



# Helen Frick and the True Blue Girls

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In Wenham, for forty-five years Helen Clay Frick devoted her time, her resources and her ideas for public good, focusing on improving the quality of life of young, working-class girls. Her style of philanthropy went beyond donating money: she participated in helping thousands of these girls.

It all began in the spring of 1909, when twenty-year-old Helen Frick wrote letters to the South End Settlement House in Boston, and to the YMCAs and churches in Lowell, Lawrence and Lynn, requesting “ten promising needy Protestant girls to be selected for a free two-week stay ”in the countryside.<sup>5</sup>

In June, she welcomed the first twenty-four young women, from Lawrence, to the Stillman Farm, in Beverly.<sup>2, 11</sup> All told, sixty-two young women vacationed at Stillman Farm, that first summer, enjoying the fresh air, open spaces and companionship.<sup>2</sup>

Although Helen monitored every detail of the management and organization, she hired a Mrs. Stefert, a family friend from Pittsburgh, to cook meals and run the home.<sup>2</sup>

Afternoons were spent swimming on the ocean beach at her family’s summer house, Eagle Rock, taking tea in the gardens, or going to Hamilton to watch a horse show or polo game, at the Myopia Hunt Club.<sup>2</sup>

One can only imagine how awestruck these young women were upon visiting the Eagle Rock summer home. It was a huge stone mansion, with over a hundred rooms, expansive gardens and a broad view of the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>19</sup>

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\* South End Settlement House, Boston, founded in 1892 by Robert A. Woods, provided daily educational and recreational classes, including classes in literacy, and had a playground for the working class.



Helen Clay Frick and father Henry Clay Frick, 1910. (Nat'l Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution)

Helen Frick's interest in helping working-class young women may have come from the efforts of other enlightened upper class philanthropic/reformers, such as copper heiress Grace H. Dodge. Beginning in the 1800s, a national network of "working girls' clubs" began. In Princeton, MA, there was, in 1835, the Fernside Vacation House for Working Girls. By 1915, there was a network of vacation homes in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, serving about fifteen-hundred working women each summer.<sup>7</sup>

As her coming out present in 1908, she convinced her father to donate a hundred-and-fifty-acres of land, in Pittsburgh, as a children's park.<sup>8</sup>

"Working girls" were largely from rural areas of New England, who worked at the textile mills. Only fifteen to twenty-five years old, they worked about a seventy-hour week and lived at large boarding houses. At the time, women generally were seen as having few capabilities outside domestic life, thus mill work was an opportunity to be gainfully employed.

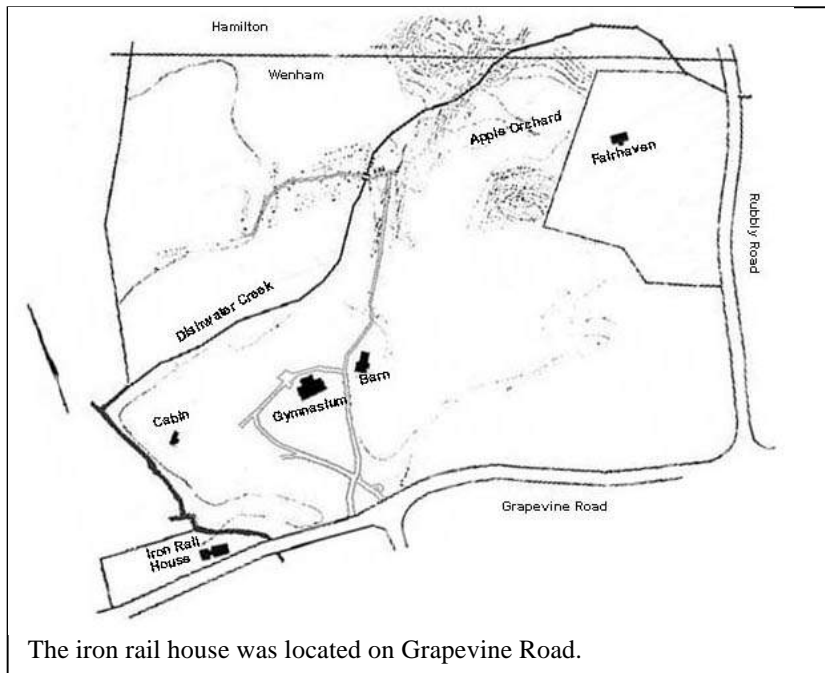
The girls began work at six-thirty in the morning, carrying their lunch with them and working until six o'clock at night. Fifty-eight hours a week with a pay envelope, on Saturday, of \$5.25.<sup>11</sup>

