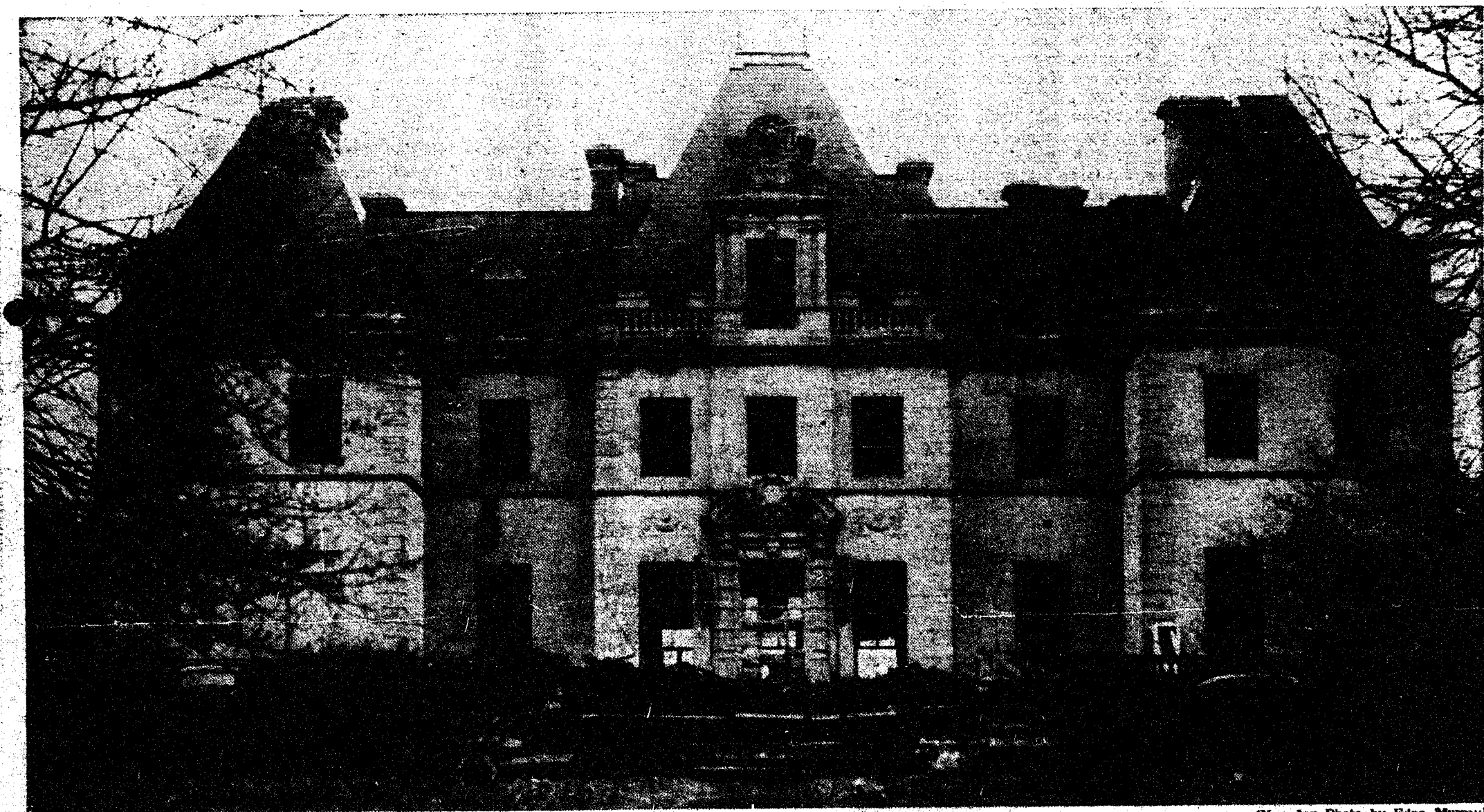


Demolition Crew Beats Vandals In Wrecking Mackay Chateau

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