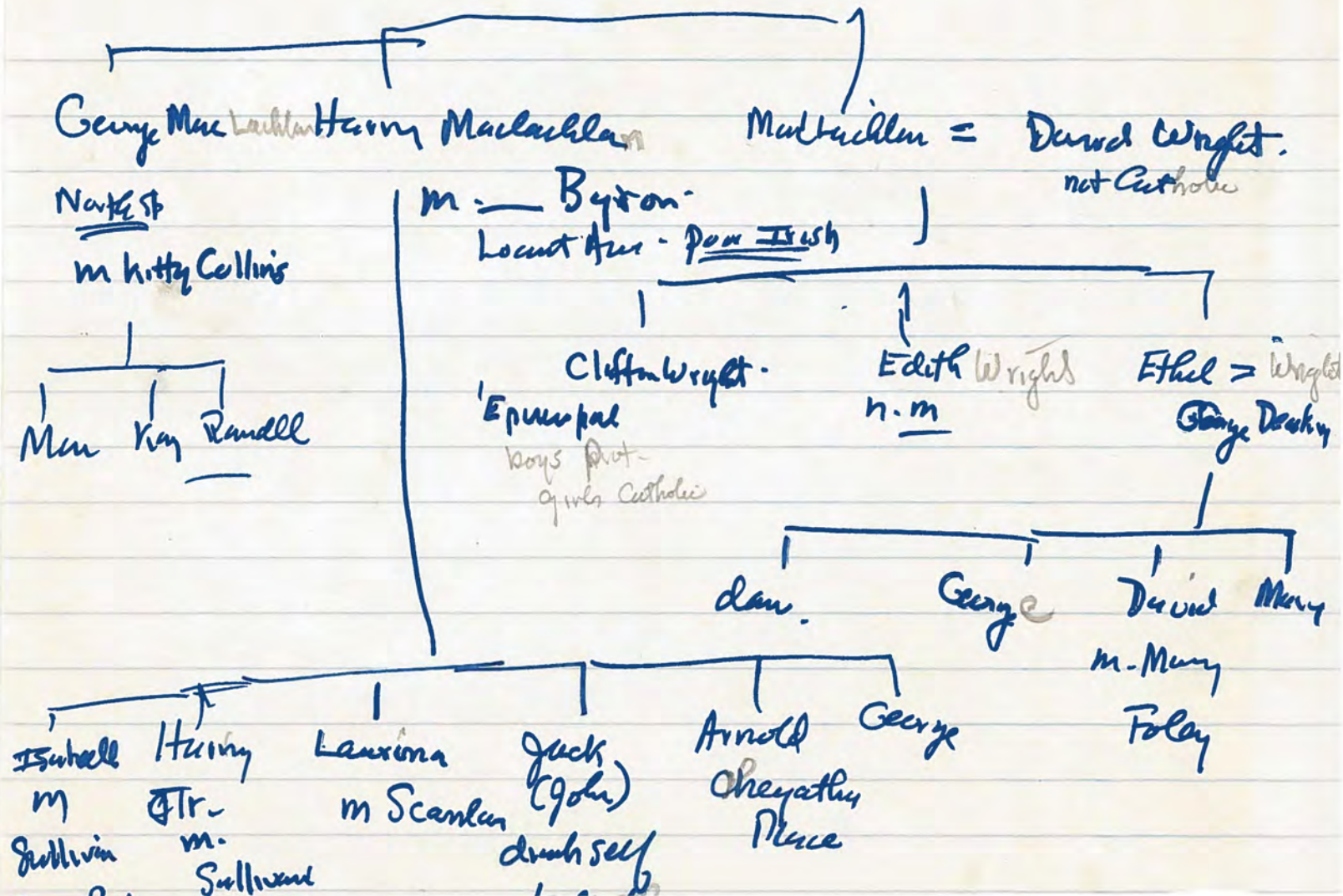


Mrs. George Mac Lochlan - Nathan 426-4614
 has book on history in Danbury.

1920s - 30s 50th Anniversary of Mac Lochlan

Chris Hansen -

Margarethe



M'LACHLAN IS GIVEN HONORS

Danbury Club President Feted at Testimonial; Oil Portrait Unveiled.

George McLachlan, president of the Danbury club since 1935, was guest of honor at a testimonial dinner in the club Saturday night when his portrait in oil was unveiled preparatory to its being hung in the lobby.

A lobster and steak dinner, attended by nearly 300 members and their guests, preceded the program.

Recognition was also given Eber A. Hodge, treasurer for more than 40 years. He was the recipient of a watch, the presentation being made by Vinson W. Bronson, toastmaster.

Opening the program, Mr. Bronson introduced two of ten surviving charter members, Mr. Hodge and Philip N. Sunderland, who were present for the affair and read a number of telegrams of congratulations and best wishes addressed to Mr. McLachlan.

A letter from Arthur E. Tweedy, first president of the club, was read. It likewise congratulated Mr. McLachlan on his achievements in behalf of the organization.

Following presentation of the watch to Mr. Hodge, Mr. Bronson presented Mayor William J. Hannan as principal speaker, expressing to him the club's appreciation of his attendance in spite of injuries from which he is still recovering.

Mayor Pays Tribute

Mayor Hannan recalled the start of the club in 1907, with 117 members and a meeting room in the Hotel Green; and erection of the clubhouse on West street, at the corner of Foster street, in 1910.

