



**Old Muirkirk Road**

Beltsville vicinity

Historic sites (4), historic resources (1)

**R**ossville developed out of a community of freedmen who had formed a Methodist congregation (Queen's Chapel) in 1868. Most of the members lived in the immediate area near Beltsville and Laurel, or in the rural enclave colloquially known as "Swampoodle," supporting themselves as laborers on local farms or at the nearby Muirkirk Iron Furnace. Nearly 20 years later, after the death of Mark Duvall, a white farmer who owned considerable property in the Vansville area, some of his land became available to these families. In settling Duvall's estate, the Equity Court ordered the division and sale of 24.8 acres of Duvall's property which was located just east of Queen's Chapel; this land was surveyed and divided into 12 unequal lots along the north side of the road between Muirkirk Furnace and Montpelier. Within a year, the 12 lots were purchased by local black families, many of whom were employed at the furnace. By 1889, structures had been erected on all but one lot.

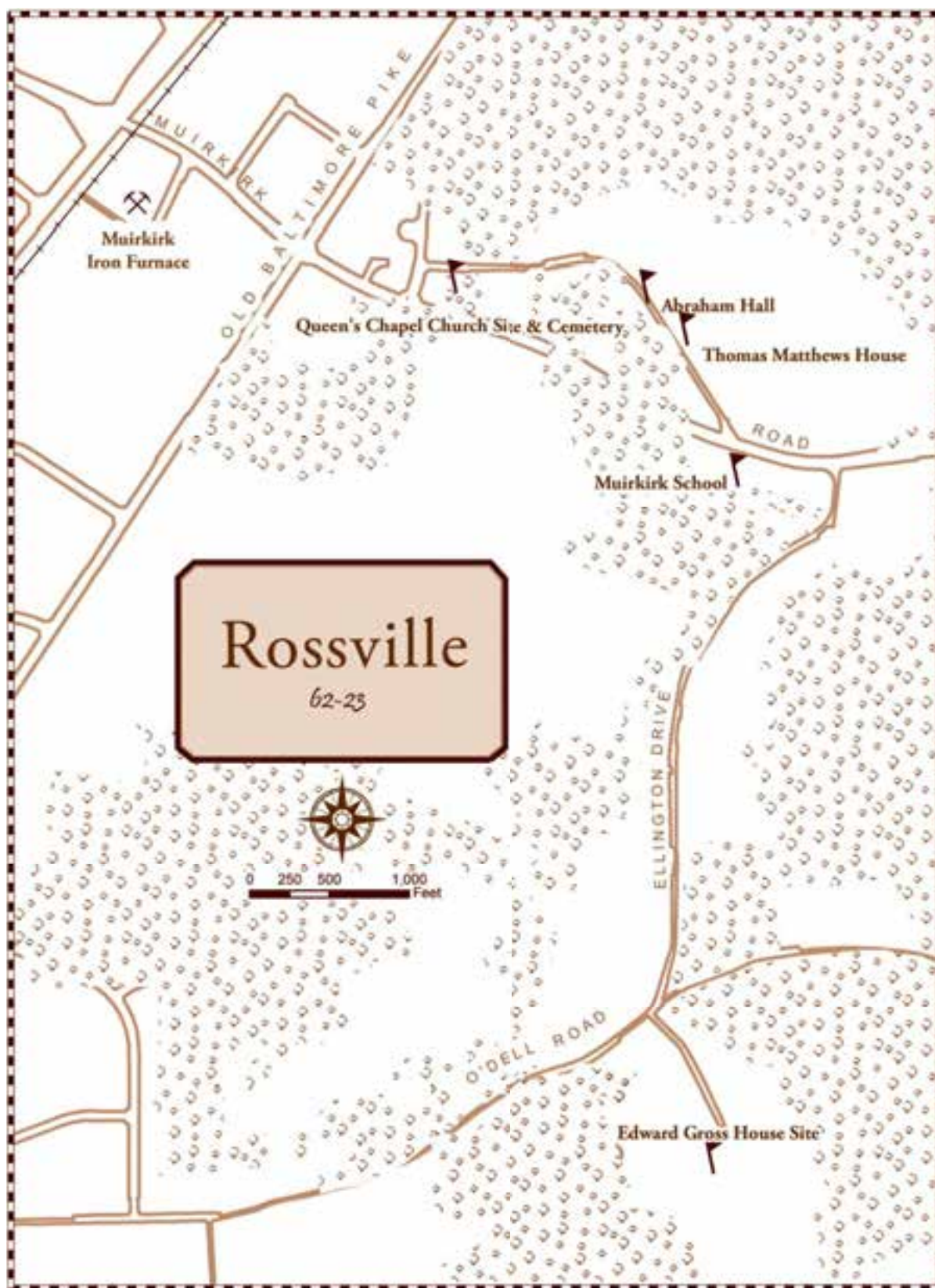
The small community of Rossville remained stable for many years, with second and third generations of the founding families staying in the community. **BELOW and LEFT:** Celebrations at Abraham Hall.

One of the new landowners, Augustus Ross, gave his name to the community, and his was one of the first houses to be built there. Other families who built houses in that first year included two of the six founders of Queen's Chapel. The largest lot was purchased by Rebecca Lodge 6, Benevolent Sons and Daughters of Abraham; this organization was one of many fraternal orders offering support to members in time of illness and emergency. It is the county's most visible symbol of the growth during the Reconstruction period of black benevolent societies, which, together with the newly established churches and schools, were the main source of support for newly freed people during this difficult period. The lodge, now known as Abraham Hall, has always been closely associated with Queen's Chapel, and has remained a focal point in the small community of Rossville.



The new residents of Rossville created their own small farms on their individual properties; many continued to work at the Muirkirk Furnace. Schools for the black children of the area had been established after the Civil War at Muirkirk and at Swampoodle; after the settlement of Rossville a school was opened in Abraham Hall and continued there until the building of a Rosenwald school in 1922.







62-23-7

## *Abraham Hall*

**7612 Old Muirkirk Road**

Historic site; built 1889

National Register of Historic Places  
(M-NCPPC)

**A**braham Hall is the best example in Prince George's County of an African-American benevolent society lodge. Of crucial importance to its community, the building has been restored and rededicated, the first African-American historic site in Prince George's County to be fully restored with public funds. This benevolent society lodge was built at the center of the newly developing community of Rossville by Laurel contractor/builder John W. Jackson, who at the same time was assisting with the construction of several of the dwellings in that community. The land was purchased by Rebecca Lodge 6, the Benevolent Sons and Daughters of Abraham, a fraternal organization chartered in 1877 that provided emergency financial assistance to its members. The new lodge building at Rossville, which soon came to be known as Abraham Hall, always had a close association with the nearby Queen's Chapel Methodist Church, and its charter members were also members of the chapel. Abraham Hall is a two-story front-gabled building of wood frame construction, sheathed with German and plain horizontal siding, painted white. It has a small side wing which is a miniature replica of the main block and which encloses a small kitchen; there is a one-story addition at the rear of the main block. The main block is three bays wide with entrance in the central bay through paneled double doors. The long windows that light the main block are framed by louvered shutters. The interior of the main block consists of one large room on each story, extended on the first story to include a raised stage in the rear. Interior trim is typical of the period: multiband molding with bull's-eye corner blocks and molded chair-rails surmounting beaded wainscoting. Abraham Hall served not only as a meeting place of the benevolent society, but also as a place of worship after Queen's Chapel burned in the 1890s, and until the second chapel was completed in 1901. The lodge also served as a schoolhouse before the construction of Muirkirk Rosenwald School in 1922. The lodge was the scene of many camp meetings for the congregations of Queen's Chapel and other churches of the Laurel Charge. As the community of Rossville has changed over the years, Abraham Hall has remained its focal point. Only two nineteenth-century African-American benevolent society lodges survive in Prince George's County, a fact that makes this building particularly important. In September 1991, after a long restoration process by M-NCPPC, Abraham Hall was rededicated for public and private use. The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. It is now the headquarters of M-NCPPC's Black History Program.



## 62-23-17 *Thomas Matthews House*

**7700 Old Muirkirk Road**

Historic site; built 1888

**B**uilt for the family of Thomas and Adaline Matthews, the Matthews House is one of the first and most substantial dwellings built in Rossville, and one of few buildings surviving from the earliest period. Thomas Matthews came from northern Anne Arundel County; in March 1887, he purchased Lot 5 of the new subdivision of Mark Duvall's land. Archival records indicate that Matthews bought five shares in the Independent Savings and Building Association, thus receiving \$500 with which he began his building project. By 1889, with the help of other members of the new community, he had completed the two-story frame dwelling for his family. Thomas Matthews died before 1895. His wife remained in the community, and in 1895 married Knotley Johnson, who, like Thomas Matthews, had been one of the founders of Queen's Chapel and an early builder in Rossville. Adaline Matthews Johnson's house was repossessed by the Building Association and sold in 1908 to Louisa Briggs. During the 1920s, Mrs. Briggs' son built several small additions in the rear of the house and applied the stucco over the original wood siding. The house remains in good condition and is a reminder of the early Rossville community, and a significant example of substantial home-building by an upwardly progressing black laborer in a new community of his peers. The house was assessed in 1889 at \$450, while the other eight houses by then completed were assessed at values ranging from \$100 to \$250.



The Thomas Matthews House is a side-gabled dwelling of wood frame construction, three bays wide, with entrance in the central bay of the main facade. This house is representative of the traditional I-house form: one parlor on each side of the central stairhall. A kitchen wing is attached at right angles at the center rear of the house. The original wood siding is currently covered with stucco, painted yellow. A one-story hip-roof porch shelters the entire facade.



## 62-23-20 *Muirkirk Rosenwald School*

**7813 Muirkirk Road**

Historic resource; Built 1922

**T**he Muirkirk School, though considerably altered, is one of the surviving schoolhouses built during the 1920s through the Rosenwald program. It serves now as an American Legion lodge.

The building is one story high, side-gabled and of wood frame construction. The classrooms were originally lighted by banks of windows on the main facade, but all of those windows have been walled over. The central doorway remains as the only opening in this facade. There are two small windows in each of the east and west gable ends. The original wood siding is now covered with beige/gray synthetic siding. This school (Colored School 2 in Election District 1) was built in 1922, as part of the same building effort which saw the completion of the schoolhouses at Chapel Hill, Fletchertown, and Duckettsville. The first school for black children in this area was constructed in 1867 by Charles Coffin, the owner of the Muirkirk



Furnace and employer of many African-American residents of the area. Although its exact location is uncertain, Coffin's school must have been located near the furnace complex; in later years, the school was operated by the county's public school system. After the founding of the Rossville community in 1888, classes were held in the immediate community, at first in the Queen's Chapel building and afterwards, for approximately 20 years at the turn of the twentieth century, in Abraham Hall. By 1919, the black population of Rossville and surrounding areas began to pressure the County Board of School Commissioners to establish a new school for the community. The board purchased property just south of Rossville on the other side of the public road, and in 1922 bonds were issued by the board to support the construction of schools at Muirkirk (Rossville), Chapel Hill, Fletchertown, and Duckettsville. A building committee was appointed in April of that year, including local residents William Tolliver, Edward T. Gross, and Harry Ross. Like the other schools in this group, the construction of the Rossville school was partially supported by funds from the Rosenwald program. The two-room schoolhouse was completed and opened in 1922; it had a capacity of 48 students, heat was provided by a wood stove, and water was available from a well just across the road in Rossville. The "Survey of Colored Public Schools" taken in the following year indicated that the community was proud of the new and modern building, and that it was quickly fitted out with new desks.

The Muirkirk School was closed in 1950 and, together with many other small schools for black children, was auctioned in November of that year. It was purchased a few years later by American Legion Post 235, whose members included many long-standing residents of Rossville. Although the building has been substantially altered and no longer conveys the appearance of Rosenwald-period schoolhouses, it is significant because of its close ties with the Rossville community.



*62-23-21      Queen's Chapel Methodist Episcopal  
Church Site and Cemetery*

**7410 Old Muirkirk Road**

Historic site; graves dating from 1886

**T**his is the site of the original Queen's Chapel, built in 1868, which became the anchor of the Rossville community 20 years later. The original chapel has been replaced twice, most recently by a brick church that stands on the opposite side of the road.

The site of the original chapel is now the cemetery of Queen's Chapel United Methodist Church; it is a tranquil, gently sloping grassy area, bordered by woods on east and west, and dotted with cedars and many old gravestones. The oldest inscribed marker dates from 1886, and some of the early stones exhibit hand-carved inscriptions. On the north side of Old Muirkirk Road stands the present-day Queen's Chapel, built in the 1950s, a front-gabled brick church building with a flat-roofed, square corner tower.

The first Queen's Chapel was established just after the Civil War, when William Minnix, a local farmer and landowner, sold a small piece of his land to six black men who had expressed the need for a place of public worship. In January 1868, Minnix sold to six trustees (Henry



Edwards, Thomas Quinn [or Queen], Thomas Matthews, Ferdinand Key, Knotley Johnson, and James Powell) 3/10 of an acre of land on the south side of the public road between Muirkirk Furnace and Montpelier, for the erection of a “substantial building to be used as a place of public worship and schoolhouse for the colored people.” The land included a small graveyard which was already being used by the black people of the Muirkirk area. A small log chapel was built on the west side of the graveyard, and for approximately 30 years this building was the center of worship for much of the local black population. In 1893, Queen’s Chapel became part of the Laurel Methodist Charge, which also included St. Mark’s in Laurel.

The log chapel was destroyed by fire in the late 1890s, and for several years, Methodist services as well as classes were held at Abraham Hall. In 1901, a new chapel of wood frame construction was erected on the site of the log chapel. This frame chapel served the community for more than a half century, during which time the chapel was enlarged and more land was purchased for expansion of the graveyard. By the early 1950s the congregation had grown substantially; the congregation acquired land on the north side of the road and began the task of raising money for a larger church. The cornerstone for that brick structure was laid in September 1953; the church was completed three years later, and the 1901 chapel was demolished. Since that time, the graveyard has expanded eastward to include the site of the old chapel.



Members of the Gross family were photographed at the Edward T. Gross House before it burned in the 1990s.



**ABOVE:** Taken when the house was still occupied by the Gross family, this photograph expresses the family's ease and comfort, freedom and independence. The car is a 1973 Buick LeSabre. Photographed October 1976 by George W. McDaniel for the Maryland Commission on Afro-American History and Culture. (Courtesy Maryland Historical Trust.)

62-16

## *Edward T. Gross House Site*

**10623 Gross Lane**

Historic site; 1916–1996

A little more than one mile south of Rossville, east of Vansville, lies the Edward T. Gross House Site. This property is significant as the site of a typical dwelling of the early twentieth century, built by an emerging middle class of black landowners. Edward T. Gross was a farm laborer who had come to the Vansville area in the late nineteenth century. Gross began buying up small pieces of property, eventually accumulating a farm of over thirty acres. In 1916, he built this house using timber from the land that was locally milled. Labor was provided voluntarily by family members and neighboring farmers; members of the family estimated the total cost to have been \$600. The house remained in the family for three generations until it was destroyed by fire in February 1996.

The Gross house was a two-story, frame, gable-roof dwelling that stood east of a rural lane between Vansville and the extensive property of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. It was a front-gable structure, four bays by two bays, with the principal facade on the irregular, two-bay south gable end. A one-story shed roof porch spanned the south gable end and wrapped around part of the west facade of the house. The original German siding was later covered with gray asphalt shingle, which can be seen in the photos above and at left. The interior plan of the house consisted of a side passage and double parlor, with a kitchen to the rear. There were no outbuildings.



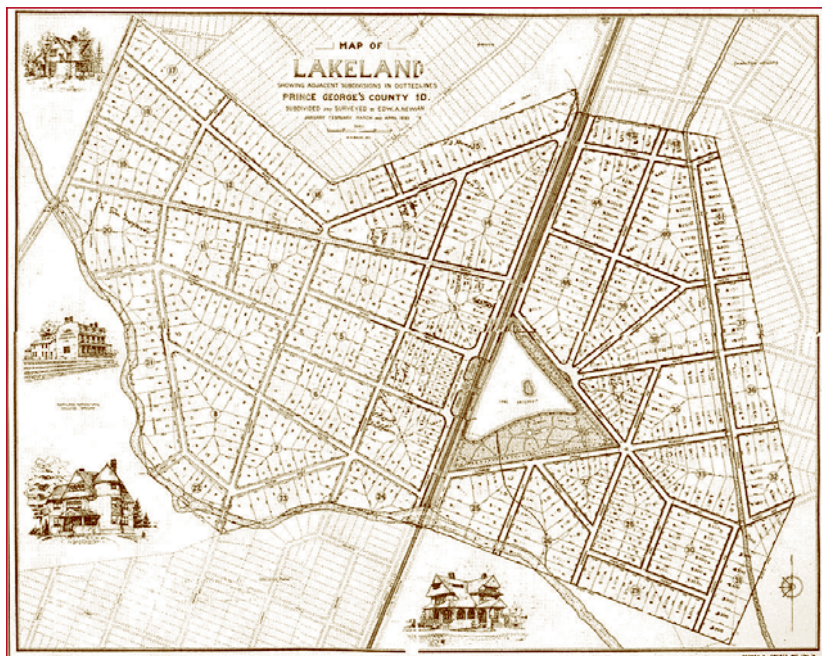
66-00

# Lakeland

North of Old Town College Park, and south of Berwyn  
One historic site

**L**akeland was developed as a late-nineteenth-century resort community in northwest Prince George's County. The small neighborhood is bounded by Baltimore Avenue (US 1) on the west and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad on the east. Edwin A. Newman, a real estate developer based in Washington, D.C.,

platted the community in 1890. Newman designed it as an exclusive resort area conveniently located near Lake Artemesia and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Newman called the community Lakeland, "on account of the beautiful lake which is to form a delightful feature of its landscape. This lake will cover an area of seven acres, will be fifteen feet deep, and is to be named Lake Artemesia in honor of Mrs. [Clara Artemesia] Newman." The lake was originally dug as a gravel extraction pit in the 1860s by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company. Water for the lake was supplied by more than a hundred springs and a pipe that brought water from the Paint Branch Creek to Lake Artemesia. Newman created a park around the lake, stocked the lake with 10,000 black bass, and provided residents with "pleasure boats."



This map shows Newman's original plan for the subdivision. (Courtesy of the City of College Park, Maryland.)

By April 1891, over 72 people had purchased property in Lakeland and had made more than \$135,000 in improvements. Newman quickly improved the area by installing gas lights, curbs, gutters, wooden sidewalks, and dirt streets. In 1899, *The Washington Post* reported there was "still considerable unimproved property at Lakeland, but also some comfortable houses." At the turn of the twentieth century, African-Americans began to move into Lakeland, although typically along the outer edges of the neighborhood, near Indian Creek and Paint Branch Creek. Many new residents were seeking employment at the nearby University of Maryland. In 1901, John Calvary Johnson became the first black resident to purchase land in the central part of the Lakeland community. In 1903, Embry A.M.E. Church (66-012) was established in Lakeland to serve the growing community. The following year, a one-room schoolhouse for African-American children

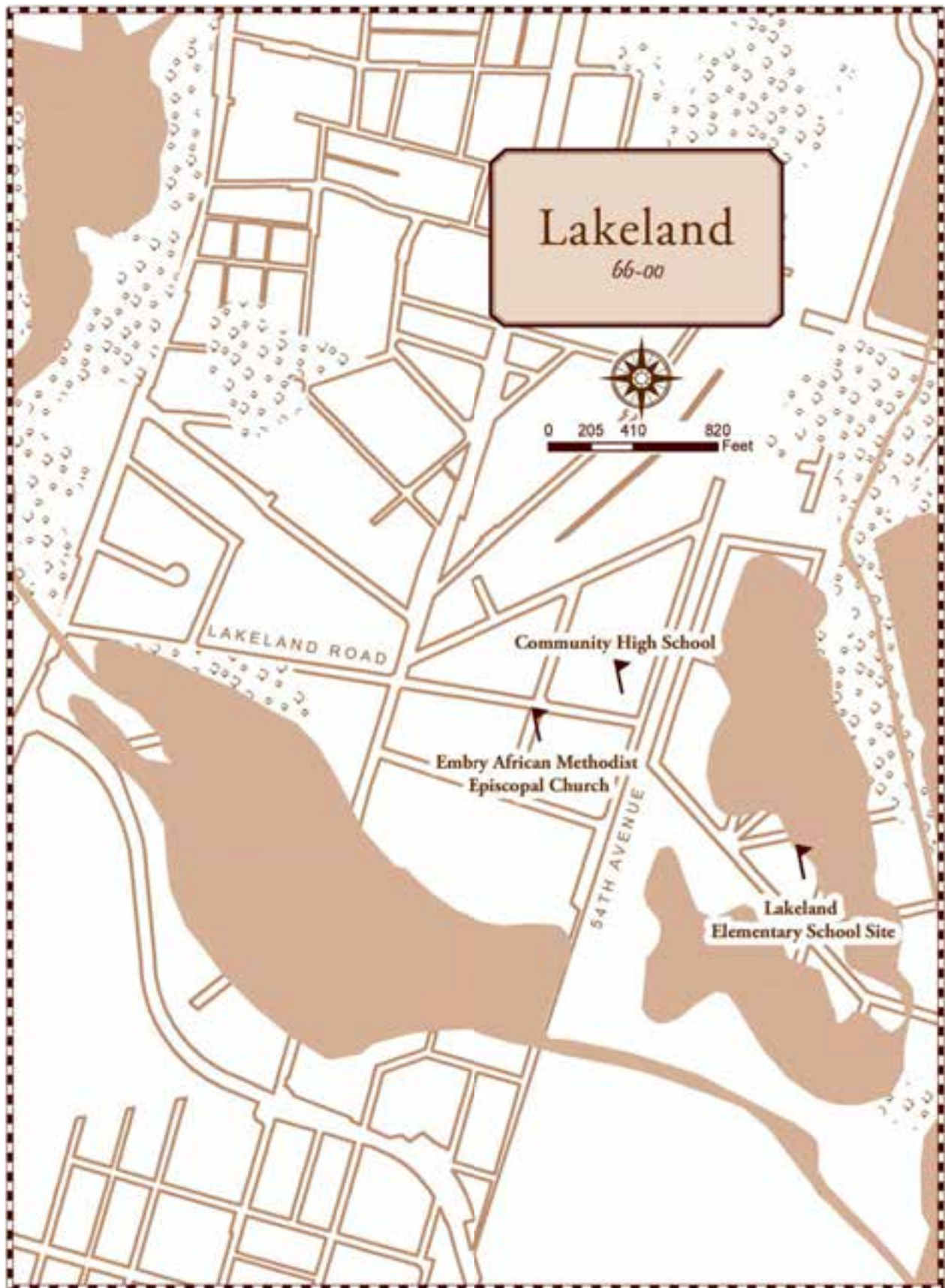
Black's Place,  
Lakeland Grocery,  
probably circa  
1950.



was constructed in Lakeland. The school was quickly filled to capacity, and in 1913, Edwin Newman donated a lot for the construction of a larger school. After years of delay, a new elementary school was built in 1926. The school was funded by the Prince George's County Board of Education and the Rosenwald Fund (see 66-013). In 1926, Lakeland was chosen as the site of an African-American high school that would serve the residents of Lakeland, North Brentwood, Hyattsville, Beltsville, Muirkirk, and Laurel. Lakeland High School opened in 1928 with an initial enrollment of 45 students. In the 1930s an attempt was made to incorporate the neighborhoods surrounding College Park; however, Lakeland and other subdivisions (including Hollywood, Daniels Park, Oak Springs, and Sunnyside) voted against the proposal. In 1945, several neighborhoods banded together in an effort to improve public services. Despite Lakeland's overwhelming resistance to incorporation, Berwyn, Calvert Hills, Old Town College Park, Lakeland, Hollywood, Daniels Park, Oak Springs, and Sunnyside were incorporated as part of the City of College Park in 1945.

