appreciation for the gift of their estate,
The Inglis Highlands, for the University of Michigan and the Ann Arbor Community to enjoy.

Preface

One of the treasures of the University of Michigan is the Inglis Highlands estate, located near the campus and adjacent to the Arboretum. The estate is used for entertaining guests of the University and hosting important events. The elegant manor house and its surrounding 8.5 acres of gardens, orchards, forests, and meadows, designed in the style of an English country estate, was bequeathed in 1951 to the University by James and Elizabeth Inglis, as a home for the Michigan president. Although the estate has been offered as a residence to each president since that time, all have chosen to live on the campus in the “White House” at 815 South University, enabling the University to use the Inglis House estate as a guesthouse.

The four story mansion has been used to host and entertain distinguished visitors to the University, including the Dalai Lama, United States presidents, foreign heads-of-state, famous musicians and actors and many alumni and friends of the University. The library, living, and dining areas of the mansion have been used to host a wide array of University events, including meetings of the Board of Regents, faculty groups, and development activities. When the University received the Inglis House estate, formerly called “The Highlands”, it was already known for its extraordinary gardens, long the effort and pride of Elizabeth Inglis.

Yet, despite the important role that this unique facility had played over the years, the financial hardships of the 1970s and 1980s took their toll. By the late 1980s, the manor house was in disrepair with its slate roof in danger of collapse. The interior of the house was well worn, no longer adequate to host many of the distinguished guests visiting the university. The gardens and grounds had also suffered.

In 1988, faced with the decision to either replace the roof and much of the infrastructure of the manor house or abandon the use of the estate, the University decided to launch a series of projects to restore the house and gardens to their original elegance. In part, this decision was motivated by the recognition that the Inglis House estate represented an important asset of the University that deserved attention and care. But this sequence of restoration projects was also motivated by a recognition of the role the estate would play in the massive fund-raising campaign of the 1990s, destined to eventually raise over \$1.4 billion for University programs.

In the process of restoring the Inglis House estate, we became very interested in the Inglis family. There was a portrait of James Inglis in the house, but no images remained of the rest of the family. Through the help of Carol Inglis Spicer, a niece of James Inglis, and other Inglis family members, we were able to acquire early photographs of the estate and the family. We are truly grateful for their help. We are also indebted to the Bentley Historical Library for their assistance in providing information on the Inglis family from their archives.

This photo essay is an attempt to document the Inglis Highlands history from the late 1920's when the house was built to the late 1990's when the renovation of the estate was completed. This document also recognizes the many people who made this restoration possible and illustrates the array of events hosted in the facility.

Anne Duderstadt
Ann Arbor, Michigan, 2015

*The Inglis Highlands Estate
and
The James & Elizabeth Inglis Family*





The Inglis family: James, Betty, Jim & Elizabeth (seated)



James Inglis was born in Detroit, Michigan, on August 15, 1864 as one of seven children of Richard and Agnes (Lambie) Inglis, both Scottish born and raised. His father, a highly respected Detroit physician, died when James was ten. Inglis's brother David, who was 25 and had completed his medical education at the time of his father's death, carried on his father's practice. Agnes Inglis kept the family together until her death on July 4, 1899. After his mother's death, James and his brother Will lived together for three years until they each married.

James Inglis's mother's estate provided him with the sum of twelve thousand dollars. As he states in the autobiography he wrote for his grandchildren, "I had to work to get on, but I was not limited, as so many are, either by poverty on one hand or affluence on the other".

James left school at the age of 14, while he was in the twelfth grade and about ready to graduate from high school. He got a job as office boy for the firm of Gillett and Hall, grain commission merchants, at a salary of \$2.50 a week. He stayed with the firm for only a short time, since his ambition was to work in a wholesale hardware store. He worked in the hardware business for five years, first with Buhl Sons & Co and then with Black and Owen. At age 17 he was on the road selling hardware and cutlery. He had two unsuccessful attempts at starting his own business, first managing a small business that made brake-beams and lock-nuts for railroads, and then a business marketing natural gas to manufacturers. In 1890, at age 26 he joined the American Blower Company, a company manufacturing fans for cooling Detroit's auto factories.

James was involved in numerous other business activities, as noted in his autobiography, including chairman of the board of directors of the National Bank of Detroit.