He told the gathering how Mr. McLachlan has aided the club since he assumed the presidency in 1935, when he directed the raising of funds to pay a mortgage of \$22,500 and more than \$6,000 in other obligations. In the past 15 years, the mayor pointed out, Mr. McLachlan has supervised numerous improvements, including an addition built to house the bar and directors room. These improvements, he noted, were paid from cash assets and the club is now in an excellent financial position.

The oil painting, by David Hutchison, was unveiled, as Mr. and Mrs. McLachlan looked on, by their daughter, Miss Kay McLachlan. Prior to the actual unveiling, Miss McLachlan was presented with a charcoal drawing of her father.

Mr. Hutchison, the artist, has done numerous portraits of prominent Americans. He studied in Antwerp and Paris, and his works are in a number of public buildings. He executed the murals in St. James' Episcopal church here.

The testimonial was arranged by a committee which included P. J. Meyer, Charles J. Durkin and Randall McLachlan, on a basis formulated by Mr. Dyer.

107 Charter Members

Mr. Tweedy was president of the club from 1907 until 1919. Other presidents in the next 15 years were Harry McLachlan, Frederick

Tweedy, H. J. D. Plaut, Dr. John C. Downs, C. A. Wright and Harvey G. Ward, all now deceased. The Danbury club is an outgrowth of the Town club, which had rooms on Library place. This property was sold and the club moved to the top floor of the Union Savings bank building. Mr. Tweedy was president and he assumed the presidency of the new Danbury

DANBURY CLUB UNVEILS PORTRAIT OF PRESIDENT



—Photos by Shea

An oil portrait of George A. McLachlan, president of the Danbury club, was unveiled Saturday night during a dinner attended by nearly 300 members and guests. His daughter, Miss Kay McLachlan, unveiled the portrait as Mr. McLachlan, right, and Mrs. McLachlan, far left, looked on. The portrait will be hung in the main lobby of the club, recognizing Mr. McLachlan's contributions to the organization during the 15 years he has been president.

LONG-TIME TREASURER HONORED

club when it was organized in 1907.

In 1910, plans for the new building were drawn by Mr. Sunderland and the contract was signed by a committee comprising Mr. Tweedy, the late Dr. W. C. Wiley, and the late Frederick B. Dalton.

There were 107 charter members. The ten now living are Mr. Hodge, Mr. Sunderland, Mr. Tweedy, Samuel A. Davis, Dr. W. Frank Gordon, Louis R. Helm, Edward M. Keeler, C. Stuart McLean, Philip Simon and Dr. Paul U. Sunderland.



His more than 40 years of service to the Danbury club in the office of treasurer were saluted Saturday night with the presentation of a watch to Eber A. Hodge, left. Presentation was made by the toastmaster, Vinson W. Bronson.

George McLachlan & Sons Hat Firm May Close Shop

DANBURY—Directors of the 54-year-old George McLachlan & Sons, Inc., hat firm meet Wednesday to decide whether to continue operations or to go out of business in the face of rising production and labor costs and declining sales.

The firm's president, G. Randal McLachlan, said today that all 125 employes, except a few clerical workers, have been laid off in a step to economize while the firm debates whether to close shop.

Layoffs were made at the hat factory at 10 Thorpe St. starting March 13, according to McLachlan this morning. The company was founded by George McLachlan in 1907.

Not 'Very Optimistic'

The founder's son said today that he's not "very optimistic" about the plant ever opening again as a hat company. He indicated the directors are meeting just to make "official" what everyone foresees, a discontinuance of operation.

McLachlan bemoaned the fact that all of the company's production machinery is geared only to the making of hat bodies. He said the machinery cannot be used for any other purpose.

This rules out any chance of the firm becoming a manufacturer of headgear for sports or other casual wear, he observed.

Cites Declining Market

McLachlan denied the firm had experienced any labor trouble. He said the layoffs and an apparent decision to close were the result of a declining public interest in hats and hatwear.

The layoffs have tossed another 125 employes into the unemployment ranks in the Danbury area, although the assimilation has been gradual since the layoffs first started in mid-March.

The McLachlan hat firm produced some 20,000 dozen hat bodies the first year of operation. The work force in 1907 numbered 25 employes.

Over the years, the plant grew to 50,000 square feet of space in the hat body factory on Thorpe St. and another 60,000 square feet of space in the fur factory, 190 White St.

1,000 Hat Bodies a Day

Production skyrocketed from an average of 50 hat bodies per day to more than 1,000 hat bodies per day during the early 1930's. The firm hit a peak of 150,000 dozen hat bodies annually only sporadically during the past 20 years.

Fur production was carried out in a four-story frame building. Furs were imported from Australia, England, France, Turkey, and South America. Millions of pounds of raw rabbit skins were imported.

The hats were shipped out of the U.S. to Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Switzerland. However, the principal domestic hat market for McLachlan apparel was in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

The McLachlan firm made both men's and women's hat bodies on its firming, shrinking and blocking machinery.

Actually, the McLachlan firm has been semi-closed for weeks or at least ever since the first production workers were laid off. Only office help has been maintained.

The meeting this week will be between the company's board of directors and the firm's accountant, according to McLachlan.

Another son of the founder, Charles McLachlan, was associated with the operation until several years ago. He is now in Sunbury, Pa. as president of a Hat Corporation of America affiliate.

