



**Bonnet House**  
**Ft. Lauderdale, Florida**

## THE THREE MARRIAGES OF EVELYN BARTLETT, PART I

(BASED ON J. KENT PLANCK'S LECTURE ON NOVEMBER 10, 2008 AT BONNET HOUSE MUSEUM & GARDENS)

The story of Evelyn Bartlett's first marriage is best understood with some background information on Evelyn's family, the Fortunes of Indianapolis, Indiana. Evelyn's parents, William Fortune (originally from Booneville, Indiana) and May Belle Knubbe (from Michigan City, Indiana) were married in 1884. Children arrived every two years for the Fortunes—Russell in 1885, Evelyn in 1887, and Madeline in 1889.

At the time of his marriage, William was working as a reporter for the *Indianapolis Journal* newspaper. That same year William first met the much older Colonel Eli Lilly when William was covering a flood relief mission in Southern Indiana of which Lilly was a part. Lilly was a veteran of the Civil War and in 1876 had started the Indianapolis pharmaceutical company that still bears his name. As Eli Lilly and Company grew, so did Lilly—as a civic leader and philanthropist.

William left the *Journal* to join the *Indianapolis News* in 1889, eventually becoming an editor. Over the years, he and Lilly grew closer while working on civic projects, and William was one of the first, outside the Lilly clan, allowed to buy stock in their company—some \$100,000 worth, a *huge* amount for the time. But just as 1884 was a positive year for William, both for meeting Colonel Lilly and for his marriage, 1898 proved devastating: William's wife May passed away that year as did Colonel Lilly. Evelyn was only 11 years old at the time.

William Fortune was also close to the Colonel's son Josiah who was much closer to William's own age. Josiah had a vacation cottage in Wawasee, a northern Indiana lake resort, and William had a houseboat there so the two families could vacation together.



Evelyn Fortune Bartlett, 1902

In 1902, Josiah Lilly's son Eli, a high school sophomore, was invited to a girls' basketball game by his girlfriend who was playing for the Girls' Classical School against Knickerbacker Hall, a private Episcopal girls' school. But Eli largely ignored his girlfriend during the game because he couldn't take his eyes off one of the Knickerbacker players—15 year-old Evelyn Fortune—the quiet daughter of his dad's good friend William. And thus, Eli Lilly's courtship of Evelyn Fortune began.

During summers at Wawasee, Eli would sail across the lake to pick up Evelyn. They went to dances at the clubhouse and took walks in the woods. Back in Indianapolis, Eli visited Evelyn driving a horse and trap. But anything more serious would have to wait. In 1904, Eli headed off to the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. Evelyn left Indianapolis too—for "finishing"—at Miss Knox's School, in Briarcliff Manor, New York.

Eli excelled in Philadelphia: He was first in his class two years running, a fraternity man and active in clubs. At Miss Knox's, Evelyn demonstrated her innate artistic talent. But she was unhappy there and left after only one term. Eli was unhappy, too, about being separated from Evelyn. He sent flowers almost every week. Then, in 1906, the two were engaged, and after Eli graduated the next year, he and his 20-year-old fiancée were married in a small family wedding at the Fortune home. The Lillys and Fortunes were ecstatic about uniting their families.

The newlyweds honeymooned at the Lillys' Wawasee cottage. Back in Indianapolis, they occupied a series of houses on what's now called the "Old Northside." The first of these sat directly behind the house of novelist Booth Tarkington, perhaps best known today as the author of *The Magnificent Ambersons*.

The young Lillys lived simply. Evelyn sewed her own clothes, though a girl came in daily to do household chores. They rarely traveled, and because Eli didn't like to socialize, they rarely went out. Social life revolved mostly around family: Sunday dinner was with Eli's parents, supper with the Fortunes. Because Eli's only non-work passion was sailing, they spent Augusts at Wawasee. They sailed in the mornings, swam in the afternoons, sat on the porch in the evenings—Eli reading, Evelyn sewing. But soon, even the quiet Evelyn became bored.

Having children proved very difficult. In June 1908, a son, named Eli, was born. He died one month later. Two years later, another was born, also named Eli. He lived but seven months. Evelyn endured several miscarriages during the 1910s. A Boston specialist diagnosed a prolapsed uterus, and Evelyn had surgery to correct it.

