



This hand carved squirrel sits atop the newell post in the house Carl Kemm Loven built for himself and his family in 1934.

Born in 1907 in Jersey City, Carl Kemm Loven grew up to be a very talented artist. He worked in oil, watercolor, charcoal, pen and ink and made lithographs and wood carvings. While studying architecture at Columbia University, Loven won the prestigious A W Brown Traveling Scholarship award that paid for a year of study and travel in Europe. Visiting England, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Switzerland and France with his new wife, Vivian, Loven filled sketchbooks with charming skillful studies of the buildings and architectural details that caught his eye. Loven also studied at the Beaux-Arts Institute of

Design which stressed the charm of French rustic design and the integration of art and architecture.

Later, setting up an architectural practice, Loven designed a fascinating and charming house with a home office in Glen Rock for himself which he named on the carved painted inset sign over the front door "Manoir Roche Vallon" (house in the valley of the rock). The house at 119 Rock Road, displays Loven's talent as both an artist and an architect as well as his passion for Norman



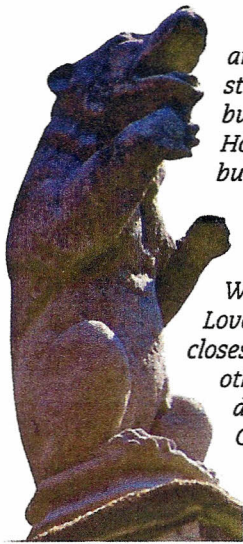
# CARL KEMM LOVEN

## ARCHITECT

# DESIGNER OF DREAMS

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architecture. The house was then, and still is now, much celebrated. The builder of the house was Fred Hoffman, a prominent local businessman, builder and developer.

This collaboration of developer and architect and their fast friendship would last throughout Loven's life. When Hoffman died 30 years after Loven, his obituary listed Loven as his closest friend. Loven also did work with other prominent builders and developers in the area such as Cheel, Carlson, Peterson, Reynen, Summer and McDonald and had for a time his own construction company, Nevol. Interest in

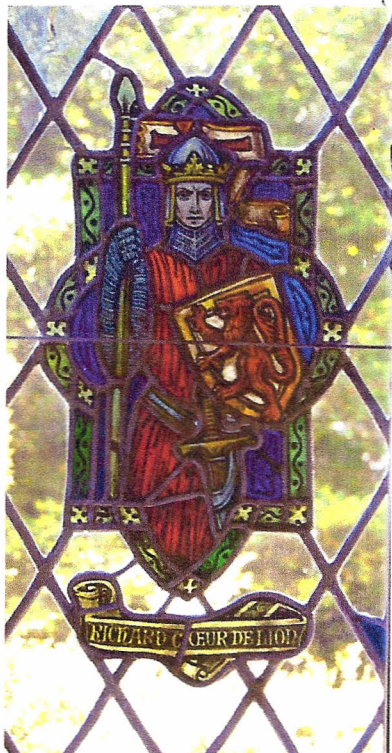
Loven's unusual house garnered publicity in newspaper articles and society columns for the new architect. Note was often made of the use of antique glass from Europe in the leaded glass windows and the fact that the inspiration for the gargoyles came from Loven's visit to the Cathedral at Chartres.

Another early work that received press coverage was the Fred Manchee house on Fairmount Road in Ridgewood. These two beautiful houses exhibit some of the distinctive elements that Loven repeated often in various ways. Both houses use creative siting. Loven's house sits kitty corner



**Above-** This picture of the architect's house was taken when the house was still new. The picture was made into a postcard. Today the front of the house appears little changed from this picture. The sides and the back of the house however have recently been expanded by the current owners Michele and Kevin Waller who worked with Glen Rock architects Paredes-Grube to create a more spacious house. Great care was taken to match the look and feel of the original house. Old wood trim inside was recovered from behind previous renovations and was restored and reused as were the stained glass windows.

