

Eidolon Nature Preserve Historical Highlights

Louis and Marguerite Zapoleon discovered the Sideling Hill property now known as Eidolon during a vacation trip to Morgan County, WV, in the summer of 1939. At that time, the property was an abandoned farm. For the next two years, the Zapoleons continued to visit the place frequently on weekends and during vacations. On these trips, they would spend their days there, staying overnight at the Parkview Inn in Berkeley Springs.

Both Louis and Marguerite were economists, and they worked and resided in Washington, DC. They had met in the library of the Brookings Institution in 1935 and married in 1937.

When the U.S. entered World War II in December, 1941, the Zapoleons became engaged in the war effort and no longer had time for trips to Morgan County. Mr. Zapoleon, who had been working at the Securities and Exchange Commission, was detailed to the War Production Board. Mrs. Zapoleon, who had been working at the U.S. Office of Education, remained there for a time working on war-related programs and then went to the Pentagon.

Describing this period in her 1985 memoir, *Everyone Needs a Mountain* (St. Clair Press), Mrs. Zapoleon wrote: "War duties occupied us nine hours or more every day but Sunday. Christmas was our single holiday. Leave was unthinkable except for major illness or emergency."

As soon as the war ended, the Zapoleons resumed their visits to Morgan County, made inquiries at the County courthouse about the status of the Sideling Hill property, and purchased it on September 10, 1945 for \$700 and payment of 1945 taxes

They named the property Eidolon after reading about Eidolons in a book called *The Lost Woods*, by Edwin Way Teale, a popular nature writer of the era. (Eidolons were phantom women of Greek mythology, created by Zeus from mist and light. Translated from the Greek, the word means "image of the ideal.") But the name proved awkward in public discourse and the Zapoleons used it only in the company of friends. Mrs. Zapoleon explained: "The spoken word, Eidolon, evoked an image of a summer cottage almost anywhere. We couldn't tolerate the misnomer, 'Idle On.' So only on stationery and with those who shared our vision did we use the baptismal name of Eidolon. We usually spoke of THE MOUNTAIN, which our friends called Zapland."

From 1945 to 1951, the Zapoleons used the property regularly as a weekend and summer retreat, again staying nights at the Parkview Inn.

One of the first steps they took was to bring in a state forester, William Maule, who was based in Romney, to advise them on managing the land. Mr. Maule arrived on November 11, 1945 and, among other things, advised the Zapoleons to get rid of all the "wolf trees" on the property, which they subsequently did. Mrs. Zapoleon described these trees as follows:

Like lone wolves, these were scattered through the woods, preying on other growth. Thick-trunked, with high spreading crowns, each towered above a circle of smaller trees thriving on sun and air it denied to them. Its deep roots sucked up ground water even in a drought while lesser trees were stunted or withered away.

Mr. Zapoleon also joined the American Forestry Association and the Pennsylvania Nut Growers Association, and set about planting fruit and nut trees at various locations around Eidolon, along with

White and Scotch Pines. Following the recommendations of foresters, he also planted Russian Olive, Lespedeza, and Multiflora Rose "to supply winter food for wild friends." All of the latter plants are now considered invasive species. Mrs. Zapoleon herself later referred to the Multiflora Rose as "a thorny pest."

The Zapoleons began construction of a stone cottage on the property during the fall of 1950. The builder was Oscar Michael. The stonework was done by a mason named John Melott. The cottage was completed in the spring of 1951.

The Zapoleons continued to use Eidolon as a weekend and vacation retreat through the 1950s.

At the beginning of the 1960s, the Zapoleons retained a consulting forester, Albert Hall, to assess the marketable timber on the site. Mr. Hall estimated the crop at 350,000-360,000 board feet, two-thirds oak (red, white and chestnut) and the remainder in other species, mostly poplar. He recommended harvesting all trees 14 inches and greater and unsound trees of smaller size. The Zapoleons subsequently signed a timber contract with local lumberman George Fearnow, who logged the property according to Mr. Hall's specifications. Mrs. Zapoleon was told that "about half the timber was made into furniture by the Beachley Furniture Company of Hagerstown, MD."

Also at the beginning of the 1960s, the Zapoleons had been planning to make Eidolon their fulltime warm-season home and spend their winters in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in a home there they had purchased from a friend some years before.

But this never happened. In the fall of 1960, Mr. Zapoleon suffered a massive stroke that paralyzed his right side and affected his speech. His mind remained clear and he eventually walked again with a cane but he could not use his right hand and "never again managed to write or speak a complete sentence."

