

## The Church of Christ (Formerly the art gallery of Desmond FitzGerald)



This building, home to the Church of Christ since 1942, was built by noted engineer and art collector Desmond FitzGerald in 1913 as a private museum housing his collections of works by Monet, Renoir, Degas, Pissarro, Hassam, Sisley, Homer, McKnight and others.

FitzGerald, the son of a British army officer and his American wife, was born in the Bahamas in 1846 and grew up in Providence, R.I. As a young man he helped build railroads in the West and became chief engineer of the Boston & Albany Railroad.

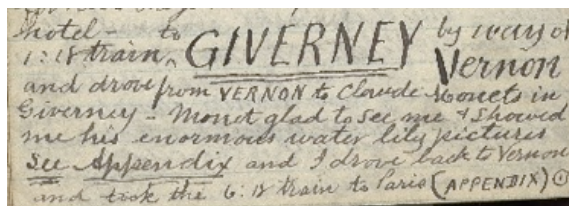
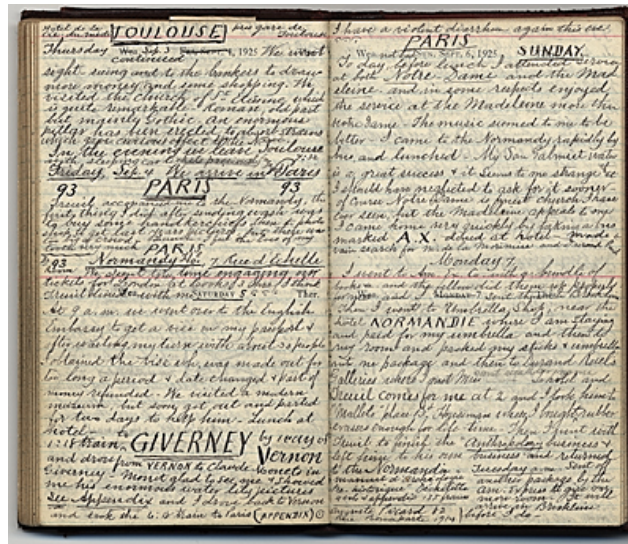
FitzGerald was best known, however, as a hydraulic engineer who played key roles in the development of water works in Boston, New York, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco, Manila and other cities. As Superintendent of the Western Division of the Boston, later Metropolitan, Water Works, he was in charge of the pumping stations at the Chestnut Hill Reservoir.



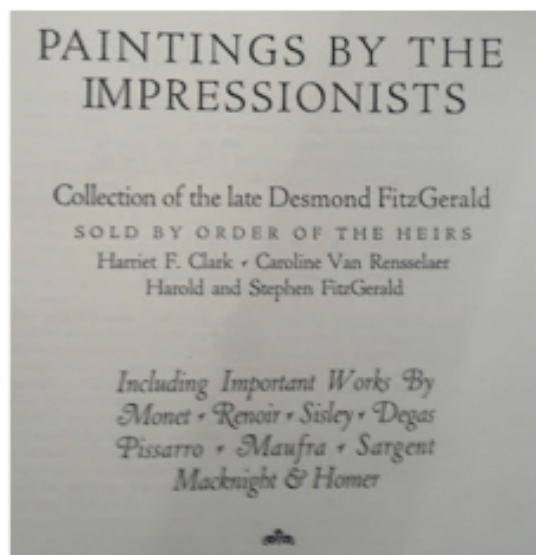
Desmond FitzGerald

A patron and collector of art, FitzGerald was an early appreciator of Claude Monet and other impressionists, both French and American.

FitzGerald became a friend of Monet and was a frequent visitor at the artist's home in Giverny. (The pages at right, from FitzGerald's 1925 journal, include the note "....drove from Vernon to Claude Monet in Giverny – Monet glad to see me & showed me his enormous water lily pictures.")



FitzGerald built his gallery adjacent to his home at the corner of Washington and Cypress Streets. A private gallery, it was nevertheless frequently opened to the public. After FitzGerald's death in 1926, his collection was sold at auction.



The building was purchased by radio evangelist John "Happy Jack" Smith in 1935 and converted to a church. The current owners, the Church of Christ, moved in in 1942 and have worshipped here ever since.