

GALION'S LANDMARK HOUSE ON HISTORIC WEST MAIN STREET

WELCOME TO The GILL HOUSE

A remarkable history. A remarkable architect. A remarkable restoration.





YOUR VIRTUAL VISIT

Key Points

- 04** An introduction
- 05** The Gills and Galion
- 07** Famous Family Friends
- 11** The Architect
- 15** Restoring a Landmark

LOUIS KAMPER'S NEOCLASSICAL
MASTERPIECE STANDS PROUD IN SMALL TOWN OHIO



AN INTRODUCTION

*117 Years of
History*

The Gill House stands proudly at the corner of Gill Avenue and Harding Way West, first known as "West Main Street" and the original route of the Lincoln Highway.

The house has two stories to share. One is about an amazing family legacy with ties to important figures in American history. The other is about a singular architect trained in the foremost studio of the day and who went on to transform the skyline of Detroit.

The house was twice saved from loss and is being slowly and carefully restored by Galion's preservation organization, Preserving Galion, Inc.

Join us on this virtual tour of this 6,000 square foot landmark house in celebration of Ohio Open Doors. We then invite you to visit in person. Limited tours are available during the pandemic; contact us for details.

THE GILLS AND GALION

200 Years of History

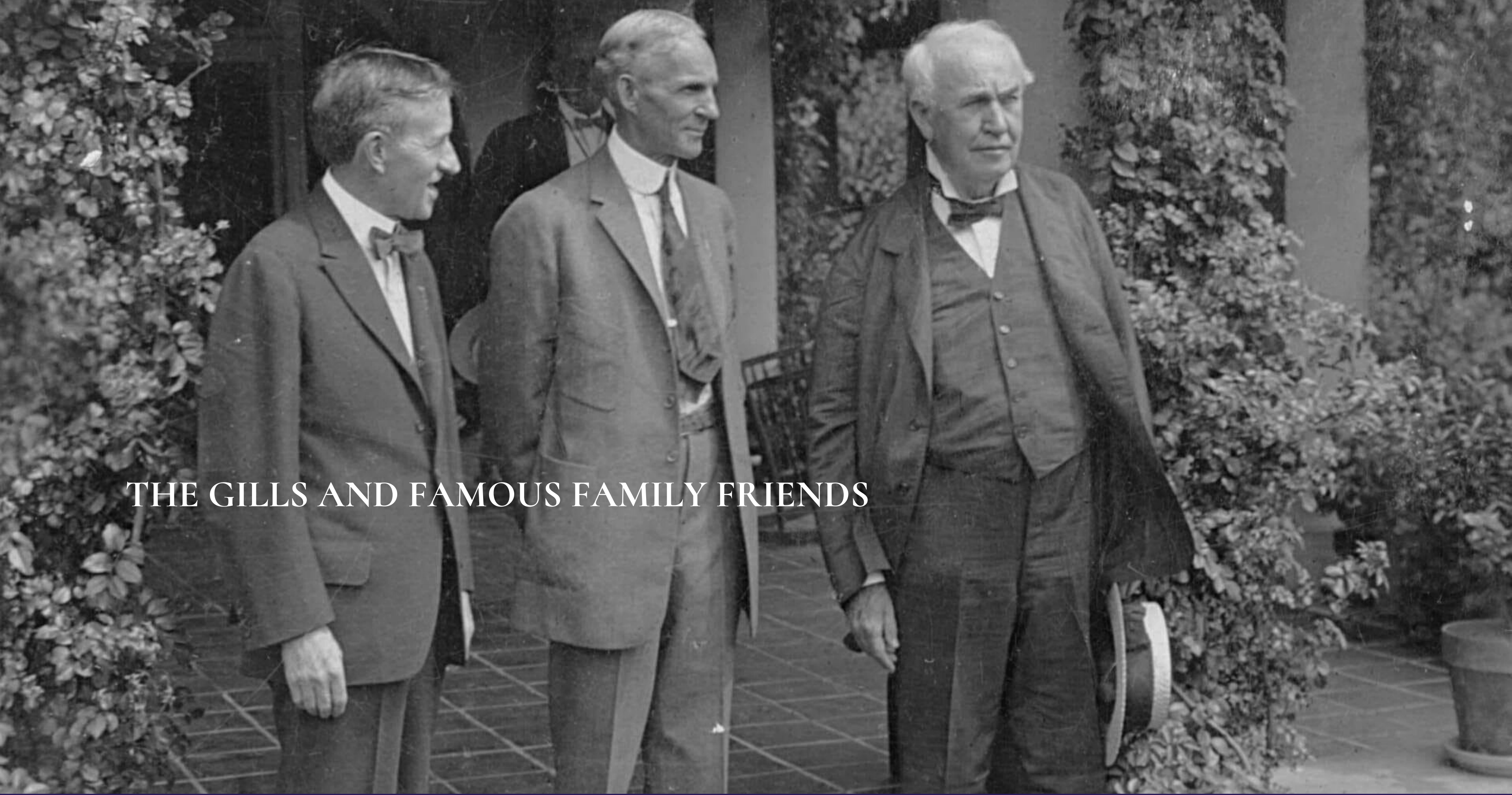
The Gills arrived in what is now Galion in 1818, the second family of settlers to arrive at a point not far from the headwaters of the Olentangy River. David Gill was the town's first schoolteacher. Over the next half century, the Gills acquired substantial acreage which they then developed, and became one of the leading families of the community.