**Left-** Gargoyle that stands on the roof of the Loven house in Glen Rock. This figure is thought to have been inspired by the gargoyles Loven sketched on a visit to Chartres Cathedral.

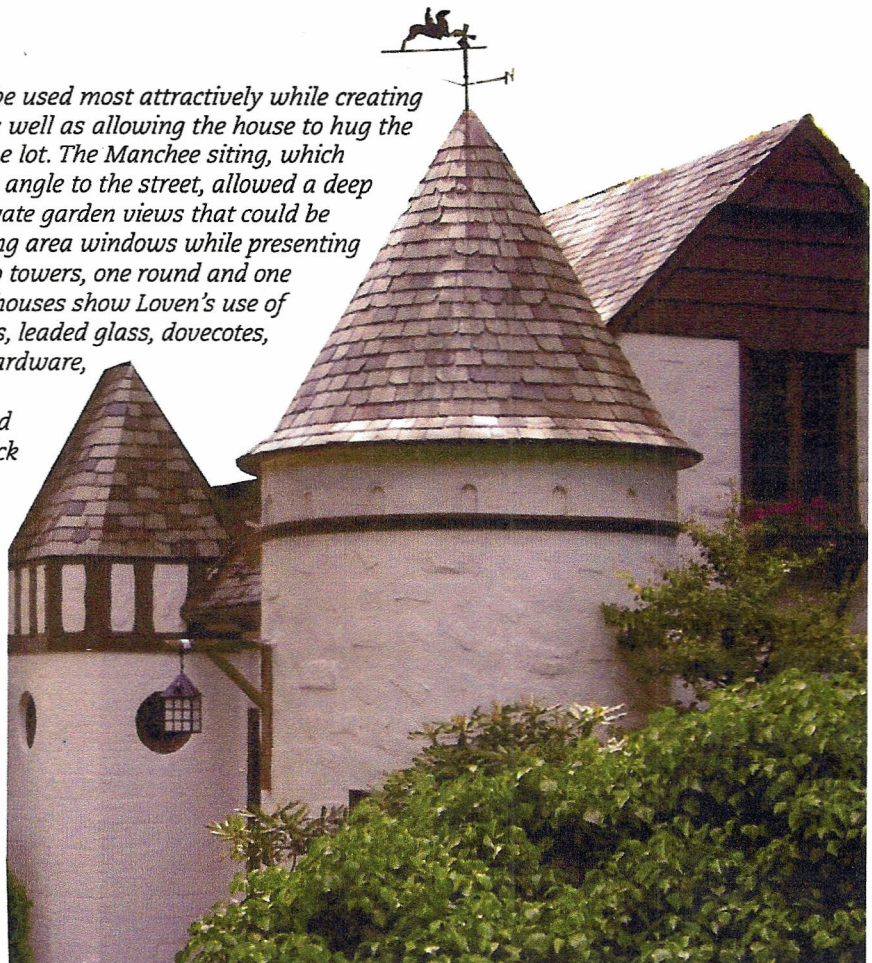


allowing the corner lot to be used most attractively while creating a private backyard area as well as allowing the house to hug the stream that transverses the lot. The Manchee siting, which places the house at a right angle to the street, allowed a deep lot to be used to create private garden views that could be seen from all the main living area windows while presenting the charming aspect of two towers, one round and one square, to the street. Both houses show Loven's use of turrets, balconies or loggias, leaded glass, dovecotes, rustic brick, hand forged hardware, rustically carved wooden elements, pegged wood, and combinations of stucco, brick and stone to create very memorable houses.