Lakeland remained a small community in the 1950s and 1960s and saw little new development. Due to repeated flooding in the community, in 1969, an urban renewal project was begun in Lakeland. The plan included demolishing existing houses that were in the flood plain and building earthenwork dikes along Indian Creek, Paint Branch Creek, and Lake Artemesia to prohibit future flooding. The issue divided the small community. Many feared the redevelopment would result in the displacement of families who had lived in Lakeland for years. Over a 15-year period, the \$5.7 million dollar project resulted in the demolition of 87 houses and the construction of 40 units of low-income housing, 86 townhouses, seven single family houses, and two mid-rise apartment buildings, one for senior citizens, and the other for students and faculty at the University of Maryland. The majority of buildings now date from the 1940s through the 1970s. Although few in number, the earliest houses in the neighborhood date from the first decade of the twentieth century and are typically two-story, front-gabled, wood-frame dwellings. The majority of these houses have a one story, full-width, or wraparound porch. The community is predominantly residential; however, some buildings in Lakeland also have religious and education uses.





66-12

## *Embry African Methodist Episcopal Church*

**5101 Lakeland Road**

Built c. 1920

Embry African Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1903, and the first meetings were held in the home of Samuel Stewart. By 1905, at the encouragement of Bishop J. C. Embry, a small chapel was built on Lot 6, Block 12 in Lakeland. It was named in honor of Bishop Embry.

In the Baltimore Conference (of the A. M. E. Church) Minutes of 1906, Embry Chapel was noted as being in prosperous condition, and even though the church was very new, improvements were already being made. The membership at that point was still very small, but 35 members contributed to the church, which was at that time under the leadership of the Reverend Edward E. Tyler. As membership increased over the years, a new lot was acquired in 1918, and the nucleus of the present sanctuary was erected in 1920. In more recent years, a parish hall has been constructed and the sanctuary has been enlarged and renovated.

Embry A. M. E. Church is a one-story, gable-roofed brick building with its entrance on the north gable end. There is a double door centered in this gable end, with a tripartite lancet fanlight, and flanking lancet windows. In the gable above the door is a small bulls-eye window. Extending to the west at right angles is a long parish hall addition, also one story.





66-13

*Lakeland Rosenwald School Site  
(John C. Johnson Elementary School)*

**8006 Winnepeg Street**

1926–c. 1984

In 1903 John C. Johnson, Edwin Carter, and Pleasant Brown were appointed trustees and building committee for a black school in Lakeland. Completed before the end of the year, this one-room schoolhouse soon overflowed with students, and classes began to be held in private homes. For part of the time before the Rosenwald school was built, school was conducted in a building on Lot 16, Block 28 and east of Lake Artemisia. (This building stood until the 1970s.) In 1913 Edwin Newman, developer of Lakeland and president of Aquarium fisheries, deeded to the Board of School Commissioners Lot 3, Block 34, where the Rosenwald school was eventually built; however, it would be 13 more years before it was constructed. In 1925 the Board of Education (successor to the Board of School Commissioners) approved the construction of five new schools using Rosenwald funds: Laurel, Lakeland, Bowie, T.B., and Westwood, and the contract for preparing the plans was awarded to Linthicum and Linthicum. Two more lots, adjacent to Newman's Lot 3, were acquired by the board in 1926. John C. Johnson, still a trustee for the Lakeland school, received permission from the owner to use the five lots across the road as a playground for the school. Completed in 1926, the school came to be known as the John C. Johnson Elementary School in honor of Johnson's long efforts on behalf of the Lakeland schools.

In 1950 Lakeland Community High School (66-014) was converted into an elementary school and the John C. Johnson School was closed. It was first rented, then sold at auction in 1951 as were all the remaining Rosenwald schools. In 1958, the old school became a church. It served that purpose until the mid-1970s when it was acquired by the city of College Park. Later it served as a residence, and was demolished after 1980. Today, Winnepeg Street no

longer exists; the area is now part of Indian Creek Stream Valley Park.



The Lakeland Elementary School was a large two-room school that served the lower grades (1–3) in one room and the upper grades (4–7) in the other. It was a hip-roofed frame building resting on a high foundation, clad in cedar shingles. It was typical of the larger schoolhouses built during the 1920s with Rosenwald funds, and most closely resembles the Bowie school, also now demolished. Like the Bowie School, Lakeland had a projecting entryway centered on the main east facade, which enclosed dual cloakrooms, one on either side.



Lakeland High School is a one-story brick building with a hip roof. The largest portion of the building is the original three-part central pavilion.

66-14

## *Lakeland Community High School*

**8108 54th Avenue**

Historic site; built 1928 (Rosenwald School)

**L**akeland Community High School was the second school, together with Highland Park, constructed for African-Americans in Prince George's County. (The first was in Upper Marlboro, opened in 1921.) The school continued to operate as a high school until 1950 when it was subsequently used as a junior high school, an elementary school, and a special education center. It ceased being used for educational purposes in 1983, and currently serves as a church.

Lakeland also has the distinction of being the first brick school to be constructed for African-American students in the county. Established to serve students from seven communities, the school was named "Community High School." Mary Hollomand, a 1947 graduate of the school, says that she has never called it by any name other than "Lakeland." The building was designed by the architectural firm of Linthicum and Linthicum of Raleigh, North Carolina. According to Rosenwald Fund records, Community High School was a six-teacher building built on four acres of land for the sum of \$21,600. Of the total cost, \$18,400 came from public funds, \$1,500, from the African-American community, and \$1,700 from the Rosenwald Fund. A handwritten notation on the record notes "\$300 for permanent construction, \$120 Elem. Library Here." Mary Hollomand's mother was in the first class of 45 students. She recalls her mother saying that the school was new, but "everything inside of it was old—the sewing machines, books, and everything."





**LEFT:** This dwelling at 4508 40th Street was an excellent example of an early-twentieth-century suburban bungalow. Note the decorative brackets at the roof line and closely spaced porch balusters. The original wood siding had been covered with brick-textured asphalt siding when this photo was taken in 1990. The house was demolished in 2006.



**ABOVE:** The Municipal Building stood across from the Henry Newton House on Church Street. It was demolished in 2006 for a parking lot.

## 68-61 *North Brentwood*

### Bordering on the Northwest Branch and Rhode Island Avenue

Historic sites (6), historic resources (9)  
National Register of Historic Places

**N**orth Brentwood is the oldest incorporated African-American municipality in Prince George's County (1924). The small town is located south of the City of Hyattsville and north of the Town of Brentwood. North Brentwood was planned specifically for African-American families by Captain Wallace A. Bartlett, a commander of the U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War (1861–1865). Born in 1844, Bartlett worked as a patent lawyer, real estate investor, and director of the First National Bank of Southern Maryland. In 1887, Bartlett moved his family from Washington, D.C., to a 206-acre farm located northeast of the city adjoining The Highlands (now known as Cottage City). Bartlett formed the Holladay Land and Improvement Company with J. Lee Adams and Samuel J. Mills in 1891 and platted a residential suburb surrounding his home. The section south of the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River was called Holladay Company's Addition to Highland, while the northern portion was called Holladay Company's Addition to Hyattsville. The northern part of the Addition to Highland, now known as North Brentwood, was often subject to flooding from the nearby branch. These less-desirable lots were sold at lower prices than those located to the south, and were marketed towards African-Americans. The Holladay Land and Improvement Company sold the first lots in 1891 to Henry Randall, an African-American from northern Anne Arundel County. By 1893, Randall's son, Peter, constructed a dwelling on an adjoining lot. Within several years, three other members of the Randall family purchased lots and built wood-frame dwellings in the immediate vicinity. This northern section of the Holladay subdivision was commonly referred to as "Randalltown." In 1898, the City and Suburban Railway Company extended the streetcar lines through Randalltown, connecting it to Washington, D.C. Early residents battled regular flooding, which was exacerbated by an eighteenth-century mill race that ran through the center of the community. In order to alleviate flooding problems, Bartlett hired several residents to dig ditches to drain the mill

race; the work was completed by 1899. Living conditions for the residents of Randalltown were considerably improved, although flooding continued to be a problem until 1954 when the Bladensburg Pumping Station was constructed. By 1904, the entire subdivision was re-named Brentwood, and a post office was established. The name Brentwood was taken from the nearby Brent family property, which was located approximately one mile to the west in Washington, D.C. The Brentwood plantation was established by Robert Brent, the first mayor (1802–1812) of the District of Columbia. The road that led from the old Brentwood plantation to Bartlett's new subdivision was still known as Brentwood Road and Bartlett applied the name Brentwood to his community. However, the name of Randalltown was still used to define the black community located in the northern section of the subdivision. The unofficial boundary between the two communities was Webster Street (then known as John Street). By the early twentieth century, Randalltown was an established community with two churches, a school, and a civic association. The Baptist Church was formed in 1905 under the leadership of the Reverend James Jasper and the first church was built in 1908 on the south side of School Street. A congregation of Methodists began to meet as early as 1913, but a church was not erected until 1920. It still stands at 4037 Webster Street. The first school, which



opened in 1902, was built on a lot that had been reserved for that purpose on Bartlett's original 1891 plat. In 1924, a Rosenwald school would be built on the site. The school was later demolished and the site is now a community park with tennis courts. The Brentwood Colored Citizens Association was

established in January 1907 under the direction of William Conway, who moved into Randalltown from the District of Columbia in 1905. Census records as well as the suburban directory from 1912 give clear demographic information of the developing community. The working-class neighborhood





This substantial early twentieth-century Craftsman-style house at 4511 40th Street has exposed rafter tails and large, hip-roof engaged dormers. The brick piers with tapered wood half-columns are original but the widely-spaced balusters are a later addition.

had grown from a population of 65 in 1905 to 315 people in 1910. Residents of Randalltown typically worked as day laborers, domestic workers, seamstresses, drivers and cooks. Some worked at the Government Printing Office, served as messengers at government offices or porters for the railroad. The community also had a grocer, barber, teacher, and school principal. The southern portion of the subdivision, which was separated from the black population in Randalltown, was incorporated in 1922 and became the Town of Brentwood. In 1924, Randalltown was incorporated and renamed North Brentwood, making it the first incorporated African-American community in the county. During the 1920s and 1930s, the population of North Brentwood expanded and improvements were undertaken at a greater rate than previously experienced. Despite the effects of

the “Great Flood of 1933,” which caused substantial damage in the community, insurance maps from 1939 and 1940 indicate significant growth. The maps show two churches, a firehouse, three stores, a lumber company, as well as 138 dwellings.

By the end of World War II (1941–1945), the street names in North Brentwood were renamed to follow the system of street naming throughout the Washington, D.C., suburban area. At the time, the town’s population was close to 1,500 and boasted a new six-room schoolhouse, two wood-coal-ice dealers, three grocery stores, three beauty parlors, a barber shop, laundry, lumber yard, dentist, lawyer, notary public, and a police and fire station. Improvements in the community were made throughout the mid-twentieth

century and included the paving of streets, extension of some streets, and the construction of a municipal building in 1952. By the third quarter of the twentieth century, residential building slowed. In the 1970s and 1980s, the community received a number of federal and state grants, used to improve and renovate a number of houses in the community. Today, North Brentwood remains a significant African-American community with approximately 500 residents. In 2003, the North Brentwood Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The district was nominated under Criteria A and C and its significant themes include architecture, community planning and development, and black ethnic heritage. The period of significance extends from 1891 to 1950. The district contains 128 contributing resources and 60 non-contributing resources.

The Hawkins House was a two-story front-gabled dwelling of wood frame construction. The two-bay gable front was sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch that wrapped around and sheltered the long west elevation. The porch was supported by posts with jigsawn openwork brackets.



68-61-1

### *Jeremiah Hawkins House Site*

**4114 Webster Street**

1905–1991

This is the site of the house built for Jeremiah and Emma Florence Hawkins, two of North Brentwood's most prominent early citizens. Representative of the modest dwellings of the town's early building period, it was an important element of the community until it was demolished in 1991.

This house, which was representative of the front-gabled dwellings built on the deep narrow lots of developing suburbs, was built in 1905 for the family of Jeremiah and Emma Florence Hawkins. Jeremiah Hawkins was born in 1864 in the rural Brandywine district of Prince George's County. He took an early interest in politics and in 1887 began serving as a delegate to the county conventions of the Republican Party; in 1889 he served on the Republican State Central Committee. In June 1903, Jeremiah Hawkins married Emma Florence Quander, who had grown up in the rural area of Cheltenham south of Upper Marlboro. Within two years, the couple moved to Randalltown (North Brentwood) and had this house built; they operated a small dairy farm on the land adjoining their house. In 1911, Jeremiah Hawkins became chairman of the Brentwood Colored Citizens Association and served until 1922; it was largely through his efforts that the community progressed towards incorporation in 1924. At that time, Jeremiah Hawkins was elected the first mayor of the new municipality of North Brentwood. In later years, he represented Prince George's County several more times at the Republican National Convention. After his death in 1940, Mrs. Hawkins continued to be active in the municipality, serving for many years as the town treasurer. The Hawkins family house was a good example of the front-gabled house form, but its greater significance lay in its association with Jeremiah and Emma Hawkins.



## 68-61-2 *Robert Orr House*

4528 40th Street

Historic resource; built 1913

**The Orr House is a two-story flat-front frame dwelling with shed roof of very shallow pitch. Entrance is sheltered by a one-story porch. The original wood siding is covered with aluminum siding. All Victorian trim has been removed from the horizontal cornice.**

**T**he Robert Orr House is representative of urban vernacular dwellings sometimes referred to as “freestanding row houses.” This house type was particularly popular and appropriate for the narrow deep lots of early twentieth-century suburbs. It was built in 1913 for the family of Robert Orr, a laborer and resident of Randalltown. Although this house has been significantly altered by the application of aluminum siding and the removal of Victorian trim, its lines and form are easily recognizable and representative of a popular period house type.

Historically, the row house type arose out of a homeowner’s desire for his or her own doorstep, not one shared by many families. Due to the narrowness of the lots, each block accommodated many houses, while allowing each its own entrance. In North Brentwood, where some lots were very narrow and deep, the use of a “freestanding” row house form was quite logical and utilitarian. The design is simple with minimal ornamentation. A row house’s basic form is a building several stories high with two

or more rooms per floor and a hall and stairway to one side. A row house is connected on both sides to other row houses with similar proportions and form. The freestanding row house has windows along its sides but otherwise is indistinguishable from the row house variation.





68-61-3

### *William H. Thomas House*

**3911 Wallace Road**

Historic resource; built 1916

This house was built for the family of William H. Thomas, who was one of the trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal congregation. Together with four other trustees, Thomas acquired the property on which the church would be built in 1920. In the following year, after the completion of the church, the five trustees and the pastor took out incorporation papers for the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. William H. Thomas served for nearly 40 years as a trustee of the church. This house remained in the possession of his heirs until 1997.

The dwelling represents one of the larger and more substantial house types built in the early twentieth-century residential subdivisions. It was the first of its form to appear in North Brentwood.

**ABOVE:** The Thomas House is a two-story hip-roof frame house of the Foursquare form. Entrance is in the third bay of the three-bay north facade; this facade is sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with plain chamfered posts and plain spindle frieze. The original wood siding is now covered with white shingles.



68-61-4

### *Mack Brown House Site*

**3907 Wallace Road**

1907–2005

The Mack Brown House was a good example of a vernacular house form which was popular in the early twentieth-century residential subdivisions of Prince George's County. Urban vernacular dwellings such as this, sometimes referred to as freestanding row houses, were built on the narrow lots of the developing suburbs. Curiously, the Mack Brown House never had nearby neighbors but stood alone with a large vacant lot next door.

The house was built for the family of Mack and Jeannette Brown. Mack worked as a porter/driver. The house remained in the possession of the Mack family until 1952 and the property, as well as the once vacant lot next door, is now occupied by a modern dwelling.

**ABOVE:** The Mack Brown House was a two-story flat-front dwelling of wood frame construction with a shed roof of very shallow pitch. Entrance was in the third bay of the three-bay north facade, sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with turned, bracketed posts. The original wood siding was covered by stucco. Typically, this type of house would have had abundant Victorian trim embellishing the cornice. By the time this photograph was taken in 1993, it had all but disappeared.





In each of the three houses, entrance is in the second bay of the two-bay facade, sheltered originally by a one-story hip-roof porch. The original wood siding of each house is now covered with synthetic siding, windows are modern replacements, and the front porches have been rebuilt.

*68-61-5, 17, 18*

*Owings Houses*

**4533, 4535, and 4537 41st Avenue**  
Historic resources; built 1912

These three houses were built by Irvin Owings as investment properties. Owings, a white man who lived in Hyattsville and was later elected mayor of that town, purchased a group of lots on Highland Avenue (now 41st Avenue) and built on them these three identical houses. All three had very narrow fronts with shallow shed roofs. All served as rental properties for a number of years. Despite modern changes, they are still representative of one type of early twentieth century urban vernacular dwelling.

*68-61-6      Seaburn House Site*

**4529 41st Avenue**  
1912–2005

The Seaburn House was typical of a frequently built and popular house type during the early years of the twentieth century, well suited for the narrow subdivision lots of developing communities. This house was built for the family of John and Annie Seaburn after they purchased two lots in the growing community. The Seaburns raised their family in this house, and descendants of the family are still very active in the community. Although the house had been significantly altered, it exhibited the lines of the original form and was a noticeable feature in the North Brentwood community. The house was demolished in 2005 and the site has not been redeveloped.



The Seaburn House was a two-story front-gabled frame dwelling with entrance in the second bay of the two-bay gable front; the entrance was sheltered by a one-story porch with turned posts. The plain cornice was returned on the principal facade.



68-61-7

## *A. A. Randall House*

**4504 41st Avenue**

Historic site; Built 1895

This house was built for Augustus A. Randall, son of Henry Randall, the first purchaser of lots in what was to become North Brentwood. In 1891 Henry Randall purchased several lots in the newly platted subdivision, and his large dwelling was built the next year. Within a few years four more dwellings were built on nearby lots for members of Randall's extended family, one of them for the family of his son, Augustus. These were

the only five dwellings shown on the 1896 plat of the area, and the community was called Randalltown because of these first residents. A. A. Randall worked for the Department of the Treasury; his wife was Maggie Hawkins, daughter of Gasaway Hawkins who had served in the U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War—a direct link with Captain Wallace Bartlett, the developer of Brentwood. The A. A. Randall House is a two-story frame dwelling, one of the larger versions of this popular type. It is three bays wide, with entrance in the third bay, sheltered by a one-story porch with turned bracketed posts. The original wood siding of the house, shown here covered with brick-textured asphalt, is now covered with vinyl siding. A small diamond-shaped loft window lights the upper gable. A. A. Randall's house is significant not only as a representative of the popular front-gabled house form, but also for its association with the Randall family and Captain Bartlett.



68-61-8

## *Edith Randall Mason House*

**4501 41st Avenue**

Historic resource; built c. 1895

The Edith Randall Mason House is an example of I-House dwellings that were built on wider lots in developing subdivisions near the turn of the twentieth century. (An I-House is so called because it is shaped like the letter "I" turned on its side. I-Houses have two stories and a single room on either side of a central passage that is aligned with the entrance in the middle of the facade.)