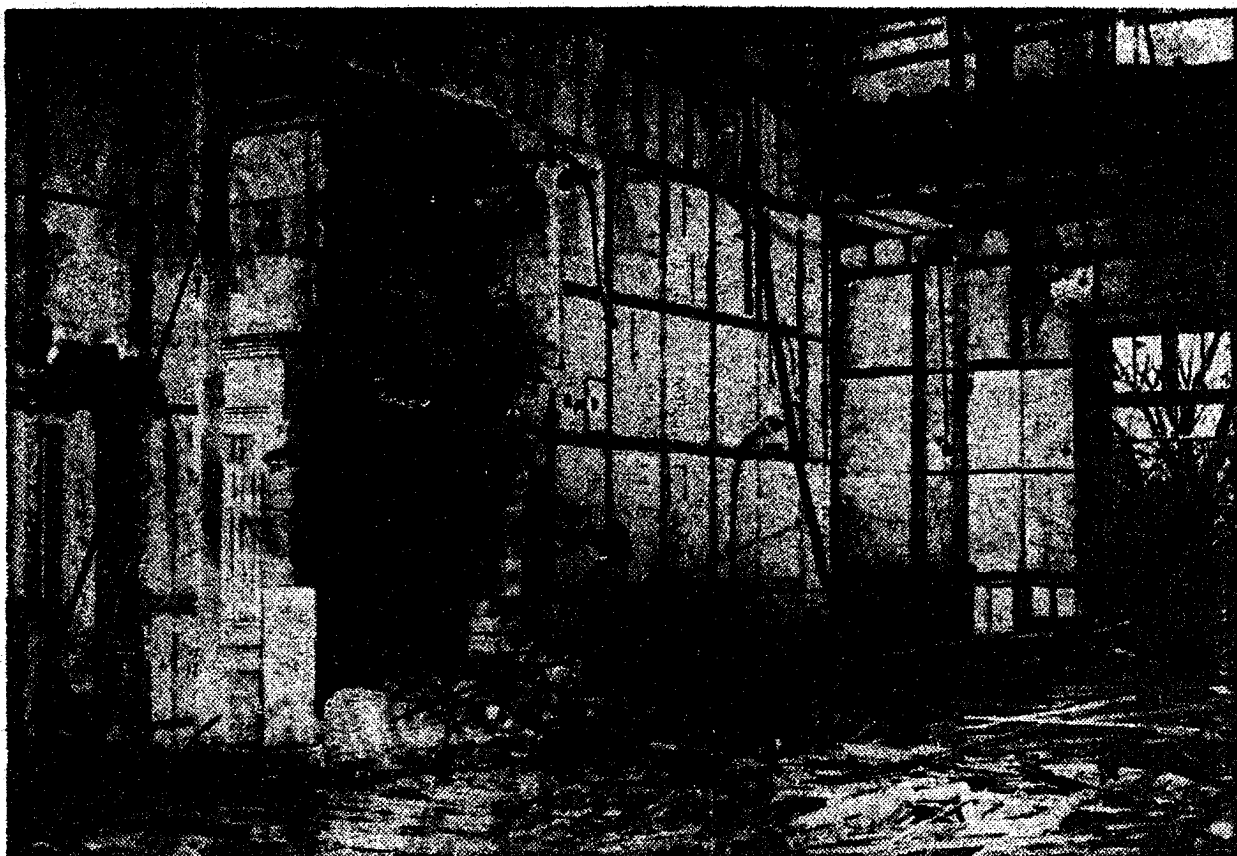
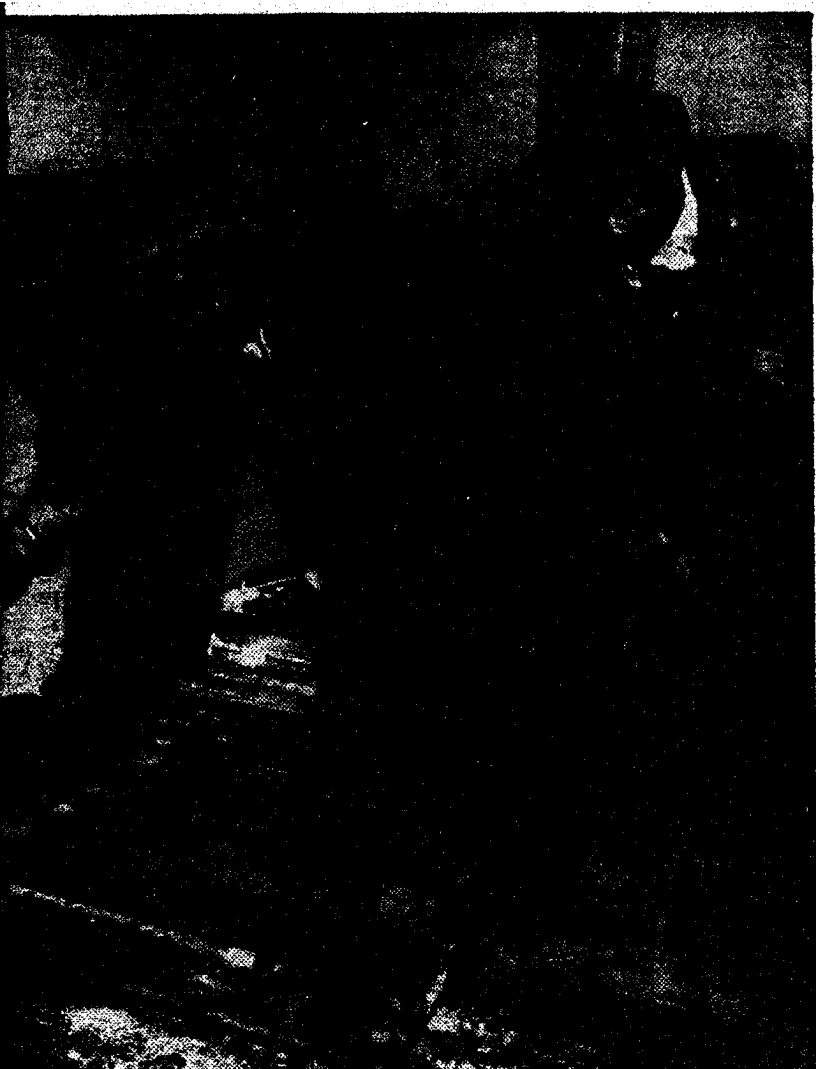
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(*Newsday* Photo by Edna Murray)