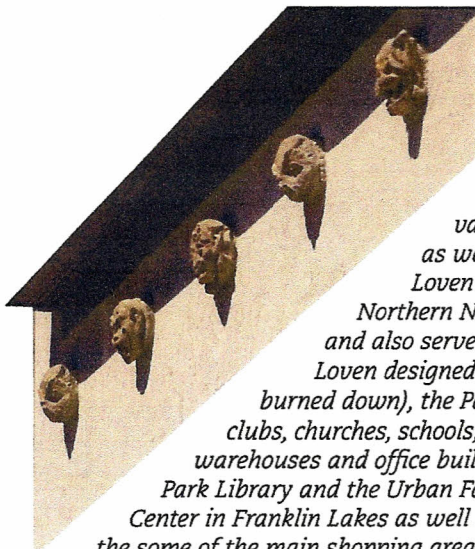
Loven also worked at Shultz and Weaver, a prominent New York City architectural firm where

**Above-** Stained glass window showing Richard The Lionhearted (note the French inscription) from the architect's house at 119 Rock Road, Glen Rock. All the beautiful leaded glass windows have been recently remounted to correct for any bowing and loosening.

**Right-** 250 Fairmount Road, Ridgewood. Originally built for Fred Manchee, it has been carefully maintained and sensitively expanded by Jim and Vicki Bruni. They added a breakfast room and a two car garage but copied all the details of the original house and garage so that it appears as if Loven might have designed it all.







he worked with other architects on such projects as the Waldorf Astoria Hotel and The Pierre. These and other large commercial projects with other firms as well as his individual study gave him the varied background and experience that made it possible for him to design large scale commercial projects as well as the special charming and often distinctively quirky houses for which he is best known.

Loven also served as President of the New Jersey Board of Architects, President of the Architects League of Northern New Jersey, and in his hometown of Glen Rock he was a member of the Board of Education for 7 years and also served as the Building Inspector.

Loven designed hotels in Bermuda and Grand Bahama as well as the Ringwood Country Club (which unfortunately burned down), the Palmetto Bluffs Hunting Lodge in South Carolina (unfortunately just recently replaced), golf and tennis clubs, churches, schools, banks and gas stations, warehouses and office buildings, the Midland Park Library and the Urban Farms Shopping Center in Franklin Lakes as well as buildings for the some of the main shopping areas in Glen Rock, Ridgewood, Wyckoff and Saddle River. He worked on planned communities in Lake Hopatcong, Pines Lake and Smoke Rise in New Jersey. The planned community in Sterling Forest in Orange County, New York was the subject of a magazine spread in Interior Design Magazine in February, 1960 featuring Loven's design for a modern ranch house with walls of windows.

Famous for his marvelous Norman and Tudor houses, Loven also designed buildings in many other styles as we have previously noted. There were modernistic style storefronts with pigmented structural glass and metal framing, and commercial buildings done in a Colonial style. We see his ranch houses in the Hartung area of Wyckoff and the brick Marron house at 10 Saddle Ridge Road in Saddle River.



**Above-** The elaborate Christmas display at Loven's Glen Rock house included these hand painted likenesses of Disney's Dwarfs. Here we see them posed on a log bridge which spanned the brook on the Rock Road property. We have picked up the image from an old black and white photograph supplied by Mimi Loven the architect's daughter, who as a child enjoyed the wonderful magical display.

**Left-** Area of new construction on the side of Loven house in Glen Rock, showing small heads of various types of gargoyles that are mounted just below the new roof line. Not only did the current owners find the source of the original roof tiles they also copied the original gargoyles. Molds were created by the Wallers from the original gargoyles on the older parts of the house so that they could cast gargoyles to adorn the new walls.

There are Williamsburg and Dutch Colonials, such as 30 North Van Dien, Ridgewood, and French Colonials, such as the Maple Manor area of Ridgewood that includes parts of Ivy Place, Carlisle and Linden Avenues. He also converted a barn in Midland Park into a church and an historic barn in Mahwah into a house at 711 Ramapo Valley Road.

Given the limited size of our publication we have chosen to concentrate on Loven's Norman houses since that was the style for which he is most famous and the style he choose for his own house.