The subject house was built for Henry Randall on a lot that backed up to his own family home; it became the home of Randall's daughter Edith. More typical of modest rural farmhouses of the 1890s, the I-House form was used for most of the houses built for members of Randall's family. Like the other Randall houses, it was built on one of the larger lots to accommodate its width. It is significant as one of four I-House dwellings (three of which survive), all built before 1896 for members of the Randalls' extended family. These four dwellings, plus the narrower front-gabled dwelling of Augustus A. Randall, were the only five dwellings shown on the 1896 plat of the area, and the community was called Randalltown because of these first residents.

The Edith Randall Mason House is a two-story frame dwelling with an unusual central flush crossgable, blind except for a diamond-shaped attic window. The principal west facade is sheltered by a one-story shed-roof porch with metal trellis posts.





68-61-9

## *McKenzie-Bullock House Site*

**4538 41st Avenue**

c. 1912–1992

This house was built for the family of George W. McKenzie, who worked as an interior decorator in Washington, D.C. It later became the home of his daughter, Ora McKenzie Bullock, and remained in the possession of the family for 80 years. It was a particularly good example of the front-gabled house form and significant for its long-term ownership by several generations of the builder's family. The house was severely damaged by fire in 1990 and demolished in 1992. The McKenzie-Bullock House was a two-story front-gabled dwelling of wood frame construction. The entrance was sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with slim Tuscan posts. It was sheathed with German wood siding.

## *68-61-10 Nelson-Queen House Site*



**4505 Church Street**

1912–1993

This house was built for the family of John and Alberta Nelson, who mortgaged the property to the Hyattsville Building Association, and by 1917 had defaulted on payments. The Building Association foreclosed, and the property went to public sale in October 1917. After several years it was purchased by Emma Hawkins, who owned a large number of properties in North Brentwood. She sold the property in 1939 to Stanley and Sarah Queen, and it remained in the possession of the Queen family

until it was purchased by the Town of North Brentwood in 1990. The house was soon after demolished to allow space for expansion of the neighboring town hall.

The Nelson-Queen House was a two-story, front-gabled dwelling of wood frame construction. Entrance was through a door with single-pane transom in the first bay of the three-bay west gable front, sheltered by a one-story shed-roof porch with turned posts. The house was sheathed with German wood siding; the cornice, boxed with crown molding, had wide returns at the gable front. The main entrance led into a shallow entry hall, behind which the stairhall filled a long side space and gave access to two adjoining parlors, front and back.



68-61-11

*African Methodist Episcopal  
Zion Church of Brentwood*

**4037 Webster Street**

Historic site; built 1920

The North Brentwood African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is a building of a typical early twentieth century form, but unusual in this community in that it is constructed of brick. It has been a landmark in the community for over 90 years. Very early in the settlement of Randalltown, a group of residents meeting in one of the private homes soon evolved into two church congregations, Baptist and Methodist. (See also 68-061-25, the James and Virginia Holmes House.) The latter group began to meet as early as 1913 in the home of Henson Primrose, which fronted on the line of the City and Suburban Railway. Over the years this Methodist congregation met also in the Firemen's Hall just across Highland Avenue from the Reverend Primrose's house. In 1920, five trustees of the church purchased a lot on the south side of John Street, and construction of the church began that summer under the leadership of the pastor, Chesterfield Jackson. The congregation moved from the Firemen's Hall and began holding services in the lower auditorium while construction continued above. The completion of the church building was celebrated in July of 1920; the cornerstone reads "Organized May 1913. Built by Rev. Chesterfield Jackson, July 18, 1920." The five trustees, together with the Reverend Jackson, took out incorporation papers as the "African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Brentwood, Maryland" in 1921.

The church is front-gabled, built of brick painted white, with an entry tower set into the northeast corner. In the gable front is an off-center double window, filled with opaque stained glass and surmounted by a tripartite gothic-arch transom light. The nave is lighted by three windows on each of the long walls of the church, each bay filled with two stained-glass gothic-arch windows with tracery. Separating the bays are projecting brick buttresses. Set into the northeast corner of the gable front is a square entry tower. A double row of header bricks forms the ogee-arch surround of the double doors. At the second level in both the north and east elevations of the tower are three slim lancet windows set off and highlighted by several belt courses of corbelled brick. The tower is sheltered by a shallow pyramidal roof.



*68-61-12 Henry Newton  
House Site*

**4502 Church Street**  
c. 1901–2000

The Henry Newton House was a good example of a cross-gabled frame house, and one of the larger examples of the early housing stock in North Brentwood. This house was built for the family of Henry D. Newton, who purchased a group of lots in this block from the developers. Instead of building a narrow front-gabled dwelling on one narrow, deep lot, Newton built this larger, cross-gabled dwelling straddling the line between his two lots, thus giving him a handsome and substantial house at a corner location. Henry Newton worked as a barber and raised his family in this house; it remained in his possession until 1924. A second generation of the Newton family continued to live and work in North Brentwood. The house was demolished in 2000 for the expansion of the First Baptist Church of North Brentwood.



*68-61-13, 15, 16 Foursquares on Webster Street*

**3914, 3916 and 3918 Webster Street**  
Historic resources; Built c. 1920

From left to right, 3914, 3916,  
and 3918 Webster Street.

These three lots were developed by Charles Lightbown, a white builder from Bethesda who was actively involved in the development of several nearby subdivisions: Brentwood, Hyattsville, and Mount Rainier. The three houses were sold to individual families around 1920, a period when the Foursquare was a very popular house type, particularly for larger lots in developing subdivisions. The central (3916), apparently the first of the three, was constructed in 1919 just before Lightbown sold the lot (Lot 4) to Albert Mansfield. The westernmost (3914) was constructed circa 1920 at about the time it was sold to the DeNeal family; it remained in the possession of the DeNeal heirs until 1963. The easternmost (3918) was built at about the same time and was sold to Sophie Randall, who retained possession of the house until 1959. All three houses are two-and-one-half stories high, of wood frame construction, and three bays by three; each has a brick chimney centered at the ridge of the hip roof, and a hip-roof dormer centered in the principal south plane of the roof.



The Peter Randall House is a two-story house of wood-frame construction, later covered with stucco. It has a central crossgable lighted by a diamond-shaped window, and one of its gable ends is highlighted by a two-story semi-octagonal projecting bay. Entrance is in the central bay of the three-bay principal facade, sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch which is now screened.

## 68-61-37 Peter Randall House

4508 Rhode Island Avenue

Historic site; built c. 1891

The Peter Randall House is the earliest surviving dwelling built in the community which became North Brentwood. One of the larger of these early houses, it was home to one branch of the family that originally gave its name to the community.

## *The oldest surviving dwelling in Randalltown.*

In 1891, the year in which the original plat was completed, Henry Randall purchased a lot in the northern part of the subdivision. The following year his son, Peter Randall, purchased the adjoining lot, and the two men built nearly identical frame houses side by side. Henry Randall's house was completed in 1892 and Peter Randall's by 1893. Both houses were frame dwellings of the I-house form (two stories, side-gabled, one room deep, with central stairhall and a parlor on each side), each with a central crossgable and rear kitchen wing, a form that was the most frequent type among rural farmhouses, but in this case adapted for an urban subdivision. Within a few more years, members of the Randall family had purchased and built houses on three more lots, and for many years afterwards, this northern section of the subdivision was known as Randalltown. Henry Randall operated a coal and ice supply company, and Peter Randall was employed by the Government Printing Office; both father and son served as trustees of the first school built in the community. Peter Randall was also elected to the town council after the community was incorporated as North Brentwood in 1924. The houses of Henry and Peter Randall were landmarks in the eastern section of North Brentwood, especially after the City and Suburban Railway Company completed (in 1898) the streetcar line along the right-of-way upon which the houses faced. Peter Randall's family retained possession of his house until 1947 and since that time it has been the home of two other families. Both Peter Randall's house and his father's house remained prominent symbols of the earliest history of this community until the Henry Randall House was damaged by fire in 1994, and then demolished in 1995.



68-61-19

## *Garland-Palmer House*

**4510 40th Street**

Historic site; built c. 1917

The Garland-Palmer House was constructed for the Reverend James L. Jasper, a prominent Baptist minister who visited the area in 1905 and subsequently helped found the First Baptist Church in North Brentwood. In 1912, Jasper purchased Lots 1, 2, 19, and 20 in Block 24 and by 1917 had overseen construction of the dwelling at 4510 40th Street. That same year, he had the neighboring house at 4512 40th Street (Sandy P. Baker House, 68-061-20) built. Jasper conveyed the Garland-Palmer House and property to Squire W. and Rosa B. Garland in 1924. During his tenure in the house, Squire W. Garland served as the Police Justice in Mayor Jeremiah Hawkins' first cabinet and was also appointed a Justice of the Peace by Maryland Governor Albert Ritchie. Following Garland's death, the property passed to his wife Rosa. Una Palmer, the current owner of the property and granddaughter of Squire Garland, resides in the house today, continuing eighty-five years of Garland-Palmer ownership. The Garland-Palmer House is significant as the home of a prominent and civic-minded African-American family that was central to the creation and evolution of the North Brentwood community. The property is also significant because of its association with the Reverend James L. Jasper, a pioneer in the construction of houses in North Brentwood. He acted as a small-scale developer at a time when housing discrimination based on race was common. This example of self-help is a common theme in the tight-knit community of North Brentwood.

This three-bay single-family dwelling is a freestanding structure reminiscent of the urban row house form. It is composed of a two-story main block, with a one-story porch spanning the façade (southeast elevation) and a full-width one-story, lean-to addition on the rear (northwest) elevation. The wood-frame dwelling has been reclad with aluminum siding and is set on a solid poured concrete foundation. The sloping roof is marked at the façade by an asphalt-shingled false mansard. Overhanging flared eaves and a boxed cornice finish the roof. A one-story, three-bay porch shelters the façade and is set on a solid concrete-block foundation. The roof is supported by metal filigree posts, which are not original.



68-61-20

## *Sandy P. Baker House*

**4512 40th Street**

Historic site; built c. 1917

The Sandy P. Baker House was constructed for the Reverend James L. Jasper, a prominent Baptist minister who visited the area in 1905 and subsequently helped found the First Baptist Church. In 1912, Jasper purchased Lots 1, 2, 19, and 20 in Block 24 and by 1917 had the dwelling constructed at 4512 40th Street, as well as the Garland-Palmer House at 4510 40th Street. Jasper conveyed the house and property to his daughter Addie and her husband, Sandy P. Baker, in 1920. During his tenure in the house, Sandy P. Baker, whose occupation is listed as “chauffeur” with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in the 1930 census, served as Mayor of North Brentwood from 1937 to 1943. Lillian K. Beverly, the granddaughter of Reverend James L. Jasper—who is also a former mayor of North Brentwood and a community activist—continues to own and occupy the dwelling. The Sandy P. Baker House

is significant as the home of a prominent African-American family that was integral in the development and stewardship of North Brentwood. The property is also significant because of its association with the Reverend James L. Jasper, who was a pioneer in the construction of houses in North Brentwood.



This vernacular single-family dwelling is composed of a two-story main block with a one-story, two-bay porch on the façade, and a two-story, front-gabled addition on the rear (northwest) elevation. The wood-frame dwelling has been reclad with aluminum siding and is set on a solid raised foundation that is faced with stretcher-bond brick. A hipped roof caps the dwelling and is covered

with asphalt shingles. A three-sided oriel window projects from the southwestern bay. The three second-story openings hold one-over-one vinyl-sash windows with aluminum-clad surrounds and inoperable louvered metal shutters. A one-story, two-bay porch spans the width of the façade and is set on a solid foundation that is faced with stretcher-bond brick. The half-hipped roof of the porch is covered with asphalt shingles and is supported by metal filigree posts, not original.



68-61-21

*Sis' Tavern*

4516 41st Street

Built c. 1912

*A well-known local watering hole that attracted acts such as Duke Ellington and Pearl Bailey.*

Owned by Samuel J. Mills, Arthur B. Adams, and Cornelius D. Mecutcheon, this building was initially operated as a grocery. It is probable that Thomas F. Randall, a member of the prominent Randall family who had been the earliest residents of North Brentwood, leased the grocery before purchasing it outright in 1911. A covenant of the property banned the sale of “intoxicating liquors” as long as the original principals of the sale and their descendants lived within a one-half mile radius of the property. Randall owned the property until 1919, at which time it was sold to Jeremiah Hawkins and his wife, Emma. Hawkins, elected as the first mayor of North Brentwood in 1924, leased the property to tenants during his ownership. The building came to be known as “Sis’ Tavern” during the 1950s and

1960s. Initially leased by Marie “Sis” Walls from Emma Hawkins, Walls purchased the property in 1966 and continued to operate the building as a tavern until its closure in 1969–1970. With the original liquor covenant no longer applying, according to local sources the tavern was a well-known local watering hole that attracted acts such as Duke Ellington and Pearl Bailey. It later became notorious for the disruption it caused North Brentwood’s residents due to its late-night brawls. Sis’ Tavern is significant as a central hub of social activity in North Brentwood’s development. Owned by local African-American residents, the property was an important commercial and social fixture in North Brentwood, first as a grocery and

later as a tavern, and is still a recognizable landmark in the community. The property is also significant because it was a commercial building operated by African-Americans for African-Americans.



68-61-22

## Quander-Dock House

4033 Webster Street

Historic site; built c. 1926

In 1923, this property was purchased by Isaac D. Arnold, who promptly sold it to Manerva Smith. Smith lived in nearby Brentwood and owned the property for three years when she sold it to Richard I. and Maude E. Quander. Based on census records it is reasonable to assume that the Quanders are responsible for the construction of the dwelling. Richard Quander was the first African-American mail carrier in North Brentwood. Quander is buried in

Arlington National Cemetery in honor of his distinguished career in the United States military. In 1971, following 45 years of ownership by the Quander family, Arthur J. Dock purchased the property. Dock, a teacher and principal at local schools, was honored by *The Washington Post* as a leader in the field of education and presented with the Distinguished Educational Leadership Award. Also a former mayor of North Brentwood, Dock is the current owner and occupant of the dwelling. The house is a good example of the Craftsman-style bungalow. With only two owners, this dwelling conveys the strong family ties and pride that were instilled in the early development of this community and continue today.



The Quander-Dock House is a one-and-one-half-story, four-bay Craftsman-style dwelling with a bungalow form. Like many dwellings built at that time, the house is set on a rock-faced concrete-block foundation. The wood-frame dwelling has been reclad with cementitious siding. A side-gabled roof of asphalt shingles caps the dwelling and is finished with overhanging boxed eaves. The northeast slope (over the façade) features a four-bay wide dormer. The first story of the façade (northeast elevation) features a one-story, full-width porch that has been screened.



## 68-61-24 *Wigginton-Brown-Bellows House*

**4005 Wallace Road**

Built c. 1910

The Wigginton-Brown-Bellows House is a large, two-story, wood-frame dwelling that sits prominently on a corner lot at the intersection of Wallace Road and 40th Street. In 1910, Mahalath F. Wigginton purchased a lot in the community and oversaw construction of the vernacular dwelling. In 1912, she purchased an adjacent lot, expanding the size of her property.

Wigginton, who later married Benjamin Brown, was named Supervisor of

Colored Schools in 1920. Additionally, Mahalath Brown operated a corner store across from her dwelling for the residents of North Brentwood. Owned and operated by a woman, this was the only general store in North Brentwood not located near or along the US 1 corridor, where most commercial buildings were sited. In 1942, the Browns sold the property to William D. Bellows, Jr. and his wife Hattie. Hattie Bellows was a member of the Prince George's County radiological staff, which was composed of a team of emergency response professionals during the Cold War. In 1988, the property at 4005 Wallace Road was conveyed to Debra Bellows Southerland. In 2002, following more than fifty years of ownership by members of the Bellows family, the property was sold to First Baptist Church,

Inc. The church currently owns the property and the house is vacant. The Wigginton-Brown-Bellows House is significant as the home of prominent African-Americans, including a teacher, business woman, and a medical expert trained for an atomic attack.

This two-story, three-bay vernacular dwelling displays stylistic influences of the Craftsman style. A front-gabled roof of asphalt shingles features wide overhanging eaves with exposed rafters and end brackets. A small interior brick chimney pierces the ridge of the roof. The window openings contain original two-over-two, double-hung, wood sash. The façade contains a single-leaf, paneled wood door with twelve lights in the westernmost bay. Two window openings are located in the easternmost bays of the façade. The second story contains three window openings. The upper gable end features a four-light, wood-sash casement window set in a square-edged wood surround.





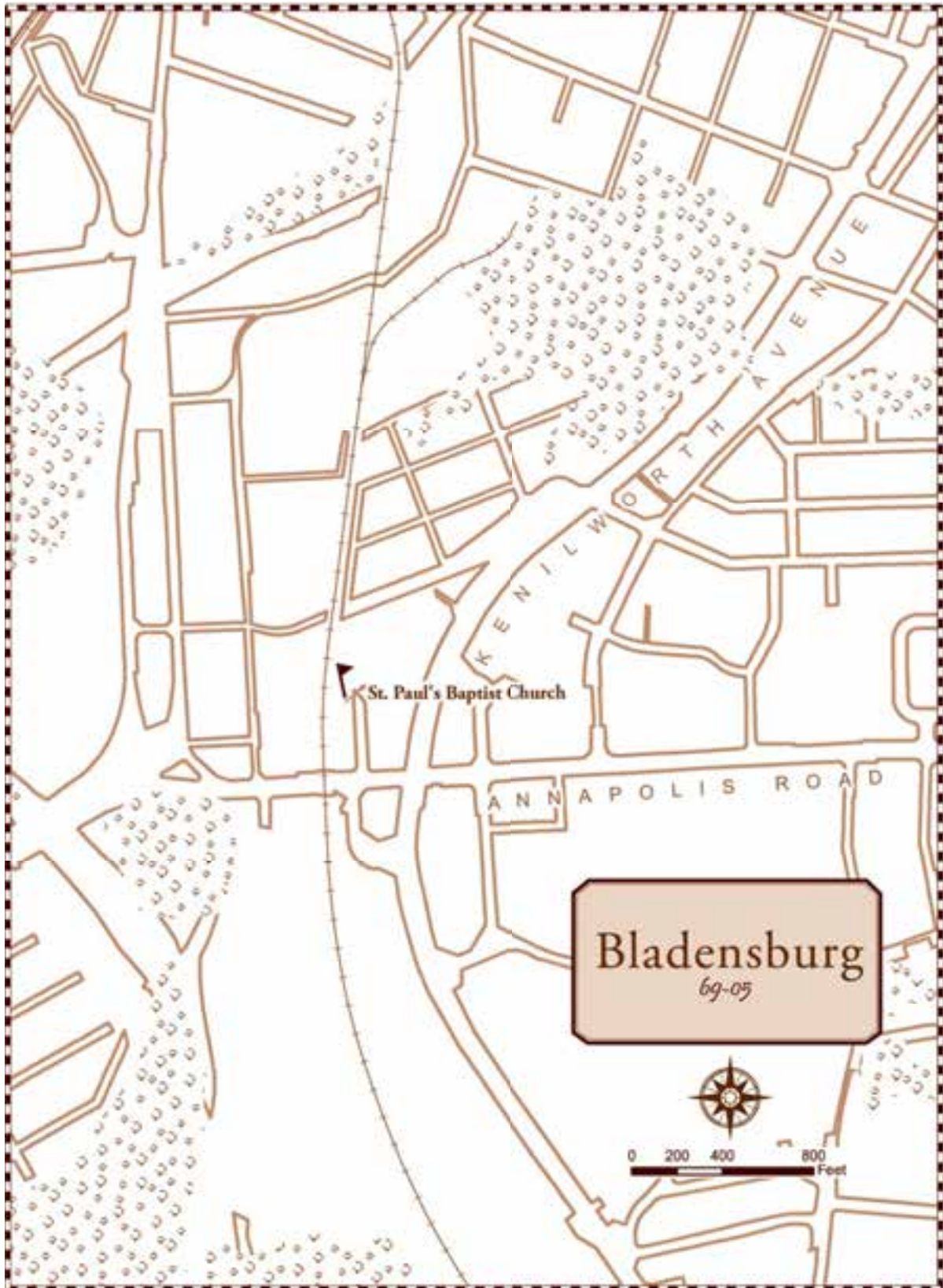
*68-61-25 James & Virginia  
Holmes House*

**4514 Banner Street**  
Built 1904

**The Holmes House, c. 1990. The house has since been remodeled, and its historic features, such as the two-over-two windows, attic story diamond window, and two-story porch have been removed or obscured by synthetic siding.**

Soon after the construction of this house at the corner of Banner and Wallace Streets, church meetings were held here because a church had not yet been built in the fledgling community. The establishment of a church became a priority and the residents of North Brentwood formed two congregations, Baptist and Methodist, both having started in the Holmes' residence. Following the death of her husband, Virginia Holmes continued to live in the house, later renting rooms for use as classrooms for the public school located across Wallace (formerly School) Street. The James & Virginia Holmes House is significant as the early location of worship for the growing African-American community of North Brentwood and as a place of education; both indicative of the success of a stable, growing community. The property is also significant because it was once owned (though not lived in) by Nannie Helen Burroughs, a prolific writer, orator, and teacher. In 1907 Burroughs founded the National Trade and Professional School for Women and Girls in Washington, D.C.