Apr 2 1961

Jan 22 '58

Danburian Involved in Civil Suit Over Oil Wells in Texas

Officials of the 132nd District court in Snyder, Tex., have a sound claim if they ever decide to put in for "endurance" pay.

They recently concluded a 13-day hearing of a civil suit involving Harry McLachlan of Danbury, Conn., and H. R. Strouble and others of Texas, one of the biggest cases, if not the biggest, ever held in that court.

The case means much to both sides, since a number of oil wells are involved. There are 16 such wells on the lease which were developed at a cost of more than a million dollars.

The jury case, not only included thousands of words by attorneys, but illustrations for the jury including maps, graphs, charts, railroad commission exhibits, instruments from the county clerk's office, photographs and photostats.

Two tape recorders ran throughout the case to take up every word.

2,000 Typewritten Pages

And every word meant plenty, since there were enough to fill about 2,000 typewritten pages.

The judge's shorthand notes took 10 shorthand books of 192 pages each, which is the most for any one trial for Oscar Clark in his nine years as court reporter.

The case had only about 15 witnesses but some witnesses stayed on the stand for as often as four days.

The issue concerned oil property near Snyder. Substantially the dispute had to do with whether wells on the lease are still flowing naturally, as the McLachlans contended, or whether the water injection pressure maintenance program in the unit is an artificial method of production, as the Stroubes argued.

The lease was first made on

June 30, 1946, from Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Elland of Snyder to G. M. Heinzelmann of Snyder, formerly of Danbury. Heinzelmann acquired the lease for himself and for the McLachlan family.

Oil was discovered there in 1948 and a year later Heinzelmann and the McLachlans assigned the lease to the six members of the Stroube family.

Reserved Overriding Royalty

The Stroubes paid \$125,000 and agreed to develop the lease, but Heinzelmann and the McLachlans reserved 7-16ths overriding royalty from the total 8-8ths production of oil, if and when it was produced, saved and marketed.

The agreement included that "... if at any time any well on said lands does not by its natural flow produce its oil allowable after a 30-day test period, then the 7-16ths overriding royalty herein reserved shall be reduced and there shall then only be reserved by and payable to the assignor hereunder from such well or wells a 7-32nds overriding royalty; and providing any well on said lands produces less than 30-barrels per day for 30 consecutive days then in said event the overriding royalty reserved by and payable to assignor from any such well or wells shall be reduced and there shall only be reserved by and payable to assign-

or hereunder from any such well or wells a 7-64ths overriding royalty."

The Stroubes completed the first well on the lease in 1950, and by September 1951, the last of the 16 wells was completed.

During the period 1952-54 however, operators in the area became apprehensive about the decline in bottomhole pressures and the upward trend of gas-oil ratios. Physical operation was provided for a peripheral water flood. The railroad commission approved the unit's water injection pressure maintenance program in 1955, and the unit became effective in May of that year.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1964

G. Randal McLachlan, 53, Former Hat Executive, Dies

DANBURY — G. Randal McLachlan Sr., 53, of Ohehyahat Pl., president and treasurer of the former George McLachlan & Sons Hat Co. Inc., died suddenly at his home, shortly before noon yesterday.

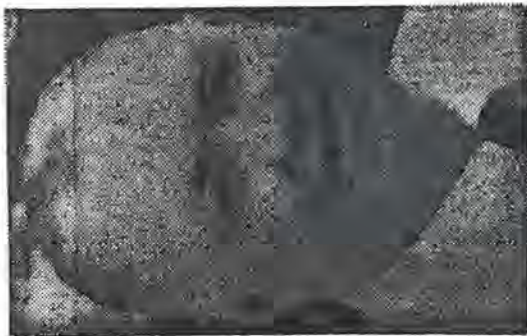
Mr. McLachlan was stricken with a heart attack and was rushed to Danbury Hospital in an ambulance, but was pronounced dead on arrival. He had been in his usual health and death came suddenly.

He was associated for many years with his father in the operation of the George McLachlan hat factory on Thorpe St. and North Main St., producing fur felt hat bodies in the rough. He succeeded his late father as president of the concern.

Mr. McLachlan was born in Danbury, June 17, 1910, son of the late George and Katherine (Collins) McLachlan, and was a lifetime resident and well known in the community.

He attended local schools and St. John's Preparatory School in Danvers, Mass., and served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was a member of the Danbury Lodge of Elks and of McGivney Council, Knights of Columbus.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Marcella Doyle McLachlan; a son, G. Randal McLachlan Jr., who is attending Phelps School in Malvern, Pa.; three daughters, Miss Margot McLachlan, a student at Mount Ida College, Boston, Mass., and the Misses



G. Randal McLachlan

Mary and Katherine McLachlan of Danbury.

Also surviving are a brother, Charles McLachlan of Sunbury, Pa.; four sisters, Mrs. Austin Hodge of Danbury, Mrs. Thomas Wall and Mrs. Jane Stevens of Fairfield, and Mrs. Lawrence Reilly of Darien; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will take place Friday at 9:15 a.m. in the John C. Freeland Funeral Home, 91 West St., and at 10 o'clock in St. Peter's Church, with a solemn high mass of requiem. Burial will be in St. Peter's Cemetery.

The funeral home will be open this afternoon and evening from 3 to 5 and 7 to 9.