### **Born in Pennsylvania**

Helen Clay Frick was born (Sep. 3, 1888) in Pittsburgh, PA. She was the third child of Henry Clay Frick and Adelaide Howard Childs. She grew up at the Clayton mansion. In 1905, the Fricks moved to New York City, where Helen attended the Spence School,\* Helen where she studied art appreciation. Prior to going to Spence School, Helen Frick was educated by a governess. She is said to have been a "voracious reader."<sup>2</sup>

Henry C. Frick founded the H. C. Frick & Co., a manufacturer of coke. (*Coke is used as a fuel and as a reducing agent in smelting iron ore in a blast furnace.*) He was chairman of the Carnegie Steel Co., and helped form of U. S. Steel. He also financed the construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Reading Co., and owned extensive real estate holdings in Pittsburgh and throughout Pennsylvania.<sup>11</sup>

At the time, the Frick family's primary residence was in the Point Breeze neighborhood in Pittsburgh. Called Clayton, the mansion had a mere twenty-four rooms.<sup>11</sup>



Henry C. Frick has been criticized by historians for his lack of morality and ruthlessness in business.

Yet, when he died, Frick left over eighty percent of his huge fortune to be distributed to charitable institutions in New York, Pittsburgh and the West Overton-Connellsville Coke region of Pennsylvania, where he was born. The bulk of what remained went to Helen, despite the fact that he also was survived by his widow; his son, Childs; and four grandchildren.<sup>2</sup>

### **Iron Rail Property Acquired**

Apparently, following the 1909 summer at the Stillman Farm, Helen Frick quickly realized that she needed more space to bring young women for their summer vacations.

On a trip to Europe in 1909, Henry C. Frick said to his daughter, Helen, "This trip is going to be an eventful one, for I am going to spend much time in Paris selecting some perfectly matched pearls for a necklace for you." Her reply, "Thank you, but I would much rather have the money that the pearls would cost. I want to have a place in the country where girls from the city can spend a vacation."<sup>11</sup>

Henry Frick bought the iron rail property (*twenty-five acres*), in Wenham, from Henry H. Melville. He said that he purchased it for his daughter's work "of making life more enjoyable, for the working girls in the mills of Lawrence, Lowell, and other New England cities, providing a place where they may spend a few weeks' vacation, during the summer."<sup>1</sup>



Back of Iron Rail Vacation Home in 1921.<sup>11</sup>

Two years previous, Henry Clay's son, Childs, had leased the iron rail property. He used the barn as a stable for his polo ponies and had a fine practice polo field laid out.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the barn, there was a large house, the old iron rail house.<sup>11</sup>

### **Property Dates Back to 1638**

The Iron Rail property originally was part of a 1638 land-grant to Richard<sup>I</sup> Dodge. The land, at the time, was still part of Salem (*and what today is Beverly*).<sup>8</sup> Richard<sup>I</sup> and Edith Dodge had five sons. He willed each son a portion of his large property, which by the time of his death had increased to five hundred acres.<sup>8</sup>

Richard<sup>II</sup> Dodge received the portion of Wenham, now called iron rail. Richard<sup>II</sup> had three sons: Richard<sup>III</sup>, Daniel<sup>3</sup> and William<sup>III</sup>.<sup>8</sup> The Iron Rail House, so-called because it had iron railings in front, was built by Richard<sup>3</sup> Dodge, about 1703.<sup>19</sup> From that time on, the name iron rail became associated with the property. (*Properties were known by the name of the owner, its location or significant attribute. Thus, the John<sup>V</sup> Dodge house got the name the Iron Rail House.*)