69-05

## Bladensburg INC. 1854

East side of Anacostia River, south of fork  
(Northeast and Northwest Branches)

One historic site

**T**he Town of Bladensburg was established by an Act of the General Assembly in 1742. The town was named for Thomas Bladen, governor of the Maryland colony from 1742–1747. In 1747, Bladensburg was designated one of the tobacco inspection stations of Prince George’s County. The Eastern Branch of the Anacostia was at that time fully navigable, and the town, which was strategically located at the intersection of several important public roads, became one of the most important shipping and commercial villages in the county. By 1776, Bladensburg was exporting more tobacco than any other Maryland port on the Western Shore; it was characterized by waterfront wharves, a shipyard and ropewalk, tannery, taverns and stores, as well as the dwellings and establishments of various doctors, artisans, and merchants. All of the 60 one-acre lots that comprised the established town were developed by 1787.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the branch had begun to silt up, preventing the continued success of the local shipping industry. The Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad opened operations in 1835, bypassing Bladensburg, and within a century of its establishment, the town began to fade in importance. The construction of the Alexandria Branch of the B&O late in the nineteenth century spurred a renewal of commerce and industry in the area, but by the early-twentieth century, Bladensburg had become a fairly quiet small town, with several churches, schools and stores, as well as a group of historic dwellings and the development of an industrial complex along the railroad line.

Bladensburg always had a substantial black population, although the number of enslaved persons and free blacks was smaller in proportion to whites than in other sections of the county. Many years before the Civil War, African-Americans were a recognized part of the commercial activity of the town. In 1790, for example, the Bladensburg inn preferred by President Washington was run by “an old black woman who keeps the best house in the town and calls herself Mrs. Margaret Adams.”

When a Freedmen’s Bureau school was established in Bladensburg; classes were held in an older building while a new building was being constructed. Classes began in the new building in April 1867. The first teacher was Sallie Cadwallader, a Quaker from Philadelphia who, when she left Bladensburg at the end of 1868, was remembered as a strong advocate of the freedmen.

The black community of Bladensburg was concentrated for the most part around the intersection of the old turnpike to Baltimore and the road to Annapolis, on the east side of the Anacostia. In the period following the Civil War, several churches were established. An African Methodist Episcopal Church continued the tradition of the antebellum



Dent's Chapel, whose members had worshipped in a loft above a carpenter's shop. Most notably, St. Paul's Baptist Church was founded in 1866 by Sarah Miranda Plummer. After 1872, St. Paul's was housed in the former Presbyterian Church building. This mostly black community expanded during the last years of the nineteenth century as several white families conveyed or devised their fine older homes to the families of their former employees.

In 1923, the Board of Education authorized the construction of a new primary school for black children; it was located a short distance to the east of the existing, mostly black, community. This school was funded by the state and county, without assistance from the Rosenwald fund, and was replaced in 1940 by a new building in the Lynwood subdivision. The 1923 schoolhouse was converted and used for many years as the Decatur Heights Gospel Church; the new Bladensburg Town Hall now stands on its site. After integration, the 1940 school was adapted for use as a public schools bus depot.

Perhaps because of the relatively low numbers of the population of enslaved persons in Bladensburg during the early years of the town's history, and the fairly early success of free black workers, the African-American population of Bladensburg never seems to have formed a separate community, but has remained somewhat intermixed with the white population. And possibly for the same reasons, few specifically African-American landmarks survive in Bladensburg.

## *69-05-6      St. Paul's Baptist Church*

**4107 47th Street**

Historic site, c. 1818 and 1908

St. Paul's Church is a two-part brick church building with a long and important history, particularly to the African-American population of the Bladensburg area. It is located on a small lot in Bladensburg, and is now surrounded by warehouses and industrial buildings.



The main block of the church is the larger section, three bays by three, and contains the sanctuary; centered in the east gable front is a tall, double window with round-arch transom and lintel, flanked by two projecting buttresses with corbelled caps and two lower rectangular windows with flat brick lintels. The long north and south walls of the sanctuary have a boxed cornice returned at the gable ends, and three courses of brick corbelling below that. Entrance to the church is through a tower that projects from the south wall of the sanctuary. Above the double door with its



Sarah Miranda  
Plummer.

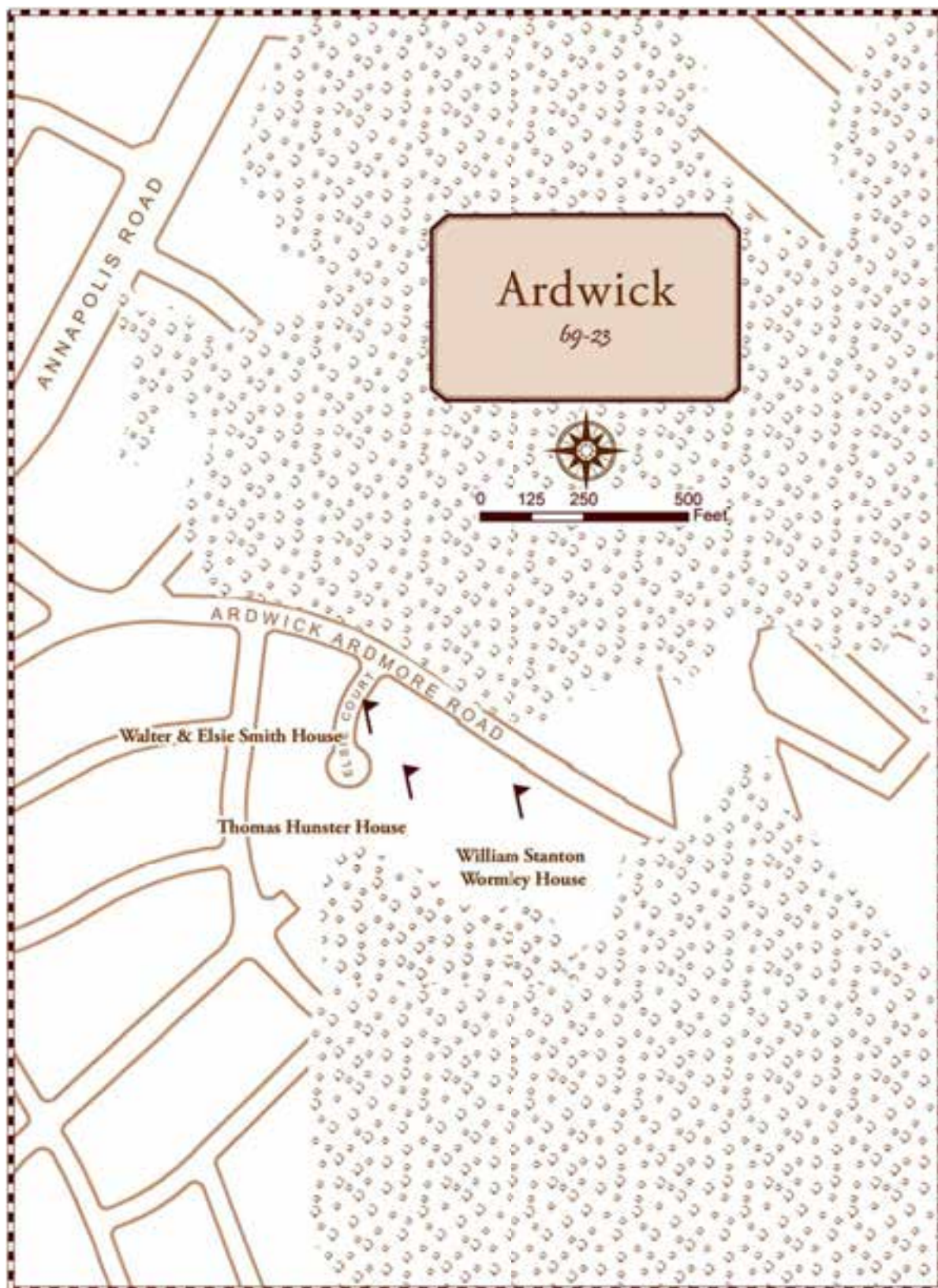
Plummer had been sold to a new owner in New Orleans just before the beginning of the Civil War. In 1866 she was returned to her family in Maryland, and at that time she founded what was to become the St. Paul's congregation. For several years, members worshipped in the Plummer house. In 1873 they purchased the old Presbyterian church and made that simple front-gabled brick building their church. In 1908 the church was damaged by fire; it was restored and the entrance tower and south wing were added, resulting in a two-part building with Romanesque Revival details. In 1973, the St. Paul's congregation moved to a newer building in Boulevard Heights. The church is endangered by virtue of its location in an industrial area.

flat-arch lintel is a deeply recessed round window, and above that a pyramidal-roofed octagonal tower set on a rectangular brick base. To the south of the entry tower is a two-bay front-gabled addition which repeats some of the features of the main block on a smaller scale, and which serves as general-purpose room and pastor's study.

The main block of St. Paul's was built in 1818 to house

the Presbyterian congregation of Bladensburg; it remained the home of the Presbyterian congregation until 1873 when it was sold to a black Baptist congregation. The St. Paul's Baptist congregation was founded by Sarah Miranda Plummer, a former slave, in 1866. The daughter of enslaved persons who worked for the Calvert family at Riversdale and for the Hilleary family at Three Sisters, Sarah





69-23

## Ardwick

Ardwick Ardmore Road, west of Veterans Highway (MD 410),  
Landover Hills vicinity  
Historic sites (2)

Until the late nineteenth century, the area comprising the present-day area of Ardwick was farmland; the land along the road from Bladensburg to Ardwick Station on the Pennsylvania Railroad had been part of the farms of William Beall and John Yost. Both Martener's map of 1861 and the Hopkins map of 1878 document limited development in the area that would become Ardwick. A few farms are located around the perimeter of the community, but none within the community boundaries. Ardwick was initially platted in 1889 as a railroad suburb by Thomas Mitchell, a Washington, D.C., real estate broker. *The Washington Post* reported that "Ardwick is a brand new town on the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, near Hyattsville. It is beautifully located....and the streets of the little city are laid out in the most convenient and symmetrical form....Already a number of cottages have been erected and occupied, and Ardwick will shortly become an important station on the road, and though just over the Maryland line, is practically a suburb of the National Capital." Despite this exuberant description, the original plat was soon abandoned, and the area remained rural, despite the location near the Ardwick railroad station. In 1897, Hugh Browne constructed a modest wood-frame dwelling on five acres of land. William Stanton Wormley, a prominent African-American teacher and artist from Washington, D.C., purchased the house and surrounding acreage in 1903.

The entrance to the  
Walter and Elsie  
Smith House, before  
the land surrounding  
it was subdivided.

Wormley was the grandson of successful businessman James Wormley, who in 1871 established the Wormley Hotel, located at 15th and H Streets in Washington. When James Wormley died in 1884, he left a substantial fortune to his children and grandchildren, who went on to take prominent positions in education, other professions, and black society in Washington, D.C. William Stanton Wormley's home in Ardwick became a



retreat for members and associates of the Wormley family. Soon other members of Washington's black professional society were drawn to Ardwick to build houses away from the city. Before his death in 1919, Wormley began selling parcels of his land to friends and family. They erected dwellings of their own, creating a small community of professional African-Americans who commuted to Washington, D.C. Gradually the weekend retreat houses became permanent residences.



69-23-17

## William Stanton Wormley House

7533 Ardwick Ardmore Road

Historic site; Built 1898–1926

*The "Wortaycarbros" was a trap shooting club named for its founding families Wormley, Taylor, Carson and Brooks.*

The Wormley House is a multipart frame dwelling which has been altered and enlarged over the years. It has considerable significance as the retreat home of the Wormleys, a black family prominent in Washington, D.C., especially in education circles. The settling of the Wormley family at this location brought about the beginning of the Ardwick community.

The original structure was of traditional I-house form. The entrance was centered in the three-bay east facade; that opening was closed in the 1920s, replaced by a large fieldstone chimney. At the same time the house was enlarged by the construction of south and west additions and of a small kitchen wing at the south end. It was at this time that the house was reoriented to face north. A stair hall was built west of the main block, and entrance to it was created through a small gable-roof vestibule which became the principal entrance to the house. A glass-enclosed porch spans the east elevation of both the main block and the south wing.

Since 1903 the house has been the residence, both as a country retreat and as a year-round home, of members of the Wormley family. The Wormley House was constructed for Hugh Browne. In 1902, Browne sold the five-acre property and frame dwelling to his brother-in-law, Furman Shadd, an early graduate of the Howard University Medical School. Shadd sold the property one year later to his nephew, William Stanton Wormley, a wealthy artist and teacher in Washington,

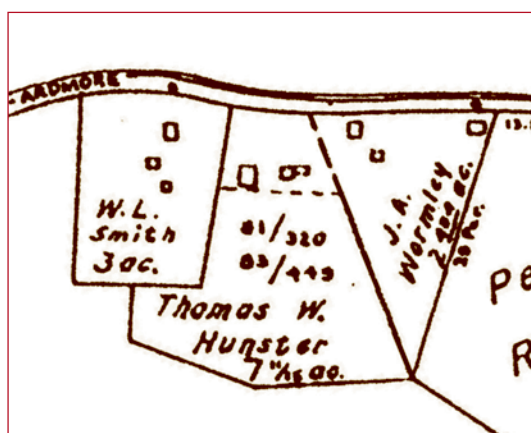
The Wormley House  
seen from the street.



D.C. Wormley was the grandson of successful businessman James Wormley. The home of the younger Wormley became a retreat for his family and associates, with a tennis court and a trapshooting range. It was the weekend retreat of a group of black professionals from Washington, used particularly by the trap shooting club known as the "Wortaycarbros," named for its founding families Wormley, Taylor, Carson, and Brooks. Wormley sold adjoining parcels of land to colleagues and relatives, and the retreat community of Ardwick was gradually populated by black professionals in Washington education circles. Wormley died in 1919, and in 1926 two of his sisters purchased the house from the other Wormley heirs and made it

**RIGHT:** The east elevation, showing the sunporch and rubble-stone chimney.

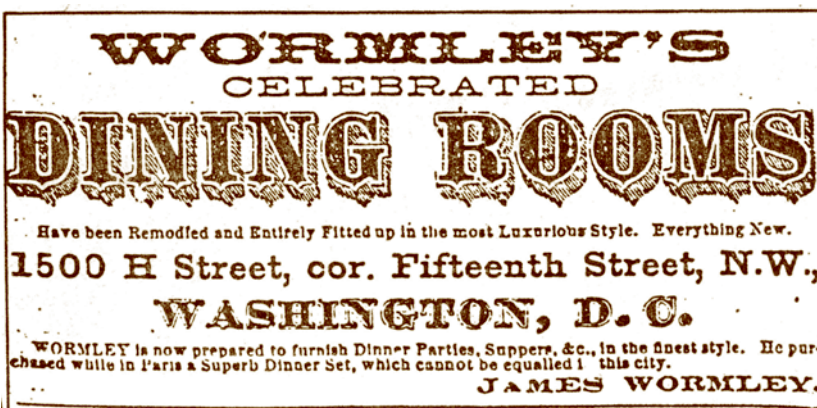
**BELOW:** This detail from the Franklin Atlas of 1940 shows the three extant properties, which also comprise the core group of the black professional retreat community. The L-shaped building to the right of the Hunster house may be Hunster's studio, which now exists only as a concrete foundation. According to Wormley descendants, the studio was a miniature version of Hunster's unique bungalow. (See 69-023-27.)



their permanent home. At that time the orientation of the house was shifted, with the enlargement of the main block and the creation of a more formal entrance on the north. The house is significant as the focal point in the small Ardwick community, and in its association with a very important family of black professionals from Washington, D.C. It also illustrates the evolution of a modest dwelling and country retreat into an large, year-round home for succeeding generations.

The first floor interior of the Wormley House is a succession of expansive, low-ceilinged and light-filled rooms that look out on the lawn. On the first floor, a small kitchen is attached to the rear. The second floor contains large, airy bedrooms. Directly to the east of the Wormley house is a Cape Cod-style dwelling built in the 1940s by and for the Wormleys. Both houses are still occupied by members of the Wormley family.

An 1869  
advertisement for  
Wormley's  
grandfather's hotel.







The Hunster House.

## 69-23-27 Thomas Hunster House

**7523 Ardwick Ardmore Road**

Historic site; built c. 1920

In 1911, Thomas Hunster purchased property from his colleague, William Stanton Wormley, next to Wormley's house in Ardwick. Hunster was a portrait and landscape painter and worked as the head of the art department in the District of Columbia's segregated public schools. Born in Cincinnati in 1851, Hunster began his career in the Washington school system in 1874, serving as a teacher for 48 years. He designed the *Exposition des Nègres d'Amerique* a series of paintings dealing with the rise and progress of Negroes in America between 1865 and 1900, which was displayed at the 1900 Paris World's Fair (Exposition Universelle). In 1907, Hunster exhibited many of his paintings at the Negro Building at the Jamestown, Virginia, Tercentennial Exposition.

The Hunster House is a one-and-one-half story bungalow with hip roof; it fronts to the north toward Ardwick Ardmore Road, but is set far back from the road on spacious grounds dotted with large cedars and hollies. A spacious and partially enclosed porch shelters the north facade of the house and wraps around the long east side of the house. A smaller porch centered in the north facade gives access to the house. At the second floor, what was perhaps an artist's studio is lighted by a bank of windows across the north front; above this bank of windows is a hip-roof dormer.

Hunster and his wife lived in a small cottage on the property while the main house was under construction. (Oral tradition maintains that this smaller building was a miniature replica of the Hunster House which afterward became Hunster's studio; it is no longer extant.) Working with a local carpenter, Hunster was involved in the design and construction of the house, which was completed around 1920.

The Thomas Hunster House is an unusual conglomeration of stylistic elements and features united in a dynamic arrangement. The attic windows, some only several inches square, are arrayed like those of an ocean liner's navigating bridge, as if the house were peering forward into dark seas. The columns supporting the attic are articulated with a faux balustrade of pickets that float a foot off the ground in a plane beyond that of the porch, and are decorated with brackets with curiously solid Mayan-like carving. The design echoes the manner in which the attic windows step along the roof as if they are following a ziggurat. In photographs the house can appear to be an enormous bungalow; the arrangement of the windows in the attic story seem to belie their true size. It appears to be a tiny dwelling, yet seems larger on the inside than the outside.

The interior incorporates salvaged trim and elements from earlier nineteenth-century buildings. One enters into a dark, narrow hall with doors flanking on either side. This hall gives way to an enormous living room lit by skylights, at the center of which is a generous but low arched brick fireplace. Porches, now enclosed, flank the main space. The attic is accessed by a stair off the entry hall.

Hunster continued to work in and modify the attic space until his death in 1929. This space, which may or may not have been used as a studio, is an intriguing warren of very small "rooms" on different levels that open onto each other. It is only possible for an adult to stand near the apex of the roof, and the "rooms," despite being lit by banks of windows, are tiny and dim and offer none of the qualities normally associated with an artist's studio. It seems best suited for a children's playroom. Whatever its planned or actual use, the attic and the house as a whole represent an intriguing and unique artistic exploration of forms, spaces and ideas.

The bungalow was further distinguished by the paintings that Hunster incorporated into the interior: huge wall paintings and window-shades with scenery. The works have since been removed, and many have been on exhibit at Howard University, at the Anacostia Community Museum, and in District of Columbia schools.

The attic interior of the Hunster House. This space may have been used as Hunster's studio.





69-23-28

## *Walter and Elsie Smith House*

### **4501 Elsie Court**

Built c. 1910

This large Colonial Revival house was built by a white couple (John and Anna Jenks) circa 1910, and purchased in 1928 by Walter and Elsie Smith. The Smiths, both prominent in the black public school system of Washington, D.C., learned about the Ardwick area from colleagues in the teaching profession. The Wormleys and the Hunsters, both of whom worked in art and education in the public schools of Washington, D.C., had settled earlier in the Ardwick area. Like other Ardwick residents, they commuted to their schools by railroad. When the Jenks house was offered for sale in 1928, the Smiths, wishing to reside in a country setting, purchased it and made it their home.

The Smith House is a two-and-one-half-story frame house with gable roof and square floor plan. A one-story porch shelters the north facade and wraps around the west gable end. The porch, which is distinguished by its Tuscan columns, is partially enclosed on the east, where the principal entrance to the house is located. Two prominent gable dormers pierce the front (north) plane of the gable roof; each is lighted by a double window. The original wood siding is covered by white synthetic shingle.

The arrival of the Smiths increased the group of African-American families, prominent in education circles in Washington, D.C., who populated the small Ardwick community. Walter L. Smith was for 21 years principal of the prestigious Dunbar High School and Mrs. Smith

was a distinguished English teacher at that institution. Walter Smith died in 1943, but Mrs. Smith remained in the house until her death in 1990. Originally accessed from Ardwick Ardmore Road (see photograph, page 91), the house is now located on a cul-de-sac and surrounded by a small subdivision.



# Brookland

## North of Greenbelt Road off Northern Avenue

Historic sites (2); historic resources (1)

Glennville, now known as Glenn Dale, was platted in 1871. Within a few years of the establishment of Glennville, a small group of African-American farmers began to settle on land to the north. This area became known as Brookland. The center point for this rural community was the Western Star Lodge which was built circa 1889. The nearest place of worship was two-and-one-half miles from Brookland and one of the trustees of the lodge began conducting worship services there. In 1895, five local men began raising money to build a church and purchased one-half acre west of the lodge “for the purpose of establishing a place of worship.” The small frame Brookland Methodist Episcopal Church was dedicated on September 16, 1900. However, from its earliest time, the church has been known as Dorsey Chapel after its first pastor, the Reverend A. B. Dorsey. The chapel served as the social as well as religious center of this rural community for over 70 years. Eventually, the congregation of Dorsey Chapel merged with that of Perkins Chapel to form the Glenn Dale United Methodist Church, and Dorsey Chapel officially closed in 1971. The wooded lot to the west was the scene of many camp meetings, and the lodge lot eventually became the church cemetery. The Brookland community has not grown, and today exists as a small cluster of houses in a still-rural area.



