

Edward Skiddy Quintard, M.D. (1867-1936)

Mark Twain's Personal Physician and Confidante
Professor of Medicine, Essayist, Poet, Painter

"I love you beyond all words, beyond all measure of words, you who have such splendid and noble and exalted thoughts for us all... God knows my heart and sentiments and love are with you every moment."

- excerpt from **Edward Quintard's** letter to Mark Twain - December, 1909



Mark Twain and Dr. Edward Quintard - c. 1900

By Christmas Eve 1909, **Mark Twain's** life was ebbing away from the painful, lingering effects of *angina pectoris* (coronary heart disease). Not long before, the acclaimed American humorist and writer (regarded by William Faulkner as 'the father of American literature'), had summoned his personal physician, **Dr. Edward Quintard**, from New York to his estate, **Stormfield**, in Redding, CT. Twain was desperately hoping that his dear friend Dr. Quintard could do something to alleviate his chronic, abject suffering - both physical and emotional.

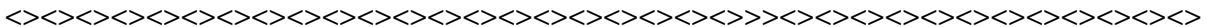
Grief-stricken and mentally exhausted by the untimely deaths of his wife, **Olivia**, and their daughter, **Susy** (at age 24), Twain had grown increasingly weak in the previous few years as his heart continued to fail and his soul was tormented by his personal losses. Dr. Quintard arrived at his bedside promptly and, aside from comforting the great American writer with his presence, reiterated his advice that Twain cut down on his lifelong practice of smoking 20

cigars a day and counseled his patient to take 'less active exercise, particularly that of Twain's habit of lightly skipping up and down the stairs'.

Twain's despondency only worsened. Christmas Eve morning, the day Twain received the above-referenced, poignant note from Dr. Quintard, his daughter **Jean** had a seizure and drowned in a bathtub at *Stormfield*. She was only 29 years old. It was all too much for Twain to bear. Four months later on April 21, 1910, Mark Twain's heart finally gave out and he died at 6:30pm at age 74, shortly after Dr. Quintard had been at his bedside ministering to his dying needs.



Mark Twain at *Stormfield*, Redding, CT, c. 1908



The Quintards of Stamford, Connecticut

Edward Skiddy Quintard was born on January 21, 1867 in Stamford, CT, to **Edward Augustus Quintard** and **Mary Skiddy Quintard** (who was a descendant of 12th U.S. President Zachary Taylor). Of French Huguenot descent, the Quintard family was prominent in Stamford for generations, their patriarch Isaac Quintard having arrived from France via England in the early 1700s.

Edward's great-grandfather, also Isaac Quintard, was a wealthy, highly regarded citizen of Stamford and his son (Edward's grandfather, Isaac again) was captain of Stamford's 1st militia in the Revolutionary War. Edward's father, **Edward Augustus Quintard**, was one of three

enterprising brothers: the eldest, George William Quintard, was a well-known financier and businessman in New York; Charles Todd Quintard was a physician and Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Tennessee; and Edward's father, Edward Augustus, was a financier who made a large portion his fortune in the coal business and went on to become president of Citizen's Savings Bank of New York.



E. A. Quintard

Edward Augustus Quintard (1826-1899)

Edward Quintard grew up in opulence on a large estate at 161 Glenbrook Road in Stamford, in an imposing French Second Empire mansion built by his well-to-do father in 1867. Since 1935, this splendid, regal building has been the home of Connecticut's **Ukrainian Museum & Library**, the oldest Ukrainian cultural institution in the United States, 'dedicated to the collection, documentation, preservation and exhibition of artifacts and publications dealing with Ukrainian culture and heritage'.



**Ukrainian Museum & Library, 161 Glenbrook Road, Stamford, CT - 1867
Boyhood Home of Dr. Edward Quintard**

Because his father's many business interests frequently took him to England, France and Germany, Edward was primarily educated by private tutors that accompanied the family to Europe. In 1887, Quintard graduated from **Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons** in New York; and after his residency at St. Luke's Hospital, he carried on his studies with post graduate work in Berlin, Munich, Vienna and Paris, specializing in internal medicine.