The Zapoleons' troubles continued to mount. During June of 1961, they became embroiled in a long dispute with an adjacent landowner, Walter Joab Deneen, of Warfordsburg, PA, who claimed title to more than half of Eidolon. Deneen's first move was a June 12 letter that simply stated: "I have surveyed the Dawson and Allen land that I own and find that you have a locked gate and outlet on my land."

Also in the summer of 1961, Western Union indicated it wanted to construct a microwave relay tower at the top of Eidolon, in an area the Zapoleons had named Druid's Grove. The Zapoleons were dismayed by this development but they decided to grant Western Union an option on ten acres because they believed the firm would probably use condemnation proceedings to secure land for the tower if need be. Mrs. Zapoleon noted that there would be compensations to the deal: "Western Union would improve and maintain the Eidolon road and their maintenance men would supply added security during our months of absence in Florida." In the summer of 1962, Western Union exercised its option and began building its microwave tower on Sideling Hill.

At about the same time, on July 6, 1962, the stone cottage at Eidolon was destroyed by fire. An elderly couple who were friends of the Zapoleons was staying at the cottage at the time, and they accidentally set fire to the structure through careless use of an Aladdin lamp.

On October 13, 1962 the Zapoleons received a summons from Morgan County's Circuit Court requiring them to answer to a civil action filed by Deneen, who was now formally seeking title to 300 acres of Eidolon. Legal maneuvering continued into 1963, and then Deneen died on May 31 of that year. The Zapoleons hoped that would be the end of the matter but Deneen's heirs continued to pursue his case. The title chain to all of Eidolon acres was not at all clear and there was a real possibility the Zapoleons would lose if the case ever went to court. Finally, in the fall of 1964, Deneen's heirs agreed to drop their suit in

exchange for the deed to the portion of Eidolon that lay on the south side of Orleans road, some 153 acres in all.

During this period and over the next several years the Zapoleons no longer visited Eidolon because of Mr. Zapoleon's health.

Mr. Zapoleon died on December 27, 1969. His ashes were interred at Eidolon the following Memorial Day.

Following Mr. Zapoleon's death, Mrs. Zapoleon deliberated on how best to keep Eidolon intact as a natural asset for future generations. In 1971 she made arrangements to convey the property to The Nature Conservancy after she passed away.

Mrs. Zapoleon lived for many more years, and well into the 1990s she continued to return to Morgan County for visits twice a year, in the spring and fall, driving herself from Florida and back and staying for weeks at a time. During these visits, she mostly spent her days at Eidolon, often inviting others to accompany her there, and she spent her nights at the Parkview Inn as she had done so many years before. She celebrated her 92nd birthday with a party at the cottage at Eidolon.

During this period, she also worked to make things ready for the property's transfer to The Nature Conservancy. In her 1985 book, she noted that:

Perpetual inventories not only of [Eidolon's] trees and other flora, but also of her birds, mammals, butterflies, reptiles, and other fauna are accumulating. . . . Entomologist Jack Cadbury, also endowed with the gift of recognizing birds by their voices, has tape recorded many at Eidolon, while Delmont Harvey reports annual migrations and unusual bird events. Tessa Cadbury has added many items, including the interesting twayblade orchid, to our inventory Other members of the West Virginia Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, notably ecologist Charles Baer and botanists Virginia Baer and Bill Grafton, and especially its director, Ed Maguire, have contributed to our scientific data on Eidolon. Recently, geologist Tom Shufflebarger, has begun to help us interpret her stones Trails of various lengths and difficulties are being marked by the Harveys for current and future explorers.

Her many projects included an effort to reestablish American Chestnut trees at Eidolon. She joined the American Chestnut Society and in 1986 obtained a number of seedlings from Michigan, which were planted at various locations on then property. Some of these trees still survive, although they all show signs of the disease that has all but wiped out this species.

Mrs. Zapoleon finally passed away in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, on October 1, 2003, at the age of 96. Her ashes were also interred at Eidolon, beside her husband's, on Memorial Day 2004.

Mrs. Zapoleon's estate was complicated and The Nature Conservancy did not take possession of Eidolon until early in 2006. The Conservancy then began discussions with the Potomac Valley Audubon Society about co-managing the property and the two organizations signed an agreement setting forth the terms for co-management on October 16, 2006. The establishment of the property as the Eidolon Nature Preserve was announced publicly on November 9, 2006, and a formal opening ceremony was held on May 19, 2007.

