



Inisfada, exterior front view, May 2013
([click here for other views of the estate](#))

Inisfada

Inisfada (In-ish-FAH-dah) is a Gaelic word that means “Long Island.”¹ It is also the name of the late Nicholas Fredrick Brady’s Manhasset estate, which, at the time of its construction in the early 1900s, was the fourth largest home in the United States.²

Born October 25th, 1878, in Albany, NY, Nicholas Fredrick Brady was the son of financial giant Anthony Nicholas Brady,³ whose life is a quintessential “American Dream” story. Anthony Brady emigrated from Ireland when he was a youth and his first taste of the business life was a small tea shop he owned in Albany.⁴ From these humble beginnings, he went on to consolidate all gas companies in Albany and Chicago.⁵ He was the founder of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company⁶ and was responsible for the consolidation of all transit lines and of all light and power companies in Brooklyn. One of Anthony Brady’s greatest accomplishments was the consolidation of “nearly all electric lighting, heat, and power facilities of New York.” Along with his partner William C. Whitney (owner of the Metropolitan Traction System, Edison Illumination Company, and Mount Morris Electric Company), Brady Sr. formed the New York Gas, Electric Light, Heat, and Power Company, which, at the time, was estimated to be worth \$25 million. These two business moguls “directed every large company in Manhattan and Brooklyn.”⁷ Brady Sr. also dabbled in the tobacco business, becoming a member of the Board of Directors for the Consolidated Tobacco Company (the result of a merger between American

¹ Foreman, John, “Big Old Houses: The Irish Channel”, *New York Social Diary*. <http://www.newyorksocialdiary.com/node/1908360> accessed Jun. 6th, 2013

²Christine Hellmer ed., “Manhasset: An Historic Hamlet,” *Long Island Community Newspapers: Heritage Magazine*, (Oct. 1985), 7; from the Long Island Studies Institute’s Manhasset Vertical File accessed Jun. 11th 2013

³ “N.F.BRADY DIES AT 51 AFTER LONG ILLNESS”, *New York Times*, Mar. 28th, 1930

⁴ “N.F.BRADY DIES AT 51 AFTER LONG ILLNESS”

⁵ “WHITNEY’S GREAT PROJECT”, *New York Times*, Dec. 11th, 1898

⁶“ N.F.BRADY DIES AT 51 AFTER LONG ILLNESS”

⁷ “WHITNEY’S GREAT PROJECT “

Tobacco Company and Continental Tobacco Company).⁸ He died on July 22nd, 1913, during a business trip, in London, England.⁹ His wealth at the time of his death, according to the *New York Times*, was “almost on par with that of the late J.P. Morgan.” His estate was worth about \$100 million: \$31 million came from tobacco stocks, \$8 million came from Brooklyn Rapid Transit stock, and \$54 million came from his other various investments.¹⁰ Anthony Brady’s will stated that his estate was to be divided six ways: Nicholas and his brother James would each receive one part and the other four parts would go to trustees to be given to his daughters.¹¹ In 1923, Brady’s daughters sued their brothers claiming that they were being negligent and misusing their father’s money.¹² Nicholas Brady fired back stating that the money was given to the trust company to insure that his father’s money did not fall into the hands of his sons-in-law.¹³ The issue was resolved in 1924 when each of Brady’s daughters was awarded \$3 million.¹⁴

Nicholas Brady graduated from Yale University in 1899,¹⁵ and that same year was elected to the board of directors of both the Edison Electric Illuminating Company of Brooklyn¹⁶ and the Brooklyn Union Elevated Railroad Company¹⁷. After his father stepped down in April 1913, he became vice president of the Edison Electric Illuminating Company and president of the New York Edison Company. Upon his father’s death, Brady became the successor to the presidency of the Edison Electric Illuminating Company of Brooklyn and the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company. He was only thirty-four years old at the time, which made him one of the youngest men in America to be in charge of a major cooperation.¹⁸ Just like his father before him, Nicholas Brady was known for consolidation. In 1928, he consolidated the New York Edison Company, the Brooklyn Edison Company, the New York and Queens Electric Light and Power Company, the Westchester Lighting Company and the United Electric Light and Power Company.