Dorsey Chapel in 1992,  
before restoration by M-NCPPC.

70-28

## Dorsey Chapel

10704 Brookland Road

Historic site; built 1900 (M-NCPPC)

In its early days, Dorsey Chapel (also known as Brookland Methodist Church) was the focal point of the Brookland community. It is a small frame meetinghouse-style church, distinguished by its steeply pitched gable roof and the late-Victorian ornamental treatment of its principal gable front: alternating courses of sawtooth and rectangular shingles, a quatrefoil bulls-eye ornament in the upper gable, and turned wooden finial at the ridge. Each of the side walls of the chapel is lighted by three gothic-arch windows which have delicate tracery in the upper sashes.



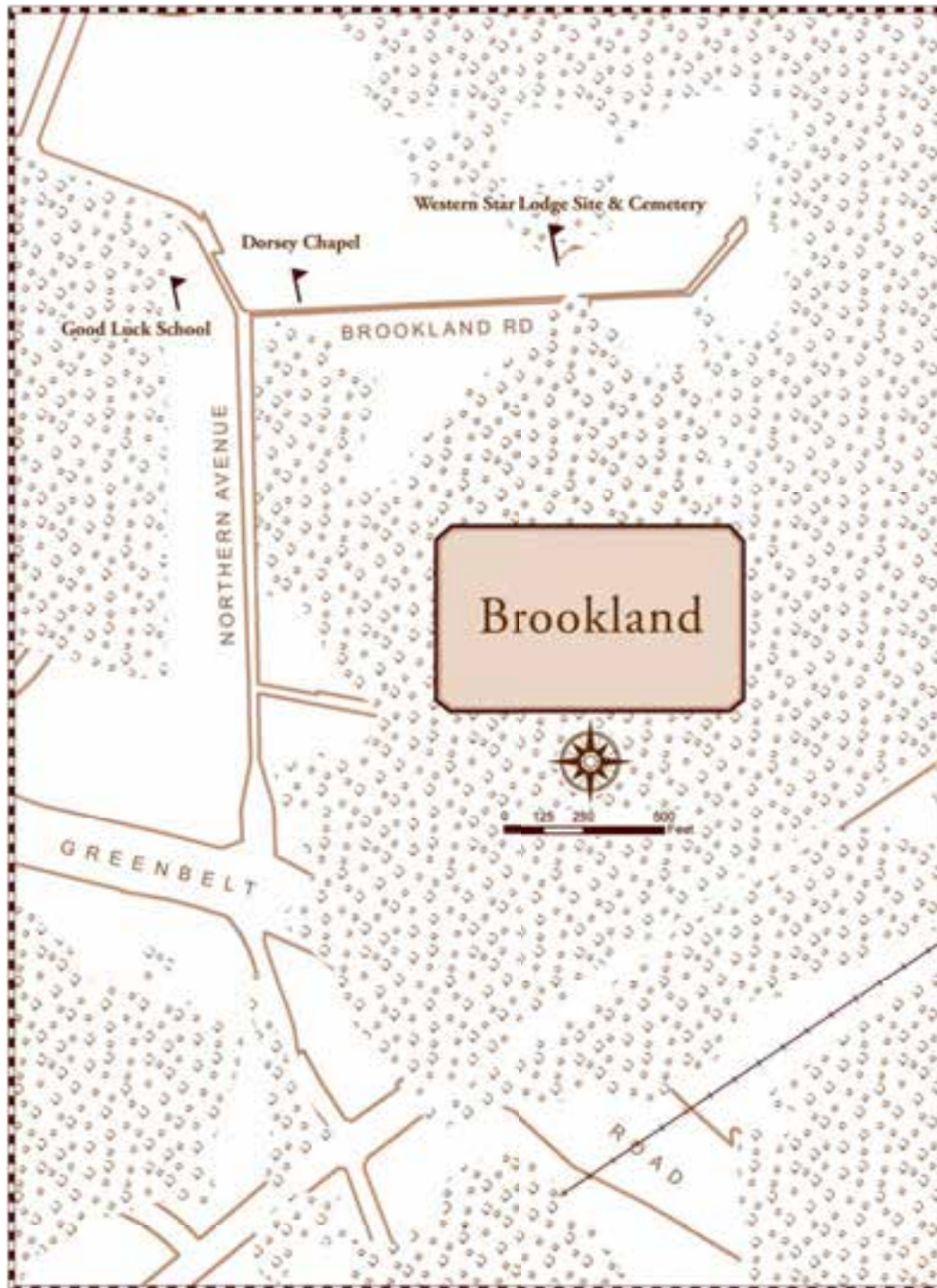
Dorsey Chapel today.

The chapel was in nearly continuous use from the time of its construction until 1971. By 1980, however, Dorsey Chapel was in deteriorating condition and was slated for demolition. Local families formed a Friends of Dorsey Chapel group and began negotiations to acquire the chapel from its owner, the Glenn Dale United Methodist



Church. The chapel with its one-half-acre lot was conveyed to the Friends in 1989, and they in turn conveyed it to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1992. Since that time,

the building has been carefully restored; it is being interpreted as an historical and cultural landmark in the African-American history of Prince George's County and is open to the public for various events.



70-87

## *Good Luck School*

**7600 Northern Avenue**

Historic resource; built 1899

**T**he Good Luck School is one of the oldest extant schoolhouses in Prince George's County. The school was originally designated as Colored School 2 in District 14; it was also known as the Glenn Dale Colored School. This one-room schoolhouse is an example of vernacular educational architecture dating from the turn of the twentieth century.

This one-story, three-bay wide, three-bay deep, wood-frame schoolhouse was originally clad in wood German siding but has been reclad in vinyl siding. The front-gable roof has overhanging eaves, cornice returns, raking wood cornice, and was covered with asphalt shingles. Fenestration of the building consists of six-over-six, double-hung, wood-sash windows set in square-edge wood surrounds with wood sills. An exterior-side, rock-faced, concrete-block chimney is located on the south addition, which was constructed c. 1915.

In 1899, when the school was built, much of the land north of Glenn Dale was owned by Shadrack Beall, who farmed many acres of land in the area. In 1879, Beall sold 12.5 acres to an African-American farmer, Elias Harrison. Harrison was associated with the small black farming community that became known as Brookland. In 1899, this small community saw the need for a school to instruct their young children and Harrison deeded one-half acre to the Board of School Commissioners for the purpose of establishing a school. Equidistant from the railroad village of Glenn Dale and the rural village of Good Luck, the new schoolhouse was commonly referred to as the Good Luck Colored School or the Glenn Dale Colored School. The original schoolhouse consisted of only the main block; the side and rear additions were not added until the early twentieth century. In 1907, the Good Luck Schoolhouse was damaged by fire. It was decided that the school was a valuable asset to its community and warranted reconstruction. Repairs took two years to complete; it is not known where the displaced children were schooled during this period. It is possible that the rear addition was added at this time and the side addition shortly thereafter. Prince George's County Public





School files include the accounts of the condition of the school in the early twentieth century. The wood-frame building was described as approximately 20 feet wide and 30 feet deep. The single-room school had about 20 desks and could accommodate up to 48 pupils. The nearest water source was about a quarter mile away, but two privies were on site. (The location of the privies is unknown.) During the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Good Luck Schoolhouse became overcrowded and the building was deteriorating. In 1922, two Rosenwald schools were constructed in the nearby communities of Fletchertown and Duckettsville and eased the burden placed on the school. As a result, attendance at the Good Luck Schoolhouse gradually declined. Poor grades and an attendance of only eight children forced the closure of the Good Luck Schoolhouse in 1935. The Board of Education transferred the students to the Normal School in Bowie. In 1939, the property was conveyed to Oscar T. and Delia E. Banner. Banner is responsible for adapting the Good Luck Schoolhouse for residential use. Banner, born in 1879, was a federal government employee, working as a blueprint gallery foreman. The building has not been occupied for many years.

70-91

## *Western Star Lodge Site & Cemetery*

### **Brookland Road**

Historic site

In May 1889, two acres of land were purchased by Thomas Williams, Jr., Elias Harrison, George Hawkins, and William Jackson, Trustees of the Western Star Lodge, from Jane Beall, widow of Shadrack Beall, and their children. This parcel was located on the eastern side of the Bealls' plantation. A building, known as the Good Samaritan Lodge, was constructed on the property shortly afterwards by the Western Star Lodge, a local benevolent society. Residents of the Brookland community conducted worship services in the lodge until Dorsey Chapel was built to the west in 1900. The cemetery was called the Brookland Community Cemetery before the church was built. Another one-acre parcel was purchased by the trustees in June 1903 for the cemetery from Margaret Ann Beall, daughter of Jane and Shadrack Beall. It is unknown what the lodge looked like or when it was demolished.

Mrs. Beatrice Snowden of Glenn Dale furnished the following names of persons who are buried in the Dorsey Chapel Cemetery: Bell, Jackson, Plater, Snowden, and Barnes. The cemetery is still owned by the Trustees of Dorsey Chapel Methodist Church of Glenn Dale, Maryland and is still active. However, there are no cemetery records listing who is buried there.

**Cement markers in the shape of crosses at the cemetery.**



The Reverend Price Andrew Scott House, (70-049-36) built in 1921 at 9022 Franklin Street. While living in Lincoln, Scott served as pastor at two historic African Methodist Episcopal churches in Washington, D.C.

This house together with its verdant setting is typical of the early dwellings in the community.



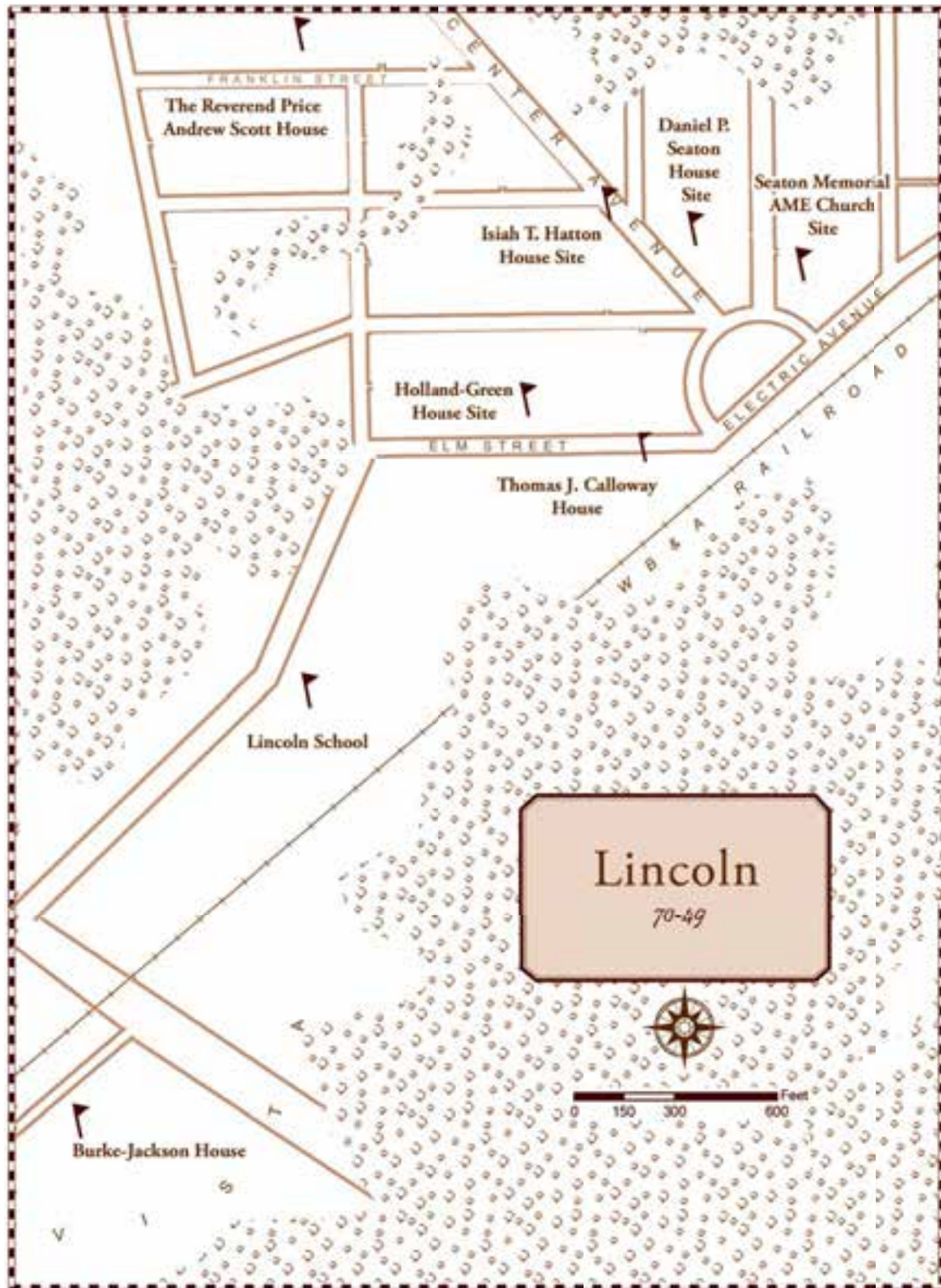
## 70-49 *Lincoln*

**North side of Annapolis Road, Lanham**

Historic sites (1), historic resources (1)

**L**incoln was established in the early twentieth century by African-Americans as a rural retreat located on a railroad line. In 1908, the Lincoln Land and Improvement Company, Inc., purchased nearly 200 acres along the Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis (WB&A) Electric Railway and platted the community of Lincoln. Thomas J. Calloway, an African-American teacher, developer, and attorney from Washington, D.C., was vice president and general manager of the Lincoln Land and Improvement Company. Calloway envisioned the community as a vacation retreat and garden suburb for black people. The community was located near the WB&A which provided convenient transportation to and from these cities. In the early twentieth century, there were few options for affordable housing for middle-class African-Americans in Prince George's County. Several other black communities developed at the same time in Prince George's County including North Brentwood, Fairmount Heights, and Glenarden.





However, Lincoln was the only community marketed as a rural retreat for African-Americans. The community was designed with “roomy” streets that were 50 to 70 feet wide and building lots that were 50 feet by 150 feet and sold for \$270. The original radiating street plan for the community was only partially developed and the intended semi-circular design of Crescent Avenue with a community park inside was never realized. In 1910, noted black architect Isaiah T. Hatton designed the first house in Lincoln for Thomas Calloway. Hatton was an architect based in Washington, D.C. who studied under William Sidney Pittman. Hatton designed a number of prominent landmarks in Washington, D.C. By 1915, approximately ten families lived in Lincoln including the Isaiah Hattons. Hatton had designed several houses in the community. Calloway noted that through Hatton’s guidance, the community was able “to maintain a high standard of excellence in home planning.” Hatton’s “leadership at Lincoln has helped us and we have helped him by putting practically all our business of designing in his hands.”

The community quickly became a retreat for a number of prominent black families who were attracted to the quiet rural setting. Lincoln had its own station on the streetcar line with a general store and schoolhouse located nearby. In 1913, Dr. Daniel P. Seaton settled in Lincoln and established

the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Seaton served as pastor of the church and also as the community’s doctor. Frank Holland, a carpenter and graduate of Howard University, also chose to settle in Lincoln. Holland worked with Hatton and oversaw the construction of several houses in Lincoln. William A. Davis was a former grocery store owner from Philadelphia who relocated to Lincoln and constructed a building that served as a “store, dining room, hotel, and residence.” The general store was the community’s only commercial building.

The community was also the home of several organizations including the Alpha Progressive Club, a social club for the women of Lincoln, and the Lincoln Citizens Association. Development in Lincoln peaked in the early 1920s. Several residents purchased multiple lots and a few even farmed on their land. The children of Lincoln attended school at the one-room schoolhouse in nearby Buena Vista or traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend classes. However, the community desired to have their own school, and in 1921, Calloway and members of the civic associations of Lincoln and Buena Vista successfully lobbied the Board of Education to allocate funds for the construction of a school in Lincoln. The school was funded by \$5,000 from the Board of Education, \$800 from the Rosenwald Fund, and \$700 raised

by the community. The school opened in 1922 and Calloway was selected as the school’s first principal.

In the 1930s, growth in Lincoln began to decline. Due to decreasing ridership as a result of the increasing popularity and accessibility of the automobile, the railroad ceased operations in 1935. Residents who did not own cars were landlocked and the lack of public transportation in the area made it difficult to travel to the District of Columbia. As a result, the community returned to its roots as a vacation and retreat community for Washington, D.C.’s, professional African-American population.

Although Thomas Calloway envisioned that Lincoln would eventually gain its own municipal government, the community remained a loosely knit, semi-rural community. Unlike other African-American communities, Lincoln never applied for incorporation. The community remained largely rural until the 1970s when a building boom began. In the 1980s, several historic structures were demolished, including the Lincoln railroad station and the original Bethel A.M.E. Church. In 1986, the original schoolhouse was sold to a church which operates the campus as a private school. Additional suburban development has begun to surround the community on the north and west.



*70-49-15     Seaton Memorial African Methodist  
Episcopal Church Site*

**5503 Lincoln Avenue**  
1916–1984

The original Seaton Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church stood immediately south of the new church that was built in 1983–84. The original 1916 church, however, was an important element in the then-new and developing community of Lincoln.

The 1916 church was a front-gabled building of wood frame construction, with shallow crossgables on each of the long sides, and a corner entry tower and porch; it fronted west onto Lincoln Avenue. Centered in the west gable front was a three-part window, surmounted and set off by a shallow semi-elliptical molding. Each of the north and south sides of the nave was varied by a projecting crossgable which formed a shallow transept. There was a two-story pyramidal-roof square tower on the south side, set back slightly from the southwest corner of the building; entrance was into the west face of this tower through a small pedimented entry porch. The church was sheathed with German wood siding, painted white, as was all of the trim. On the interior, the walls of the nave were covered below the chair-rail with dark vertical wainscoting, and there was a small, slightly raised altar at the east end.

The first services in the new community of Lincoln were held in the small general store run by W.A. Davis, and were soon conducted by the Reverend Daniel P. Seaton, who had purchased a lot in Lincoln in 1913. In that same year, four of the new residents, acting as trustees of the Bethel A.M.E. Church of Lincoln, purchased a lot for the construction of a church. Services continued to be held in the Davis store and in Seaton's home while money was raised to build the church. Construction of the Bethel A.M.E. Church was underway in 1916. Daniel Seaton died in 1918; his will contained a legacy to the Bethel Church, and since that time, in his memory, the church has been known as Seaton Memorial A.M.E. Church.

The church was a focal point of the Lincoln community for nearly 70 years. By the early 1980s, however, with the new residential construction in Lincoln, the church was no longer large enough for the expanding congregation. The trustees purchased adjoining lots in 1982, and in the following year began construction of a new brick church building. The 1916 church was demolished in 1984.

Seaton A.M.E. Church shown  
here in a 1983 photograph.



## 70-49-32 Daniel P. Seaton House Site

5510 Lincoln Avenue

1915–1990

The site of the home of one of Lincoln's most important early residents, this house was built for the Reverend Dr. Daniel P. Seaton, writer, world traveler, and spiritual leader, to whom the church in Lincoln was dedicated.

Dr. Seaton's house was a large, two-and-one-half story cross-gabled house of wood frame construction; it had several distinctive architectural details including pedimented gables and pseudo-Palladian windows in the gable ends and dormers. The lines of the house were varied by a two-story semi-octagonal projecting bay on the principal facade and a one-story wraparound porch with slim Tuscan columns.

The house was the most handsome and substantial dwelling in the new and growing community of Lincoln. Although Dr. Seaton lived in Lincoln only a few years after the completion of the house, his influence upon and contribution to the community were so great that the house, as well as the church which was to bear his name, remained an important feature and landmark long after his death.

Daniel Peter Seaton was born in 1835 near Baltimore of free parents and was educated in Pennsylvania and New York. He received both a medical degree and a license to minister. He pastored churches in Pennsylvania, Delaware, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C., and was a presiding elder for the Potomac District of the African Methodist Episcopal Baltimore Conference. He traveled extensively and in 1895, after three trips to Palestine, published *The Land of Promise*, an analysis of the Palestinian culture from a religious perspective. Seaton retired in 1913 and purchased a lot in the fledgling community of Lincoln. Following the philosophy of black self-help, he hired black professionals and craftsmen to design and build his new dwelling; it may have been designed by architect Isaiah T. Hatton, as were most of Lincoln's early dwellings, but this has not been substantiated. During this period, a small African Methodist Episcopal congregation was forming in Lincoln; a lot was purchased and construction began on a church to be known as Bethel A.M.E. Church. During the years of construction, Seaton served as pastor of the congregation, which met sometimes in the general store and sometimes in Seaton's house. Seaton died in 1918, before the church was fully completed;

his will contained a legacy to the Bethel Church, and since that time the church has been known as Seaton Memorial A.M.E. Church.



Dr. Seaton's House in 1983, before it was demolished.





70-49-33

## *Thomas J. Calloway House*

**9949 Elm Street**

Historic site; built 1910

National Register of Historic Places

The Calloway House is a hip-roof structure of the compact Foursquare plan, two-and-one-half-stories high, of wood frame construction. Entrance is in the second bay of the east facade, sheltered by a one-story porch with slim Tuscan columns and plain balustrade; the porch wraps around and shelters part of the south elevation which fronts on the railroad right-of-way. The original German siding of the house is now covered with white aluminum siding. The lines of the building are varied by hip dormers centered in the south and east planes of the roof and a one-story semi-octagonal projecting bay on the south elevation.

subdivisions of the early twentieth century. It was built in 1910 for one of the most influential of the early residents of Lincoln, and was one of the earliest dwellings built in the new community of Lincoln.