Richard<sup>II</sup> willed the iron rail property to his son, Daniel<sup>III</sup>, who was, in 1710, one of first teachers in Wenham, and one of the first graduates of Harvard University. In 1740, Daniel<sup>4</sup>, who later willed the house to his son, David<sup>V</sup>.<sup>19</sup>

In 1750, the house was owned, briefly, by John Lowe. That same year. A member of the Dodge family repurchased the iron rail property, and kept it until the mid 1800s.<sup>19</sup>

In 1850, Thomas Thompson, from Marblehead, bought the iron rail property and ran it as a working farm, until 1899. It was during this time, the area became known as Thompson's Corner (*Grapevine and Essex Streets*). Many changes were made to the original iron rail house.<sup>1</sup>

The house changed hands rapidly in the early 1900s, going through the hands of men named Tuckerman, Grantham, Willard, Melville and Allen.<sup>19</sup>

### Iron Rail Vacation Home

One of the letters Helen Frick mailed in 1909 went to the South End Settlement House in Boston. Robert Wood, the Director, gave the letter to his assistant, Ellen Boyd, and said, "Look into this very thoroughly, for it may bring wonderful results, or possibly it may be the passing whim of a very rich girl."<sup>11</sup>

As Ellen Boyd would write many years later, "it was not the whim of a young lady, with her whole life ahead of her, and money enough to satisfy her every desire, but a real honest-to-goodness dream."<sup>11</sup>

After extended a correspondence with Ellen Boyd, Helen Frick hired her, in the summer of 1910. Ellen Boyd became the director of the Iron Rail Vacation Home. She was an experienced social worker from the City Missionary Society of Boston.<sup>1</sup>

Ellen Boyd was born and raised in Medfield, MA. She took her first paid work at the Boston City Missionary Society. She remained there for thirty years, leaving to work at Iron Rail Vacation Home, in 1910.<sup>11</sup>

Boyd selected the girls to come to the iron rail site. Some were only fourteen years of age, and worked in stores and mills, fifty-eight hours a week, for as little as \$5.25, a week.



Blue girls, 1932. (Photo courtesy of the Wenham Museum)



Ellen Boyd, 1909<sup>k</sup>

They traveled, from Boston to Beverly, by train and, then, by trolley to Wenham. The girls, as many as eighty at a time, spent two weeks at the camp.<sup>1</sup>

Many of those guests, chosen by Ellen Boyd, were errand girls in R. H. Stearns Store in Boston, were only fourteen years of age, and came from families living on Island and Chesterfield Streets, in homes, not far from the South End Settlement House. In the whole of the summer of 1910, nearly five hundred guests came for summer vacations at the Iron Rail Vacation Home.<sup>11</sup>

Once at the iron rail house, the girls were assigned a room (*two to a room*), given new clothes to wear, which included blue pantaloons. They also wore blue stockings, a white middie blouse, white shoes, and a blue scarf. From this dress, the girls quickly became known as the "True Blues."<sup>1</sup> The name True Blue was a popular expression, of the day, meaning faithful and loyal.

Since some of the girls, when they arrived, appeared to be undernourished, each was weighed, at the beginning and end of their stay.<sup>19</sup>

The rooms were furnished with beds, dressers and tables. The girls cared for their own rooms, and they took turns waiting on the dining tables and arranging flowers for each rooms.<sup>11</sup>

The house had small, old-fashioned rooms, a fireplace in every room, and wide-board floors.