Nicholas Brady married Genevieve Garvan, daughter of Senator Patrick Garvan, on August 11th, 1906.¹⁹ Nicholas and Genevieve were both devout Irish Catholics, and, in 1918, Brady became the first American layman to receive the title “Papal Chamberlain.” Pope Pius XI also made him a member of the “Ordine Supremo del Christo of the first class”²⁰—the Supreme Order of Christ—the highest Papal Honor a person could receive.²¹ At the time, the only other person to hold this prestigious honor was the King of Italy. Brady was also a founding member of the U.S. chapter of the Knights of Malta and helped form the Catholic Charities Organization.²² In 1926, Nicholas Brady gave Pope Pius XI a donation of \$1 million for the Catholic Church, and that same year the Pope gave Mr. and Mrs. Brady the titles of Papal Duke and Duchess.²³ Genevieve Brady was the founder of the Carroll Club, “a Catholic club for young business girls,”²⁴ and she was also chairman of the executive committee of the National Council of the Girl Scouts of America. Because of her work with young women, the King of Belgium gave her the honor of the Belgium Order of the Knight of the Crown in 1928.²⁵ In 1929, Mr. and Mrs. Brady donated an estimated \$2 million to the construction of the St. Isaac Jogues

⁸ “CONSOLIDATED TOBACCO CO”, *New York Times*, Jun. 7th, 1901

⁹ “A.N. BRADY’S DEATH WAS KEPT SECRET”, *New York Times*, Jul. 24th, 1913

¹⁰ “BRADY’S FORTUNE MAY BE \$100,000,000”, *New York Times*, Aug. 6th 1913

¹¹ “FOUR BRADY HEIRS TO GET \$3,000,000”, *New York Time*, May 28th, 1924

¹² “BRADY HEIRS MAKE \$8,429,314 DEMAND” ,*New York Times*, Jun 26th, 1923

¹³ “BRADY SAYS FATHER TRAINED HIM IN JOB” ,*New York Times*, Jan. 18th , 1924

¹⁴ ““FOUR BRADY HEIRS TO GET \$3,000,000”

¹⁵ “N.F.BRADY DIES AT 51 AFTER LONG ILLNESS”

¹⁶ “ Edison Company Election”, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Sept. 21st 1889

¹⁷ “Directors Elected To-Day”, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 3rd , 1889

¹⁸ “N.F.BRADY DIES AT 51 AFTER LONG ILLNESS”

¹⁹ “BRADY-GARVAN WEDDING TO-DAY,” *New York Times*, Aug. 11th, 1906

²⁰ “N.F.BRADY DIES AT 51 AFTER LONG ILLNESS”

²¹ “The Supreme Order of Christ,” *Association of Papal Orders in Great Britain of Pius IX, Saint Gregory and Saint Sylvester*. Accessed on June 20, 2013 <http://www.papalknights.org.uk/order-christ.html>

²² “N.F.BRADY DIES AT 51 AFTER LONG ILLNESS”

²³ “MRS. BRADY WINS LAETARE MEDAL,” *New York Times*, Mar. 11th, 1934

²⁴ “MRS. WM MACAULAY SUCCUMBS IN ITALY,” *New York Times*, Nov 25th, 1938

²⁵ “ MRS. BRADY WINS LAETARE MEDAL”

Novitiate in Wernersville, Pennsylvania, and after he passed away on March 28th, 1930, at the age of fifty-one, Nicholas Brady was buried there.²⁶ Genevieve Brady then succeeded him as vice president of New York City's Welfare Council. Brady left her his entire \$12 million fortune, without restrictions, certain that she would use the money mainly for philanthropic purposes. As a result of her community service and devotion to the Catholic faith, Genevieve Brady received the Laetare Medal from Notre Dame University in 1934—the 11th woman to receive the award.²⁷ In 1936, the honorable Pope Pius XII, then Papal Secretary of State Cardinal Pacelli, was a guest at the Brady estate during his visit to the United States. On March 6, 1937, Genevieve Brady married William J. Babington Macaulay, Irish Free State minister to the Vatican, at St. Ignatius Loyola Church in New York City. Later that year she would give 100 acres of her 250-acre estate, including the eighty-seven room house, to the Jesuits to be used as a seminary. She died on November 24th, 1938, in Vatican City.²⁸

