

# Dublin Historical Society

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## GRENVILLE CLARK

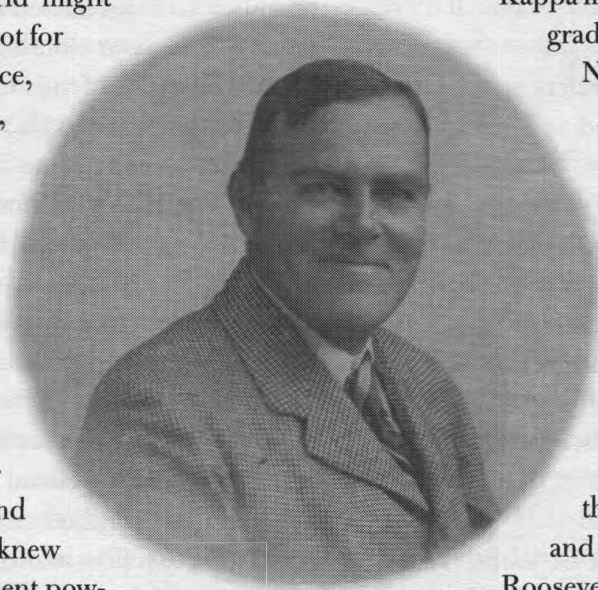
by Ian Aldrich

IT'S FAIR TO SAY that the world might have been a different place if not for Grenville Clark. His influence, often exerted from Outlet Farm, his home on Lake Road, knew no bounds, from his well-publicized effort to strengthen the United Nations to his lesser known backing of broader civil rights for African-Americans. His name may not have carried the same kind of recognition around the country as the congressmen, cabinet members, and presidents he worked with and knew well, but the world's most prominent power players knew Clark's impact. "His example," said President John F. Kennedy, "is one for which we can all be grateful."

### Early Life and Career

Grenville Clark was born in New York City in 1882, and raised in his grandfather's home on Fifth Avenue, his family having made a fortune in railroads and banking. He grew up tall and lean with a commanding presence. Clark learned early on that he could be, should be, more than just a product of his wealthy upbringing. A social conscience was imperative. He'd gleaned that from his maternal grandfather, Col. LeGrande B. Cannon, a force of a man and ardent abolitionist whose friends included Daniel Webster and Abraham Lincoln. Cannon believed in the power of ideas and action. "Don't wait for someone else to do it," he told his grandson. "Do it yourself."

Clark attended some of the country's finest schools, first Pomfret, then Harvard, where he graduated Phi Beta



Kappa in 1902. He returned for his law degree, graduating in 1906. He then returned to New York City, where he clerked for an established firm that also employed another Harvard alumnus, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Working for others, however, was not in Clark's nature, and in 1909 he teamed up with Francis W. Bird and Elihu Root Jr., and established a private law practice in New York City that quickly blossomed into a nationally recognized firm. (It didn't hurt that Root's father had served as senator and as secretary of state under Theodore Roosevelt.) Hard work took the firm further, and Clark, who throughout his life would work to the point of exhaustion, set the tone. "He prepares like a scientist and hangs on like a leech," recalled one person who knew him.

In addition to starting his new practice in 1909, Clark married Fanny Pickman Dwight, a Bostonian who over the course of her long marriage to "Grenny" was an indispensable supporter of her husband's work and causes. The couple had four children: Eleanor, Mary, Grenville Jr., and Louisa.

Fanny introduced her husband to Dublin. In 1885 her maternal grandmother had purchased the Eli Morse farm, a large tract of land on Lake Road anchored by a spacious Federal-style brick house built in 1822. Eventually Outlet Farm came to be owned by Fanny's parents, Daniel and Mary Peele Dwight. When they died in 1909, the farm passed down to Fanny. The home has a rich history. The original west wing of the house was built in 1758 and is the oldest preserved house in Dublin. Starting in the 18th cen-



*Eli Morse homestead circa 1885*

ture it served as a stopping point for travelers on the Great Road to Vermont and Ticonderoga, and as a guesthouse for Dublin's first summer visitors.

Now owned by Fanny and Grenville's youngest daughter, Louisa Clark Spencer, Outlet Farm was a center point for Clark. It's where he would come, not just to rest and escape the rigors of political wrangling, but where this "statesman incognito" as some called him, comfortably welcomed high-profile friends and did some of his most important work, often by phone. (Appropriately, his number was Dublin 1.)

### **Public Citizen**

As the world was shaken by the onset of World War I, Clark, going against the isolationist fervor coming out of Washington, sensed that American involvement in the conflict was inevitable. He also knew the country's military wasn't prepared for war.