Upon his return to New York, Quintard became chief physician at St. Mary's Hospital for Children and then assumed the position of medical director at **New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital** on Second Avenue and 20th Street in New York - which later merged with New York University Medical School and Bellevue Hospital.

To quote the 1919 *History of Medicine in New York*, Volume V ... "[Dr. Edward Quintard] an eminent specialist in internal medicine of New York, whether as physician, educator, author or important factor in the affairs of leading medical institutions, is characterized by abilities of a high order. As director of the Medical School and Hospital, his activities therewith cover the most noteworthy period of development and growth in the history of the institution and to that development Dr. Quintard has contributed in full measure". Quintard also authored many medical research papers and monographs such as, *Hepato-Intestinal-Toxemia* (1908) and *Report on Two Cases of Tubercular Stenosis of the Ileum* (1909).

On June 5, 1894, Quintard married **Estella Hayden** who came from a well-to-do manufacturing family in Columbus, OH. *The New York Times* declared: 'One of the prettiest and important weddings was held yesterday at the apartments of the bride's parents in the Valencia on West 59th St'. The couple settled into an apartment at 145 E. 58th St. and subsequently moved to 1050 Fifth Avenue.

Of An Artistic Bent

In an era, unlike today's world with its dizzying array of recreational, entertainment and electronic distractions, Dr. Quintard epitomized his generation's steadfast dedication to a fierce work ethic, uplifting moral behavior and an abiding love for the arts. For Quintard, 'recreation' was writing essays and poems, playing the piano and painting pastoral scenes.

He was considered by the History of Medicine to be a *'writer of genius and ability who achieved literary fame as the author of a number of books of essays and poetry'*, including ***Battle Hymn and Litany*** (1899), ***Sea Babies and Other Babies*** (1903), ***From a Window*** (1911) and ***Vernal Tides and A La St. Terre*** (1913).

A selection from his book ***Sonnets*** (1900) sheds light on Quintard's artistic sensibility:

Solitude

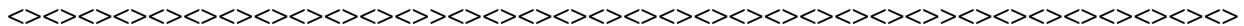
*He that would know the sweetness of the hour,
When free from noisy tongue and jarring strife
His spirit feels the calm content of power,
Must seek still solitude and breathe its life.
Yet not in cloistered walls nor lonely cell
Doth its calm presence soothe the restless heart;
Nor doth its spirit cast its magic spell
Where destiny of man hath played a part;
But where the silver-sandalled moon her way
Across the sleeping sea in silence seeks,
Or where the planet-lights resplendent play
Like alter fires 'round some starlit peak';
There, in the solemn silence of the hour,
Is solitude, imperial in its power.*

Of his books of essays, the most well known was ***Extra Muros and Other Essays*** (1906) [in Spanish, *Extra Muros* means outside city walls], in which Quintard enthuses about how spiritually necessary and uplifting it is to flee the cacophony and grime of city life to retreat to the country in a concerted effort to soothe one's shredded, mortal soul. These sentiments may explain why he and Estella became part of the influx of 'summer people' - well-to-do city escapees who began rustivating around the 19th century, turning Norfolk into their sweet-aired, pastoral playground.

Samplings from ***Extra Muros...*** express Quintard's deep feelings about the sanctity of the natural world and how, despite its long tenure as custodians and stewards of Mother Earth's munificence, humankind never really comes to grips with its inherently indifferent, destructive tendencies. Regarding the moneyed, conspicuously consumptive society that predominated during the *Gilded Age* (an apt designation coined by Mark Twain) Quintard laments:

- *Gold and Gunpowder are the statesmen and high priests of the hour*
- *Magnitude and Pretension ride boldly and throw their brazen gauntlet into the very face of Excellence*
- *[they are] Lost in the dense fog of selfishness and indifference... glitter and show, brag and bluster*
- *The quality that separates the pedagogue from the master, the artisan from the artist, and mediocrity from greatness can only be acquired by a full and intimate association with nature*
- *[listen to] the voices of wind and water*
- *a man acquires more true wisdom in clearing an acre of ground than he can get in all the newspapers printed in the course of a year*
- *to the ceaseless energies, the everlasting repose of Nature must man turn to finally know himself*

“beyond the walls, then, everyone of us must go”



Norfolk Connecticut Casts It's Spell

By 1904, through his friendship with **Dr. Frederic Dennis**, professor of surgery at Bellevue Hospital (who grew up ‘summering’ on the Village Green in Norfolk; and after whom Dennis Hill State Park is named), Quintard began acquiring several parcels of land on Greenwood Road (where Botelle School now sits) and the present-day Laurel Way Extension. Property records at Town Hall show that Quintard made over forty real estate transactions in that area (and on Doolittle Lake) well into the 1930s.

**Dr. Frederic Shepard Dennis
(1850-1934)**



Becoming very much part of the Norfolk's social summer firmament, Quintard and Estella were charter members of the **Norfolk Country Club** when it was founded in 1912, headquartered at the Eldridge Gymnasium on Maple Avenue. It's difficult today to imagine the brilliant social milieu, the gracious standard of living, the beautiful clothes, the grand newly-minted houses, the excitingly new scientific miracles of electricity, telephones and automobiles that permeated life when Norfolk truly WAS Norfolk in the early 20th century.

Quintard's most significant Norfolk property acquisition was what is now 106 Greenwoods Road, a stately Queen Anne Victorian situated admirably at the crest of a hill, built by one of Norfolk's Gilded Age patronesses, **Ellen Battell Terry Stoeckel**. A widow, whose husband died two months after their son's birth in 1874, Ellen Terry engaged noted Hartford architect, **William Brocklesby**, to design a handsome domicile (perhaps for a bit of independence from life with her father **Robbins Battell** at **Whitehouse** on the Village Green) she called **Knolly Brook**.

Shortly before the house was completed Ellen's son, **Frederic Battell Terry**, a promising, handsome young man, died tragically at the age of 16 from an accident playing baseball. Unable to countenance moving into the brand new, empty house, Ellen sold it (for one dollar) to her son's caretaker, **Julia Wessman**, who lived in **Rose Cottage** on Maple Avenue.

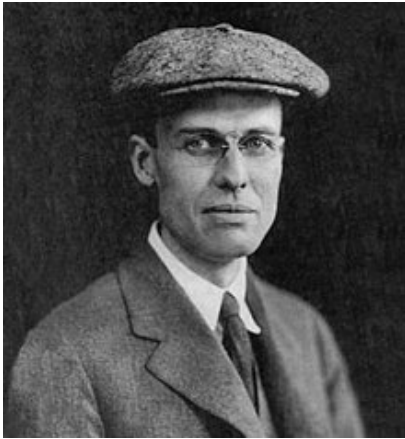


Knolly Brook - William Brocklesby - 1890

Quintard purchased Knolly Brook from Miss Wessman in 1913 and he and Estella settled comfortably into the humming social ambience of Norfolk while relishing the contentments of country living. Estella died in 1926 and just a year later Quintard married **Lucy "Peachy" Jones Flagg**, widow of his friend John Flagg. Both the Quintards and the Flaggs were listed in *The New York Social Register* in 1918 and lived close to one another near Central Park on the Upper East Side.