Aug 30 1963

George McLachlan Dies at 56; Was Prominent in Community

DANBURY—George Augustus McLachlan, Sr., 56 former Danbury hat manufacturer, bank official and widely known throughout the area as a community leader, amateur golfer and prominent Catholic layman, died early this morning in the Danbury Hospital after a short illness. His home was at 37 Boulevard, Newtown, where he had lived for the past 15 years.

He was admitted to the hospital last week for observation and on Friday underwent an operation which disclosed an advanced malignancy. Since prior to that he had appeared to be in his usual good health, even to playing tournament golf earlier this month, his sudden passing has shocked the community where he was widely known, into a deep sense of sorrow and loss.

Headed Many Projects

His interest in the development and welfare of the community where his family had long been leaders in business and industry was manifested in his willingness to assume the chairmanship of many important civic projects.

He was a leading figure in prompting and carrying out



George A. McLachlan Sr.

plans for the War Memorial Center in Rogers Park. He was a past president of the War Memorial Center Assn. He was also general lay chairman of the building fund of Immaculate High School, regional high school of the Bridgeport Catholic Diocese currently under construction here, lay chairman of the building fund of the new St. Rose's parochial school in Newtown and chairman of the Newtown Junior High School Building Committee. He was also a former member of the Danbury Hospital Board of Managers.

Knighted by Pope

In recognition of his outstanding service to his church, Mr. McLachlan was invested as a Knight of St. Gregory the Great, an honor conferred by the late Pope John XXIII, at ceremonies in St. Rose's Church on Aug. 16, 1962. He was the second member of his immediate family to be so honored, his oldest brother, Harry McLachlan, having been made a papal knight in 1959.

Mr. McLachlan was born in Danbury Feb. 22, 1907, a son of the late Harry A. McLachlan, founder in 1892 of the hat manufacturing firm of H. McLachlan & Co., and of the late Margaret (Byron) McLachlan.

He was graduated from the Cochran preparatory school in Norwalk and from Dartmouth College in 1929 where he was a member of Theta Beta Pi fraternity and the Sphinx Senior Society. He had even then shown outstanding promise as a golfer and was a member of the college golf team.

He was associated in the family business during most of his lifetime and following the death of the founder, with his brothers, Harry McLachlan Jr., Arnold F. and the late James Donald and the late John B. McLachlan, carried on the family business until it was discontinued. He was vice president of the firm when it closed its doors in 1956.

Banking Leader

Since then Mr. McLachlan has divided his time between his Connecticut home and the winter residence which he maintained in Bermuda, retaining his local banking associations as his main business

ground unit based at Gulfport, Miss.

On Jan. 28, 1932, he married Miss Louise Connors of Stamford who survives.

He also leaves four sons, George Jr., J. Richard, Peter C. and Malcolm B. McLachlan; two daughters, Mrs. Stephen B. Smith and Miss Louise Margaret McLachlan, all of Newtown; six grandchildren; two brothers, Harry and Arnold McLachlan, both of Danbury; two sisters, Mrs. Harry Scanlan of Danbury and Mrs. George Sullivan of Washington, D.C.; eight nieces and eight nephews.

The funeral will be held from the Honan Funeral Home, 56 Main St., Newtown, Monday at 9 a.m., with a solemn requiem mass in St. Rose's Church, Newtown, at 9:30. Burial will be in St. Rose's Cemetery.

The funeral home will be open Saturday from 7 to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 2 to 5 and 7 to 9 p.m.

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Banking Leader

Since then Mr. McLachlan has divided his time between his Connecticut home and the winter residence which he maintained in Bermuda, retaining his local banking associations as his main business interest. He was vice president of the Savings Bank of Danbury, elected to that office in 1962 after serving as a director since 1940. He was a member of the advisory board of the City Trust Co. and also a director of the F. L. Anderson Oil Co., Portland, Conn.

He was president of the Ridgewood Country Club, of which his late father was a founder, and had headed its official board at different periods over a number of years. He was serving as president during the period of construction of the new clubhouse opened last year.

Prominent Golfer

An enthusiastic amateur sportsman and particularly an ardent golfer, he was a nine times winner of the Ridgewood Club championship and had planned to leave for Scotland in October to represent the Ridgewood Club in a pro-amateur tournament.

He was the Bermuda Seniors champion and a member of the Bermuda team which played in the World Amateur Team Championship tournament for the Eisenhower Cup at Kawana, Japan, last year.

Last year also, with his niece, Miss Marcia McLachlan, he won the Bermuda mixed foursome tournament, and the same year, teamed with Bob Tarrant of Danbury, won the Bermuda four-ball tournament. He was a member of the Ridgewood team which placed third last year in the Bermuda Good Will tournament.

Mr. McLachlan was president for two years of the Connecticut Golf Club and was a member of the Mid-Ocean Club of Bermuda. He was also a member of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrew's, Scotland, and of the Equinox Club of Manchester, Vt.

Was A.F. Captain

A veteran of World War II, he served with the rank of captain in command of an Air Force

4-30-63

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June 5 1964



REMAINS OF HAT FACTORY of George McLachlan & Sons are inspected by Frank Ross and his grandchildren, Robert and Nadine Hallock. View

is from Thorpe St. The crane being used for demolition will tackle next the portion of factory near Main St. (The News-Times—Mannion)



Once a big name in hatting . . . now mostly rubble

This photo provided by Albert E. Hamilton of Danbury shows the former George McLachlan & Sons factory off White Street, before more sections were added, in what

is known as 'The Swamp.' Photo shows the east side of the sprawling structure which was almost leveled last night in another of Danbury's many suspicious blazes.