A set of rules was developed for the girls: no makeup, no fibbing, no smoking, no boys, no gossiping and no bobbed hair.\*<sup>19</sup>

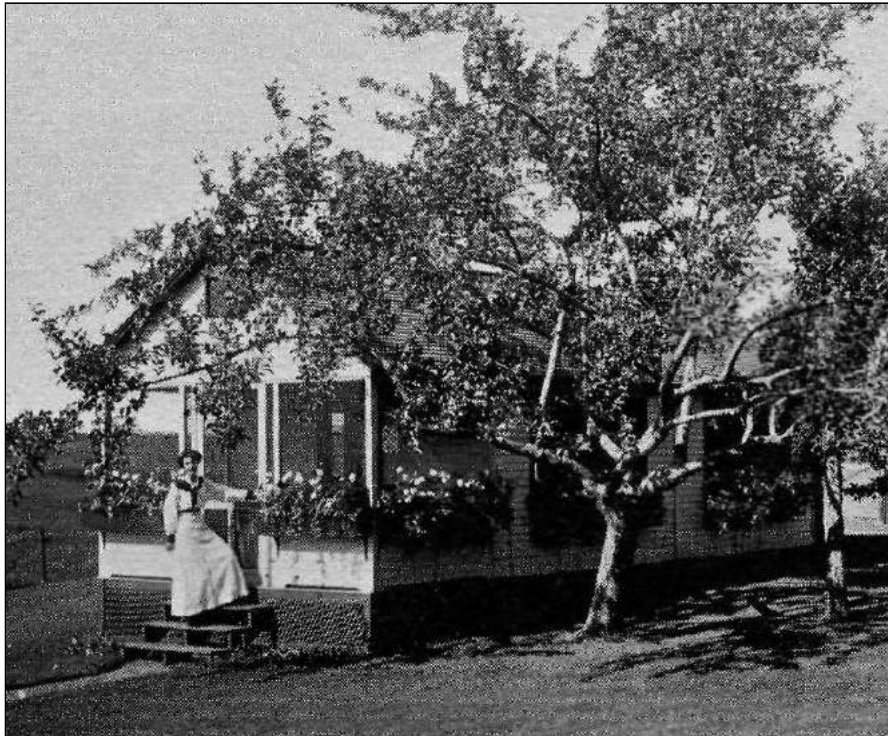
Chicken dinners were served on Sundays, with fresh vegetables and homemade ice cream, made and churned in an old-fashioned freezer by the young guests, who felt repaid for any effort because they could each have a portion of the delicious cream, which clung to the dasher when the ice cream was ready to be packed until dinner time.<sup>11</sup>

Milk came from Eagle Rock dairy every day.<sup>2</sup>

Besides director Boyd, there was a cook, her helper, and a gardener. They lived in the house, as did the girls. Helen Frick stayed at the family home at Prides Crossing.

Hugh McLean, the gardener, who worked very hard to get his flowers in bloom so that every room in the cottage would have sweet peas on the dresser, and the dining tables would never be without flowers.<sup>11</sup>

For local travel, the Iron Rail Vacation Home had two buses.<sup>11</sup>



Friendship cabin, 1914.<sup>11</sup> At the peak, there were eight cabins on the property.

The kitchen was quite large and very-well equipped. The cook, Mrs. Foster, with her helper, Mary Heffernan, “felt that they were most necessary to the happiness and smooth-running of a place dedicated to the bringing of joy and health and peace of mind to hundreds of young women placed in the care of all the workers at the Vacation Home.”<sup>11</sup>

Eventually, as the number of girls coming to the Iron Rail Vacation Home increased, ten cabins were built about the property. Each cabin had eight cots, and a separate room for a counselor. The cabins had individual names, such as Friendship (*the first one built*) and Adah House (*Adah, Hebrew, meaning: gorgeously adorned.*). The girls in each cabin were responsible for housekeeping.<sup>1</sup>

While there was a gardener, the girls also helped grow own vegetables.

Each year, mothers of the girls were welcomed to come to Wenham, for three-day getaways, at no cost.<sup>19</sup>

The Iron Rail Vacation Home was open June, July and August. There were plenty of social activities and games to keep the young women busy.