Eli remained consumed by work. Born to the business, he wanted to show he could run it. There was little time for fun. Plus, Eli didn't enjoy Evelyn's idea of fun. Eli and Evelyn started to create separate lives. When Eli went away for

two weeks with his father, Evelyn headed off too – to visit Indianapolis chum Catherine Eddy Beveridge in Washington, D.C., where she lived with her husband Albert, a former U.S. Senator. Eli rejuvenated a men's club his father started—called the "Rowdy Revelers." They met often at the Lilly cottage at Wawasee to fish and play cards.

Despite the distance in their relationship, the Lillys kept trying for a family. And on September 25, 1918, a daughter was born to the 31-year-old Evelyn. Named after her mother, she was always simply called "Evie." Fearful that she—like her brothers—might die, the Lillys hired a fulltime nurse.

But Evelyn now started going without Eli for extended visits with Catherine Beveridge at Catherine's summer home in Beverly, Massachusetts. Evelyn first met Helen Birch there when Helen came to visit her cousin Catherine. "I knew [Helen] before I knew Frederic and before their marriage," Evelyn said in her oral history. But Evelyn soon met Helen's new husband, too, when the newlywed Bartletts came to visit Catherine in Indianapolis.



Evelyn & Evie

Catherine purchased a small house at the entrance to her Beverly estate, and around 1920, when Evie was two, Evelyn began to spend most of the summer there alone, though Eli and Evie sometimes joined her briefly. Still, the couple continued trying for more children, and in 1922 yet another pregnancy ended in miscarriage.

Eli continued working 'round-the-clock. He knew things at home weren't good and he tried to set them right. Evelyn and Eli left Evie with the nurse and motored through New Hampshire's White Mountains. According to Lilly biographer James H. Madison, Eli said they "stopped at the most famous hotels and resorts while I made every effort to be the devoted bridegroom." But the attempt to rejuvenate the marriage didn't work. The Lillys continued to drift apart.

Evelyn went away again without Eli, this time on a motor trip with her father, escorting the noted writer Ida Tarbell through Indiana and Kentucky. (Tarbell wrote the muckraking expose, "History of the Standard Oil Company," but this time she was researching a book on Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Fortune had done some of his own Lincoln research and shared it with Tarbell.) The following spring, 1923, Evelyn headed off yet again without Eli—to Paris with another female friend. She continued to summer alone in Beverly.



Evie & Ely Lilly, Evie's Wedding, 1944

Frederic and Helen Bartlett—together with Helen's father Hugh Taylor Birch—bought their own estate in Beverly, probably because of cousin Catherine's presence there. The home was purchased from the prominent Francis Amory family of Boston. Christened "Treetops" by Mr. Birch, Frederic later had it painted white and then renamed it "Whitehall." Frederic and Helen stayed at Whitehall in the summer of 1925 after an extended trip abroad, and they socialized in Beverly with Evelyn. "I remember lunching with them that summer that they spent here together in this house," Evelyn recalled decades later at Whitehall. "Then," she said, "Helen's death occurred so suddenly." Helen died from breast cancer in October of that year.

Shortly after Helen's death, eight-year-old Evie came to visit Evelyn in Beverly, but Evie was sick when she arrived and she developed pneumonia. Many years later Evelyn recalled, "Frederic was still here, and he was very sympathetic. That was the beginning of my knowing him—that was just after Helen's death. . . . That same year I was in the house [the small cottage] my first winter."

By that time, Evelyn was now living virtually year-round on Catherine Beveridge's estate. And though Eli seemed content to work 'round-the-clock in Indianapolis, he wanted his wife there, too, even if she had to stay home by herself most of the time. Eli told his father he wanted a divorce. Although Josiah threatened to disown him, Eli said he would leave Evelyn anyway.

Evelyn returned to Indianapolis that winter, but she left town abruptly in March for Beverly—this time she took Evie with her. She may well have suspected what was coming. Indeed, according to biographer Madison, Josiah called this the "abduction" of his granddaughter. And *that*, apparently, was the last straw for Eli. Evelyn and Eli were divorced in the summer of 1926 after 19 years of marriage. The court awarded Evelyn custody of Evie and Eli was allowed to spend two months a year and certain holidays with his daughter.