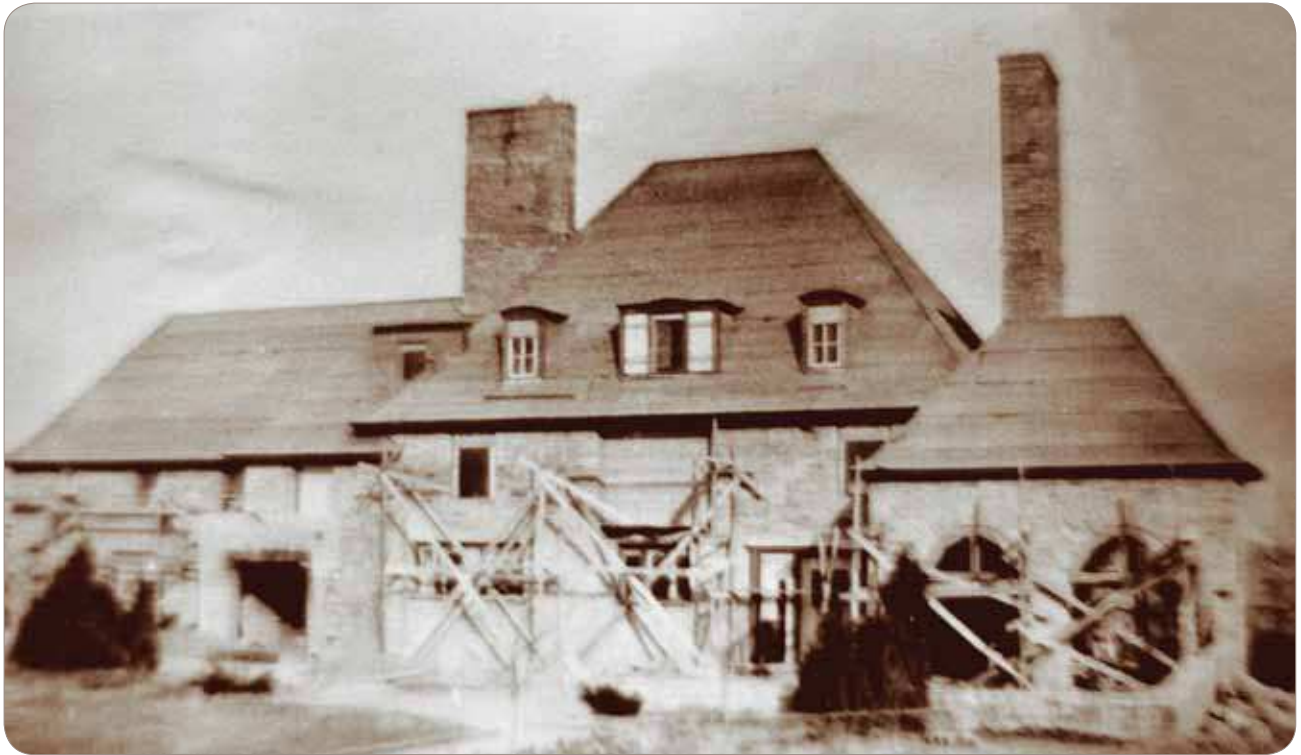
James Inglis's sister, Kate, moved to Ann Arbor with her husband, Frank Smith, in 1901 and purchased a farm on the east side of the city. The Smith's white farmhouse was located at 2105 Geddes, near Concord. In the 1920's the Smith's began subdividing the farm into residential lots on what are now Highland, Concord, Lenawee, and Lafayette streets.

James and Elizabeth bought an 8.5 acre plot on the farm that was perched on a hill and extended down toward the Huron River, as the site for their retirement home. They turned to a friend of the family, Lilburn "Woody" Woodworth, to design and build a house in the English country style, constructed of stones and irregular brick with a slate roof. The 12,000 square foot home cost \$250,000, a rather considerable sum at that time.