The early history of the property has not yet been traced in detail but Mrs. Zapoleon's book and other sources provide several historical anecdotes:

- In an article in the November 27, 1964, *Morgan Messenger*, Morgan County historian Fred Newbraugh wrote that the old coach road that traverses the property was called "the Cacapon Road." He said this road "left town by the English graveyard and over Warm Springs Ridge just south of the graveyard, passed Great Cacapon (Shearers Saw Mill) and thence to near Orleans Cross Roads and crossed the Potomac." He wrote: "This is the road used in the eighteenth century by circuit riders going West through Bath. Rev. Robert Ayers called it the most rocky and rugged road he had ever seen." Newbraugh's article included a copy of an 1820 Morgan County map that had been surveyed and drawn for the Virginia Board of Public Works under the direction of John Wood. This map and other early and mid-19th century maps show a road traversing the east face of Sideling Hill in the vicinity of Eidolon. In the 1980s, Mrs. Zapoleon tried to get the road declared a national historical trail or road by the U.S. Department of the Interior, but apparently nothing came of that.

- An old ledge quarry is located at the southwestern tip of Eidolon. According to Mrs. Zapoleon, this quarry supplied stone for the abutments of Dam No. 6 on the Potomac, which was erected in 1839 to divert water into the C&O Canal. The land that adjoins the northern boundary of Eidolon on the west side of Sideling Hill where the blue trail runs is the site of another old quarry. According to Mrs. Zapoleon, "the hard Purslane sandstone found on the top of this portion of Sideling Hill was used for bridge piers on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad and for the Chesapeake and Ohio aqueduct over Fifteen-Mile Creek in Maryland."

- Mrs. Zapoleon based her account of these quarries on a May 1986 report to her by Thomas E. Shufflebarger, Jr., a Berkeley Springs geologist. Shufflebarger's report said in part:

Beyond doubt, sandstone, removed from quarries on Sideling Hill, particularly the Purslane sandstone, has been used in the construction of the Fifteenmile Creek Aqueduct; moreover, rough ashlar of Purslane, amongst a variety of locally quarried stone, are to be found in the south abutment of Dam Number Six at Great Cacapon, West Virginia.

- A C&O Canal "Historic Resource Study" written in the 1970s by National Park Service historian Harlan D. Unrau and finally published by the Park Service in August 2007 indicates that the stone used in Dam Number Six more likely came from Cacapon Mountain. But this manuscript, which was based on a review of original construction records, suggests strongly that both the Eidolon quarry and the quarry just to the north of Eidolon did in fact supply stone for the Fifteen-Mile Creek aqueduct (Aqueduct Number 9). The manuscript states: "This aqueduct was built chiefly of hard sandstone obtained from three quarries on Sideling Hill Mountain on the Virginia side of the Potomac, some 2 1/3 to 3 1/8 miles distant. The stone was hauled down to the river by wagon, boated across the Potomac to the 'river road,' and then carried overland for one mile by wagon." These distances correspond closely to these quarries.

- A 1988 Morgan County Historical and Genealogical Society document entitled "Recap on the Society's Visit to Zapoleon's Mountain in September," by Leonard Davis, said the stone for the Fifteen-Mile Creek aqueduct was cut by a mason named John Henry Apple. "The letter A can be found on [the aqueduct] place there by [Apple] laying claim to his craftsmanship at the time of its being built," Mr. Davis wrote. This document also said that "[i]n 1903 drilling was done in search of coal that might be lying under the ground [at Eidolon]. However, none was found or the vein so light that it was not worth mining."

- A forest fire scorched much of the mountain around 1929 and the scars were still visible when the Zapoleons purchased the property in 1945. Mrs. Zapoleon wrote: "as Ardalina [Youngblood] remembered

it, sparks from a B&O engine had ignited brush and trees. A wintry wind had swept the blaze over Sideling Hill. Black, jagged stumps . . . marked its devastating path."