The divorce was bitter. William Fortune lashed out at the Lillys, accusing them of paying excessive executive salaries and scrimping on dividends. James Madison quotes Eli as saying that Evelyn was "affectionless, cold and uncompromising." Madison says Eli accused her of lacking "maternal instinct" and blamed Evelyn for their sons' deaths. Biographer Madison believes Evelyn and Eli were truly once in love. They simply had much different interests. When Evelyn found it difficult to fulfill her own, Madison says she simply grew "more strong-willed and independent."

The year following the divorce, Evelyn escaped the wagging tongues of Indianapolis to live full-time in the little house at Catherine Beveridge's Beverly estate. She remained forever indebted to Catherine. Said Evelyn: "[Catherine] was the one who more or less saved my life."

In November that same year, Eli Lilly remarried to Ruth Helen Allison, his secretary of seven years.

Part II will be featured in the next issue of The Newsletter.

**THE THREE MARRIAGES OF EVELYN BARTLETT, PART II**  
BASED ON J. KENT PLANCK'S LECTURE ON NOVEMBER 10, 2008 AT BONNET HOUSE



Frederic & Evelyn Bartlett on their honeymoon in 1931

**THE YEARS WITH  
FREDERIC BARTLETT**

Evelyn Fortune Lilly married Frederic Clay Bartlett on June 1, 1931, Frederic's 58th Birthday. Evelyn was 44. Following the wedding at her father's house in Indianapolis, the couple honeymooned in Europe, mostly in Frederic's beloved Munich where he had studied in the 1890s and had since often visited. Evelyn said that when they passed through Paris on the way, Frederic bought her "an

entire wardrobe." Returning to the States in August, they took up residence in Evelyn's Boston house on Marlborough Street. Frederic had cataracts on both eyes, so the Bartletts stayed in Boston through the 1931-32 winter in order for him to have surgery on one of them. Evelyn began painting water colors while Frederic recovered.

They then took an extended trip throughout the Caribbean, possibly in search of a place to spend their winters. Evelyn said Frederic wasn't certain he wanted to resume wintering at Bonnet House as he had with his second wife, Helen Birch. Frederic had rarely returned here since Helen's death. Helen's father, however, much preferred the isolation of the South Florida coast to a winter social life up north. So, unlike Frederic, Mr. Birch had resumed spending winters here, and Frederic may have wondered if he and Evelyn would be welcome at Mr. Birch's lonely habitat. Still, following the Caribbean trip, Frederic decided they would winter here. Perhaps he didn't want to start over somewhere new – especially in the much more remote Caribbean – given his diminished eyesight. For summers up north, Frederic decided they would sell Evelyn's Boston house and live at his Whitehall estate in Beverly.

The Bartletts spent part of the next winter, 1932-33, in a house on Martha's Vineyard, but also returned to Europe

and again spent most of their time in Munich. Evelyn's 14-year-old daughter Evie went with them, as did good friend Catherine Beveridge and her daughter Abby.

Evelyn said that although Frederic had secured a painting studio in Munich, she was its primary user. "That's where [Frederic] taught me how to put a palette out and oils," she later recalled. "I had painting lessons in school and that sort of thing. I haven't had any real instruction other than that. So it was living in the atmosphere of people, Frederic and his son talking about it all the time and so forth that it made me want to try my hand at it."

Frederic's and Evelyn's winters at Bonnet House were quiet. In fact, Evelyn said that, because of all their travel, "We didn't spend that much time there when Frederic was alive." The estate was very stark in the early 1930s. The drawing room had little furniture and it was totally undecorated. The grounds were mostly sand dunes and saw grass, the veranda and sandy courtyard besieged by heavy winds that brought even more sand and hordes of bugs. Most of the time they couldn't sit outside. Evelyn urged improvements. She had Frederic dredge the marshy slough to create the lagoon. She used a \$500 gift from her father to plant royal palms along its western shore. Evelyn's father, Mr. Fortune, had joined the Boca Raton Club, and the club's manicured landscape gave the Bartletts additional ideas. The club's gardener told them to plant Australian pines near the beach to shield the wind, salt spray and bugs. He also suggested replacing the sand in the courtyard with good topsoil for a tropical garden. Frederic designed the courtyard paths and fountain, but he asked Evelyn to take charge of the gardens.