Many's the hat came from 'The Swamp'

By KEN STACK

DANBURY — Another of the large, rambling hat factories which once helped make Danbury famous as a hatting center is no more.

Last night it took less than 15 minutes for the four-story structure where George McLachlan & Sons Inc. and predecessor companies once made fur felt hat bodies, to collapse, sending up a spectacular shower of sparks as fire rampaged through the industrial complex at 190 White St.

The portion of the complex once occupied by the Hobson & Botts cutlery company, also was badly damaged. The company had ended its operation at the site only last week.

Although in recent years new industries had moved into the complex,

it was the cutler and the hatter, both of whom had seen industrial change bypass their businesses, who had shared the complex since the 1920s.

The destroyed building long was known as "The Swamp" to local hatters during Danbury's heyday as a hatting center, no matter who operated the factory there.

The former vonGal Hat Co., among others, conducted operations there until the 1920s when the late George McLachlan established the Mac Fur Co. there to process fur for the main McLachlan plant at 427 Main St. Later, a branch hat factory was established at 190 White St. by McLachlan, operating for several years until hat making was concentrated in the Main Street plant.

The latter was closed in 1961 and then

torn down to make room for a gasoline station.

With McLachlan having established his business in 1907 with a plant eventually stretching from 427 Main St. to 10 Thorpe St., Hobson & Botts was a relative newcomer to the Danbury scene when it was founded in 1920 on Chestnut Street. However, the infant firm was the first to move into the then vacant factory on White Street which it occupied in 1924.

It wasn't until 1927 that McLachlan moved its fur processing to the complex. Originally, the processing had been handled at a Bethel plant beginning in 1922.

However, as the hat industry declined, McLachlan closed the White Street operation and in 1961, the final

125 employees were laid off as the Main Street plant closed "indefinitely."

The Hobson-Botts firm also had its share of problems, particularly with the Japanese invasion of the flatware market in the post-World War II years.

However, the company, which prided itself on the stability of its relatively small staff of employes, managed to continue its production of stainless steel utensils for variety stores and restaurants in almost complete obscurity in the plant off White Street. But, in the end, bankruptcy accompanied dwindling orders.

Last night, both companies were back in the limelight. And, although a little bit of Danbury history was lost, no one can say they didn't go out in a blaze of glory.

Dispatcher key man in big blaze

By MAC OVERMYER

DANBURY — In a major fire, such as last evening's White Street blaze, the success or failure of firefighters at the scene could very easily depend on the actions of one man located far from the smoke and the flames.

He is the fire department dispatcher who not only brings into play the many forces involved in fighting a fire but also balances them to insure security on all fronts.

The fire alarm for the White Street blaze was telephoned at 8:57. A second alarm was ordered a few moments later. Soon after the second alarm was received, the dispatcher had alerted the Connecticut Light and Power Company. CL&P maintains a radio-equipped utility truck which was sent to the scene to cut off electric power and gas if it became necessary.

The civil defense rescue vehicle was

dispatched to provide first aid and oxygen to firefighters who might suffer smoke inhalation, as two firemen did last night.

It is the responsibility of the dispatcher to insure security on all fronts. Fifteen minutes after the fire alarm was sounded, the Miry Brook volunteer company was stationed at the foot of East Liberty Street to protect the area of the Federal Fur Co. Many burning embers were being carried in a south-southwesterly direction early during the blaze.

Germantown volunteers were stationed in front of the Hoffman Fuel Co. on White Street and Mill Plain volunteers were dispatched to the Locust Avenue station for standby duty.

There are simpler but equally important duties handled by the dispatcher. The mayor was called and arrived at the fire soon after it started.

The Salvation Army was notified with the Mill Plain Auxiliary to provide coffee, doughnuts and soup for the firefighters.

Volunteer companies in outlying areas were put on an alert to assist in case another fire broke out. The Bethel ambulance was brought here to back up city ambulances already at the scene.

The Marjorie water filtration plant was called and told to keep up with the additional water demand in the area of the fire.

At 10:40 p.m., the Mill Plain volunteers on Locust Avenue were dispatched to the city dump to douse a small fire there.

And when it was all over, the dispatcher was the man who put together the facts and figures concerning equipment that was used.

Last night's dispatcher was firefighter Donald Wood. He is one tired man today.

3-20-70



News-Times — West

Raging inferno

Firemen spray a single stream of water on the raging flames engulfing the former George MacLachlan Hat Co. complex on White Street last night in a futile attempt to save the main building.



News-Times — Brooks

Disadvantage point

Firefighters scramble to evacuate the roof of a building they were using to spray their hoses on the inner complex of the former George MacLachlan Hat Co. last night. Their vantage point caught fire.

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Mrs. David Wright Dies at 89; Long Prominent Here

DANBURY—Mrs. Mary McLachlan Wright, 89, of 19 Division St., died early today in St. Joseph's Manor, Trumbull, where she had resided the past two months.

Mrs. Wright was a member of a family long prominent in the industrial and social life of Danbury. She was the widow of David P. Wright, who was for many years Fairfield County jailer.

Her late brothers, Harry McLachlan Sr. and George A. McLachlan, founded hat companies here which bore their names. Her late son, Clifton A. Wright, was also a hat manufacturer.

Mrs. Wright was born in Scotland Oct. 2, 1872, daughter of the late John B. and Mary (McDonald) McLachlan and came to this country 75 years ago. For many years she was active in the social life of the community.