Following the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915, a small group of private citizens headed by Clark approached Major General Leonard Wood about the need to train college students as potential military officers. They had an offer to make. Clark and the others would pay for recruitment and training of several hundred young men at an old army camp in Plattsburg, New York, so long as the War Department provided the proper training protocols. The "Plattsburg Movement," as it came to be known, was a smashing success, graduating 1,200 new officers in its first session and setting the wheels in motion for the War Department to establish twelve additional Plattsburg camps in 1916. By September 1917, Clark, who would rise to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Adjutant General's Department, saw his work lead to the commissioning of 27,341 officers. For his

work Clark was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

After the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Clark returned full-time to his private law practice. But in 1932, shortly after the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Clark called on Washington again, this time writing the new president about the concerns he had over the country's escalating debt problems. Roosevelt responded by asking his old friend to outline a plan to reduce government spending, a document that would form the backbone of the National Economy Act of 1933.

There were other issues on Clark's radar screen, too. Alarmed by increasing use of loyalty oaths and other compromises of the Bill of Rights, he pushed the American Bar Association to create a committee to guard against such intrusions. Clark was named its chairman.

In 1940, as war clouds again thickened, Grenville and his old Plattsburg friends looked at the country's seeming lack of readiness for battle and pushed for the creation of a draft. After meeting some initial resistance from then Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring, Clark worked the backchannels to have him replaced with an old friend and draft supporter, Henry L. Stimson. Eventually, Clark authored much of what became known as the Selective Service Act, which, despite early Senate opposition, became law in September 1940.

Still, even as Clark focused on defeating the Axis powers, he was looking ahead toward what the world might look like after an Allied victory and the kind of peace that would have to follow in order to prevent a third world war. In the wake of the atomic destruction unleashed on Japan in 1945, Grenville Clark, now retired and largely living full time with Fanny in Dublin, was already fully engaged in the issue that would define his life's work.

### **World Government and the First Dublin Conference**

"Grenny," one close friend once recounted, "not only carries things through, he carries them to the limit." Nowhere was this perhaps more evident than in Clark's ambitious work to create a strong world government, the need for which he saw as paramount in the nuclear age. He'd certainly been thinking about it for some time, writing as early as 1939 an unpublished plan for world peace.

In the aftermath of World War II, Clark was heartened by the global push to create the United Nations organization. But the resulting charter for the new organization was too limiting, he felt, to deal adequately with the proliferation of nuclear weapons. He dismissed the UN's one-nation-one-vote set up, favoring instead representation based

on population, and saw immediately the inherent problems connected to the organization's Security Council. "This arrangement, incredible as it may seem, is that any one of the Big Five may, by its sole fiat, paralyze the whole world organization," Clark wrote.

With his usual tenacity and efficiency Clark set to work. On October 11, 1945, just two months after Hiroshima, he, along with Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts, New Hampshire Governor Robert P. Bass, and two others, convened a five-day conference at the Dublin Inn (now Phoenix House), to address establishing a stronger United Nations. The guest list, some fifty in all, was truly distinguished, U.S. Senator Styles Bridges, and future U.S. Senator Alan Cranston, among others, all making their way to Dublin.

The conference was no love-fest, and at times the debates got thorny. Particularly divisive was whether to include the Soviet Union in the group's proposed world federation. Clark, who lobbied for Soviet inclusion, trod the sometimes delicate ground deftly.

"He was . . . a magnificent example of the man of reason joined to the man of good will," Norman Cousins of the *Saturday Review* later recalled, adding: "The political philosophy reflected in his talk placed him in the tradition of John Stuart Mill, the Physiocrats, the leaders of the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention, and jurists like Oliver Wendell Holmes. When he spoke about the need for world law, he was not just trying to prevent war; he was speaking to a condition necessary for human progress."

Under Clark's leadership, a majority of participants signed off on an eight-point plan to strengthen the UN. Stories about the conference landed in many major papers. But while the document made the important rounds in Washington and elsewhere, the UN Charter was not revised in the way the group had hoped.

Clark, though, never wavered in his support or enthusiasm for what had come out of Dublin. He continued to push his ideas with senators and cabinet members he'd come to know. With Harvard Law School Professor Louis B. Sohn, Clark published the book *World Peace Through World Law* to great success in 1958. Six years later, a frail, older Clark welcomed a new group to Alexander James' studio (now the home of Christopher James) for a second Dublin Conference.

Despite the movement's many setbacks, Clark's commitment to the cause of world government was clear, he said. "It's just that I have always felt ashamed of our human race's inability to summon up the intelligence and social will to get rid of war, when we know perfectly well how



*Great American Series stamp commemorating Clark, issued in 1985*

to do it, and when the means and the example of our own American model are before us so close at hand."

### Local Impact

While very much a man of the world, Grenville Clark found his home in Dublin. He was an active resident, bringing the same drive and passion for local causes as he did with his national and international work.