The Bartletts traveled to Europe again. They had dinner in Paris with renowned art collector Paul Guillaume, and Evelyn later recalled going to "all the galleries." Frederic also took Evelyn to Merion, Pennsylvania, to see the art collection of noted American collector Albert Barnes. Frederic had heard that Barnes had the place wired so he could listen to what people said about the artwork. "Don't make any unpleasant comments," Frederic warned Evelyn, so she said she didn't say a word the whole time they were there.

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As the 1930s progressed, Frederic created the shell museum, the bamboo bar, the pavilion at the South Lagoon, and the Island Theater. Evelyn had major art exhibitions at the John Heron Museum in Indianapolis and at New York's Wildenstein Galleries. Art News called Evelyn's paintings "sophisticated . . . clever in their color harmonies and contrasting patterns."

In June 1937, Evelyn threw a coming-out bash for debutante daughter Evie at the Ritz Carlton in Boston. She hired Ruby Newman, Boston's leading society orchestra, to play. Later that summer, in what Lilly biographer James Madison called a "very uncharacteristic display of ostentation," Eli Lilly threw Evie another celebration. Held at Lilly's home, it began with an outdoor afternoon tea for 500, and ended several days later with a gala ball. Under a huge marquee on the lawn, among fountains, statues and flowers, guests danced to the music of Benny Goodman on a portable basketball floor borrowed from Butler University.

In 1938, Evelyn bought Bothways Farm in Essex, Massachusetts. She raised flowers, vegetables and animals – chickens, cows and sheep. She even had llamas and an emu. Sometimes she had the chickens or cows served up for dinner. Asked if eating her animals bothered her, she said, "No. I run a farm, not a zoo."

The following year, Frederic created a second Florida retreat that looked like Munich's Nymphenberg Palace. Since it was located on what was then the fringe of the Everglades – now suburban Davie – he named it "Nymphenglade." Evelyn recalled it as "an enchanting little place," but said they seldom used it.



Nymphenglade

About this same time, Hugh Taylor Birch moved out of Bonnet House and returned it to the Bartletts' exclusive use, explaining that he had gotten "too old to share a house with anybody." But there was no sense of upset in his decision to go. It was just time to

move on. Birch built a fairly modest two-story house north of Sunrise Boulevard to live out his few remaining winters. It's now the Birch Park visitor's center. Still, Bonnet House remained a fairly quiet place. Evelyn said she and Frederic had all the social life they wanted up north. Like Birch, the Bartletts saw Bonnet House as an escape. Only close friends came to visit or stay over.

During World War II, the Bartletts spent winters in a Manhattan apartment. "[I]t was unpleasant in Florida," Evelyn recalled. "Every night the house had to be completely dark." Heavy curtains had to be pulled along the eastern side because of suspected German craft off the coast. The house wasn't air-conditioned so it was hot and miserable inside.

In the summer of 1947 Frederic spent six weeks planning a lavish 60th birthday party for Evelyn at their Massachusetts farm. Evelyn said tables and chairs were set up outside for a hundred guests. The murals now in the studio here served as backdrop. But it rained during lunch, so the crowd moved into the barn for the eclectic entertainment: a tap-dancing sailor, tangoing Argentines, American square-dancers, trained dogs on trapezes. The guests were eclectic, too; among them: Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the Atlantic

Monthly; John Gregg Allerton, the adopted son of Frederic's life-long friend Robert; Joseph Grew, Under Secretary of State; John Alden Carpenter, a Chicago shipping magnate and composer who has been credited with influencing the work of George Gerstwin.

Now at age 74, Frederic's bad eyesight hampered his creative production, and his heavy glasses bothered him. He became depressed – not unlike his father, decades earlier. In an effort to cheer him up, the Bartletts went to Hawaii in 1948 to see Frederic's life-long friend Robert Allerton.