St. Ignatius College at Inisfada was opened on September 6th, 1937, with ten faculty members and forty-three students. The first president of the college was Rev. J. Harding Fisher.²⁹ It remained a seminary until 1963 when Fr. John Magan converted it into a retreat house.³⁰

Inisfada was built for the Bradys during the years 1916-1920. It featured Jacobean Revival architecture by famous Philadelphia architect John Windrim,³¹ who is known for his work on buildings such as the Franklin Institute, Jefferson Hospital and the Lincoln Liberty Building. The Bradys estate was his only non-Philadelphian project.³² Notable exterior architectural features at Inisfada include sculptures of gargoyles, angels, drones, clowns, and animals, as well as scenes from thirteen different fairy tales, including *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Tortoise and the Hare*, and *Billy Goats Gruff*. In addition, the medallion above the portecochère depicts Mrs. Brady's namesake, St. Genevieve, the patron saint of Paris.³³ Also noteworthy are the building's thirty-three Tudor chimneys, no two of which are alike.³⁴

Among the original interior rooms of Inisfada were the Great Hall (later converted to a chapel), a solarium, a billiards room, salons, a library, kitchen and pantry suites, a large dining room, bedrooms (including rooms for servants), and St. Genevieve Chapel, which contained stained glass windows and a marble and gold altar. Each room had a special design, planned between Genevieve Brady and the architects, and carried out by artisans from Europe. The building features oak wood ceilings and marble floors, along with carvings done in Celtic, Native American and honeysuckle motifs.³⁵

The landscape architecture was done by the Olmstead Brothers³⁶, known for designing the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens³⁷, and Samuel Parsons³⁸ who worked on Central Park in New York City.³⁹ They surrounded Inisfada

²⁶ "MRS. WM MACAULAY SUCCUMBS IN ITALY"

²⁷ "MRS. BRADY WINS LAETARE MEDAL,"

²⁸ "MRS. WM MACAULAY SUCCUMBS IN ITALY"

²⁹ "JESUIT COLLEGE TO OPEN," *New York Times*, Aug. 18th 1937

³⁰ "St. Ignatius Retreat House," <http://www.inisfada.net/about/> accessed Jun. 6th 2013

³¹ Robert E. and Judith A. Spinza, "Prominent North Shore Families Their Estates and Country Homes", Spinza Collection Vol 1 (1992), 157; ; from the Long Island Studies Institute's Special Collections accessed Jun 11th, 2013

³² Robert B. Mackay, Anthony K. Baker, and Carol A. Traynor, ed. *Long Island Country Houses and Their Architects: 1860-1940*, New York: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities in association with W.W. Norton & Co., 1997, 443

³³ Foreman "'Big Old Houses: The Irish Channel'"

³⁴ The American Institute of Architects, Long Island Chapter and The Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, *AIA Architectural Guide to Nassau and Suffolk Counties, Long Island*, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1992, 31

³⁵ "Old and Abandoned, Castles and Mansions," Aug. 17th 2010 <http://castlesmansionsandmore.blogspot.com/2010/08/nowadays-it-is-commonplace-to-see.html> accessed on July 15th, 2013

³⁶ Spinza, "Prominent North Shore Families Their Estates and Country Homes,"

³⁷ "Olmstead Brothers Landscapes," *Cultural Landscape Foundation*, <http://tclf.org/landscapes/1379/all?page=1> accessed on Jun 13th, 2013

³⁸ Spinza, "Prominent North Shore Families Their Estates and Country Homes,"