She was the last member of her immediate family.

She leaves four grandchildren, Mrs. Thaddeus Kolwicz and George T. Deakin of Danbury, First Selectman David W. Deakin of Bethel and Mrs. William Durkin of Dunham; 18 great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to her son, Mrs. Wright was the mother of two daughters, the late Mrs. George M. Deakin and the late Miss Edith Wright.

The funeral will be conducted Tuesday at 9:15 a.m. from the John C. Freeland Funeral Home, 91 West St., and in St. Peter's Church at 10 a.m. with a solemn mass of requiem. Burial will be in Wooster Cemetery.

Friends may call at the funeral home Monday from 2 to 5 and 7 to 9 p.m.

Harry McLachlan Dies; Had Major Hat Industry Role

DANBURY — Harry McLachlan, a leader in the men's hat industry for many years prior to his retirement and a member of a family long prominent in business, civic and religious affairs in Danbury, died last night at his home in the Ledgewood Apartments, Brookfield Center.

He was 72. For many years the family home was at 20 Deer Hill Ave. here.

During many of the years he lived in Danbury, Mr. McLachlan was a trustee of St. Peter's Church. He was honored by Pope John XXIII in 1959 by being named a Knight of St. Gregory the Great and was vested in the order by Lawrence Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore, then the bishop of Bridgeport.

During the years he was president of H. McLachlan & Co., Inc., a post in which he succeeded his father, the firm came the world's largest manufacturer of fur felt hat dies. Its principal plant was on Rowan St.

His late father, Harry McLachlan Sr., founded the firm in 1892. It was the first to specialize in the manufacture of hat bodies, selling them to finishing shops where they were completed under a variety of trade names.

Harry McLachlan Sr. died in 1933 and his son and namesake took over the presidency of the firm. He and four brothers, including McLachlan and the late Clark, George A. and J. Donald McLachlan, showed a rare



Harry McLachlan

harmony for working together, each in executive posts. This family unity was considered a major factor in the growth of the firm during the period when hatting was Danbury's principal industry.

While hatting declined, not only here but throughout the country, the McLachlan family kept the Rowan St. plant going until mid-1955. A worldwide shortage of rabbit's fur, from which most hats are made, was a major factor in the decision to terminate manufacturing operations then.

Mr. McLachlan was born in Danbury May 30, 1896, son of Harry and Margaret (Byron) McLachlan.

Joined Business In 1914

After his graduation from Danbury High School in 1914, Mr. McLachlan joined his father in business.

Young McLachlan worked in all departments of the plant and became well versed in all the technical processes. Gradually, he relieved his father more and more of the responsibilities of management.

He interrupted his hatting career to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War I.

By 1922 the firm was turning out 400 dozen hat bodies a day. If there was a better way to do something, Mr. McLachlan found it — discarding without hesitation old processes for improved methods.

Under the supervision of Harry McLachlan, many of the modern methods and mechanical processes of hat-making were originated and perfected.

Sizing Machine Developed

The McLachlan Co. had a major role in developing sizing machines which enormously boosted production by taking hat-sizing out of the field of hand operations. For a long time, the McLachlan firm controlled the patent on these machines.

He served for many years as

an officer and director of the U.S. Hat Machinery Corp.

He and the family also had other business interests in Danbury and in other areas.

In the '30's, an additional hat plant in Brookfield, Mass., was founded under the name of the McLachlan Hat Co. The hurricane of 1938 all but washed the factory away in the ensuing flood, representing a large financial loss.

Mr. McLachlan promptly restored the machinery and buildings and production resumed within two months.

Mr. McLachlan served for many years as president of the Hat Institute, Inc. He also headed the Hat Research Foundation, formed as a broad post-World War II research organization.

Other Activities

He represented industries on the board of directors of the Connecticut Chamber of Commerce; was a director of the former Danbury National Bank, treasurer of the Danbury Building and Loan Assn. and member of the Board of Estimates of the old city of Danbury. He was formerly vice president of Danbury Industrial Corporation.

He never sought elective office, although he was considered for many years one of the most influential Republicans in the area.

Since moving to Brookfield Center in 1965, he had been a member of St. Joseph's Church there.

He was also a member of McGivney Council, K. of C. the Rev. John D. Kennedy General Assembly, Fourth Degree K. of C., Danbury Lodge of Elks, Joseph A. Treadwell, Post, American Legion, and the Ridgewood Country Club.

He leaves his wife, Mrs. Grace Sullivan McLachlan; two sons, Harry McLachlan Jr. and William M. McLachlan, both of Danbury; 10 grandchildren; his brother, Arnold, of Danbury; two sisters, Mrs. Harry Scanlan of Danbury and Mrs. George Sullivan of Sarasota, Fla., and several nieces and nephews.

The funeral will take place in St. Peter's Church Wednesday at 10 a.m. The high mass of requiem will be offered by a family friend, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. George B. Curtiss, pastor of St. Thomas' Church, Fairfield, and former chancellor of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Burial will be in St. Peter's Cemetery.

There will be no calling hours.

Helen D. McLachlan

Helen D. McLachlan, 61, of 121 Villa Circle, Atlantis, Fla., wife of Harry McLachlan, died Sunday at John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital, Lantana, after a long illness.