Robert Allerton, 1932

Evelyn said it worked: "After that, Frederic was full of enthusiasm and had so many ideas." Evelyn had ideas of her own. She found pods on the ground at Allerton's place and put them in her purse. Back at Bonnet House, she planted the seeds. Two are now the enormous ear trees that flank the caretaker's cottage.

One year later, in the winter of 1949, a rattlesnake was killed at Bonnet House. Evelyn later thought it was an omen. Perhaps it was. Good friends were due to visit and Frederic was frantic to paint the music room floor. "It was overdoing," Evelyn said. "But we couldn't stop him." Frederic completed the job, and the guests arrived, but the following morning – as Frederic was driving around the grounds – he had a stroke.

"When the stroke came," Evelyn said, "he could no longer do anything. His life was just a misery to him. Never another happy moment. It was cruel. His whole life was creating."

Although he would live four more years, the Frederic Evelyn had known for quarter of a century was gone. He was partially paralyzed, often bedridden. The creative capacity that most defined him was broken. Evelyn sometimes now found herself going out to social events alone, without Frederic. In so doing, she met Daniel Elliott Huger (pronounced "you-gee"), a handsome, affable man ten years her junior. Though rumors persist today that Dan was Evelyn's gardener or chauffeur, he was, in reality, a retired stockbroker coming off a divorce from his second wife, and living on Manhattan's Upper East Side where the Bartletts may still have had that apartment from World War II days. Dan's and Evelyn's paths apparently crossed there socially, and Dan became a recurring guest of the Bartletts.

Dan's son, also named Dan, is now a retired attorney living in Charleston, South Carolina. He said that the ailing Frederic came to like his father very much. "When [Frederic] was dying," Dan Junior said, "he told Evelyn that after his death he wished that she would marry my father."

On June 25, 1953, Frederic Clay Bartlett died at Whitehall at age 80. Evelyn, however – at age 66 and in robust health – was not quite ready to don her widow's weeds. Five months after Frederic's death, she remarried, to the 56-year-old Daniel Elliott Huger – just as Frederic may have suggested.

Part III will be featured in the next issue of The Newsletter

## THE THREE MARRIAGES OF EVELYN BARTLETT, PART III BASED ON J. KENT PLANCK'S LECTURE ON NOVEMBER 10, 2008

### THE DANIEL ELLIOTT HUGER YEARS

Evelyn's new husband was descended from a long line of illustrious South Carolinians who traced their roots to Daniel Huger, a French Huguenot born in Loudon, France, in 1651. The South Carolina Hugers included a delegate to the Continental Congress, a United States Senator – the first Daniel Elliott Huger – and a Revolutionary War General, Isaac Huger.



Daniel Huger and Evelyn Bartlett

Sometime in the late 1800s, one of Isaac's descendants, Lynch Prioleau Huger, migrated north to the New York area, and a son – who would later marry Evelyn Bartlett – was born in 1897 and named after the former South Carolina Senator, Daniel Elliott Huger.

Dan had two siblings, a brother and a sister, and they grew up in Nyack, New York, along the west side of the Hudson River. Through the eleventh grade, Dan attended the Kent School in Connecticut, now an independent co-educational private boarding school. Although the United States had not yet entered the fighting, World War I was raging across Europe, and Dan was recruited by the nascent French Air Force to become a pilot in the Lafayette Flying Corps. To do this, Dan first had to join the French Foreign Legion.

After enlisting, Dan was sent off to Pau in southwestern France for training. He then flew mostly reconnaissance on the Western Front. When the United States entered the war in 1917, Dan was inducted into the United States Naval Air Corps as a Lieutenant Commander. Unfortunately, Dan got shot down while flying along the Austrian Front. He parachuted, landed safely, and was only slightly wounded.

After the war, Dan found success on Wall Street as a stockbroker, and in 1927 married Betty Kress.

They had two children: Beatrice, now deceased, and Dan Junior. But things did not go well for Dan Senior. When the stock market crashed in October 1929, he apparently lost everything – including, ultimately, his wife, through divorce in 1931. Following World War II, Dan married again, to Marge McLean who had a son, John – also now deceased – from a previous marriage.