Building the Inglis Highlands

The house contained twelve rooms on four levels. The first floor consisted of a formal entryway, a large library, men's and women's restrooms, and service facilities. On the second floor was a combination living/dining room, breakfast room (called the "coffee room"), kitchen, pantry and a three-car garage with electrically-operated garage doors. The master bedroom with dressing room and bath, two bedrooms, each with a bath and a maid's apartment, were on the third floor. Their son Jamie's suite of rooms was on the fourth floor, which included Ann Arbor's first walk-in shower. Also on this floor was a large fan, a product of Inglis's American Blower Company, designed to keep the house cool in the summer.

The grounds of the estate included a caretaker's cottage, a greenhouse, workshop, a tennis court, a three-hole golf course, and at one time a peacock house with peacocks. (The peacocks eventually had to be removed because of their noise.)





Elizabeth Inglis's Gardens





The Inglis Family





Inglis Family Memories

The Inglis Highlands was the gathering place for the extended Inglis family. Some of the family members and friends shared some of their fondest memories in an article written by Carol Inglis Spicer, a niece of James Inglis. Jim (Jamie), the son of James and Elizabeth, remembers the "terrific" asparagus in his mother's vegetable garden; the electrically-operated garage doors; and - especially- the double sinks in his parents bathroom - quite a luxury in the 1930's when the average family was fortunate to have one bathroom. Carol's brother, David, recalls skiing down the hill in the meadow in the front of the house towards the Arboretum (on what was in summer a three-hole golf course). Then, after skiing, he would leave his skis outside the French doors and step into the library to join in activities.



Carol's fondest memories were of the "young ones" stretched out on the floor in front of the fire in the paneled and book-lined library listening to records. She recalled playing tennis on Saturday afternoons and all day Sundays, sitting between sets, on the stone wall or on the bench of the stone-paved courtyard above, drinking lemonade. She also remembered Frieda's white-frosted cakes covered with melted bitter chocolate, and the family dinners at the long table in the living-dining room with her uncle Jim and father Will, reminiscing, with laughter, about old days in the house on Gratiot Avenue in Detroit and their bachelor apartment years together. Marge Litzenbert, a friend of Betty Inglis, remembers the cook, Frieda's, boned chicken within boned chicken. As an attendant in Betty's wedding, she recalled the bride walking alone down the stately staircase.



Living/Dining Room (above), Library (below)



*The Inglis Highlands Estate was given to the
University of Michigan in the 1950s*

The Inglis Highlands was given to the University of Michigan in 1951 by Mrs. Elizabeth H. Inglis, widow of James Inglis, Detroit industrialist and honorary alumnus of the University. The twelve-room home was built in 1927 of irregular brick and stone construction. From its height on the eight and one-half acre estate, it commands a sweeping view of wooded hills, with the University's North Campus in the distance.

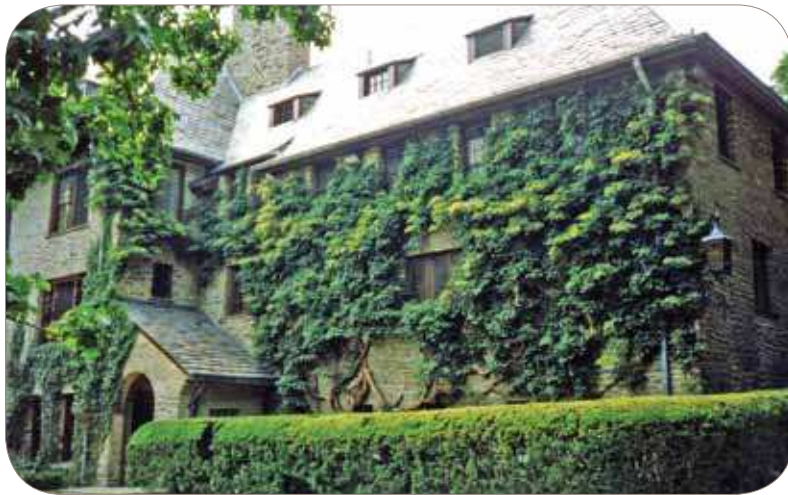




A New Slate Roof

By the 1980s, Inglis House was showing signs of needing attention. The University had gone through one of its most difficult financial periods. However, Inglis House was an important asset. The University was beginning a Capital Campaign to raise 1 billion dollars - the most any public university had attempted, and Inglis House would play a major role in the effort. However, before any work could be done to the house, a new slate roof was needed.