This house is typical of houses being built in the suburbs of the early twentieth century; it represents the popular American Foursquare form. Thomas Junius Calloway was the general manager of the Lincoln Land and Improvement Company, and the prime mover in the promotion of the new Lincoln community. His house is nearly identical to the house designed by Isaiah T. Hatton for his family, and it is very likely that Hatton designed the Calloways' house as well. Writing in 1915 about the developing Lincoln community, Calloway indicated that through Hatton's guidance the community had been able to maintain a high standard in home planning, and in return the community had helped Hatton "by putting practically all our business of designing into his hands."

Thomas Junius Calloway was a man of considerable importance in the progress of African-Americans on a national level. A graduate of Fisk University, he received a law degree from Howard University in 1904, and he practiced law in Washington, D.C. He was an organizing member of the Negro Development Company, and by the time the Lincoln community was beginning, he had been actively involved in Negro participation in the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1889 and the Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition in 1907. Calloway was instrumental in acquiring Rosenwald funding for the Lincoln School and served as its first principal. He was the only black representative from Prince George's County to serve on the Maryland Inter-Racial Commission when it formed in 1927; he served until his death in 1930. The Calloway House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

Lincoln School today is a complex of connected structures, of which the southernmost section (the main block) is the original schoolhouse. This section is one-and-one-half-stories high, side-gabled, and of wood frame construction; it is, as is the rest of the complex, now covered with a brick veneer. The building fronts west onto Baltimore Avenue, with entrance through a double door centered in a shallow projecting crossgable and approached by a flight of steps.

The projecting entranceway is flanked by banks of five windows which lighted the classrooms. The building rests on a high basement which also contained school spaces. The main block is connected at its north gable end with a series of large wings of more recent construction.



## 70-49-35 *Lincoln Rosenwald School*

**5201 Baltimore Avenue**

Built 1922

The Lincoln School is scarcely recognizable as a schoolhouse of the 1920s. At the time of its construction in 1922, however, it was a model of its type, one of the largest and best equipped of the Rosenwald schools of the period.

The school that served the black children of this area at the time of Lincoln's beginnings in 1910 was located nearly a mile to the southwest in a rural area known as Vista. By 1920, with the growth of Lincoln, the one-room Vista school had far exceeded its capacity. Residents of Lincoln, seeking authorization from the Board of School Commissioners for a new school, formed a community club; this organization, under the leadership of architect Isaiah Hatton and educator/developer T. J. Calloway, petitioned the school board and began the process of raising local funds for school construction. A lot in Lincoln was purchased in 1922, and local funds were raised through entertainments and subscriptions. Calloway, who had considerable experience in fundraising and school administration, was able to secure Rosenwald funding for the school construction, and the school board agreed to appropriate funds to complete the project. Though not quite finished, Lincoln School (Colored School 5 in Election District 14) opened late in 1922, with four classrooms, six teachers, a library, cloak rooms and a large community hall; it was lighted with electricity, had new desks and a piano, and was soon fitted with a steam heating plant and modern toilets with running water.

Major additions were constructed in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and for many years the building complex was used as a public school resource center. It was declared surplus in 1982 and transferred to the county, which subsequently sold it to a church. Although the building is no longer recognizable as an early schoolhouse, it was an important factor in the history of the Lincoln community, a product of its progressive residents.



Shown here in a 1993 photograph, the Hatton House was a hip-roof structure of the compact Foursquare plan, two-and-one-half stories high, of wood frame construction. Entrance was in the first bay of the principal facade, sheltered by a one-story porch with square paneled posts on bases of molded concrete block. It was clad in German siding.

The lines of the building were varied by a shed dormer centered in the principal plane of the roof and a one-story, semi-octagonal projecting bay on one of the side elevations.



### *70-49-37     Isaiah T. Hatton House Site*

**5502 Center Avenue**  
1911–2003

The Isaiah T. Hatton House was typical of dwellings built in the suburbs of the early twentieth century; it represents the popular American Foursquare type. The house was designed by Isaiah T. Hatton, one of a rising generation of black architects in Washington, D.C., and one of the first to build in the newly established Lincoln community. It was completed in 1911, when Hatton and his bride moved into their new home. Early records indicate that Hatton was commissioned to design many of the other early dwellings in Lincoln. He is known to have worked with carpenter Frank Holland on many of these houses, including the house (no longer standing) built in Lincoln for Holland's family. In the next several years, Hatton was to make a name for himself, designing several important buildings in Washington: the Industrial Bank Building (1917), the Whitelaw Hotel (1918-19), the Southern Aid Society Insurance Company Building/Dunbar Theatre (circa 1920), and the Murray Palace Casino (1920). He also designed buildings in Philadelphia, Norfolk, Richmond and Newport News. Hatton was also active in the efforts of the Lincoln community toward the building of its own schoolhouse.

Isaiah Hatton died at the age of 33 in 1921, cutting short what had appeared to be a promising career in architecture. Before his death he had sold his Lincoln house to a cousin, Jacob Sanders, whose family became active members of the community. Abandoned and determined to be unsound, the house was demolished in late 2003.



The Burke-Jackson House is a two-story, side-gabled dwelling of wood frame construction. Entrance is into the central bay of the three-bay northwest facade; the third bay is enclosed by a one-story front-gabled addition. The second-story windows of the facade are asymmetrically aligned, giving emphasis to the frontal addition. A one-story porch shelters the rest of the facade. The house stands in a semi-rural setting on the right-of-way of the old electric railway.

70-37

## *Burke-Jackson House*

**4907 Lottsford Vista Road**

Historic resource; built c. 1918

The Burke-Jackson House is a modest frame dwelling, asymmetrical in plan. It has had several alterations and additions, but its significance lies in its associations with prominent individuals in the local African-American community of the early twentieth century.

Edwin and Georgia Burke were among the early residents of Lincoln, from which Edwin Burke commuted to his work as part of the security staff at the U.S. Capitol. In 1918 the Burkes moved into this house in a nearby rural area known as Vista. They had the house designed and built by two members of the Lincoln community: architect Isaiah Hatton and carpenter Frank Holland. Their new house fronted on the tracks of the WB&A a short distance southwest of Lincoln and closer to the one-room Vista schoolhouse where Georgia Burke taught. It was in this schoolhouse that the children from the Lincoln community were educated. By the time the Burkes moved into their new house, however, with the growth of Lincoln, the Vista school was drastically overcrowded; Mrs. Burke began offering an evening session at her new home for the overflow of students. It was not until 1922 that the new Lincoln Rosenwald School was opened; Mrs. Burke was appointed the first teacher of the upper grades.

The house of Edwin and Georgia Burke remains in the possession of their descendants. It is a modest example of early twentieth-century rural housing, but it is significant because of its associations with a locally well-known architect and carpenter, and with a leading teacher in the community—members of a growing and progressive black middle class.



## 70-49-34 *Holland-Green House Site*

9944 Elm Street, Lanham

1914–1985

*This is the house  
where Peaches—  
of "Peaches &  
Herb"—grew up.*

This house was constructed by the brothers Frank and Benjamin Holland as a residence for Frank Holland. The Hollands were carpenters and worked in association with Isaiah T. Hatton, architect and community resident. Frank Holland was active in the community, serving on the Executive Committee of the first Citizens' Association, and served as secretary of the organization to raise funds for the Lincoln Rosenwald School construction in 1920. Holland was also a trustee for Bethel A.M.E. Church Congregation, which would become Seaton Memorial A.M.E. Church. Holland's widow sold the house in 1927 to Edward and Julia Gibson. The house eventually was owned by Jane Green, granddaughter of Edward and Julia Gibson. Her daughter, Linda Green, grew up in this house and spent her teenage years in Lincoln. Green(e) worked as one-half of the musical duo Peaches & Herb from 1977–circa 1984, recording songs such hits as "Shake Your Groove Thing" and "Reunited." In 1981 the duo became the first black entertainers to perform in communist China.



The Holland-Green House was an unusually narrow two-bay, two-and-one-half-story variant of the American Foursquare. It had a hip roof with a hip-roof, three-light dormer centered on the roof ridge. The windows were of two-over-two light configuration.

71A-22

## Fletchertown

### South of Bowie

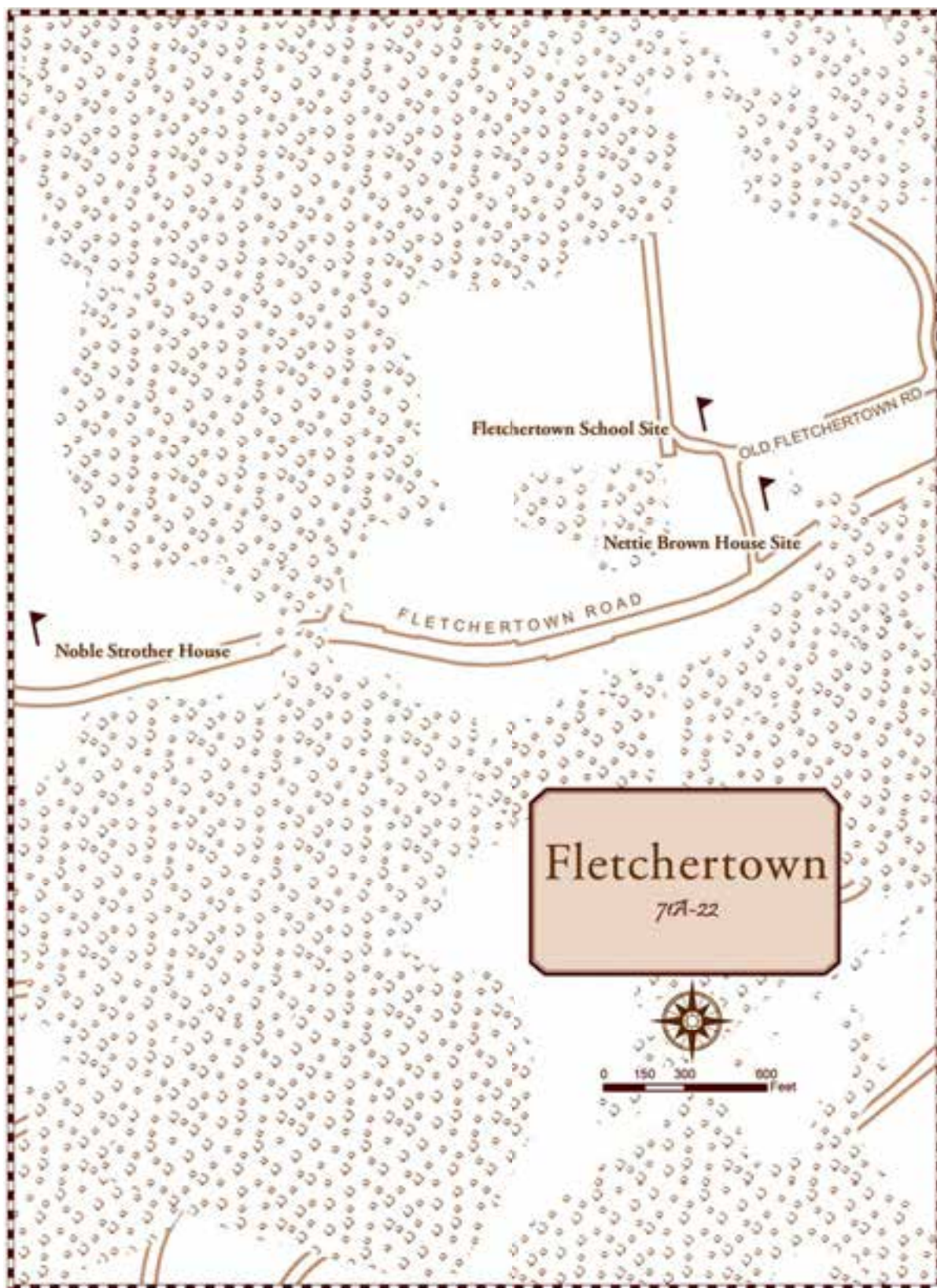
One historic resource

In the late nineteenth century, Gabriel Fletcher, an African-American farmer, began purchasing land to establish a family farm near Bowie. Fletcher was born circa 1857 in Maryland; the 1880 census lists Fletcher as a single 23-year-old biracial man living with his mother and siblings in Queen Anne, Prince George's County. His occupation is listed as "laborer." In 1892, Fletcher purchased a 13.5-acre lot (lot 6) from the estate of George W. Wood for \$150. The following year at a public auction, Fletcher purchased lot seven for \$500, which contained 6.32 acres. By 1900, the census notes Fletcher living in Bowie with his wife of 14 years, Virginia, and their five children. He is listed as owning his home and his occupation is listed as farmer.

Within a few years, several other members of the extended Fletcher family began to develop and work farms in the immediate area. By the early years of the twentieth century, this community of small farms came to be known as Fletchertown after the members of Gabriel Fletcher's family. Early settlers included, in addition to the Fletchers, families named Hawkins, Chittams, Fleet, Williams, Spriggs, and Thomas. Many of the residents worked for the railroad, which was the impetus for the establishment of the Bowie community; others were farm workers, and most maintained their own small farms. Because of its closeness to Bowie, Fletchertown never developed into a self-sufficient community; unlike some other rural communities (for example, Chapel Hill), Fletchertown never had its own church. Residents of Fletchertown attended the churches of Bowie, in particular Ascension Roman Catholic Church, and until the 1920s, children from Fletchertown went to the school on Horsepen Hill, a short distance to the northeast. There were apparently many joint social gatherings with the residents of Duckettsville, approximately one-and-one-half miles to the northwest.

Duckettsville was a community similar to Fletchertown; it started with the purchase of land at the turn of the twentieth century by a black family named Duckett. Many of the older residents who still live in the community are descendants of the original





Duckett family. Like Fletchertown, Duckettville was a community of small farms and modest frame farmhouses, and families whose livelihood depended on the railroad town of Bowie. Many of these families (the Ducketts, Dorseys, Brooks and Halls) attended the churches of Bowie or of nearby Pleasant Grove. Duckettville children attended the model school on the campus of the Bowie Normal and Industrial School (now Bowie State University) until a Rosenwald-funded school was built in the community in 1922. At the same time a school was built in Fletchertown for the children of that community.

By the mid-twentieth century, Fletchertown remained a small rural village; however, residents soon began selling off portions of their property and new houses were constructed in the community. Development continued in the late twentieth century. Both Fletchertown and Duckettville offer a glimpse into the rural black communities early in the previous century. Most of the original housing stock is now gone, although each community still includes a few examples of the typical early frame I-House dwellings. Fletchertown is gradually being constricted by the construction of large-scale subdivision houses on both the north and west; Duckettville is framed by landfill expansion on the east and by construction of subdivision housing on the south.

### *71A-22-1 Fletchertown Rosenwald School Site*

**13016 Old Fletchertown Road**  
1900–2000

**The Fletchertown School  
in the 1990s, long  
after it was converted  
to a residence.**



of both communities protested the combination, and by June 1921 the board recommended the construction of two schools, one in Fletchertown and one in Duckettville. Trustees were appointed for the Fletchertown school, and one of them, Lawrence Hawkins (nephew of Gabriel Fletcher, one of the first residents of Fletchertown), sold to the Board of Education one acre on which to erect the schoolhouse. Construction of the Fletchertown School (Colored School 4 in Election District 14) was partially supported by Rosenwald funds, and the school opened in 1922; at the same time a similar school, also supported by Rosenwald funds, was built in Duckettville (Colored



School 3 in Election District 14). These were among the smaller local schools built under the Rosenwald program; each school had only one classroom and one teacher. The Duckettsville School no longer stands; the Fletchertown School had been converted into a small residence, and was demolished around 2000.

The Fletchertown School was a one-story, side-gabled frame structure. It was one of the smaller of the Rosenwald schools built in Prince George's County, but it served as many as 50 students during some periods. The original entrance was in the gable end, but it had been closed off and a new entrance and new windows constructed in the long south elevation. The building was not immediately recognizable as a schoolhouse in its later years; its original board siding had been covered by gray asphalt shingle.

The Fletchertown and Duckettsville schools were among the last of the smaller schoolhouses built for blacks in Prince George's County. The Rosenwald Fund was in its early years, and the next decade would see larger, more substantial school buildings erected under this program. The Fletchertown School, with a large number of students crowded into one room under the supervision of one teacher, was in effect the end of the first era in black education in Prince George's County.

*71A-22-2*

### *Nettie Brown House Site*

**13011 Old Fletchertown Road**

c. 1930–1999

**The Nettie Brown House in the 1990s.**

The land on which this house stood belonged to Lawrence and Benedict Hawkins, nephews of Gabriel Fletcher. It was sold in 1930 to Arthur and Nettie Brown, and it is possible that the house was not built until the Browns purchased the property. The

house was more likely built while the Brown family rented the property from the Hawkins brothers. It was modest, but typical of the period; it probably exemplifies many of the early houses built, but no longer standing, in the communities of both Fletchertown and Duckettsville.



The Brown House was typical of the small I-House forms which were being built in the early years of the twentieth century. Consisting of two spaces on the first story and two on the second, a central stair and (often) a kitchen to the rear, this was an easy and economical house to build. The screened porch would have originally been open.



71A-22-4

### *Noble Strother House*

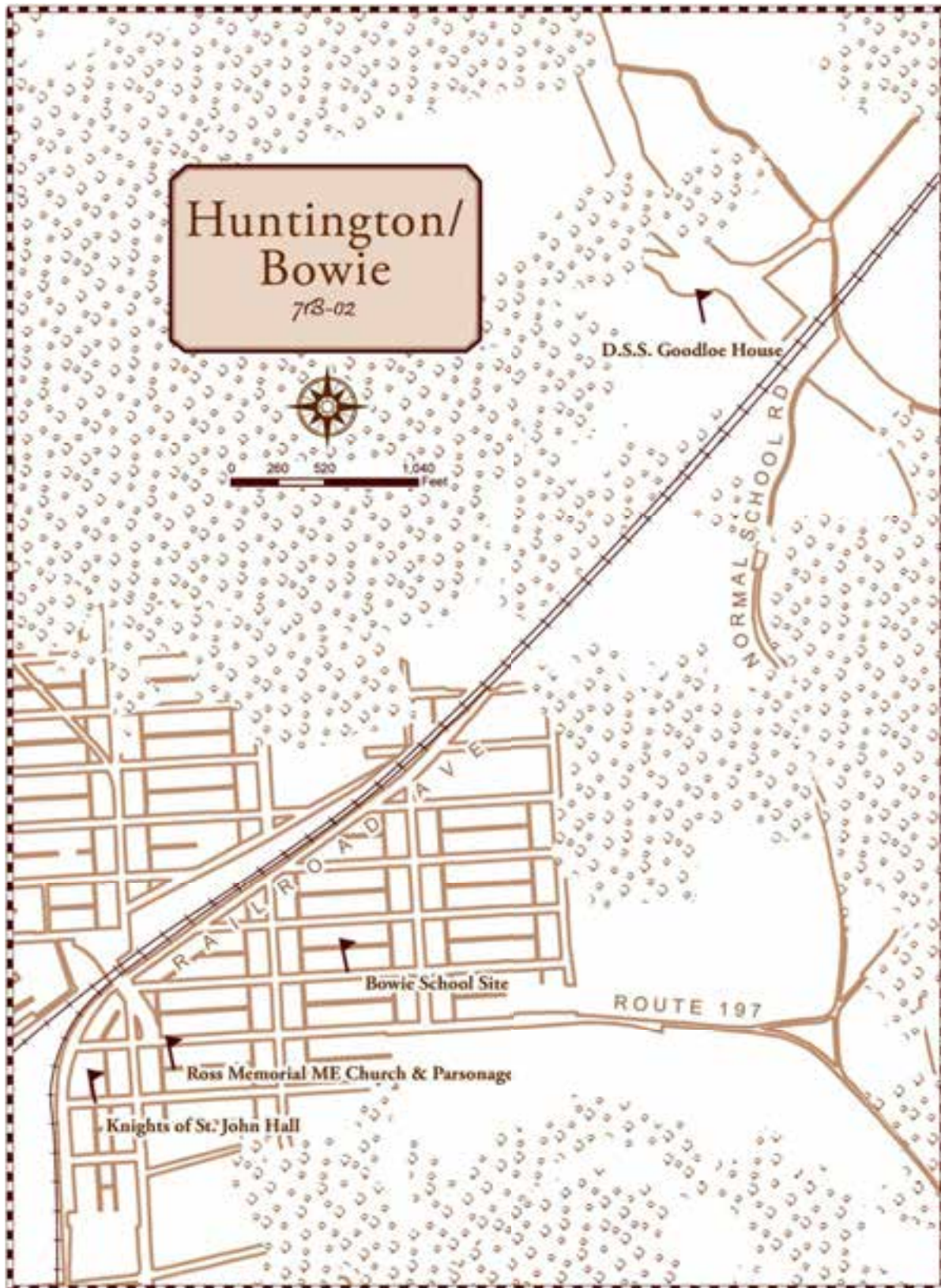
**12500 Fletchertown Road**

Historic resource; built 1924

Noble Strother, an employee of the federal government, came to Fletchertown from the District of Columbia. In 1921 he purchased six acres near the western edge of the area already settled and farmed by members of the Fletcher family. His family apparently lived for several years in a small building on the property, and then in 1924 he had this large frame house built. This commodious American Foursquare was by far the most substantial house at that time in Fletchertown. It remained in the possession of the Strother family until 1967.

The Noble Strother House is the most substantial of the early dwellings surviving in the community of Fletchertown. It is of the American Foursquare form and of wood frame construction. Typical of most Foursquares, it has a hip roof, and in this case, the principal plane of the roof is lit by a hip-roof dormer. A screen-enclosed, hip-roof porch shelters the principal facade.