³⁹ "Samuel Parsons, Jr. Landscapes," *Cultural Landscape Foundation*, <http://tclf.org/landscapes/989/all?page=1> accessed on Jun. 13th, 2013

with beautiful formal gardens that had themes ranging from Italian to Japanese. A reflecting pool with a statue in it was later added to the grounds. The reflecting pool remains, but the formal gardens are now gone.⁴⁰

Due to economic reasons, the St. Ignatius Retreat House closed its doors on June 1, 2013.⁴¹ It is currently for sale, with a listing price of \$49 million.⁴²

~Andrew Solar, July 2013

⁴⁰ Foreman ““Big Old Houses: The Irish Channel,”

⁴¹ “Closing of Saint Ignatius Retreat House,” <http://www.inisfada.net/home-feature/closing-of-saint-ignatius-retreat-house/> accessed on Jun. 6th 2013

⁴² “The Inisfada, a Manhasset mansion built in the '20s, up for sale for \$49M,” *News 12 Long Island*, May 7th, 2013 <http://longisland.news12.com/news/the-inisfada-a-manhasset-mansion-built-in-the-20s-up-for-sale-for-49m-1.5217372> accessed on Jun. 26th, 2013.



Inisfada, exterior front view, May 2013



Inisfada, exterior front and side view, May 2013



Inisfada, exterior side view, May 2013



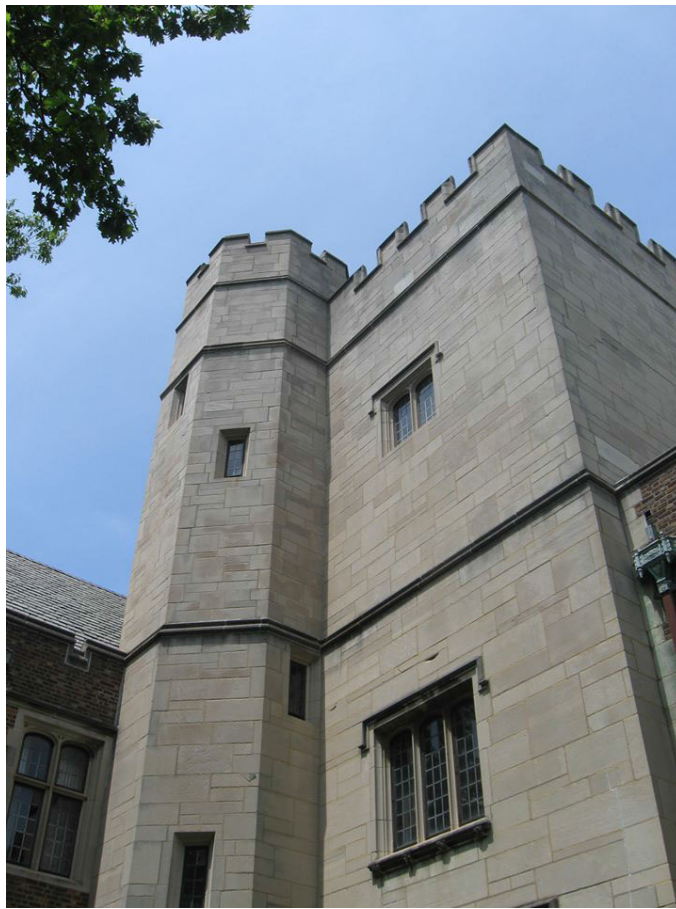
Inisfada, exterior rear view, May 2013



Inisfada, exterior rear view, May 2013 (2)



Inisfada, exterior rear view, May 2013 (3)



Inisfada, exterior rear view, May 2013 (4)



Inisfada, exterior view carving, May 2013 (3)



Inisfada, exterior view carving, May 2013 (2)



Inisfada, main entrance, May 2013



Inisfada, front door-closeup, May 2013



Inisfada, Little Red Riding Hood exterior carving, May 2013



Inisfada, view looking out from porte-cochère, May 2013



Inisfada, statue in reflecting pool, May 2013



Inisfada, labyrinth, May 2013



Inisfada, well statue, May 2013



Inisfada, medallion depicting St. Genevieve, above porte-cochère, May 2013