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\* The bob haircut was simply a blunt cut, level with the bottom of the ears all around the head. It was worn either with bangs or with the hair brushed off of the forehead. It was a simple look but a drastic departure from the long feminine looks. Preachers warned parishioners that “a bobbed woman is a disgraced woman.” Men divorced their wives over bobbed hair. One large department store fired all employees wearing bobbed hair. <sup>u</sup>



There were gym classes, sewing lessons, entertainments and all kinds of activities.<sup>11</sup> There was etiquette instruction

The girls were asked to assist in the daily tasks of the household,<sup>11</sup>

Each young woman coming to Iron Rail for the first time was presented with a small New Testament hand-inscribed and signed by Helen C. Frick.<sup>19</sup>

Later in life, one of the True Blue girls wrote, "I'll never forget my first visit and my first Sunday, when Helen Frick spent much of the afternoon with us girls; I still have a Bible verse she gave me, written in her own handwriting."<sup>1</sup>

There were deer, pheasants, raccoons and foxes living on the property.

Their motto was, "For the other girl."

A group of Lawrence girls, in 1910, came up with the Iron Rail Song.

Iron Rail's the place to go  
To make your friendships rare  
Laughter, rhymes, and jolly times  
Girls from everywhere.  
Glad, yes, be glad,  
And don't unhappy be,  
When you know you can come back,  
Back to Beverly.<sup>19</sup>

A hard-cover True Blue Hymnal, printed in 1914, was distributed at no cost to each member, for years after.<sup>19</sup>

By 1914, Henry Frick had bought the back parcel (*the Capt. Richard Dodge property*) and other properties nearby, including some in Hamilton. His total holdings were 1,181, acres.<sup>1</sup>

Gradually, the property grew to consist of two hundred and eighty-two acres of land, including forty-five acres of waterfront on Chebacco Lake. Instead of one building, as in 1910, it expanded to have thirty buildings, including a large, modern, brick auditorium and gymnasium, equipped with a large kitchen and dormitory.<sup>11</sup>

Previously, the large barn on the property had been modified to be a gymnasium. However, in 1941 a new brick gymnasium, with additional rooms and a library was built.<sup>19</sup>

Trips were an exciting part of True Blue for many members. Paid for by the girls through their club savings fund, these trips were often the first they ever had. How thrilling it must have been in 1915, when the first group of fifty-seven set out by boat and train for an eleven day trip to Washington. D.C. The cost? \$25, each. The most ambitious trip True Blue ever taken was in 1929. A 10,000 mile cross country train trip in Pullman cars, with sightseeing tours in four cities. The girls cooked their own meals on board.<sup>19</sup>

The Iron Rail Vacation Home remained open during World War I. However, during World War I, Helen Frick was a volunteer, in France.<sup>3</sup> She founded a Goodwill section of Red Cross to help the WWI refugees in Europe and later established a Frick unit under the Red Cross, which was responsible for care of refugees, in over seventy towns in France. She also provided a foster home to British refugee children and enrolled them in the school, organized the Forty-Plus Club, to assist the older men find employment, initiated pension plans for the employees of the Frick building, and supported the food distribution program.<sup>5</sup>

During WWI, wool was supplied to the Club members and their families so that they might participate in helping win the great conflict. The result was a staggering number of sweaters, socks, scarves, helmets, children's dresses, clothing of many sorts, and also hospital garments.<sup>11</sup>

The guests at Iron Rail were busy night and day, making garments and knitting sweaters and socks for the soldiers.<sup>11</sup>

Candy sales, fairs and collection drives were always being held, it seems to raise funds to contribute for charitable causes, here and abroad. During WWI, for example, the girls bought two ambulances, sent money donations, and sewed 55,000 dresses for war relief efforts in France.