Mrs. McLachlan was born in Danbury, Jan. 2, 1925, daughter of the late J. Augustus and Rena Hodge Deakin. A Danbury resident most of her life, she was a member of St. Peter's Church and the Ridgewood Country Club.

Following her retirement to Florida nine years ago, she was a member of St. Luke's Church, Atlantis, and the Atlantic Golf Club.

Besides her husband, she is survived by three sons, Harry IV and Thomas, both of Danbury, and Michael of Woodbury; four daughters, Grace Goode of New York City, Margaret Cerchiaro of Endwell, N.Y., Susan Brown of Bethlehem and Anne Cowan of Sayre, Okla.; and six grandchildren.

Private services will be at the Green Funeral Home, 57 Main St., Danbury, Saturday at the convenience of the family.

Burial will be in St. Peter's Cemetery.

There are no calling hours.

Contributions in memory of Mrs. McLachlan may be made to the charity of one's choice.



(Shea)

Harry McLachlan, Jr.

McLachlan Enters Insurance Field

Harry McLachlan, Jr., of 105 Deer Hill Avenue has established his own insurance and real estate office. For the time being, it will be in his home.

At the same time Mr. McLachlan announced he has become affiliated with the Equitable Life Assurance Society as an agent.

This represents an extension of his business activities. Mr. McLachlan, who has been in the real estate field for the past three years, will continue on that line, although he expects to devote a major portion of his time to insurance.

He was for several years assistant secretary of the former H. McLachlan & Co., Inc., a hat manufacturing firm established by his late grandfather, Harry McLachlan. During World War II, he served with the Second Armored division in France and was twice wounded in action. Mr. McLachlan and his wife, the former Helen Deakin, are parents of seven children.

Brenda M. Scranton

Brenda McLachlan Scranton, 53, a Danbury native, died Jan. 20 in New York City after a brief illness. She was the wife of John G. Scranton of New York City.

Mrs. Scranton was born in Danbury, Aug. 8, 1936, a daughter of the late Arnold F. and Mary Burns McLachlan.

She is also survived by a daughter, Susannah Whiteside of Pennsylvania; two sisters, Janet Jobe of Fairfield and Mary Cullerton of Ridgfield; and several nieces and nephews.

Services were private.

Contributions in memory of Mrs. Scranton may be made to Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, 1275 York Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Died

McLACHLAN—In Brookfield, Conn., Dec. 16, 1968. Harry McLachlan, age 72, of Ledgewood Apts., Brookfield Center, husband of Mrs. Grace (Sullivan) McLachlan.

Funeral from St. Peter's Church, Danbury, Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock with a High Mass of Requiem.

Burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

There will be no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the local Cancer Fund.

(Arrangements by the John C. Freeland Funeral Home.)

May 28 1988

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Raging fire destroys former fur factory



News-Times — Brooks

Another Danbury landmark burns

A huge ball of flame dwarfs fire fighters in an alleyway of the former George McLachlan Co. complex on White Street. The blaze last night drew

thousands of spectators, including many students from nearby Western Connecticut State College.

By STAFF REPORTERS

DANBURY — The third suspicious fire of major proportions in the city in less than a week raged through a partially-occupied, large industrial complex on White Street last night.

Police Chief William F. Tobin and Fire Chief Joseph Bertalovitz said today the police department will increase patrols immediately in an effort to halt the rash of suspected arsons which have plagued Danbury recently.

"We don't know yet whether last night's fire was deliberately set or not," said Tobin, "but the situation is so bad that people just naturally assume every fire we have is arson.

"But there is no question that something must be done. Starting tonight, the police department will

Other pictures and stories on Pages 21, 22

have extra men on patrol, day and night, throughout the city until we solve this problem."

Two men were questioned for more than six hours last night by city officials investigating the cause of the general alarm blaze that destroyed the former fur factory of G. McLachlan & Sons off White Street, in an area known as "The Swamp."

The suspects were released after the questioning.

Mayor Gino J. Arconti, Police Chief Tobin, Fire Chief Bertalovitz, Fire Marshal Alton Spencer, and Detective Sgt. Edward Keating left the police station about 4 a.m. today after questioning the suspects.

The two men were taken from the scene of the fire to the police station by police acting on the express orders of the mayor.

Police said the two men were seen in the area shortly before the fire broke out and were "acting suspiciously."

Arconti, visibly angered when he heard about the suspects, ordered the two men brought to the station for questioning.

The spectacular fire, with damage probably reaching into the hundreds of thousands of dollars, was first reported

Continued on Page 23

Fire levels plant

Continued from Page 1

at 8:58 p.m. It quickly raged out of control as firemen and hundreds of spectators raced to the scene.

The major structure in the complex, a four-story wood-frame building with more than 60,000 square feet of floor area, collapsed in a ball of flame 15 minutes after firefighters arrived.

Power lines running to the building snapped and fell in a flash of blue sparks as flames soared more than a hundred feet into the night sky.

The sprawling building at 190 White St., now owned by Samuel Young of Danbury, was the former George McLachlan & Sons Hat Co., which produced hatters' fur. Ranging from one to five stories it was occupied by four divisions of the North American Dye Corp. and the Carey Waterbury Co., dye manufacturers.

North American Dye's Sunset Dytint, Colorama, Biosafe and Barrington Hand Cream divisions had large quantities of stock and machinery, as well as a laboratory in the plant. Much of this was destroyed even though firemen worked feverishly to recover over \$100,000 dollars worth of on-hand stock from the burning buildings.

