
ROSSDHU CASTLE

There used to be a castle right here in Chevy Chase. It was located on East Woodbine Street near Beach Drive, and stood on a hilltop overlooking Rock Creek Park.

The *Washington Post*, February 1, 1975, stated that it was a replica of the 12th century, Scottish ancestral castle of Clan Colquhoun on Loch Lomond. Built of masonry and concrete studded with stones brought over from Scotland, it boasted a huge ballroom, turrets, gun emplacements, and countless rooms filled with priceless antiques.

The castle was the result of extensive planning by Clarence C. Calhoun and his wife Daisy Breaux Calhoun. He was a Captain in the Kentucky State Guard and a lawyer by profession. His wife was socially prominent and successful in many literary and artistic endeavors. Construction of the castle was completed in 1927. It was, however, the victim of rapidly changing times.

During the Great Depression, the family suffered financial reversals and lived in the gatehouse for several years. In the early 1930s, the castle was converted into a posh nightclub and in 1937 to a 30-unit apartment house. Captain Calhoun died in 1938. After World War II, the area was zoned for single family dwellings. This action led to the demolition of the castle in 1957 and the subdivision of most of the property.

Today all that remains of the castle on Woodbine Street are the turreted five-bedroom gatehouse and the small moat or pond in front. The surrounding community bears the name "Braemar" after the Scottish town near the site of the original castle. Recent occupants of the gatehouse have experienced unexplained, ghostly happenings as if some long-lost soul from the Scottish or Chevy Chase castle had at last found refuge on the premises.

William Duvall



Rossdhu Castle on East Woodbine Street about 1930

COURTESY, FRANK AND JEANNE BROULIK