Until he died in 1919, Henry Frick paid taxes on the iron rail property,<sup>1</sup> which he willed to Helen. Further, Helen C. Frick, at the age of thirty-one, inherited \$38 million. She was the richest single-woman in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

For ten years, I lived at the Vacation Home and I thoroughly enjoyed the close contact with the guests and all the work and problems of the days.<sup>11</sup>

In 1920, Helen Frick built a house on the property, for the director, Ellen Boyd. She would live there for the remainder of her thirty-year tenure, at Iron Rail Vacation Home.<sup>1</sup>

Boyd called the house "Fairhaven," because her ancestors had settled in Fairhaven, MA. The house (*25 Rubbly Rd.*) was built to resemble the Cooper-Austin House (*on Linnaean Street, Cambridge, and estimated to have been constructed circa 1681-1682*).<sup>1</sup> Fairhaven was built approximately on the site where, in 1798, John<sup>5</sup> Dodge built his house which had the iron-rail fence.<sup>1</sup>

Not that Iron Rail Vacation Home had become a nationally prominent site, but rather that Helen Frick was a staunch supporter of the Republican Party, brought some dignitaries there. President Calvin Coolidge came to the camp.<sup>11</sup>

As her Christmas present to each member that year (1923), Miss Frick sent copies of the True Blue Almanac, a 110-page volume of "interesting facts ... and much useful and entertaining matter."



Fairhaven house, 1924 (Photo courtesy of the Wenham Museum)

Thanksgiving the holiday table was set for any True Blue without family with whom to spend the occasion.

Until 1931, Helen Frick personally paid taxes on the property, as her father had previously done.<sup>1</sup>

Sometime between 1931 and 1934, Helen Frick changed the status of the iron rail property to nontaxable, by incorporating it as Iron Rail Vacation Homes, Inc., with a Board of Directors.<sup>1</sup>

On Sundays, some true blue girls attended church services, in town. Director Ellen Boyd wrote, "The little Baptist Church, which was within walking distance of the Vacation Home, was a source of real delight, for the members of the church took us in and made our church affiliation a very unusual pleasure."<sup>11</sup>

In 1940, Helen Frick wrote in her letter to the members of Iron Rail Vacation Homes, upon Ellen Boyd's retirement, that Ellen Boyd had "become, for many, the only place on earth that can be called '(h)ome,' and because of Mrs. Boyd's genius, this [h]ome has been the inspirational source for greater ambition and greater effort along many lines. It would be impossible to estimate how many lives have been changed because of her unselfish interest, devotion, and untiring energy."<sup>3</sup>



Combination dormitory, auditorium and gymnasium was built in 1941. <sup>k</sup>

Thirty-one hundred individuals who visited Iron Rail Vacation Home during the thirty years that I was there as director Those thirty-one hundred True Blue Girls who were guests of Miss Frick had a total of 32,670 Vacations at Iron Rail varying in length from one day like Thanksgiving to a long sojourn of several months.<sup>11</sup>

“No girl ever visited this unusual young lady without carrying away a great desire to make her own life count for something worthwhile, and in scores of instances, the young lady who shared was able to definitely assist in that resolve.”<sup>11</sup>

In 1940, Ellen Boyd retired. In the following years, she privately printed an autobiography, "Adventures in Sharing," dealing in detail, with the history of Iron Rail Vacation Homes. A lawsuit, brought by Helen Frick Clay, blocked the release of Boyd's book to the public.<sup>3</sup>

In 1941, a large brick gymnasium was built on the Iron Rail property.<sup>11</sup> The gymnasium, in the old barn, had become too small. The modern brick center had a large auditorium, gymnasium, fully-equipped kitchen and dormitory.<sup>11</sup>

Even before WWII had begun, the summer of 1941, Helen Frick started a course in Defense Farming, which was continued through the summer of 1942. The outline of this course was especially for women, who might thus prepare themselves for actual farming. Frick secured the best teachers, and offered the course to anyone. Mrs. Horace Killam, Mrs. Ray Knowlton and Mrs. Edward B. Cole were enrolled from Wenham.<sup>9</sup>

The Iron Rail Vacation Home remained open during WWII. However, Helen Frick had the iron rail fence removed and donated to WWII scrap drive.<sup>2</sup>

