



*IN MEMORY OF HER SON – The Arthur Home for Destitute Boys was founded by Summit resident Georgianna Klingle Holmes in honor of her son, who died after being bitten by a rabid dog. The stone home pictured went up in 1901 at 80 Pine Grove Ave., and when it came down in 1948, it was replaced by the homes that now stand on Pine Ridge Drive. (Postcard from the collection of the Summit Historical Society)*

## **Georgianna Holmes was ahead of her time**

### **Children's home founded in memory of young son**

**By Christine Siepert Smith**

Georgianna Klingle Holmes was a woman of many interests, and quite an unusual person for her time.

She was born in Philadelphia, Pa., on Nov. 4, 1841, a few days after the death of her father, Dr. George Klingle, a medical doctor whose practice was in that city. He was an 1816 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. Mary Hunt Morris Klingle, his widow, was his

second wife and much younger than he. They had married in 1840, and Dr. Klingle was only 40 at the time of his death. His widow later married John Haas, who ran a store in Philadelphia and who raised Georgianna along with the two children he and Mary had together. One of those, John Franklin has, later came to Summit to live.

Georgianna's mother was a descendent of Lewis Morris of Morrisana, Pa., a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Mary was known as a woman of strong mind and deep spiritual insight who did charity and spiritual work in Philadelphia, primarily for her church. She is buried in Laurel Cemetery in that city.



**SELF-PORTRAIT** – Recently added to the archives of the Summit Historical Society was this self-portrait, painted by Georgianna Klinge Holmes. (Photo by Chris Siepert Smith)

On Jan. 13, 1870, Georgianna married Benjamin P. Holmes, a veteran of the Civil War. A large, imposing man, Benjamin was her second cousin, who had enlisted in the war at age 16 and had a remarkable record of service. His interest in the military continued throughout his life, and he was a leader in the New Jersey Militia for 35 years. Colonel Holmes helped mobilize his regiment, The Third, when war with Spain

was declared in 1898. After the Spanish – American War, he often wore his uniform, and he kept two cannons on his front lawn at 70 Pine Grove Ave. in Summit. He was a manufacturer of paints and varnishes, and also a stationer on Springfield Avenue. His reputation was that of a gentleman of a noble mind and upright character, according to his 1922 obituary.

The Holmeses had a son, Arthur, who died in 1881 at the age of eight after being bit by a rabid dog. In his memory, Georgianna founded the Arthur Home for Destitute Boys. She was assisted by friends and Calvary Episcopal Church in developing a home for the “care, cure, nurture and maintenance of orphans, half-orphans or destitute children.” In 1901 the home was located in a house erected on four acres at 80 Pine Grove Ave. at a cost of \$14,625.50. In 1910 it became known as The Blind Babies Home, and it closed permanently in 1927. (The site today is where the homes on Pine Ridge Avenue stand.)

Arthur had been the Holmeses only child, but a second son, LaRue, was born on Dec. 28, 1883. LaRue was a lover



*Ben. P. Holmes*

**THE COLONEL** – Long after he had served in the military, Colonel Benjamin Holmes was easily recognized around town, as he enjoyed wearing his uniform as everyday clothing. This engraving from the collection of the Summit Historical Society was published by E. G. Williams & Bro. in New York, and originally appeared in a publication called “The American Historical Society.”

buggy to the various schools, giving talks on topics related to nature.



**PASTORAL LANDSCAPE** – Recently donated to the Summit Historical Society by a New Providence resident with a family member who had worked for Georgianna Klinge Holmes was this landscape painting done by the late Summit resident. (Photo by Chris Siepert Smith)

of nature and a zealous student of natural history, botany, entomology and ornithology. A reserved boy, his great passion was birds, and although young, he served as a curator at The Museum of Natural History in New York City. LaRue was also a correspondent for The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. His entire life was spent in Summit, and he died at the age of 22 in 1906 of what his obituary described as “rheumatism of the heart complicated with other weaknesses.”

Having lost another son, Georgianna founded in LaRue's memory the LaRue Holmes Nature Lovers' League, with which she remained active with the public schools. Between 1915 and 1925, she traveled by horse and

In addition to her presentations about nature, Georgianna was a gifted artist who painted in oils. A self-portrait and two landscapes hang in the library at the Carter House, gifts of Mary Hyde Donelik of New Providence, whose great

aunt Sarah Sweeney was Georgianna's nurse late in her life. Georgianna was also a prolific poet and writer, often publishing under the name George Klinge. Several of her books and photos are in the library, as well. Her writings were often about nature, religion and relationships. In addition to these talents, Georgianna was also a pianist. She was an active member of Calvary Episcopal Church.

Her life was long, nearly 100 years, and while often sad,

was also full of accomplishments. Georgianna led an active, philanthropic life, most of which was spent in Summit. Her spirit was strong, and she had the gift of artistic talent. Sources found all lead to the belief that she was a remarkable woman.

*Author's note: Sources used in researching this story include a variety of materials from the archives of the Summit Historical Society.*