Ingli's House Before the Renovation



Entrance Hall (above), Ladies Powder Room (below)





Library





Living/Dining Room (above), Breakfast Room (below)





Kitchen (above), Serving Pantry (below)





Master Bedroom (above), Master Closet, Bathroom and Stairway to Third Floor Bedrooms (below)





Meadow Bedroom (above), Garden Bedroom (below)





Maid's Apartment



Third Floor Hall to Maid's Apartment, Stairs to Fourth Floor



Fourth Floor
Bedroom



Fourth Floor
Sitting Room

Renovation of Inglis House Begins



Entrance Hall



Library



Living/Dining Room



Breakfast Room



Second Floor Stairway



Second Floor Bedrooms



Fourth Floor Sitting Room



Maid's Apartment

Ingli's House After the Renovation



Entrance Hall



Library



Living/Dining Room



Breakfast Room, Kitchen and Serving Pantry



Master Bedroom, Meadow Bedroom (above), Garden Bedroom, Stairway to Third Floor (below)





Maid's Apartment (above), Fourth Floor Bedrooms & Sitting Room (below)



Restoring the Inglis Highlands Gardens



The Formal Garden





Formal Garden Lawn





The Orchard





The East Lawn - Originally the Tennis Court



Re-establishing the Korean Mum Garden, Kathryn Leidy supplied the mums given to her by Elizabeth Inglis.



Herb Garden



Rose Garden



Wildflower Garden



The Meadow



Inglis House Entrance



Front Circle



Original Greenhouse (above), New Greenhouse (below)





Rebuilding Cold House (above), Rebuilding the Hot Frame (below)





Building the Lath House



Renovating the Shed, Drying Shed (Original Peacock House), Shop, Peaches, the Inglis Highlands Cat



The Inglis Highlands Gardens 1990s



The Inglis Highlands Gardens 1990s



Inglis House in the 1950s, 1970s and 1990s after the renovation



Inglis House in the 1970s/1980s and 1990s after the renovation



Inglis House in the 1970s/1980s and 1990s after the renovation

Events at the Inglis Highlands

The Inglis Highlands provided a magnificent setting for institutional advancement. The estate was used extensively by the President for university events in the 1990s. It was also made available to Schools and Colleges, Deans, Directors, Chairs, Executive Officers and Regents for their special activities. A highly skilled staff handled all of the details. Inge Roncoli managed the house and cooked breakfast for the guests. Kurt Szalay assisted Inge and kept the house in "spic and span" order. Barbara Johnson, from the President's Office, handled reservations and worked closely with Judi Dinesen who arranged details with caterers, and oversaw each event. And Joan Kobrinski together with her staff, kept the grounds and gardens in pristine condition for the guests to enjoy. She also made all of the exquisite floral arrangements throughout the house.



Inge Roncoli



Kurt Szalay



Barbara Johnson



Judi Dinesen



Joan Kobrinski



Student Events at the Inglis Highlands



Student Events at the Inglis Highlands



Faculty Events at the Inglis Highlands



Faculty Events at the Inglis Highlands



Deans & Directors Events at the Inglis Highlands



Deans & Directors Events at the Inglis Highlands



Regents, Executive Officers Events at the Inglis Highlands



Regents, Executive Officers Events at the Inglis Highlands

Acknowledgements

Universities are highly people-dependent institutions, and the successful renovation and operation of the Inglis Highlands was due to the efforts of a great many dedicated University staff. Our sincere thanks to the following:

Inglis House Staff:

House manager: Inge Roncoli
House assistant: Kurt Szalay
Horticulturist: Joan Kobrinski
Horticulturist: Charles Jenkins
Gardening staff: Rose Abercrombie
The Students
Events Manager: Barbara Johnson
Events Designer: Judi Dinesen

Renovation Team:

Director of Plant Extension: Paul Spradlin
Director of Facilities Projects: Tom Schlaff
University Architect: David Stockson
Architect Assistant: Brian Harcourt
Interior Design: Norma Monsma

Photographs:

Inglis Family and the Inglis Highlands Estate: Douglas Inglis
Garden Restoration: Joan Kobrinski
Historical Photographs: Bentley Historical Library
Contemporary House, Gardens and Events: James J. Duderstadt

