



MARY COLE MOUNTFORD
1904



THE MARY COLE MOUNTFORD STORY

March 8, 2017 CBG Auxiliary Meeting

Presentation given by Linda Nakamura
Granddaughter of Mary Mountford

Mary Cole was born in 1886 on Mayfield Farm in England. After her father's death in 1892, she moved with her mother and siblings to Whitby, England. Mary attended secondary school including Millinery and Art school which is where she met her husband Henry Mountford, a lithographer from Darlington, England. She loved painting, especially watercolors of England which each of her grandchildren inherited. Henry and Mary married in 1913 and that same year immigrated to Canada before settling in the United States with their two children and becoming American citizens.

In the mid-1930s, during the Depression, Mary Mountford was hired by the Clark family as a cook. The current Clark Botanic Garden gift shop, named for Mary Mountford, was originally a large kitchen where Mary prepared the family meals. Later, Mary's husband Henry was hired by the Clark family and together they became caretakers of the Clark property. Mary loved her job at the estate. She took pride in cooking, gardening, and caring for the house. Mary's granddaughter, Linda Nakamura, was born and raised at Clark Garden until she was three years old. She has many fond childhood memories of the Clark family and their kindness to her grandmother and her family. Linda lost her mom when she was only nineteen and recalls visiting and bonding with her grandmother spending many wonderful moments in the kitchen where Mary would prepare and share meals with her as well as assign her grandchildren chores! Mary worked hard and passed along this sense of responsibility to her family. Linda remembers washing windows, doing dishes, whatever needed to be done around the house. She also remembers playing in the attic with Clark family toys, running to see the train and buying candy with her grandfather across the street from the Clark estate. Linda also remembers how her grandmother cared for an ailing Fanny Dwight Clark.

After Fanny Dwight Clark's death, Grenville Clark gifted Clark Botanic Garden to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in 1969 which later became part of the Town of North Hempstead. Grenville assured Mary Mountford she could live on the property until her death. Mary enjoyed a full, happy life at Clark Garden until her death in 1981. She was ninety-four.

The Mary Mountford Gift & Garden Shop's opening celebration and dedication was on June 12, 1981.

Mary's granddaughter, Linda Nakamura, generously donated one of her grandmother's paintings to The Fanny Dwight Clark Memorial Garden, Inc. The painting will proudly be displayed in the Mary Mountford Gift & Garden Shop in her honor.



Artist
MARY MOUNTFORD
Gifted to FDCMG, Inc. by her family

A PICTORIAL HISTORY



Whitby, England



Mary Mountford's home in Whitby, England



The Clark Estate, 1970



Grenville Clark with Henry & Mary Mountford and their daughter Eileen



Mary Mountford with her granddaughter Linda Nakamura at CBG



Jerilyn Drelllein, Chairperson FDCMG, Inc., Louisa Clark and Linda Nakamura at CBG in 2000