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———— felicia barber + riley wentzler ————

## *A General's Residence in Greenburgh: The story of Carrollcliffe*

*By: Riley Wentzler & Felicia Barber*

What kind of house would you expect an American Military general with a wife and three kids to live in? When one thinks of houses in this country words like: “ranch-style”, “duplex”, and “colonial” often come to mind. Perhaps, for the more affluent among us, the words “Victorian-style” may appear in our mind’s eye, so maybe this type of Victorian-style home is what you’d expect if someone said, “A military general lives in this house.” But, for Brigadier General Howard Carroll, you’d be wrong. One word that does *not* typically enter the American mind when thinking of private houses is the word, “**castle.**” Yet on 400 Benedict Avenue in Tarrytown, that is exactly what stands on that spot. The name of this castle is sometimes referred to as “Axe Castle,” however, more commonly it is referred to by its other name “Carrollcliffe.” While today this castle is a hotel, from 1897 - 1940 it was a private home (<https://castlehotellandspa.com/attraction/history/>). This is that story.

Before going into detail on the history and architecture of the castle, we must first pause to discuss the man who planned its design, Brigadier General Howard Carroll.

## **The General:**

On September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1854 Howard Carroll was born. Despite the fact, or maybe because of the fact, that his father Major General Howard Carroll of the United States (Union) Army was killed at the Battle of Antietam on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1862, young Howard Carroll had a lifelong passion for military affairs. His education was split between schools in Albany and schools in Europe. After completing his education, he became the Washington correspondent at, and a special writer for, the New York Times. He had a wife, two sons, and one daughter (<https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w6ff4q84#biography-collapse>). His life-long interest in military affairs would eventually lead him to enlist in the New York State Militia, where he earned the rank of Brigadier General.



## The Castle:

It was in 1890 that he began planning the design of the family residence “*Carrollcliffe*”, a magnificent castle modeled on the Norman fortifications in: Wales, Scotland and Ireland, it utilizes the Tudor architectural style. The house was constructed by renowned New York architect Henry Kilburn and construction occurred in two stages. Howard Carroll supervised both stages of the construction. The first stage was completed in 1897(<https://castlehotelandspa.com/attraction/history/>). The next year with the rank of Brigadier General in the New York State Militia, Carroll became the inspector for New York troops heading into The Spanish American War (<https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w6ff4q84#biography-collapse>). Since the war only lasted four months, it did not affect construction of the house much, and, the second stage was completed in 1910. Upon completion, the castle had 45 rooms. Although Brigadier General Carroll himself died suddenly only six years after the house’s completion, on December 30<sup>th</sup> , 1916, the rest of the Carroll family continued to live there until 1940. The Carroll family was very well connected in society, J.P Morgan and Andrew Carnegie were frequent guests at Carrollcliffe (<https://castlehotelandspa.com/attraction/history/>).



In 1941, Emerson and Ruth Axe bought the castle and 64 acres of land for \$45,000, and it became the headquarters of an investment counseling firm. It was during this period that *Carrollcliffe* was renamed “Axe Castle” (<https://castlehotelandspa.com/attraction/history/>). From 1996-present it has been

the location of The Castle Hotel & Spa, a four star hotel with a Four Diamonds Award winning restaurant (<https://castlehotelandspa.com/attraction/history/>).



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About the Authors:

We are both Assistant Town Historians at Greenburgh Town Hall and we are engaged to be married and are currently looking for permanent employment.

**Riley Wentzler:**

I was born and raised in a small rural town in central Pennsylvania. In high school, I took every honors course available including four years of Spanish. I received A's in all of them. I graduated third in my class of 146 students. This brought me to Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Once there, I continued my trend of academic excellence. I graduated summa cum laude in Political Science with a minor in Spanish and a Master's in Communication Studies, with a G.P.A of 3.94. It was also there that I met my lovely fiancée, Felicia Barber. My Master's in Communication has promoted public speaking, teamwork, and customer service. My Political Science degree has developed my research skills using computer-based tools and provided me with experience using the Microsoft Office products. My minor in Spanish has facilitated my bilingual capabilities. During my internship at Greenburgh, I created the petition for the State Roads project using website tools. My diverse education and areas of interest have provided me with a wide range of skills. I look forward to finding a career opportunity in business or government. **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at [assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com](mailto:assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com), or to help me find employment, you can contact me at [rjwentzler413@gmail.com](mailto:rjwentzler413@gmail.com)**

**Felicia Barber:**

I was born in New York City and raised in Hartsdale, New York. I graduated from Ardsley High School. I recently earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. It was here that I met my fiancé, Riley Wentzler. As a result of my academic excellence, I won a scholarship every year. I learned and applied many graphic design skills to projects during my summer internships and at school. I am proficient in using Adobe graphic design applications including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. For my Identity/branding course at Edinboro, I created logos to appear on the tee-shirts of Physical Education majors. For a veteran's upcoming event, I used a typeface to focus the reader to the soldier in the poster. For the State Roads Legislative Campaign project, I created the embedded graphic-photo that accompanied the petition I am looking for a job to utilize my skills as a Graphic Designer in an agency, print shop, company or government **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at [assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com](mailto:assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com). To learn more about my artwork or to help me find employment you can contact me at [feliciadbarber@gmail.com](mailto:feliciadbarber@gmail.com).**

**Two Interviews with the authors:**

<https://riverjournalonline.com/around-town/a-love-of-history-and-each-other/13708/>

<https://wcbs880.radio.com/articles/news/stories-main-street-couple-cerebral-palsy-brings-manytalents-town-greenburgh>

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