Loven received much publicity over the years for the elaborate Christmas display he set up in his yard every year with a creche as well as famous Disney characters. Loven carved and painted the figures adding more each year until there were 150 figures with lights and music. "American Home" magazine ran a story and photo of the display in December, 1941. More publicity for Loven came on December 25, 1953 when a front page headline in the New York Times ran four columns wide. It proclaimed "Christmas Display in Jersey so Good it Snarls Traffic and Brings Ban". Many families traveled miles to see the display but as it's popularity and the crowds grew, distressed town officials and neighbors had to deal with the resultant traffic jams and eventually banned such a large production calling it commercial advertising. After the ban, Loven mounted a smaller 15 figure display and most of the other figures were dispersed.

This is custom Home at 425 Hawthorne Place in Ridgewood is a very charming example of Loven's use of a cottage revival style. A more complete view of this house appears on our cover. The garage appears to be a later addition so it is not shown. The roof here uses the same ceramic tiles used on Loven's own home. Inside are wide wood pegged floors and rustic wood trims are used inside and out. Here Loven used decorative metal embossed gutters and downspouts that add to the charm of the house rather than spoiling the lines as gutters and downspouts can often do on period revival style houses.







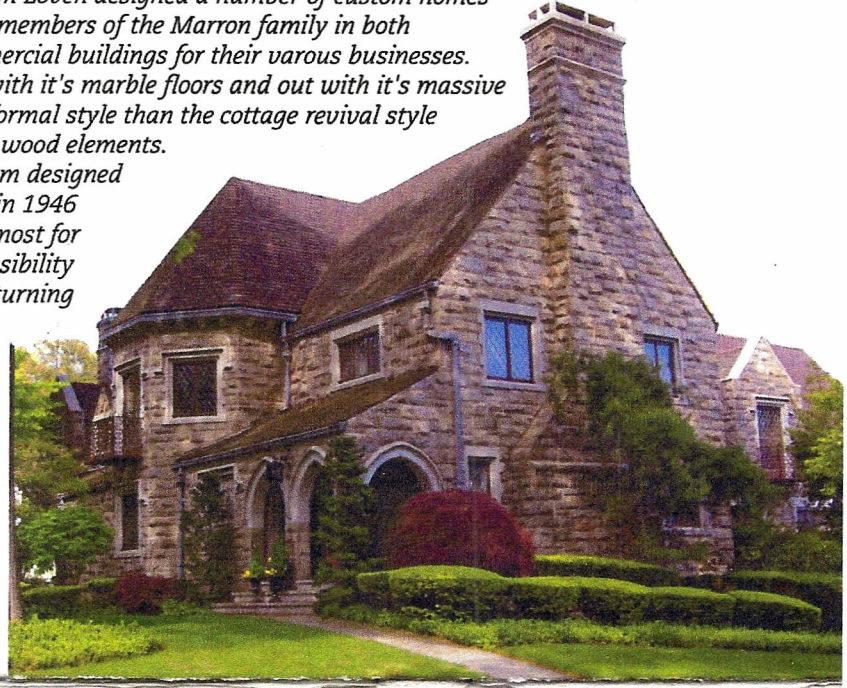
50+ years later, some of the figures are displayed at Christmastime at the Ridgewood Water Company property in Midland Park. After initial efforts by the Midland Park Volunteer Fire Company and the additional 30 year effort by Midland Park Councilman Bud O'Hagan and his wife Janet, Cub Scout Pack 157 and other volunteers, the display has been kept available for the public to enjoy. But after so many repairs, repainting, and replacements of figures, what we see now is the work of many other hands. Carl Kemm Loven at this point should only be thought of as the originator.

Carl Kemm Loven designed a number of custom homes for various members of the Marron family in both

Ridgewood and Saddle River. He also designed a number of commercial buildings for their various businesses. This solid impressive house seen at right uses stone both inside with its marble floors and out with its massive arches and deep walls. This design of Loven's represents a more formal style than the cottage revival style we see in some of his other commissioned designs that use rustic wood elements.