Following WWII, interest in attending the Iron Rail Vacation Home began to weaken.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the True Blue Girls, having taken Miss Frick's advice, had gone into nursing and teaching.<sup>2</sup>

The windmill-driven well, which provided water for the houses on the property, went dry.<sup>15</sup>

In 1952, Helen Frick and the trustees of the Iron Rail Vacation Home contacted the Wenham selectmen and Water Board about the possibility of extending the water main by Grapevine bridge to iron rail property, a distance of about a quarter-mile. The selectmen felt it was too expensive a project. Subsequently, Helen Frick entered into negotiations with the Water Board and together with them arrived at a proposition that the selectmen agreed was extremely advantageous to the town. A hydrant also was put in, which helped reduce the cost of insurance, since water available was then available in case of fires. Iron Rail (*Helen Frick*) paid the bill.<sup>19, 6</sup>

Summer vacations at the Iron Rail Vacation Homes continued for the "True Blues," until 1953. Over the forty-four years of its existence, an estimated twenty thousand girls had come to Helen Frick's vacation grounds.

Iron rail vacations totaled 32,670 in all. The property grew from thirty-seven acres and two buildings in 1910 to 281 acres and thirty buildings forty years later.<sup>19</sup>

For the next twenty years, she arranged and paid for a get-together at least once a year, at a Boston hotel. She picked up the tab for the buses that brought the women to the city. In 1973, at the age of eighty-five, she hosted what would be her last True Blue reunion, at Boston's Sheraton Plaza.<sup>19</sup>

Some years after the start of the Iron Rail Vacation Homes, Helen Frick organized a True Blue Club, of former guests.<sup>11</sup> She also set up clubhouses, in some cities, like Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill and Boston, for the True Blue Clubs.<sup>14</sup>

There also were annual reunions. On Aug. 23, 1976, Helen Frick attended their final Boston reunion, but she continued to help some women financially.<sup>2</sup> As part of the reunion, the True Blue girls took a bus trip to the Iron Rail site, in Wenham.

Following their visit, the women sang the club song. "I was really blown away when they broke into song. Here are 13 ladies in their 90s, singing every damn word of the song," said Katherine Khalife, at a 1976 reunion of True Blue Girls.<sup>15</sup>

A young woman from a Lowell mill said to Helen, "I'll never forget the time I first saw you. I was afraid for I thought you were above me, but ... (when) you spoke something snapped inside my chest and I always(s) loved you after that."<sup>2</sup>

### **Girls Clubs of America**

At the suggestion of President Hoover, says Mrs. Warren, Miss Frick later gave the property to Girls Clubs of America, in 1954.<sup>15</sup>

The property was organized, on Apr. 23, 1954, as the Iron Rail Corporation, as a subsidiary of Girls Clubs of America, Inc. The GCA formed the Iron Rail venture "to maintain and operate one or more camps or vacation homes for girls and women and their children."<sup>4</sup>

Later in 1954, the Iron Rail Corp. acquired two-hundred and ninety-six acres of land, including a lake and various buildings, in the towns of Hamilton, Essex and Wenham. Each summer thereafter, through 1970, Iron Rail operated a summer camp for girls on the property. A minimal charge was paid for each camper; the camp, therefore, depended heavily on contributions.<sup>4</sup> Helen Frick was a major contributor.

Early in 1971, Iron Rail had a series of major setbacks. These included "the incapacitation of its top administrators, a fire in the camp's main building, and the loss of the backing of the camp's principal financial supporter. The cumulative impact of these blows caused Iron Rail to curtail, but not eliminate its 1971 camping program. At the end of the 1971 summer session, the buildings were closed and the furniture stored. The salaried maintenance superintendent and two non-salaried maintenance employees stayed on and lived rent free in homes on the Iron Rail property in Hamilton."<sup>4</sup>

Iron Rail now limited only the "best" Brownie troops. So, Helen withdrew her financial support and the Girls Clubs, unable to afford the program, sold the property to the town of Wenham.<sup>2</sup>

