



MNHSCOLLECTIONS

Tea Time

“SHALL I BE MOTHER?” A very appropriate question from the mother of this British American family in Minneapolis, about 1918. Nell Ingram Walton at the teacart glances expectantly at her daughter Grace and husband Edmund G. Walton while oldest daughter Audrey contemplates her teacup. Such a query in Great Britain means, “Would you like me to pour the tea?”

This family picture was arranged by the photography firm of Lee Brothers, famous for their portraits of prominent Minnesotans. Typically, their work was traditional portraiture focusing on one person. This homey family scene is a departure, perhaps inspired by Mr. Walton’s prominence

as a real estate developer and proud owner of a Tudor Revival mansion at 802 Mt. Curve Avenue in Minneapolis. By showing a typical British family scene, the photographer also underscores Mr. Walton’s position as England’s Vice Consul for the Northwest.

The family was very close, as their letters preserved in the Minnesota Historical Society collections show. The Waltons had a third daughter, Dorothy, who is most likely not in this picture because she worked with the Red Cross in France during World War I. Sadly, the family circle was broken about one year after this photo was taken when Edmund succumbed to the influenza pandemic.

The elegant Walton home, also known as Grey Court, was built for \$12,000 in 1893, designed by archi-

tect Edgar Joralemon and decorated by tastemaker John S. Bradstreet. It is considerably fancier than the residences Walton sold in his developments, which ranged in price from \$650 to \$5,100, according to his promotional booklet, *Homes in the Making*. During his career he promoted and sold lots in Columbia Heights, Seven Oaks in the Longfellow neighborhood of Minneapolis, and Walton Park on the city’s north side.

This charming family photo epitomizes a line in Walton’s obituary: “Mr. Walton has always remained a British subject.”

—Bonnie G. Wilson

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