Chief Bertalovitz said firemen worked closely with the plant managers who were at the scene to remove much of the valuable stock and equipment.

The blaze was brought under control about 9 p.m. Firemen used a deck-gun — two 3-inch hoses attached to the 100 foot aerial ladder — to "bore into" the building with 200 pounds of pressure. They then doused the structure and surrounding area, using over two miles of hose.

J. Forrest Hobson, owner and manager of the Hobson & Botts Co., cutlery manufacturers, a plant directly in the rear of the dye manufacturing

complex, said: "It was an absolute miracle that not a bit of smoke damage and not a drop of water damage happened to the building."

The fire drew hundreds of spectators. Chief Bertalovitz said police did an outstanding job in keeping spectators away but added that "some people would do almost anything just to get a few feet closer to the fire."

One spectator was taken to the hospital. Leon Robson, 16, of 212 Southern Blvd., was treated at the hospital for exposure.

Thought to be suspicious in nature, the fire officials would not make further comment.

"The building was occupied and two of the sprinkler systems were working when we got there," said Fire Marshal Spencer.

Chief Bertalovitz said that it may take a while to check the scene and sift through the rubble, but that the cause is not known as yet.

Mrs. H. G.
Mrs. Harry McLachlan Sr.

Mrs. Grace McLachlan, 82, formerly of Deer Hill Ave., Danbury, died Wednesday at Glen Hill Convalescent Center. She was the widow of Harry McLachlan Sr., owner of the former H. McLachlan & Sons Hat Co., Danbury.

She was born in Salem, Mass., Feb. 24, 1899, daughter of the late Michael and Mary Crouse Sullivan. Mrs. McLachlan lived in Danbury most of her life, and also maintained a home in Sea Island, Ga., for many years. She was a member of St. Peter's Church, Danbury.

She is survived by two sons, Harry McLachlan Jr. of Lake Worth, Fla., and William McLachlan of Danbury; a brother George Sullivan of Florida; 10 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be conducted Tuesday at 9:15 from the John C. Freeland Funeral Home, 336 Main St., Danbury, to St. Peter's Church for a Mass of Christian Burial at 10 a.m.

Burial will be in St. Peter's Cemetery.

There are no calling hours.

Friends are asked to omit flowers. Contributions in her memory may be made to the Kidney Foundation of Connecticut, 920 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, Conn. 06107.

Nov 29 1975

Civic leader A. McLachlan

DANBURY — Arnold F. McLachlan, a longtime civic leader and member of a family prominent in the men's hat industry when it flourished in Danbury, died today at the Glen Hill Convalescent center. He was 69 and lived on Oheyahtah Place.

Mr. McLachlan was a longtime member of the Danbury Board of Education and chairman of the school building committee during the 1950s.

A licensed pilot and aviation enthusiast, Mr. McLachlan also served for many years on the Danbury Airport Commission.

For many years he served as a trustee and vice chairman of the board of Fairfield Hills Hospital, Newtown. In that period, there was no state department of mental health and the trustees had full authority for the operation of each institution.

In 1959, Mr. McLachlan received The News-Times Civic Achievement Award for his contributions to education, transportation and mental health.

Arnold Francis McLachlan was the last survivor among five brothers who became associated with their father in H. McLachlan & Co., a leading producer of fur felt hat bodies for six decades.

He was born in Danbury Dec. 19, 1904, son of Harry and Margaret Bryon McLachlan. He joined his father's company in 1925 and became secretary and vice president after it was incorporated in 1929. His brothers, the late Harry, Jack, George and J. Donald McLachlan, were also officers of the firm. The company had its main plant on Rowan Street, now occupied by Castro Convertibles.

The Park Avenue, Roberts Avenue, Hayestown Avenue and Mill Ridge schools were built during Mr. McLachlan's service as school building chairman.

Mr. McLachlan was a director of the Savings Bank of Danbury and a member of St. Peter's Church.

His wife was the late Mary Burns McLachlan.

He leaves three daughters, Mrs. Robert Cullerton of Ridgefield, Mrs. Janet Jobe of Danbury and Mrs. John Scranton of New York City; five grandchildren; two sisters, Mrs. Harry Scanlan of Danbury and Mrs. George Sullivan of Sarasota, Fla., and several nieces and nephews.

The funeral will take place in St. Peter's Church Monday at 10 a.m. with a Mass of Christian Burial. There are no calling hours. Friends have been asked to omit flowers.

Burial will be in St. Peter's Cemetery. (Arrangements by John C. Freeland Funeral Home).

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THE NEWS-TIMES

Obituaries

Donald K. McLachlan

Donald K. McLachlan, 44, of 852 Monroe Drive Northeast, Atlanta, Ga., formerly of Danbury, died suddenly in Atlanta yesterday morning.

Mr. McLachlan was born in Danbury, July 20, 1938, a son of the late J. Donald and Alice Keane McLachlan. He moved from Danbury to St. Petersburg, Fla., in 1953. He attended Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla., and has made his home in Atlanta since 1970.

Mr. McLachlan is survived by a brother, James S. McLachlan of New York City, and a sister, Mrs. Bernard J. Dolan Jr. of Danbury.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at St. Peter's Church, Danbury, at a time to be announced.

Interment will be at St. Peter Cemetery.

There will be no calling hours.

The Tomlinson Homestead, 336 Main St., Danbury, is in charge of arrangements.