From his home, Clark had a fantastic view of the western side of Mt. Monadnock, which he cherished and regularly climbed. When news broke in 1944 that the town of Jaffrey had reached an agreement with a New Hampshire radio chain to turn over a portion of the mountain's summit to an FM radio tower, Clark, still following his grandfather's advice, swung into action. Working with Francis E. Frothingham, a Boston banker who summered in Dublin, and others, he formed the Association to Protect Mount Monadnock to fight the plan. Within a year it had 700 members.

With Clark's financial support, political connections, and tenacity, the organization successfully prevented the tower plans from going forward. The resulting work not only saved the summit from the blight of a radio tower, but eventually placed the last crucial chunks of land surrounding the top of Mt. Monadnock into conservation. Were it not for Clark, the mountain that's so beloved today would look very different.

Clark's impact could be felt on less elevated ground, too. In 1961 the Clarks turned over a portion of lake-front property to the town for the creation of a public boat landing on Dublin Lake. The Community Church was also a recipient of the family's generosity. In his will, Clark left the church \$20,000 to help secure its endowment.

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#### ACCESSIONS TO THE ARCHIVES

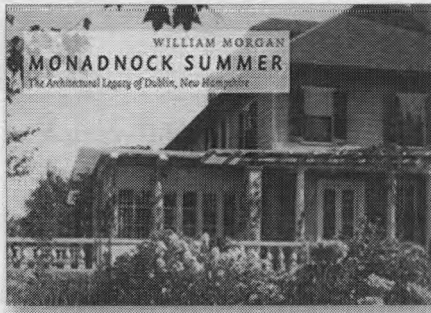
A particularly welcome gift from **Louisa Thoron** is a copy of a photograph taken at the wedding of Mary Alden Osgood to Erskine Childers, on January 6, 1904. Among the bridesmaids is Louisa's grandmother, Louisa Hooper Thoron.

Mary Osgood was the daughter of Dr. Hamilton Osgood and his wife, Margaret Pearmain, who were among the first summer residents to build a cottage in Dublin—the house off the Old Harrisville Road now owned by Charles and Sally Collier. They later built the original part of what is now Nick

and Regina Silitch's house on the south side of the lake.

Erskine Childers was an Anglo-Irishman who took the Republican side in the Irish civil war and was captured and executed by the Treaty forces in 1922. Their son, Erskine Hamilton Childers, was president of Ireland in the 1970s.

Among other generous donors have been **Holly Alderman, Anne Blodgett, Michael & Lillian Carter, Edward Germain, John & Alice McKenna, and Will Morgan**. Our thanks to them all.



#### LOOKING FORWARD . . .

We are pleased to announce the publication of *Monadnock Summer, The Architectural Legacy of Dublin, New Hampshire*, by William Morgan. Published by David R. Godine, it will be available this summer.

We are offering a pre-publication reduced price for the limited hardbound edition. Please return the enclosed order form to reserve your copy.

#### *Grenville Clark continued*

#### Later Years

In May 1964, Fanny Dwight Clark, Grenville's longtime wife, passed away. Clark, remained in Dublin. The following year, he married Mary Brush Pierce, daughter of noted Dublin painter George de Forest Brush.

Even as he aged and slowed down physically, Clark continued to immerse himself in ideas and causes. Quietly, he pushed to thaw U.S. relations with China, even attempting to put together a trip to Asia to sit down with Chairman Mao. Clark also turned his attention to pressing domestic issues, most notably civil rights. He came down on the side of freedom riders who placed their lives in jeopardy in places like Montgomery and Birmingham, and put up \$80,000 to help bail them out. He also bequeathed, over a ten-year period following his death, a total of \$500,000 to the Legal Defense Fund of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

For all his work, Clark was nominated several times for the Nobel Peace Prize, but never received that honor. Other awards, however, did come, including, in 1959, the American Bar Association Medal, the organization's most prestigious recognition. In addition, he received the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Medal, honorary degrees from Harvard, Princeton, and Dartmouth, and was a member of the Harvard Corporation.

His death, on January 13, 1967, made national news. His funeral service filled the Dublin Community Church with more than 250 mourners and concluded with a communal singing of "Battle Hymn of the Republic." In his obituary, the New York Times called him "one of the great private citizens of his time."

That might have seemed like a little much to the humble Clark, who, when asked late in life about his work, offered up a fairly simple explanation.

"It all came about quite naturally," he said. "My public interests were simply a matter of course."

*(Ian Aldrich is a member of the Historical Society's board of trustees. He edits and writes for Yankee Magazine and is the great-great-grandson of George de Forest Brush.)*

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Society records with sorrow the death of **Charles A. Winchester**, for many years a member and benefactor of the Society, and extends its condolences to his widow, Ellen, and to his daughter, Ann Conway.

We also note with sadness the loss of **Clinton B. Yeomans**, and extend our condolences to his daughters, Grace Thayer, Carol Conard, and Tyler Madden.

We are very grateful for the contributions received in their memory.