- A lifelong resident of the area, Ardalia Youngblood lived below Sideling Hill at the intersection of Orleans and Woodmont roads. The Zapoletons befriended her before they bought Eidolon and she figures prominently in Mrs. Zapoleton's book: she taught the Zapoletons much about the property and country life in general.
- Mrs. Zapoleton quoted Mrs. Youngblood as saying Eidolon had been owned by a Civil War veteran named Emmert: "Emmert came out of the Civil War with bad lungs, was told he hadn't long to live, finally got that mountain place. Well, he lived to be nearly ninety up there. Along about 1915 it got too rough for him and the Missus and they moved down along the river."
- The Emmert cited in this reference appears to have been Thomas Philip Emmert (sometimes spelled Emmert in records), who was born in 1840 in Hampshire County, VA, served in the 13th Virginia Infantry during the Civil War, and married Anna Catherine Barry in 1866.
- It is not clear exactly when Thomas and Anna Emmert came to Morgan County or when they took up residence on the property now known as Eidolon. Census records show them living in Mineral County, WV, in 1870. It is certain that Thomas acquired title to 307 acres of the property now known as Eidolon from the estate of its previous owner, Philip C. Pendleton, of Berkeley Springs, on January 22, 1900, as a result of a Chancery Court ruling in his favor. The Court ruling indicates that Emmert had made a substantial payment or payments to purchase the property sometime before 1900—perhaps decades before—and he and his family may have been living on the property in the meantime. A chronology prepared by Mrs. Zapoleton cites unidentified "data" in the Morgan County Courthouse as indicating that Emmert had purchased the land from Pendleton in 1875 for \$307, with \$74 of that amount to be paid immediately and the balance to be paid in three annual installments thereafter. These records have not yet been verified.
- Not much is known about the Emmert family's time on the property. They eventually had six children in all, five of whom lived to adulthood.
- Exactly when the Emmerts left Sideling Hill is not known, either. By the time of the 1920 Census they were living in Rawlings, in Allegany County, MD, and they sold the Eidolon property on May 19 of that year to Riley H. Yokum, of Red Creek, Tucker County, WV, for \$1,500. (Interestingly, the official record of this transaction listed the property as 507.5 acres in size. But county records do not indicate any conveyance of any additional land to the Emmerts between the time they gained title to their original 307 acres in 1900 and the time they sold the property to Yokum in 1920. This discrepancy was apparently the basis of Mr. Deneen's claim against the Zapoletons.) Family genealogical records indicate that Thomas Emmert died in 1924 in Berkeley Springs, and Anna died two years later in Berkeley Springs.
- Yokum, who was 29 in 1920, had been born and raised in Red Creek. Nothing is known about his ownership of Eidolon and he may not have ever lived there. He married Julia McGowan, who was from Midland MD and who had been born in 1904, in 1927. The *First Annual Report of the Maryland Bureau of Mines*, which covered the years 1922 and 1923, listed an R. H. Yokum as foreman of the Manor Coal Company Mine No. 2 in Garrett County during that two-year period. The 1930 Census listed Riley and Julia as living in Kitzmillerville, in Garrett County, MD, where he was then working as a coal mine superintendent.

- On June 17, 1929, Riley and Julia sold the Eidolon property to Claude H. Duckworth and his younger brother Lyle, for \$800. Claude and Lyle had come from Swanton, MD, which is located in Garrett County. Claude was 21 and Lyle was 15.

- Claude built a bungalow-style house on the flat land just southwest of the spring and built the stone walls that still stand nearby. A large boulder embedded in the stone wall is inscribed "CD 5.3.31." Claude also built a small barn that he used to store food. He did not raise crops on the property but he kept a sizable herd of goats. Another younger brother, Guy, who was 12 in 1929, lived with Claude and Lyle. According to Lena Kidwell, Ardalía Youngblood's daughter, both Lyle and Guy attended school, and they walked down the mountain to get a school bus. Mrs. Kidwell did not remember that Claude owned an automobile; instead, he and his brothers "walked everywhere," she said. At one point, Claude was bitten by a snake and almost died. Mrs. Kidwell's mother brought him to her house and nursed him back to health. Mrs. Kidwell recalled that Claude had a wife named Hazel but she did not live on Sideling Hill, at least not at first.

- Another young man from Swanton, MD, Harrison Harvey, lived with Claude on Sideling Hill for a while. After a time, Harrison went to live with Ardalía Youngblood. Mrs. Zapoleon said in her book that Mrs. Youngblood adopted Harrison but Mrs. Kidwell said that was not so. "She just took him in," she said. Following Ardalía's death in 1948, Harrison and his wife, Delmont, lived in Ardalía's house and became unofficial caretakers of Eidolon, assisting the Zapoleons while the Zapoleons were visiting on the property and watching over it when they were elsewhere.

- On September 19, 1936, Claude and Hazel Duckworth sold the property to Henry Twigg and his wife, Fannie, for \$800.

- The Twiggs were both originally from West Virginia. They had been married about 1921 and had four or five children. According to Mrs. Kidwell, the Twiggs did not farm the Sideling Hill property but simply resided there and, like the Duckworths, they did not own an automobile. It is not known how the Twiggs made their living. Census records show that Henry had earlier worked for a time as a butcher in Cumberland, MD.

- In 1938, Henry and Fannie Twigg defaulted on the \$500 mortgage they had secured to purchase Eidolon and the property was sold at auction to Citizens National Bank on June 4 of that year for \$541.36. The record of the auction sale indicates the property at that time included a one-story frame bungalow, a stable, and outbuildings. The property remained in the bank's hands and unoccupied until the Zapoleons purchased it in 1945.

—*Prepared by Peter Smith, PVAS; updated 08-14-11*