LAST DAYS of the fabulous Gothic chateau, the **Mackay** mansion at East **Hills**, are drawing to a close as wreckers tear it down board by board. Built for **Clarence** Mackay's bride 40 years ago, it housed the

famous and the royal and its 40 rooms often were filled with guests. The manion cost \$6,000,000 to build. Here is the exterior front view of the house. (Story and other photos on page 3.)



GONE are the rich hangings, the ancient armor, the carved moldings and mantles in the huge reception hall where once as many as 1,000 guests were entertained, at Harbor Hill, the Mackay mansion at East Hills. At left, wreckers salvage the expensive flooring of the stable, famous for its tiled interior, teak doors and chimes tower.

Demolition Crew Beats Vandals In Wrecking Mackay Chateau

By Helen Dudar

East Hills—Another fabulous old mansion which housed a multi-millionaire in the gaudy era when the servants numbered 100 and party guests reached 1,000 is on the way down the dusty trail to the special junk yards reserved for the colossal "white elephants" that dot Nassau's North Shore.

Harbor Hill, the \$6,000,000 French chateau built over 40 years ago by the late Clarence Mackay with the wealth amassed from silver mines and telegraph and cable services is being demolished by a professional wrecker before local vandals destroy everything of value in it.

Demolition of the 40-room, three-story mansion which stands at the highest point on the 450-acre estate was ordered by Mackay's son, John, because "during the war when we could not hire watchmen and when police were suffering from the manpower shortage, vandalism reached such a peak that the home . . . was destroyed to a point almost beyond repair."

House Stripped

For six weeks now, a wrecking crew of the Mar-Gus Co., 795 Hempstead Tpke., Elmont, has been stripping the house, stone by stone, floorboard by floorboard, but it will be four and one-half more months before the vast residence of the cable king is completely razed.