The first Gill House on the current site was built in 1845 by David's son, James, and it was moved - and still stands - behind the current Gill House, which was built in 1903 by David's grandson Bloomer Gill and his wife Nellie Stewart Gill. The Gills had four children -- Mary, James, Mina, and Isabel.



GALION, CIRCA 1910. THE GILL HOUSE IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS PHOTOGRAPH.





THE GILLS AND FAMOUS FAMILY FRIENDS



THOMAS AND MINA MILLER EDISON

During her teenage years, Nellie Stewart Gill's close friend was Mina Miller, daughter of Akron industrialist and Chautauqua Institution founder Lewis Miller. Mina became the second Mrs. Thomas Alva Edison, and Nellie and Mina remained close throughout their lives. Bloomer and Nellie's second daughter was named Mina Miller Gill.



HENRY FORD

As he worked for one of the largest wheel manufacturers in the country at the time of the advent of the American automobile industry, Bloomer Gill was often in Detroit, where he befriended a would-be car maker, Henry Ford. Ford made visits to Galion to visit the Gills at the house, including spending time on the beautiful East Porch.



HENRY LEE

At the time of Bloomer and Nellie's wedding, the groom was working for Henry D. Lee, proprietor of Galion's Central Ohio Oil Company. After moving west for health reasons, Henry Lee founded a wholesale grocery business in Salina, Kansas. When he needed clothing for workers, the Lee Jeans Company was born.