The Knolly Brook Artists Colony

Dr. Quintard was not only a painter, he was a generous patron of the arts. The Great Depression was a particularly difficult time for artists because the marketplace of wealthy art collectors dried up after the Crash of 1929. Quintard had a great many friends in the New York arts community through his association with *The St. Nicholas Club* and other arts and literary clubs such as *The Authors Union*, *The Coffee House Club* and the *Society for Literary Knowledge*, of which he was a founding member. One of Quintard's closest friends in the New York art world was noted art critic and, at-the-time, well known New York artist **Guy Pène du Bois**, who was a lifelong friend of artist **Edward Hopper**. Du Bois was best man at Hopper's wedding to Josephine Nivison in 1924. Hopper and du Bois studied painting together under the tutelage of **Robert Henri** who, in revolt against academic art in the early 1900s, pioneered the *The Ashcan School of American Realism*. Henri implored his students to "forget about art and paint what interests you in life" and "it isn't the subject that counts but what you feel about it".



Edward Hopper (1882-1967)



Guy Pène du Bois (1884-1958)

It's interesting to note that, of the two best friends, Hopper went on to extraordinary success and recognition as an artist while du Bois, decidedly as talented and prolific an artist as Hopper, is largely unknown today by the general public. Ever fickle are the doges of art, as are their loyal disciples. Discerning readers of this Profile may choose to ascertain for themselves from the paintings below, which of these two gifted artists better captures the moment and elucidates profoundly the loneliness and despair that sometimes seeps into human relationships:



***Summer in the City* - Edward Hopper, 1950**



***Café Madrid (Mr. and Mrs. Chester Dale)* - Guy Pène du Bois, 1926**

In the 1930s Quintard invited du Bois to Norfolk where they set up a studio in a cabin behind Knolly Brook. Du Bois presided and gave art lessons while down-on-their-luck artists such as American Impressionist, **Ernest Lawson**, one of the infamous, **The Eight** (a group of avant-garde artists, again led by Robert Henri that included, George Bellows, William Glackens and Maurice Prendergast) were able to paint without financial burdens, as guests of Dr. Quintard.



Haystack Mountain, Norfolk Connecticut - Ernest Lawson, 1933

The **Knolly Brook Studio** building still stands, tucked behind the Knolly Brook House, looking much as it did in the 1930s when it was buzzing with well known artists and their students under the watchful eye of their patron, Dr. Edward Quintard. Former members of the NCC, acclaimed artist and sculptress, **Ann Curtiss Scoville**, and educator and lifelong artist, **Betsy Hubbard Stott** (who passed away this year at the age of 102) took art lessons from Guy Pène du Bois at Knolly Brook Studio when they were teenagers.