Dan's new wife Marge had two homes. One of them was an apartment at Manhattan's luxurious River House on East 52nd Street. Marge also had a winter place on Florida's west coast, so Dan got used to a migratory life – between New York and Florida. Unfortunately, this marriage also failed and the two divorced in 1952, around the time that Dan and Evelyn probably first met.

Evelyn's and Dan's November 1953 wedding was a quiet affair at the Fort Lauderdale home of Evelyn's good friend Catherine Beveridge. The house was located on a small parcel of land at the southwest corner of the Bonnet House property that Evelyn had sold to Catherine in 1945. A condominium building now stands there.

The newlyweds honeymooned in Europe. Following their wedding trip, they established their own migratory life, spending eight months a year together at Whitehall and four at Bonnet House. Twice a year the couple was driven by chauffeur between Massachusetts and Florida; here at Bonnet House they dined on meat that had been packed in ice at the Massachusetts farm and flown to Fort Lauderdale. An occasional visitor here, Dan's son said the Bonnet House cuisine was "the best food I've ever eaten."

Dan's son also remembers Evelyn having four small dogs. He said that one night, during cocktail hour, Evelyn tossed a tennis ball to one of them, the dog bounced it off its nose to another, and all four then kept it bouncing in the air for "at least a couple of minutes."

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Only a few other people remember much about Dan's and Evelyn's days together. A male acquaintance remembers Dan as a "sportsman who liked to fish and to shoot." A female acquaintance says Dan liked to flirt with the ladies.

Others remember Dan liking to putter around the grounds – for example, pulling fronds from the lagoon at Bonnet House and planting trees along the driveway at Whitehall – which may have led to the legend that Dan was the gardener. He wasn't. He just liked to putter.

About ten years into their marriage, around 1962 or 1963, Dan developed prostate cancer. His radical surgery – performed in Florida – affected him emotionally as well as physically, and it didn't cure him. Daniel Elliott Huger died on October 15, 1967, and was buried in the Bronx. Evelyn had been married to Dan for 14 years, about eight years fewer than to Frederic and some five fewer than to Eli Lilly. Dan was 70 years old when he died, Evelyn 80. And they were still married, contrary to the oft-repeated belief that the two had divorced. They had not.



Daniel Elliott Huger

Following Dan's death, Evelyn took back the Bartlett name. Explained Dan's son: "Mr. Bartlett was without doubt the love of her life."

### The Final Years

Evelyn never married again. She was by now 80 years old and three marriages had likely been enough. Still, she always liked to have a handsome man escort her to dinner or some special event. She lived an active widowed life for another thirty years until her own death in 1997, spending far more days at Bonnet House alone than she ever spent here with Frederic or Dan – or both of them together.

As with anyone living to such an old age, Evelyn's life continued to be marked by the death of others. Three years after Dan's death, on April 5, 1970, Evelyn's daughter Evie died of throat cancer in the Virgin Islands. According to Lilly biographer James Madison, at the end of the funeral in Pennsylvania, Evelyn's former husband Eli Lilly turned to Evelyn – whom he had not seen in years – and without saying a word, simply kissed her on the cheek and walked away. They never saw each other again.

Life managing several properties wasn't easy for an aging widow – even one with Evelyn's experience and resources. Vandals destroyed the island theater, so Evelyn had it torn down. Four times in one season, more vandals set fire to the Chickee Bridge, so Evelyn put up a fence to keep them out.

Evelyn kept on enjoying life, right in to her very old age. She rode on an elephant at her hundredth birthday party and soon thereafter flew on the Concorde for a visit to London with a group of friends. She also liked to feed the squirrel monkeys that had come to live at Bonnet House. "There are about 30 of them," she once said, "and they come every morning for peanuts up on my balcony, and every evening they return . . . They are such fun."



Evelyn Fortune Bartlett

Evelyn's health stayed strong almost to the end. But in 1997, at the age of 109, she finally succumbed – basically, of old age: "failure to thrive," the doctor wrote on her death certificate.

Evelyn Bartlett had been an artist, a collector and, to those who knew her, a gracious lady. But she had also been one very strong woman who had made sure that she always wound up living her life the way she wanted, no matter what anyone else thought. And in that respect, she had also been a woman very much ahead of her time.