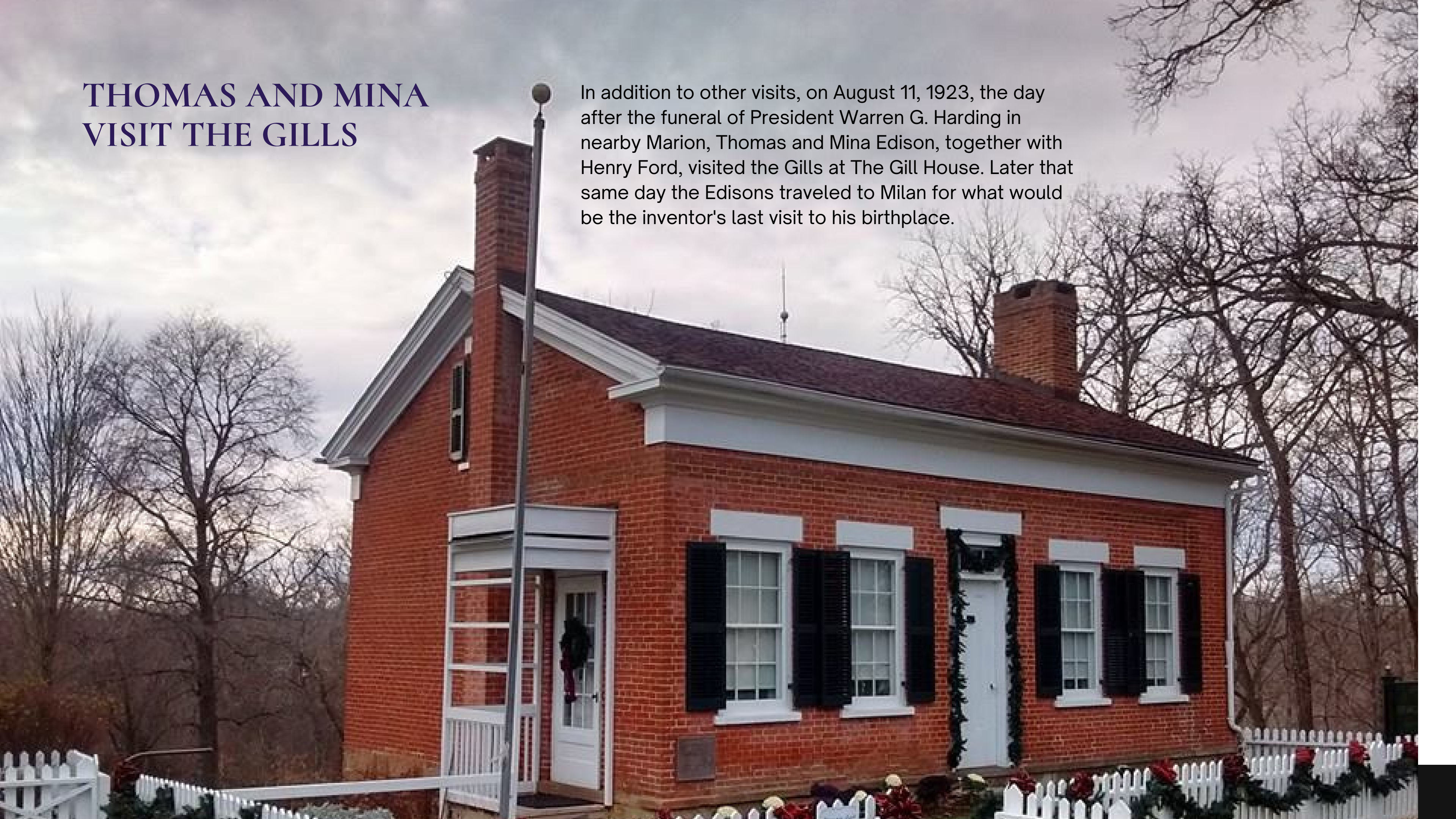


DONALD OGDEN STEWART

Nellie Stewart Gill's first cousin was Donald Ogden Stewart, screenwriter and author, who won the Best Adapted Screenplay Academy Award in 1940 for *The Philadelphia Story* with Katharine Hepburn, Jimmy Stewart, and Cary Grant. He also wrote the screenplay for 1947's *Life with Father* and many other films.

THOMAS AND MINA VISIT THE GILLS

In addition to other visits, on August 11, 1923, the day after the funeral of President Warren G. Harding in nearby Marion, Thomas and Mina Edison, together with Henry Ford, visited the Gills at The Gill House. Later that same day the Edisons traveled to Milan for what would be the inventor's last visit to his birthplace.