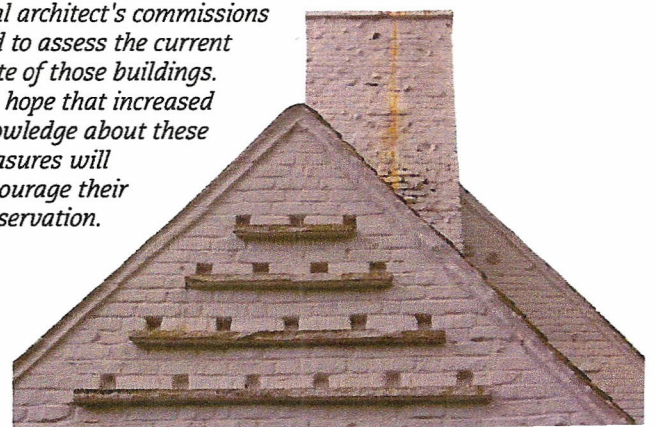
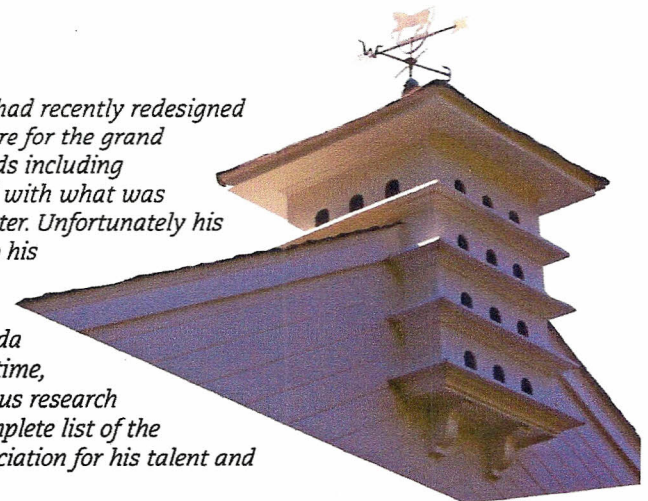
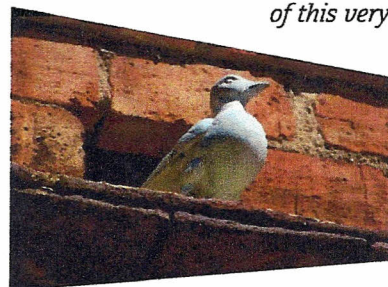
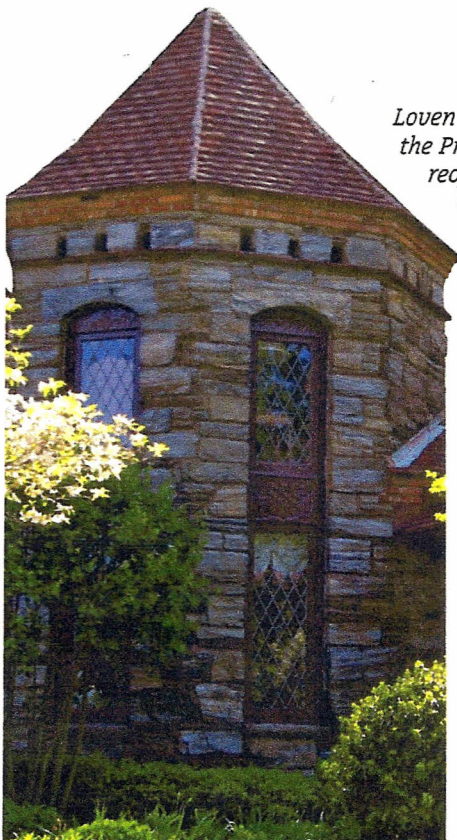
Loven who built some extremely expensive and luxurious custom designed homes also designed more modest houses. He received an award in 1946 from the Architects League of Northern New Jersey for doing the most for his profession. In his acceptance speech Loven stressed the responsibility of architects to design and build affordable homes for veterans returning from the Second World War.