**Junction of Amtrak and Popes Creek Railroad lines**

Historic sites (2)

**T**he town of Bowie (first called Huntington) was the direct result of the construction of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad. Farmers from southern Maryland had long tried to establish a railroad connection with the markets in Baltimore, and the project was finally begun shortly after the end of the Civil War. Construction began in 1868 on a 73-mile railroad line between Baltimore and Pope's Creek on the Potomac in Charles County; at a point 18 miles northeast of Washington, D.C., the Pennsylvania Railroad constructed a branch from the main line into the federal city. The station established at this junction was named Bowie in honor of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Company's president, Oden Bowie, who was elected governor of Maryland in 1869, shortly after construction of the line began.

In 1870, the town of Huntington was platted around the Bowie Station; approximately one square mile was surveyed and laid out with small narrow lots and streets forming a rectangular grid over the diagonal railroad line. The purchase of lots began immediately and houses began to go up, many occupied by people and families working on construction of the railroad. The Washington spur line began operation in July 1872, and the Pope's Creek line to southern Maryland opened in January 1873. Over the years, the spur line came to be more heavily used than the original main line to Pope's Creek, and the original name of the town (Huntington) was soon displaced by the name Bowie.

By 1880, there were approximately 60 families, half black, half white, and among them a substantial number of settlers from Germany. The railroad was the biggest employer, and the population included conductors, engineers, baggage masters and brakemen as well as many railroad laborers. Bowie has from its beginning had a substantial black population; by 1900, more than 40 percent of the town's population (by then nearly 450) was black, and by far the majority of these men worked as railroad "hands" or laborers. A few years later, Calvin Chase, editor of *The Washington Bee*, the leading African-American newspaper of Washington, D.C., at that time, ran prominent columns in his newspaper advertising excellent home sites: "The first opportunity offered colored people to secure Homes on Weekly payments of 50 cents a week or Two Dollars per month;" "the best depot on the Baltimore and Potomac railroad;" "Stores, churches and schools already built; the most healthful spot in the State of Maryland."

As in all other developing communities, the focal points were church and school. By 1885 a congregation of black Methodists had formed and, after meeting for worship in various places, built their church in 1909. Many other local African-Americans belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. During the late nineteenth century the black children of Bowie attended a one-room school a short distance south of town. After the establishment of the Normal School near Bowie in 1908, primary school students attended a model school on the Normal School campus, and later still, when Rosenwald





Huntington/Bowie Railroad  
Station, view from the  
southwest, late nineteenth  
century.

funds for black schools were available, a school was built within the town boundaries.

The old junction town began to fade in prominence in the 1950s when the Levitt Corporation began to develop Belair at Bowie on the old Ogle-Woodward estate, Belair, four miles to the south. Many of the older buildings in the junction village had by this time been destroyed, and new shops began to take their places. The new Belair subdivisions were sequentially annexed by the older incorporated town, so that today the original junction village (Huntington) comprises one section of the much larger City of Bowie and is enjoying something of a renaissance as a center for antiques and craft shops. Many descendants of the old families, both black and white, still reside in the community.

*71B-2-10      Ross Memorial Methodist Episcopal  
Church and Parsonage*

**13111 and 13105 11th Street**

The Ross Memorial Methodist Church and its parsonage stand on adjoining lots at the center of the railroad junction town of Bowie, reminders of the early black institutions of the town.

A Methodist church was built near the Popes Creek railroad tracks in 1884 and was attended by white members of the Bowie community. At the same time, a congregation of black Methodists was forming and met for many years in the homes of its members. As the black congregation grew, members began to meet in one of the town's hardware stores, and in 1909 they began the planning and construction of the church building. Completed later that year, the church was known as Ross Memorial Methodist Church after the first pastor, Nathan Ross. In 1924, the white Methodist congregation began construction of a new church near the north end of the town (6th Street), farther away from the railroad; members of the Ross Memorial congregation were encouraged to use some of the structural material from the 1884 church. This they did, and in the mid-1920s constructed the clipped-gable bungalow next to their church; it served as the parsonage, first occupied by the family of the Reverend J. A. Arter. The parsonage is a one-and-one-half-story front-gabled dwelling of bungalow form and of wood construction. The front gable is clipped to form the jerkinhead profile, and the main (north) facade is sheltered by a one-story porch with stencilled, jigsawn balustrade; above the porch, centered in the main facade, a double window lights the loft level. The building is sheathed with German siding, painted white.

**In its original (1909) form, shown below, the side walls of the nave were lighted by three gothic-arch windows, and another pair of these windows flanks the central gabled entry vestibule on the north gable front.**

The church is a front-gabled meetinghouse-style structure of wood frame construction, now covered with white synthetic siding. Entrance was through a paneled double door approached by a flight of steps. A small porthole window lighted the upper north gable above the entry vestibule. The church was converted into a residence many years ago; at that time, the gothic-arch windows were replaced by modern rectangular windows, and the small entrance vestibule was enlarged to add more living space. Later, the German wood siding was covered with synthetic siding. In the 1980s, the house was renovated to serve again as a church. Ross Memorial Church was closed in the late 1960s, and members of the congregation joined with the white congregation of First Methodist Church on 6th Street in Bowie. Both Ross Memorial and its parsonage were then used as residences, and the church was significantly altered during the 1970s. In the 1980s, the two lots on which the church stands were acquired by the congregation of Faith Independent Baptist Church, and the building was renovated to serve again as a church. Although the church building is greatly altered from its original form, it is, together with the adjoining parsonage, an important reminder of the early black community in Bowie.







71B-2-23

## *Knights of St. John Hall*

**13004 12th Street**

Historic site; built c. 1907

The Knights of St. John Hall was built as a meeting place for the St. John's Auxiliary, the black members of the local Ascension Roman Catholic Church. The Knights of St. John Hall is a long, narrow building of wood frame construction, which was built to serve the black Roman Catholic congregation of the town of Bowie. It is front-gabled and one story high, raised on a partial basement; entrance is in the south gable front. Ascension Church had been built in Bowie in 1893, an outgrowth of the early (pre-Revolutionary) Jesuit mission Catholic church at Whitemarsh, now known as Sacred Heart. With the increase in population in the railroad junction late in the nineteenth century, and the relative difficulty of access to the Whitemarsh church, the Jesuits built Ascension Church near the train line in 1853 to accommodate the parishioners. For many of Ascension's early years, the majority of its congregation was black. Joint church activities, such as picnics and fairs, with the predominantly white congregation of Sacred Heart were continuous through the years, but there was still a separation of the races in social activities. The construction of St. John's Hall allowed for separate meetings of various kinds to be held by the black members of the congregation. The hall is protected by a preservation easement held by the Maryland Historical Trust.



71B-2-32

## *Bowie Rosenwald School Site*

**13216 10th Street**

1927–1980

The first school for black children in the Bowie area was constructed in the late 1870s on Horsepen Hill, a short distance east of the railroad junction town. As the black population of Bowie grew, residents requested establishment of an elementary school within the corporate limits of the town. A two-acre piece of land in Bowie was purchased in 1926 for construction of a schoolhouse with sufficient area for playground purposes. Money for the purchase was raised jointly by the Board of Education and the local black community, and construction of the building was supported by the Rosenwald fund. The Board of Education authorized the architectural firm of Linthicum and Linthicum to draw up plans for a schoolhouse similar to those being planned for Ridgeley, Lakeland, and Laurel. The Bowie School (Colored School 1 in Election District 14) opened in 1927, with two large, high-ceilinged classrooms, each of which served at least three grade levels, a central storage area, and an entranceway flanked by two cloakrooms. Of the four schools built on this plan, only the Ridgeley School survives.



These photos of the Bowie School were taken soon after it was constructed.

With the start of school desegregation in 1954, the Bowie School and others like it were closed and sold. This school was converted into two living units, and remained residential until its demolition in the late 1980s and replacement by a modern house. Its site is important to the history and development of the black population of Bowie.

71A-21

## *Bowie State University*

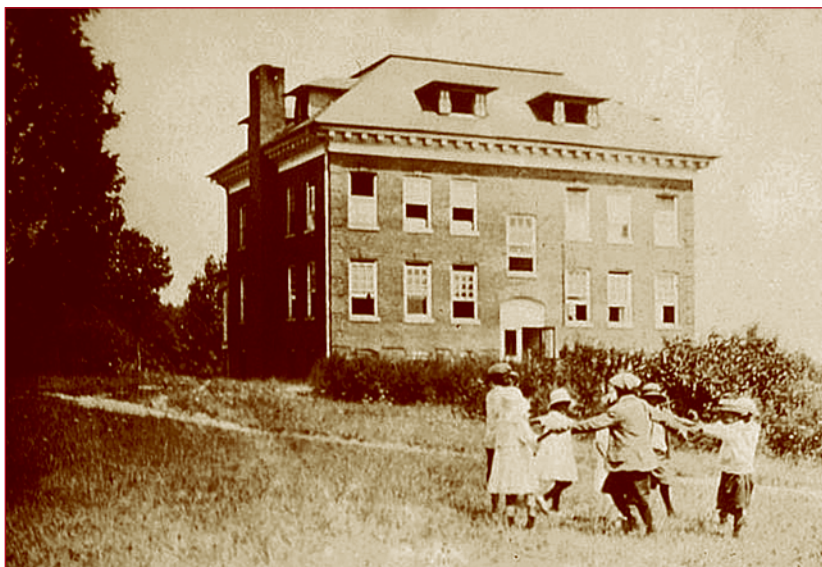
13900 Jericho Park Road

The Bowie State University campus is located on approximately 275 acres north of the City of Bowie, adjoining the Amtrak Railroad line to Baltimore. The history of Bowie State University began with the establishment of the Baltimore Colored Normal School in 1865 in Baltimore. In 1908, the trustees of this institution offered their assets to the State of Maryland, and the State agreed to maintain a permanent normal school for training black teachers. In June 1910, the State purchased a 187-acre tract of land near Bowie, and contracted for the construction of the first building: a 50-foot by 50-foot dormitory for women; the men's dormitory was a converted barn. The new institution opened in September 1911 as the Maryland Normal and Industrial School at Bowie. There were 58 students enrolled in a two-year program, and the principal was Don S. S. Goodloe.

Within the first year, the black elementary school at Bowie was placed under the Normal School, thus giving teachers-in-training a model school for practice. The Normal School grew gradually, with the construction of new buildings; in 1938, the program was expanded to a four-year degree program, and the institution's name became Maryland State Teachers College at Bowie. In 1963, the institution became Bowie State College, reflecting the change in curriculum from the granting solely of teachers' certificates to the granting of liberal

Primary school children playing  
in front of the Administration  
Building at the Maryland Normal  
and Industrial School, July 1918.

This building has since been  
demolished. Photograph from the  
Goodloe family archives.





arts degrees. Finally in 1988, it became the Bowie State University, an official campus of the University of Maryland system. In 1990 the campus had 2,600 undergraduates enrolled in 26 programs, and 1,200 graduate students enrolled in 14 programs.

No original buildings remain on the campus; all present construction is modern. Bowie State's significance lies in the fact that it was Maryland's first black post-secondary school. It has grown in less than a century from a one-building school for the training of black teachers to a multimillion dollar, racially integrated institution for the conferring of liberal arts degrees.

**A vintage photograph of the Bowie State University Administration Building with the figure of a student at the open window.**



71A-30

## *D.S.S. Goodloe House*

**13809 Jericho Park Road**

Historic site; built 1916

National Register of Historic Places

The D.S.S. Goodloe House is a brick and frame dwelling of the Colonial Revival style. It is significant not only for its architecture but for its importance in the African-American history of Prince George's County.

Of wood frame construction entirely faced with brick, the house consists of a two-and-one-half-story main block with a two-story rear kitchen wing; each section has a hip roof. Noticeable features of the house are its substantial size, its tall exterior corbelled brick chimneys, its gable dormers with Palladian-style windows, its stick-style decorative details and wraparound porch. Interior plan of the house is that of the traditional Foursquare, with central stairhall and flanking double parlors.



The Goodloe House is significant for its association with Don Speed Smith Goodloe, the first principal of Maryland's first black post-secondary school. In 1910 the State of Maryland purchased a large tract of land near Bowie in order to set up a permanent normal school for training black teachers; this institution opened the following year as the Maryland Normal and Industrial School (now Bowie State University). Goodloe guided the school through its formative years, serving as principal until 1921.

In 1915, Goodloe purchased 38 acres just west of the Normal School campus, and contracted with the Moore Architectural Company to prepare plans and specifications for a 2-story, 10-room brick veneer house for his family. John A. Moore was a black carpenter/architect who is known to have worked in northeast Washington from 1911 through 1923; he prepared plans and specifications for Goodloe, who hired local black laborers to construct the house. Lumber for the framing was cut on the Goodloe property, and bricks for the veneer were made on the property. The house was completed in 1916 and assessed at a value of \$2,000, a substantial value for this period. It remained in the possession of Goodloe's heirs until 1990.

The Goodloe House is significant not only for its architecture but also for its association with principal Don S. S. Goodloe, who guided through its formative years an institution which was very important in the black education movement. The house is also significant because it was designed by a black carpenter/architect who was one of only a few African-Americans in the profession at that time; the original building specifications survive. Because of its architectural and historical significance, the Goodloe House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.





Mildred Ridgley Gray on a visit to the Ridgeley School and surrounding buildings in 2007.

## Ridgley

Discontiguous resources on both sides of Central Avenue (MD 214), between Jonquil Avenue and I-95/495, Landover

Historic sites (3)

For over one hundred years, members of the Ridgley family have been prominent citizens and landowners influencing education, community, and land development on both sides of Central Avenue where it joins Ritchie Road. Lewis Ridgley was born circa 1831. He was married to Mary Watters on Christmas Day, 1855, by her father, the Reverend Watters, and their residence was located in the county. By 1860 he was living with his wife Mary and two children near Elk Ridge Landing in Howard County, but by 1863 he is found in the U.S. Civil War Draft Registration Records under Prince George's County. By 1870 Lewis and Mary and their six children (Natias, Isaiah, Eleanor, Arthur, Ida, and Noah) were listed in the census as living in Bladensburg. (By 1880, Emma, Teana, Arabella, and Sareana had been added to the family.) In 1871, the Ridgleys entered into an agreement to purchase 52 acres and cultivate tobacco at the northwest corner of what is now Morgan Boulevard and Central Avenue (MD 214).<sup>1</sup> (The land was part of the large Concord property owned by the Berry family.)

*"We had five acres of lilacs..."*

According to the 1900 census, the widowed Mary Ridgley was residing with her son Arthur, his wife Mary Eliza, and their young son in the farmhouse on the Ridgley property. Arthur Ridgley, noted in the census as a gardener, was born in 1867 and married Mary Eliza Dyson in 1898. By 1910, Ridgley, now a farmer like his father, was residing on Central Avenue in his father's house with his wife and six children as well as his mother, Mary Ridgley. Upon the death of his mother, Ridgley and his family took primary ownership of the property.

By 1938, aerial photographs show that the majority of the property was cultivated as cropland, with wooded areas north and south of the former Randolph Village Elementary School. The tract was improved by a tobacco barn and perhaps as many as six dwellings and tenant houses near Central Avenue. The surrounding area was similarly rural in character with woods, fields, and cultivated land. At one time a "carriage house" existed on the property and "people came from all around for dances."<sup>2</sup> Arthur and his wife Mary raised 13 children on the Ridgley

<sup>1</sup> Fifty-two acres is a large amount of land; it is likely Ridgley was a free man by at least 1850. Ridgley may also have been working and living on the Berrys' land before entering into the agreement with them.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Mildred Gray, October 6, 2009.

The family's surname is variously spelled Ridgley, Ridgely, and Ridgeley in documents of the period. "Ridgley" is the preferred spelling for the family surname today; "Ridgeley" correctly refers to the school, and "Ridgely" is used to refer to the church. Hopkins' Map of 1878 which shows the location of the Ridgely Methodist Episcopal Church, center, and Lewis Ridgely's property, center left.



farm. Their youngest child, Mildred, was born in 1920. She recalls that “the main crop on the farm was tobacco...corn to feed the pigs...my mother had what was called a truck garden with chickens, eggs, strawberries, and string beans...and we had five acres of lilacs...those five acres of lilacs were taken to market and also sold on Central Avenue...that money was used to pay taxes...but the string beans, the vegetables and the poultry and eggs and the like, that was my mother’s money. And she put it in the bank. And with her money she was able to buy land.” In 1909, Mary Eliza Dyson Ridgley had purchased 5 1/3 acres on the south side of Central Avenue to the east of Ritchie Road. The land was sold to her by Samuel Lofton, who was also a trustee of the Ridgely Methodist Episcopal Church. Presumably, the Ridgleys used the land to grow flowers or produce; aerial photographs from 1938 show it as largely unimproved, with fields and trees. Later this would become the location of the Ridgeley Rosenwald School. The Ridgleys were active in their community. Besides serving as a trustee for the Ridgeley School, Arthur Ridgley, Sr., was also a trustee of the Ridgely Methodist Episcopal Church, as was his father. Mary Eliza Dyson Ridgley was a teacher at the first Ridgeley School, a Sunday school teacher at Ridgely Methodist Episcopal Church and president of the Ladies’ Aid Society. After being educated there as an elementary school student, then at another Rosenwald school (Highland Park) Mildred Ridgley Gray served as principal at the Ridgeley Rosenwald School when it became a school for children with special needs.

The allied themes of family, faith, community and education are represented by the Ridgley farm, church and school. Together they tell a compelling story about African-Americans establishing their place in the American landscape through hard work, perseverance, and acumen.





**72-05** *Ridgely Methodist  
Episcopal Church*

**8900 Central Avenue**

Historic site; built 1921

National Register of Historic Places

The first church at this location was built in the late 1870s on a half-acre of land that had been deeded by the Berrys to Lewis Ridgely and two other trustees, Joseph Beall and Richard Cook “provided the said premises

shall be kept and used as a place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.” Shortly thereafter, the community built what became known as Ridgely Methodist Episcopal Church. Burials were later placed nearby.

This was part of the large landholdings of Thomas E. Berry on the north side of the “central turnpike;” in 1892, Mrs. Berry deeded another acre adjoining the church lot on the west, “provided that said lot shall be kept for Divine Worship and cemetery.” The church came to be known as Ridgely Church in honor of its most active trustee, Lewis Ridgely; members of Ridgely’s family continued to be active in the church and in the local black education movement. Several members of the family became teachers in the local school, both while classes were held in the nearby “benevolent hall” or lodge, and after the adjoining Rosenwald school was built in 1927. There were only a few dwellings in this small community scattered along both sides of the Central Avenue; the church and lodge were its most important elements.

Ridgely is a small, meetinghouse-style church of wood-frame construction, distinguished by a series of stained-glass windows and an adjoining burial ground with hand-carved concrete stones. Entrance is through a vestibule centered in the south gable front. The nave is lighted by pointed-arch windows filled with stained-glass memorials. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation; in its southeast corner is a cornerstone which reads “Ridgely M. E. Church, 1887–1921.”



A row of headstones near the woods at  
Ridgely Church.

In 1921 the church burned to the ground and was soon afterwards replaced a short distance to the west by the present structure. The cemetery just west of the church continued to be used, and it is distinguished by its hand-carved gravestones. During the years of growth in this part of the county, particularly in the 1970s, the church became somewhat isolated in an area dominated by highways and shopping centers. When the widening of Central Avenue was planned, the State Highway Administration undertook relocation of the church, away from the avenue's right-of-way. After its relocation, it was fitted out with new basement spaces and rededicated in February 1990. In 2005 the Ridgely Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

75A-28

## *Ridgeley School*

**8507 Central Avenue**

Historic site; built 1927

**I**n 1927 the Prince George's County Board of Education received a request from what was even then called the "Ridgeley colored school," asking that a new building be erected. School had been held first in the church, and then in what were known as the two "benevolent halls," (no longer extant) that stood nearby. Arthur Ridgley, Sr., offered two acres of land (owned by his wife Mary Eliza Dyson Ridgley) approximately 400 feet off Central Avenue—with a deeded right-of-way—to the Board of Education in exchange for a one-acre tract fronting directly on Central Avenue. On the two-acre tract the board constructed the new Ridgeley School, in part with funds from the Rosenwald school program. It is the best example of nine surviving Rosenwald schools originally built in Prince George's County.

Linthicum and Linthicum, an architectural firm from Raleigh, North Carolina, that was commissioned to build many of the county's Rosenwald schools, was contracted to build a two-room schoolhouse similar to those designed for Bowie, Lakeland, and Laurel. The school opened in 1927—a prototype of the black elementary schools constructed in the late 1920s: two large

Ridgeley School in 2011,  
its restoration nearing  
completion.





classrooms, each of which served at least three grade levels, a central passage with an “industrial room” and an entranceway flanked by two cloakrooms.

Ridgeley School is a one-story hip-roof schoolhouse of wood frame construction, typical of the two-room schoolhouses designed by Linthicum and Linthicum in Prince George’s County in the 1920s. It is sheathed with unpainted cedar shingles as it was historically. Entrance is in the north facade, in the projecting central bays which form a sheltered entranceway. There is a bank of five side-by-side windows in each of the east and west elevations; these windows lighted the two classrooms which made up the original school building. The two classrooms were separated by a central passage, and the sheltered entranceway was flanked by two cloakrooms, one cloakroom accessible from each of the two classrooms. The original schoolhouse was built in 1927, and a rear addition was constructed within the next 20 years.