Portrait of Jane Quintard Clark (Byers), age 18 - by Ann Curtiss Scoville - 1943

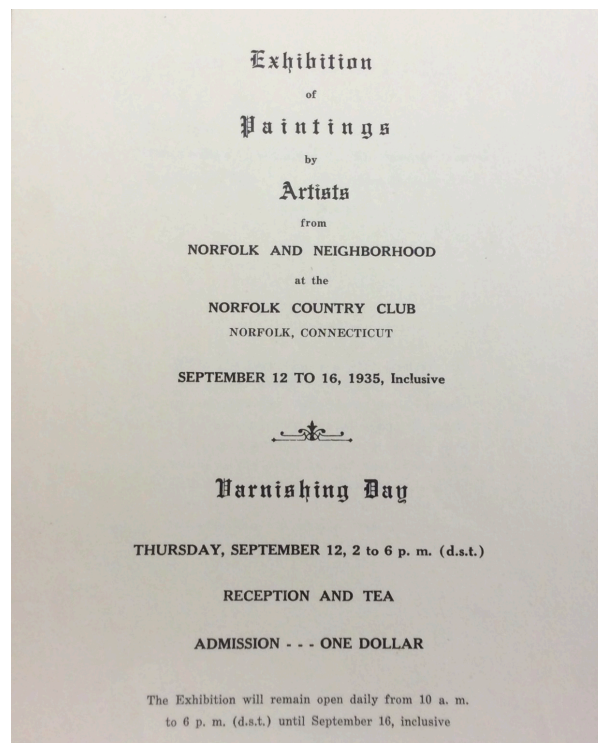


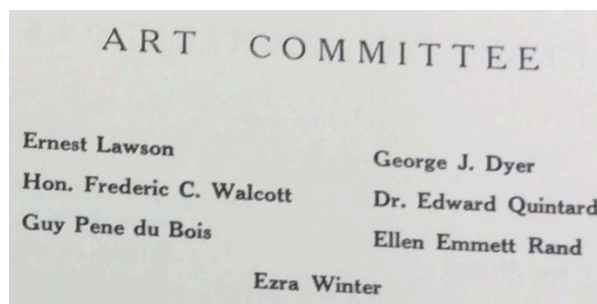
Knolly Brook Studio - as it looks today



Varnishing Day and the Art Exhibition at the Norfolk Country Club, 1935

The culmination of the short-lived Knolly Brook artists colony in Norfolk came in September of 1935 when the only art exhibit ever held at the Norfolk Country Club was hung in the Clubhouse on Golf Drive. Close to 100 artists, *Norfolk and Neighbors*, exhibited their paintings for five days to help alleviate the pervasive doldrums of the Great Depression and to generate much-needed income for struggling artists.





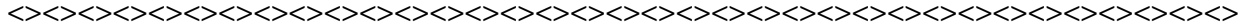
NCC Art Exhibit Program and Distinguished Art Committee, Including Dr. Quintard - 1935

In 1936, Dr. Quintard travelled to **Sewanee, The University of the South** in Tennessee, an Episcopal liberal arts college, to attend a meeting of the school's board of regents, of which he was a legacy member. His uncle, **Charles Todd Quintard**, second Bishop of Tennessee and also a physician (who had the dubious distinction of being 'the Chaplin of the Confederacy' during the Civil War) had been the first vice-chancellor of the University in 1866. On the way home on February 12, 1936, stopping to spend the night in Chattanooga, TN with his wife "Peachy", Dr. Quintard suffered a heart attack at the 1872 **Read House** hotel and died the same day at the age of sixty-nine. Just a week before he had told a *New York Times* reporter that he was "contemplating devoting his entire next summer, which he planned to pass at his country estate, Knolly Brook at Norfolk, CT., to the writing of a book to be called the 'Knolly Brook Essays'. Ominously, he told the reporter, "Don't print that yet. I don't like to tell in advance what I'm going to do, because something might change my plans." Dr. Quintard is buried alongside his Quintard relatives at **Kensico Cemetery** in Westchester County in a modest grave marked by a simple cross - not far from where his first wife Estella was interred in the Hayden family mausoleum.



**Dr. Edward Skiddy Quintard Gravesite
Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, NY**

by
Micheál Cummings Kelly
Club Historian
July 27, 2022



Acknowledgements

A sincere thank you to NCC member, **Jenny Quintard Byers**, who generously shared anecdotes, reminiscences and photographs of the Quintard family, providing a definitive spark to the putting together of this Profile. Jenny's genuine pride in her Quintard family (which has now been in Norfolk for generations) and high regard for Dr. Quintard ("Uncle Ted") came shining through in all her correspondence and conversations.

A special thank you (and an affectionate tribute) also, to Jenny's mother, **Jane Quintard Clark Byers**, longtime NCC member and one of the Club's best tennis players in her salad days, who spent her childhood summers at a delightful 'cottage' (which came down years ago) on the Knolly Brook estate. Jane enthusiastically shared Quintard family lore and stories before she passed away in 2020 at the age of 94. Her portrait, painted by her longtime friend **Ann Curtiss Scoville**, is shown above.



Jane Quintard Clark Byers (1925-2020)
Unwinds After a Tennis Match at the Norfolk Country Club - 1960

...and as always, big thanks to NCC Club Manager *extraordinaire*, **Michael Sinclair**, who unfailingly shepherds to the finish line, with his technology skills, these often unwieldy Profiles before e-blasting them to nearly 400 (it is hoped) interested NCC members.

Next Up: Author Philip Everett Curtiss (1885-1964)