**Above-** 570 Linwood Avenue in Ridgewood. Note the use of some of Loven's favorite elements such as the leaded glass window and the second floor balcony. Here they are used on a more modest size house. We know this to be a Loven design because it was listed as a model home in a newspaper article. **Right-** House on the right is a custom built home at 325 Gardner Road in Ridgewood often referred to by people in the area as the Marron house.



Loven died suddenly at 58 years of age in 1965. He had recently redesigned the Princess Hotel in Bermuda and had traveled there for the grand reopening ceremonies with a large group of friends including Governor Hughes of New Jersey. Loven took ill with what was believed to be meningitis and died 4 days later. Unfortunately his wife died less than a year after his death so his records were not kept intact. Their son, Carl Kemm Loven Jr, died in 2004. Their daughter, Mimi Loven Mathey, lives in Florida and has been extremely generous with her time, photographs and news clippings in helping us research Loven's work. We hope to create a more complete list of the architect's works as well as a greater appreciation for his talent and his very special houses.

Much work still needs to be done in order to discover all of this very special architect's commissions and to assess the current state of those buildings. We hope that increased knowledge about these treasures will encourage their preservation.

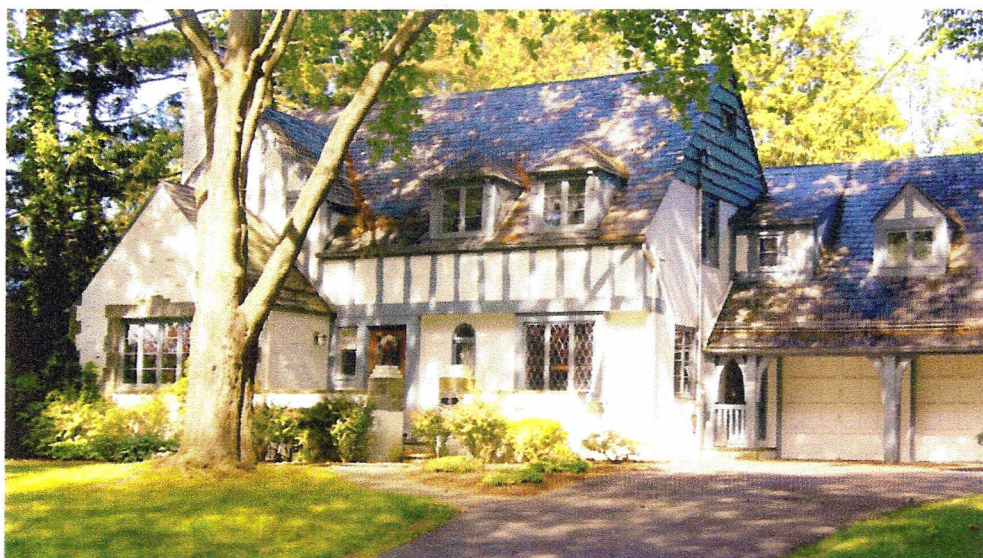


Loven often used dovecotes as decorative elements in his designs. Note the variety of styles. From left turret Greenway Road, Ridgewood, Loven home Rock Road, Glen Rock with metal bird, above Hartung Road, Wyckoff, below Woodfield Lane, Saddle River.



**Right**—This Loven designed house at 45 Wyncote Road in Ho-Ho-Kus, is very charming indeed. Loven worked with Harold Cheel, the builder of many fine homes in the area. Loven designed a stone front Colonial at 80 Ardmore Road in Ho-Ho-Kus for Harold's brother, Duncan Cheel.

**Below**— This small outbuilding with a built in grill is behind the main house at 30 N. Van Dien in Ridgewood. Loven's commissions often included such additional structures. He also designed pools and pool houses.



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Nancy Atkins Peck, Glen Rock Historian, June 2008

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