Remorseful over seeing the home of his youth demolished, Mackay, an executor of his father's estate, said it would be impossible to prevent repeated acts of vandalism except by a 24-hour guard. He is living in the southeast corner of

the estate in what was the superintendent's 20-room "cottage."

The dream house Clarence Mackay built for his beautiful bride, who shocked society in 1913 by running away with another man, is now only a bleak granite shell of the lavish residence where the Prince of Wales and 1,200 guests were entertained at a typical Mackay party 23 years ago.

Virtually everything of value has been stripped from the interior and Mar-Gus wreckers are now going to work on the outside. Augustus Frati, owner of the Elmont firm, said he had already salvaged 100 tons of cast iron and 50,000 cubic feet of granite slabs from the Gothic home.

Other Jobs

Frati's professional services have been responsible for the demolition of a half-dozen famous showplaces on the Gold Coast. His wreckers have accounted for the razing of the mansions of John Schiff, Oyster Bay, Clifford Brokaw Jr., Glen Cove, and Mrs. John T. Pratt, Glen Cove, among others.

Surrounded by acres of wooded

hills and yards of overgrown formal gardens, the Mackay home rang with the sounds of sledgehammers and workmen's voices yesterday.

Inside, an occasional strip of fine old oak panelling or a seven-foot fireplace whose granite carving had not yet been removed

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Fabulous Mackay Chateau Falls to Axes

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hinted at the former splendor of the huge home.

An incredible amount of rubble covered the floors while in odd corners fine, hand-carved pieces of molding were piled up beside bathroom fixture waiting for removal. Magnificent parquet flooring had been stripped from the floors, exposing the concrete base and in every room the enormous, bare fireplaces had become only blackened holes in the walls.

Horse 'Palace'

Close by, the fabulous, circular main stable, built in Gothic style to match the house, was also being torn down. Probably the most resplendent home of horses ever created, the stable had huge teakwood doors, a tiled interior, Belgian brick flooring, and a huge tower with a set of chimes. In later years, Mackay filled it with the well-kept ancient carriages and horseless buggies which he collected as a hobby.

Large sections of the mansion's interior have already been sold. The magnificent staircase and several rooms which were imported, piece by piece, from France went to some of the most prominent names in the Social Register, according to young Mackay and Frati.

The executors long ago disposed of many of the furnishings, including the huge collection of antique armor the multimillionaire amassed. Some of the furniture was sold, some went to museums and the remainder to members of the family.

Mackay said the huge formal garden, now overgrown, its 12-foot stone and bronze statues and the enormous fountain would remain intact because he felt that, whatever happened to the property, it was possible that this section of the estate might be retained.

Trees Gone

The vast property, however, is not the estate that old Mackay knew. Fifty of the tremendous poplar trees that lined the southeast corner have been uprooted recently to allow for the widening project undertaken on Glen Cove Road by the county.

The U. S. Army leases about 300 acres which it has fenced. During the war, the area served as a radar station. Now 12 GLs, attached to Mitchel Field, live on the property in trailers.

Large sections of the property are rented to farmers who were out yesterday, busily plowing and planting their fields.

Mackay says he has quite definite plans for the property if and when the Army vacates. The 150-

acre portion which is not leased to the Army is for sale, he indicated, but "any developer who buys this parcel will have to prove to me first that his work will be an asset to the community."

During the hey-day of the mansion's existence, its owner made the headlines regularly. First his wife, socialite Katherine Duer, deserted him and their three children and eloped to Paris with his friend, Dr. James Blake. A devout Catholic, Mackay waited until her death in 1930 before he

married Anna Case, the great Metropolitan Opera soprano.

Then, over his fierce opposition, his daughter, Ellin, eloped with the Tin Pan Alley idol, Irving Berlin. They were not reunited until 1928 when the first Mrs. Mackay died.

On the memorable "Black Friday" that opened the 1929 crash, Mackay was reputed to have lost \$36,000,000 in 30 minutes. He closed up the big house and moved out, but in 1935, after he had recouped some of his immense wealth, he and his wife returned to stay until his death three years later.