On Sept. 21, 1971, the Iron Rail board of directors met to discuss the future of Iron Rail. An appraisal of the Iron Rail property was obtained, and the maintenance superintendent was instructed to restore the fire damaged building without making any structural changes. At this meeting, the Iron Rail assets were transferred to Girls Clubs. Then, the Girls Clubs was left with the decision to operate the Iron Rail property as a summer camp for girls if the necessary funds were available.<sup>4</sup>

However, by that time, most of the independent girls clubs in New England, were finding local camping experiences for their members. These factors led to the national board to decide not to operate the iron rail facility any more.<sup>2</sup>



Iron Rail property, 2011 (Photo Bing Maps)

The property, owned by the Iron Rail Fund of the Girls Clubs of America, consisted of nearly three hundred acres, with one hundred thirty one acres in Hamilton; one hundred and nine acres in Wenham, and the remaining forty-one in Essex. The Essex portion bordered Chebacco Lake. In Hamilton, the decision whether to appropriate a sum of \$470,000 for the acquisition of land within its boundaries was put to vote at a town meeting and was voted down. Wenham voters approved the purchase of the land at a cost of \$500,000.<sup>16</sup>

### **Wenham Acquires Iron Rail**

In 1974, the Town of Wenham bought about eighty acres from the Girls Clubs of America. The Selectmen named an Iron Rail Commission, to administer the property.<sup>1</sup>

In 1976, the Fairhaven house was sold and moved, in three sections, to Hamilton. The house was so large it had to be cut into three sections to be moved. The Fairhaven house still stands and is owned privately.

In 1977, the former Dodge/Thompson house, the iron rail house, the Vacation Home for Girls, near the entrance of the property, was moved to a lot on the Sears estate on Bay Road, Hamilton.<sup>1</sup> The house was abandoned for many years since fire gutted portions of the attic.<sup>20</sup>

Today, at the Iron Rail Property:

*Wenham's Highway Department* has its headquarters and main garage.

*Wenham's Water Department* has a water storage tank adjacent to the Highway Department building.

*Wenham's Cemetery Commission* controls the "orchard section" (9.5 acres) for a cemetery.

*Hamilton-Wenham Youth Soccer Association* has a 20-year lease, expiring in 2015, and operates three soccer fields.

*Iron Rail Gymnastics Academy* rents the gymnasium. Iron Rail Gymnastics Academy, established in 1985, provides children, from the surrounding communities, with a quality gymnastics training program. There are both boys and girls teams.

*Boy Scout Troop 28* holds regular Monday evening meetings and other activities, in the refurbished barn/gymnasium.

Much of the 79.5 acres is wetland, and is maintained as conservation land.

### **Thank You Miss. Frick**

In 1981, Helen Frick moved back, from Eagle Rock, to the Clayton home, in Pittsburgh. Three years later, 1984, she died at her Clayton home, at age of ninety-six. Her body is buried alongside her parents, in the Frick family plot at the Homewood Cemetery, Pittsburgh.<sup>2</sup>

Helen Frick never married. Her father refused to allow Helen to marry, and following his death she remained single. Yet, she was a fierce defender of her father.<sup>2</sup>

She bequeathed her beloved family home to become a house museum to show how people lived during "The Gilded Age."<sup>2</sup>

In her 2007 book, "Helen Clay Frick: Bittersweet Heiress," Martha Frick Symington Sanger, wrote of Helen Frick, "I saw a deeply wounded woman, who was up against the sexism of the times, up against the misunderstanding of abuse of power by the father, just up against so much, but she pulled her bootstraps up and did it anyway."<sup>2</sup>

The Helen Clay Frick of her Wenham days was anything but a "deeply wounded woman." She was excited, she was successful, she was loving, she was proud of what she was able to do.

Helen Clay Frick insisted that of all the things in her life, her "greatest interest" was the Iron Rail.<sup>2</sup>

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