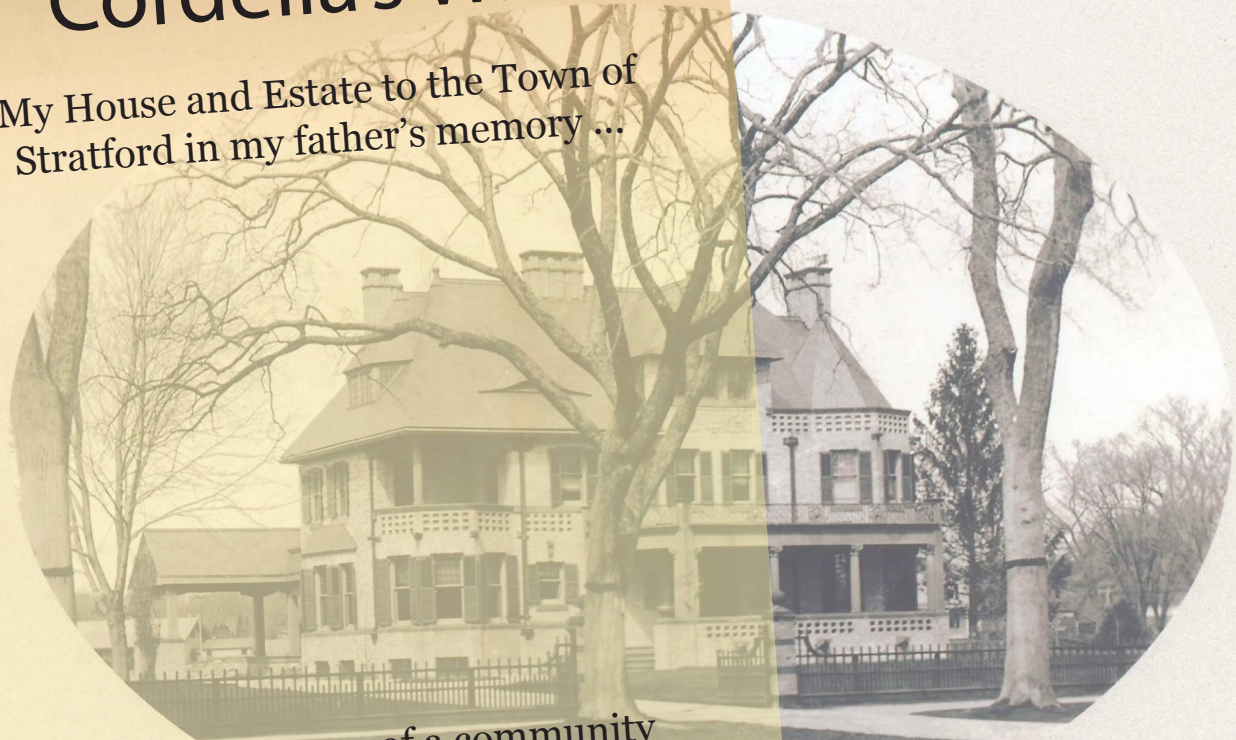


1931

Cordelia's Will

My House and Estate to the Town of Stratford in my father's memory ...



... for the purpose of a community center, playground and park for the use of the residents ...

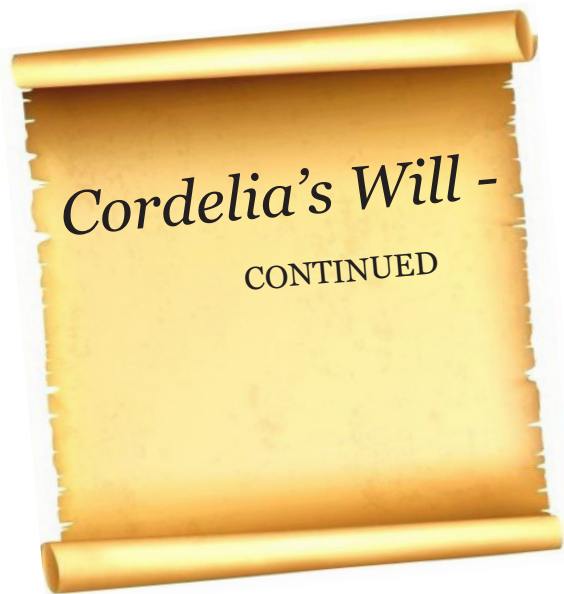
ARTICLE 13. Pursuant to the power conferred on me by Article Ninth of the Last Will and Testament of my brother, John W. Sterling, I give and bequeath the entire principal of the trust fund of \$250,000 directed to be set apart for my benefit by the said Article Ninth of the Will of the said John W. Sterling, to the First Ecclesiastical Society of the Town of Stratford, Connecticut, IN TRUST, for the uses and purposes hereinafter set forth:



Cordelia, right, and sister Catharine on the front porch

Section I. Desiring to commemorate the life and activities of my father, Captain John W. Sterling, ... it is my wish that a portion thereof, not to exceed \$100,000, be used for the purchase, at a fair value to be ascertained by appraisal, of part or all of the real estate, situated on the block bounded by Church Street, Main Street, Broad Street and Linden Avenue ... comprising the residence of my said father and known as the Sterling Homestead, and such other real estate situated in the same block as can be obtained at fair appraisal value, and for the development of the property so purchased for the purposes of a community center, playground and park for the use of the residents

**The Will of Cordelia Sterling
Abbreviated and Annotated
Continued Next Page -**



of the Town ... Title to land so purchased shall be taken in the name of the Town of Stratford as trustee to hold the same as trustee subject to the control of the Board of Trustees herein created ...

Section II. The remainder of the principal of the said Trust Fund, not used in purchasing and developing real estate as above provided, shall be invested and the income thereof paid over semi-annually to the Board of Trustees herein created to be used by said Board for the maintenance and operation of the property for the purposes hereinbefore outlined.

Section III. (a) The purchase, development, maintenance and operations of the said property shall be conducted under the control of a Board of seven Trustees.

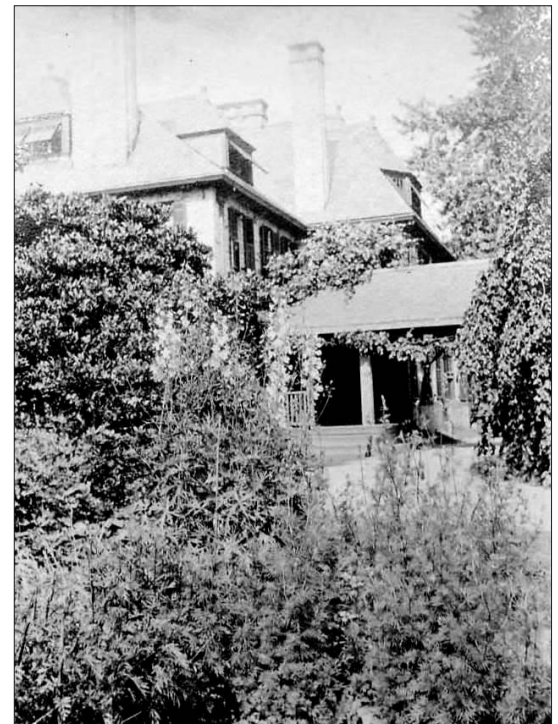
Section IV. It is my wish that the Board of Trustees obtain the services of a competent landscape architect in order to develop the property purchased so as to combine, as far as possible, beauty of landscape treatment with the greatest measure of usefulness as a park, community center and playground, for the children and young people of the town, without regard to race or religion; and it is my desire that the brick house now standing on the said Sterling Homestead property, near the corner of Main and Church streets, be devoted to community interests, after suitable alteration, and that it be known as Sterling House ...

Section V. It is my earnest wish, without however imposing it as a condition, that neither dancing nor card playing be permitted on Sunday in Sterling House, or in any part of Sterling Park that may be purchased with money bequeathed by me, nor any Sunday games that tend to draw crowds of spectators, such as baseball and football. To the simpler plays of the young children and the quieter games of older ones I make no specific objection.

Recognizing, however, that even the most conservative sentiment may change in years to come, I leave the ultimate decision with regard to Sunday activities to be made by unanimous consent of the three Trustees elected by the First Ecclesiastical Society, feeling that the old Church has always stood and will ever stand for what is right and good in accord with the best sentiment of every period.

“It is my earnest wish, without however imposing it as a condition, that neither dancing nor card playing be permitted on Sunday in Sterling House, or in any part of Sterling Park.”

- Cordelia Sterling, Last Will



Black and white photography does not do justice to the early estate gardens, which included several garden areas near where I-95 runs through the old estate property.