THE ARCHITECT



LOUIS KAMPER

McKim, Mead & White

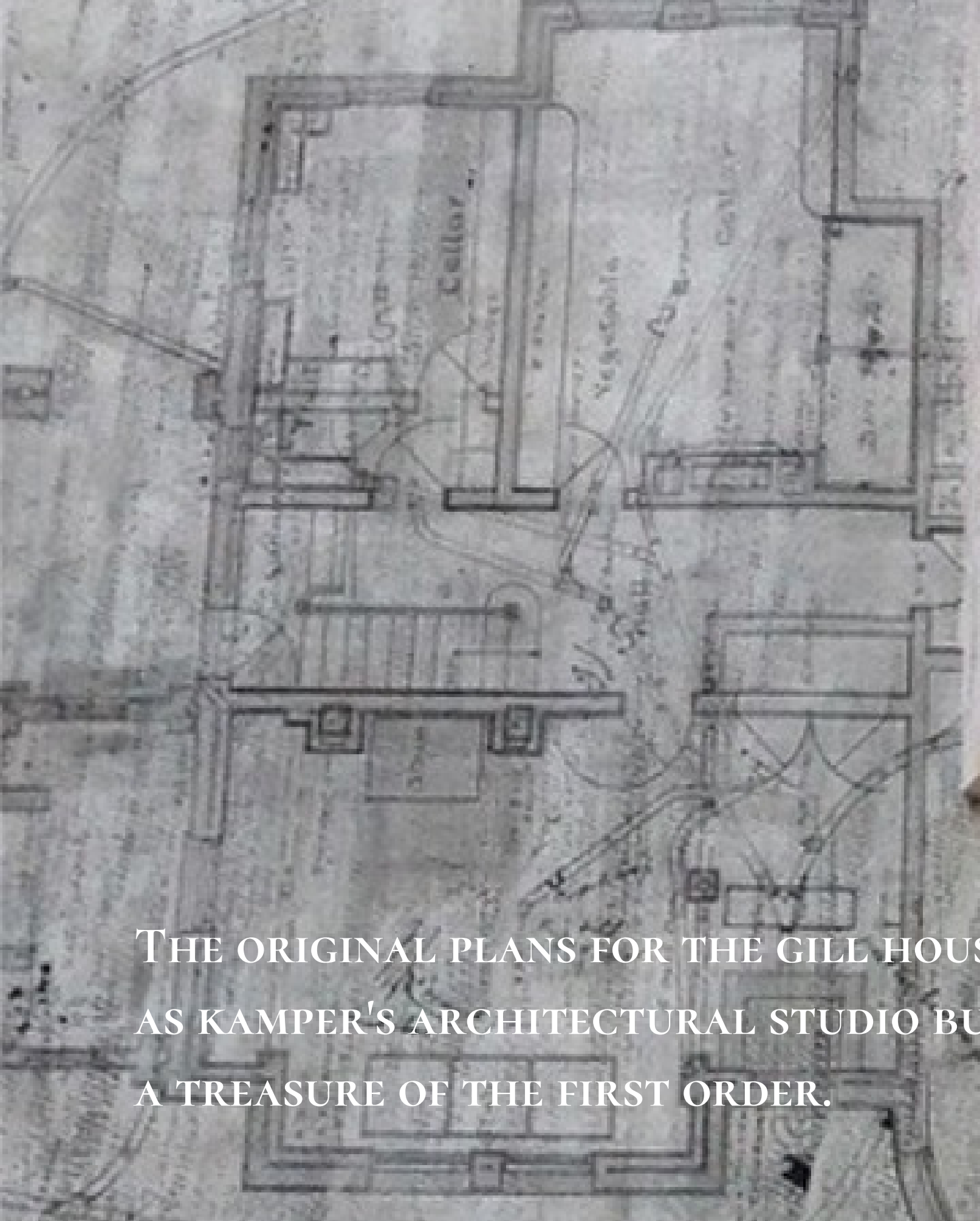
Kamper was trained in the foremost architectural firm of the Beaux-Arts style in America at the turn of the last century, and was a protege of famed architect Stanford White.

Detroit's Remarkable Architect

Kamper designed many of Detroit's iconic skyscrapers, hotels, and residences, including the famous Book-Cadillac Hotel. He is credited as making the Michigan city the "Paris of the Midwest."

Neoclassical Architecture

During a five year period, Kamper designed several residences based on his landmark Michigan Building at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. The Gill House, built in 1903, is the only one still standing.



Gill House until 1903

THE ORIGINAL PLANS FOR THE GILL HOUSE WERE HANDED DOWN FROM OWNER TO OWNER. AS KAMPER'S ARCHITECTURAL STUDIO BURNED IN THE 1950S, THE PLANS THEMSELVES ARE A TREASURE OF THE FIRST ORDER.



39. THE GILL HOME

GALION, W.

JUST-COMPLETED GILL HOUSE AWAITING ITS FIRST COAT OF WHITE PAINT

RESTORING A LANDMARK

Preserving Galion, Inc. is undertaking a multi-year restoration of the Gill House, which was built by local contractor John King. In doing so, it is also providing preservation trades training to local high school students

A room by room approach has resulted in four spaces being repaired and returned to original paint colors. Exterior renovation continues as well, with a hopeful return to the original front porch.





THE SITTING ROOM IS NEARING COMPLETION AFTER HUNDREDS OF HOURS OF VOLUNTEER AND STUDENT LABOR







VISIT HISTORIC GALION

Louis Kamper was just one of several named architects that left their mark on the streets of Galion. Others were associated with the likes of Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, and other nationally known firms. Architectural tours are available by contacting Preserving Galion, Inc.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions, tours, sharing ideas and enthusiasm

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