



Robert R. McCormick Museum
Cantigny Park
1 S 151 Winfield Rd.
Wheaton, IL 60189

CANTIGNY

McCormick's Home

Self-Guided Exterior Walking Tour



Robert R. McCormick Museum

Dedicated to connecting Robert R. McCormick's life and legacy with the modern world

Museum visits by guided tour, open Tuesday to Sunday

Welcome to Colonel Robert McCormick's Home

Chicago Tribune owner Joseph Medill (1823-1899) built this house in 1896. He spent \$15,000, nearly 3 times the budget for a typical house. Architect Charles A. Coolidge designed a white clapboard farmhouse with a strong classical portico for the front facade. Medill named his property *Red Oaks Farm* after the 300 year-old oak trees that still grow on the estate.

His daughter, Katherine Medill McCormick (1853-1932) and her husband Robert Sanderson McCormick (1849-1919) received the house in 1898. They gave it to their youngest son, Robert Rutherford McCormick (1880-1955) in 1910.

Robert, and his first wife Amy, changed the estate's name to *Cantigny Farm* to honor Robert's service in Cantigny, France with the First Division during World War I. They decided to remodel the house in the early 1930s and hired architect Willis Irvin to oversee the expansion. He used the McCormick family's 18th century plantation home in Virginia as inspiration.

Irvin's changes included adding East and West wings and a new brick façade covered with a white lime wash. The West Wing holds private bed, bath and dressing rooms on the first floor, staff quarters on the second floor and kitchen spaces in the basement. The East Wing holds the showplace *Freedom Hall*, McCormick's name for his soaring library space, and a private movie theater in the basement.

Who was Robert R. McCormick?

Robert R. McCormick (1880-1955) led an exciting life. The son of diplomat Robert Sanderson McCormick and Katherine Medill McCormick, he attended school in England until age 13. Frequent visits with his grandfather Joseph Medill influenced his love of journalism.

As an adult, his interests ranged from journalism to fox-hunting to aviation. As editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune* for 44 years, he created a media empire that survives today. He built Tribune Company from a single newspaper to a media giant by creating radio and television stations and building newsprint factories.

This one-time politician became a citizen-soldier, serving in the Illinois National Guard in 1915 and as a Colonel in the First Infantry Division during World War I.

He enjoyed the life of a gentleman-farmer, operating the Tribune Experimental Farms in Wheaton and Yorkville, Illinois and influenced the creation of Meigs Field, an airport in Chicago.

He married twice, first to Amy Irwin Adams, who lived at Cantigny until her death in 1939, and later to Maryland Mathison Hooper, with whom he traveled the world.

Upon his death, his will established the Robert R. McCormick Charitable Trust, known today as the McCormick Foundation, which established Cantigny as a public park and created a charitable trust to fund programs serving children, communities, and country.



Espalier Sculptures

Maryland McCormick added decorative sculptures to the house. These pieces mimic pear trees in espalier, a process of training trees to grow in a two-dimensional pattern, usually against a wall.



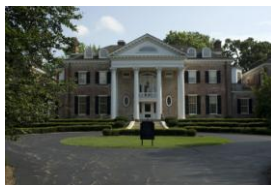
White Wash

Behind the sculpture, and in protected places under the eaves, you'll see remnants of a lime-based white-wash. In 1936, the house appeared white, not red as you see it now. This enhanced the Colonial-style architecture overall. Over time the whitewash has weathered off most of the exterior. *(Look to the right and left of the front porch)*



Chinese Lion

A pair (male and female) of Chinese lions stand guard at the front door. Maryland McCormick appreciated Chinese art and collected pieces from all over Asia. These lion statues compliment the Asian art found throughout the home.



North Entrance

The McCormicks greeted guests at the formal front entrance to their Colonial Revival home. From this view you can imagine the house as it looked in 1896, before the large additions and the brick façade were added.



Madison Porch

James Madison's Virginia home, *Montpelier*, inspired this porch addition. Modeling his residence after those of prominent early American patriots highlighted how much he revered these men. Robert added screens in the 1940s but used glass panels at eye level to provide an unobstructed view.



Allee

Looking south across the lawn, you'll see two rows of stately trees stretching across Cantigny Park. Robert McCormick used the allee as a formal starting point for foxhunts held on the grounds. Dutch Elm disease took most of the American Elms planted here but landscape architect Franz Lipp preserved the look and feel of the allee when he designed Cantigny's gardens in 1967.



South Reflecting Pool

The McCormicks enjoyed this restful spot, an early landscape feature. Sit quietly near the pool and you'll be rewarded with frog calls.

(Face the Madison Porch and continue on the path to your right)



Jefferson Porch

Robert McCormick honored Thomas Jefferson by crafting a porch reminiscent of Monticello, Jefferson's Virginia home. The porch is attached to the eastern side of the 1930s addition of Freedom Hall.

(Look for the sculpture niches to the right and left of the porch)

The Exedra



Nestled in the trees and just east of the house, Robert's grave site echoes classical Greek and Roman architecture. In Ancient Greece, an *Exedra*, or semicircular walled niche with a raised seat, served as a gathering place for conversation and contemplation. In Ancient Rome, these structures formed parts of buildings. Robert and Amy McCormick are buried in Cantigny's Exedra. The statues represent two favorite pet dogs, Lotta and Shelia.



Sculpture Niche

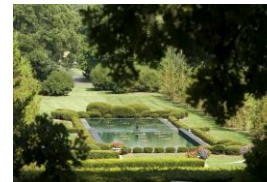
Sculpture niches flank the porch. Originally intended to hold statues of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, the statues were never produced. Four other patriots are honored above the North and South windows where the names (Patrick) Henry, (Daniel) Morgan, (George Rogers) Clark and (George) Mason are carved in limestone.



Swimming Pool site

By 1919, Robert McCormick was a wealthy man. In August, he built a swimming pool that cost as much to build as a typical house--\$3,500. Originally located on a terrace between the house and the East Reflecting Pool, it was filled in sometime after 1940.

(Follow the steps down hill)



East Reflecting Pool

These terraces and reflecting pool, like the small one to the South, are early features designed by the landscape architecture firm Root & Hollister.

(Return to the house and continue around the North side)



Burr Oak Tree

Robert McCormick protected an enormous Burr Oak tree during construction of the east side addition. He paid special attention to the tree's root system and designed a bathroom floor to avoid cutting important tree roots.