The building served as an elementary school for more than twenty years, then was used for the education of special needs children in the 1950s. Used by the Board of Education for decades as a bus lot, the property has been restored as a museum and community center by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

*72-61*

## *William and Mildred Ridgley Gray Residence*

**8118 Central Avenue**

Historic site; built 1955

In 1945 Arthur and Mary Ridgley subdivided the 52-acre tract and devised individual parcels to each of their children; Mildred Ridgley and her husband William S. Gray received Parcels 6 and 7 (totaling 9.6 acres). About ten years later, the Grays commissioned Robert H. Hill to construct their dwelling on the two parcels. Hill, a prolific African-American builder active during the 1940s and 1950s, constructed approximately 500 houses for black families, and offered low-interest home loans

during an era of housing discrimination. The design of the Gray Residence was influenced by the residential fashions of the period, including the Modern Movement, as well as the specifications of Mildred Ridgley Gray herself. In 2001, Mrs. Gray transferred the property to the Mildred Ridgley Gray Charitable Trust, Inc., with the intent to bring “public awareness to the historical background of a community in Prince George’s County, formerly known as Ridgeley, Ridgely or Ridgley.”



Combining visual cues from both the French provincial and western-ranch styles in a simplified, yet formal manner, this residence signals a clear break from the frame dwellings and farm-related structures



William Gray.

previously built on the property. The house is composed of a one-story, hipped-roof main block with a half-hipped garage on the easternmost end and half-hipped wings on the east (side) elevation and rear (north) elevations. An enclosed porch projects from the west (side) elevation.

The Gray Residence is an excellent example of Robert H. Hill's work, and of the flexibility of mid-twentieth-century houses to the specific needs of owners. The house is also representative of the increasing prosperity of the Ridgley family from the late nineteenth through the twentieth century and their transition from farming to other occupations, notably education. The property reflects the gradual subdivision and development of land in Prince George's County in the twentieth century as its character changed from that of the predominantly rural to the predominantly suburban.

*72-65*

## *DeAtley and Lillian Ridgley House*

**7900 Central Avenue**

Built 1939

In 1938, Arthur and Mary Ridgley conveyed a 100-square-foot parcel of their 52-acre property to their son, DeAtley<sup>1</sup>. On this small parcel, DeAtley Ridgley and his wife, Lillian, erected a modest one-story, wood-frame single-family dwelling. The house is clad with German siding and is capped by a cross-gable roof. A central-interior brick chimney marks the ridge of the roof, which is covered with asphalt shingles. Paired and triple six-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows fenestrate the façade (south elevation).

A version of a one-story I-house, the original open porch of this frame dwelling has been enclosed.

Following World War II, in 1945, Arthur and Mary Ridgley subdivided the remainder of their 52-acre tract in order to deed individual parcels to each of their children; DeAtley and Lillian Ridgley received Parcels 1 and 3 (totaling 9.6 acres). The couple actively pursued development of their land and platted the "Ridgley Manor" subdivision,



<sup>1</sup> Pronounced de-OT-ley.



which was located directly west and north of their house. This subdivision comprised four blocks with twenty-four residential lots. The Ridgleys sold most of their property in the early 1950s, but the house lot remained in the family until 1990. By 1965, there were at least seven dwellings located along Central Avenue that were owned by various members of the Ridgley family. By 2011, only the DeAtley and Lillian Ridgley House and the Gray Residence were extant.

DeAtley Ridgley was born ca. 1912 and is listed in the 1930 federal census as living with his parents. He married Lillian Tyler prior to World War II and after the war, the couple began to actively develop their acreage. By 1953, the Ridgleys were in the process of creating a subdivision from Parcel 3, which was located east of the Ridgley Manor subdivision and the DeAtley and Lillian Ridgley House. However, before Ridgley legalized the subdivision, he sold the land to Frank Fleming. Fleming never finalized the subdivision plat and, instead, sold the property in 1964 to the Board of Education. The Randolph Village Elementary School was then constructed on this property.

By the 1970s, the Ridgleys had moved to California, but continued to own the single-family dwelling located at 7900 Central Avenue. Following their divorce in 1971, DeAtley Ridgley transferred his rights to the house to his former wife, who continued to own it until 1990.

72-43

### *Arthur Jr. and Louise Ridgley Farmstead Site*

The site of this Ridgley farmstead consisted of two main houses, a tenant house, tobacco barn, privy, corncrib, garage and shed that were accessed by a common drive. This aerial photo was taken just before 1998 when the resources were demolished.

**8302-8304 Central Avenue**

Early-mid 20th century–1998

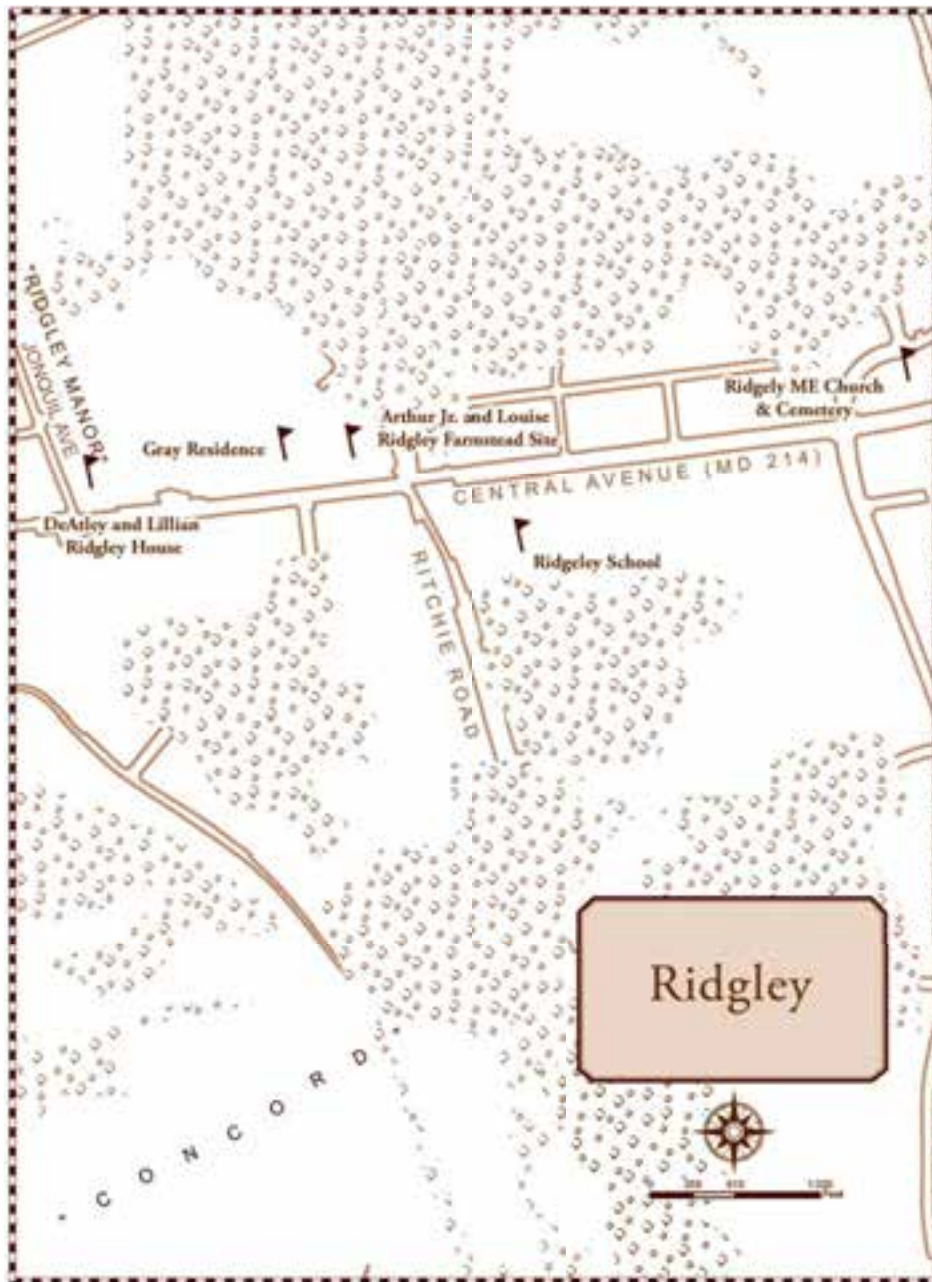
This farmstead was an example of the small tobacco and truck farms common in southern Maryland during the first half of the twentieth century. The property was originally part of the larger 52-acre farm owned by the Ridgley family since 1871. Arthur Ridgley, Jr., purchased this parcel from his father in 1945 and in the latter half of the decade added additional acreage and buildings.

The westernmost of the two main houses (8302) may have been constructed in the early twentieth century and moved to the property. The one-story frame dwelling had a cross gable roof and a front porch with tapered wood posts with scroll-sawn knee brackets. The easternmost of the two main houses (8304) was a more modest, one-story gable-front house probably dating to the mid-twentieth century (it does not appear on the 1938 aerial). The outbuildings included an early- to mid-twentieth-century tobacco barn with a gable roof and vertical board siding; a mid-twentieth-century frame, gable-roof



garage; a small frame corn crib; and a one-story gable-front concrete block building that may have served as a tenant house.

The property was surveyed in 1996 when the Morgan Boulevard Metrorail was being developed; all the buildings had vanished by 1998. Except for two parcels fronting Central Avenue still owned by the Ridgley family, this property and other portions of the 52-acre farm are now owned by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.







Fairmount Lodge 92 at 5501 Addison Road, as it appeared c. 1980. Heavily remodeled by 1990, the c. 1940s building once closely resembled the Old Treasury on the State House grounds in Annapolis.

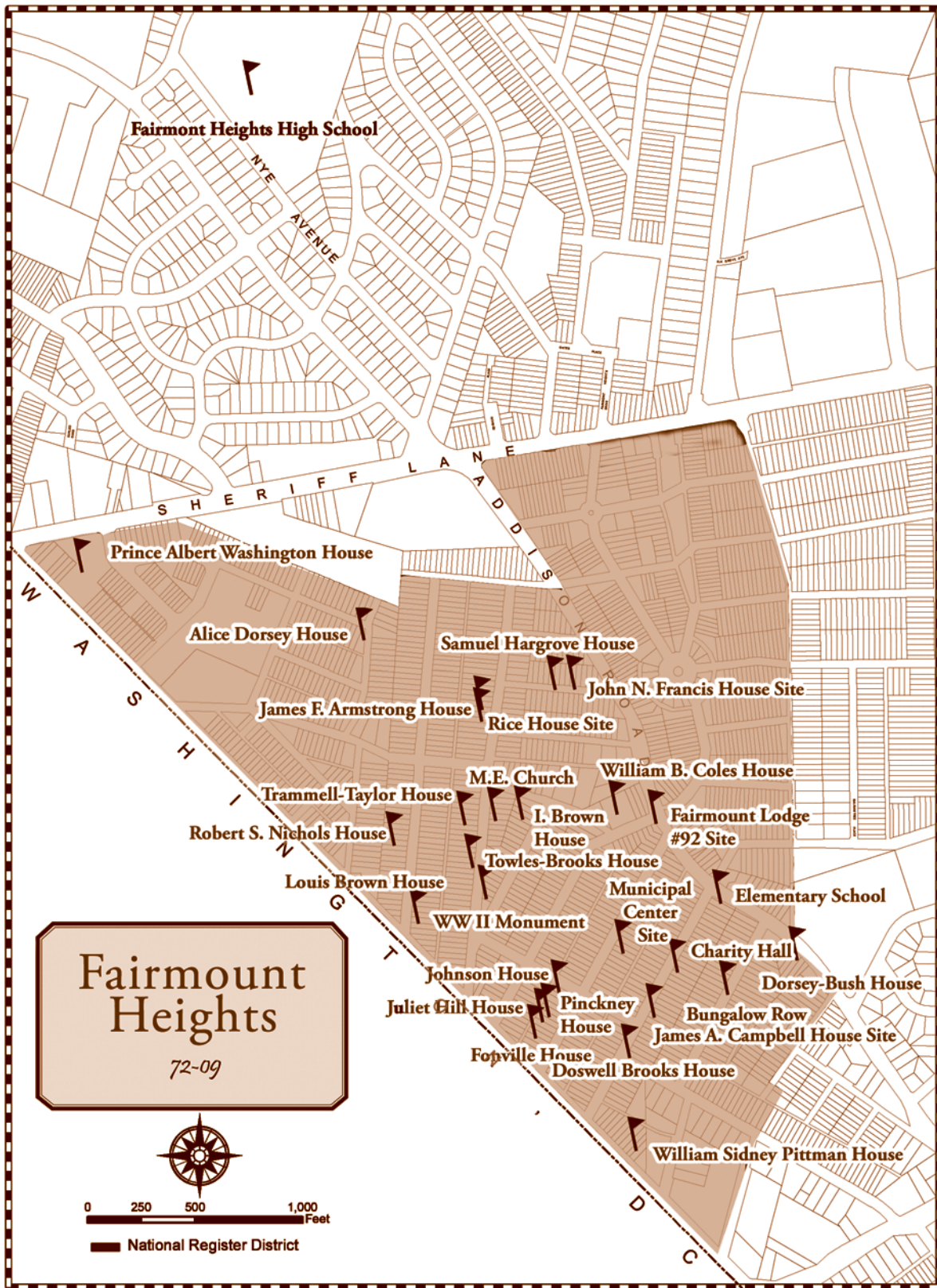
## 72-09 *Fairmount Heights* INC. 1935

**Bounded by Sheriff Road, Balsamtree Drive, 62nd Place, and Eastern Avenue**

Historic sites (4), historic resources (13)

National Register of Historic Places

In the late-nineteenth century, the area that would become Fairmount Heights comprised several small farms. These were purchased and consolidated by land speculators in the first decades of the twentieth century. Fairmount Heights contains six subdivisions platted between 1900 and 1923 by different developers. The first was platted as Fairmount Heights in 1900 by Robinson White and Allen Clark, two attorneys and developers from Washington, D.C. The initial platting contained approximately 50 acres that were divided into lots typically measuring 25 by 125 feet. White and Clark encouraged African-Americans to purchase property, and the subdivision became one of the first planned communities for black families in the county. White and Clark sold the lots at affordable prices, making home ownership attainable for many. The earliest dwellings were wood-frame construction and of modest size; however, several substantial houses were also built. Early on, the neighborhood was home to several prominent African-Americans, including William Sidney Pittman, a noted architect and son-in-law of Booker T. Washington. Pittman took an interest in the development of his own neighborhood. He formed the Fairmount Heights Mutual Improvement Company, whose purpose was to construct a social center for the community. Pittman had Charity Hall constructed, which was used for social events, as a church, and as the community's first school. In 1908, the Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis Electric Railway opened, providing easy access for Washington, D.C., commuters. (Residents of Fairmount Heights used the neighboring Gregory Station, located in Seat Pleasant.) Because of the early success of Fairmount Heights and new transportation options available nearby, several new subdivisions were platted adjacent to it. Waterford, a very small subdivision





adjacent to the northeast corner of Fairmount Heights, was platted by J.D. O'Meara in 1907. Mount Wiessner was platted by the Wiessner family in 1909 and featured lots approximately 50 by 125 feet. In 1910, Elizabeth Haines platted North Fairmount Heights on approximately 15 acres of land. The Silence family platted West Fairmount Heights (also known as Bryn Mawr) in 1911 around their family farmstead.

Other African-Americans, encouraged by the development in Fairmount Heights, soon settled in the area. In addition to the Pittmans, James F. Armstrong (supervisor of Colored Schools in Prince George's County), Henry Pinckney (White House steward to President Theodore Roosevelt), and Doswell Brooks (supervisor of Colored Schools in Prince George's County and the first African-American appointed to the Board of Education) all erected houses in the neighborhood. Many residents worked as clerks or messengers for the federal government. In 1920, developer Robinson White constructed 19 bungalows on 62nd Avenue in the original Fairmount Heights subdivision. In 1922, approximately 35 acres of farmland located east of Fairmount Heights was purchased by the Weeks Realty Company and platted as Sylvan Vista. The development marked the sixth and final subdivision making up the present-day Town of Fairmount Heights. Sylvan Vista had deep, narrow lots, generally measuring 25 by 125 feet, similar to the original subdivision of Fairmount Heights. The neighborhood was designed around a market circle with radiating streets. Although the lots were of similar size, the dwellings were generally smaller and more modest than the houses built in the earlier subdivisions. After several unsuccessful attempts to incorporate in the 1920s, the Town of Fairmount Heights was officially incorporated in 1935 with a mayor-council form of government. The town included all six subdivisions platted between 1900 and 1923. In 2011, the Fairmount Heights Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The district was nominated under Criterion A and its significant themes include community planning and development, politics and government, and African-American ethnic heritage. The period of significance extends from 1900 to 1960. The district contains 301 contributing resources and 261 non-contributing resources, distributed over approximately 144 acres.

## 72-09-9 *Fairmount Heights Elementary School*

**737 61st Avenue**

Historic site; built 1912

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School is one of the largest buildings in the community. Before its construction, classes were held in nearby Charity Hall, but in early 1911 a group of residents approached the Board of School Commissioners and requested that an elementary school be built. The board agreed, and a building committee (which included W. Sidney Pittman) was appointed. Architect Pittman was chosen to submit a design for the school, and in April 1911 the board ordered that the school be erected in accordance with Pittman's plans and specifications. A few months later, the board purchased four unimproved lots at the corner of Chapel (now 61st) Avenue and Addison Road. The school was constructed and ready to open by June 1912.

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School is a two-story, hip-roof frame structure. The original entrance was through double doors centered in the west facade; an enclosed shed-roof porch now obscures this entrance, and a new double-door entrance has been constructed to the south. The two windows that flank this new entrance have been reconfigured with round arches for the use of the building as a church. The pyramidal-roof cupola, which originally housed the school bell, survives but has been enclosed. The eaves have a deep overhang, punctuated by exposed rafter ends, which have a curved jigsaw profile.

By 1915 enrollment had increased to 160 pupils; there were five teachers, four classrooms and a carpentry shop. At that time this was the only public school with "industrial" training facilities for black students in Prince George's County.<sup>1</sup> This building served as the public school for Fairmount Heights until 1934 when a new eight-room brick school was built at the corner of Addison and Sheriff Roads. At that time, the old school property was purchased by the Mount Zion Apostolic Faith Church. The building has served as a church since then.



<sup>1</sup> The St. Thomas' Church-supported Croom Industrial and Agricultural Institute offered similar training during the same period. See 86A-027-24.





## 72-09-17 Samuel Hargrove House

**5907 K Street**

Historic resource; built 1918

The Hargrove House was built in the North Fairmount Heights subdivision, platted in 1910. It was built for (and probably by) brick mason Samuel Hargrove; it is an unusual dwelling form, with molded brick detail, and is possibly unique in Prince George's County.

The Samuel Hargrove House is a brick town dwelling with unusual molded brick decorative detail. It is two stories high with a shallow hip roof and has a long, narrow floor plan well suited to the lots of the Fairmount Heights subdivision. Most of the long west elevation is sheltered by a one-story porch supported by square brick posts. The main entrance to the house is in the second bay of the narrow north facade, and the remainder of that facade is lighted by large paired windows set in segmentally arched wooden enframements. There is a wide belt course of links and bands at the first story. The second story is embellished with two more of the same belt courses beneath which is a wide band of alternating floral-motif panels. Molded beads arranged in a shallow segmental arch further decorate each opening on the north facade.

Samuel Hargrove was born in North Carolina in 1870; he was listed as a brick mason in the 1910 census, the year in which he and his wife purchased four lots in the newly platted North Fairmount Heights subdivision. There was a small house on the property at that time, and it is not certain whether that house may be incorporated into the present brick structure, or whether the Hargroves lived in the smaller dwelling while constructing the new one. In any case, the present large brick house was finished by 1918 when the assessed value of the improvements leaped to a very substantial \$1,750, nearly three times the value at which they had been assessed consistently since 1910. The property was conveyed by Hargrove's son, Earl W. Hargrove, to Maggie Simms in 1929. Shortly thereafter Simms conveyed the property to Virginia Cooper in 1931. Cooper sold the property in 1938 to Cornelius B. and Lillian R. Weeks. Members of the Weeks family have owned the property since that time.

*The John N. Francis House (72-009-22) at 5909 K Street, stood directly east of the Hargrove house on three lots, and was similar in style. It was Italianate, but executed in wood rather than brick. Three bays across, it had a front porch and a bracketed cornice. The house was built in 1912 for Francis, a foreman for the water company, and demolished circa 1995 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.*



William Sidney Pittman.

*The house was known to the family as "Little White Tops."*

72-09-18

## *William Sidney Pittman and Portia Washington Pittman House*

**505 Eastern Avenue**

Historic site; built 1907

The Pittman House was designed and built as a family home by architect William Sidney Pittman in 1907, the year in which he married Portia, daughter of his former mentor, Booker T. Washington. Pittman (1875-1958) had attended Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and then received a degree in Architectural and Mechanical Drawing from Drexel Institute in Philadelphia in 1900. He returned to Tuskegee to teach until 1905, at which time he opened his own architectural office in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington, D.C. After their marriage in 1907, the Pittmans moved into the house that he had designed in the developing suburb of Fairmount Heights. (The house was known to the family as "Little White Tops;" possibly the name derives from roof decorations that have long since disappeared.) Actively involved in the progress of this new community, Sidney Pittman established the Fairmount Heights Mutual Improvement Company. His wife, a professional musician, gave frequent piano recitals at their new home.





The Pittman House is a front-gabled dwelling that stands on high ground overlooking the boundary between Prince George's County and the District of Columbia. The gable front is sheltered by a one-story porch that wraps half way around the east (side) elevation of the house. The long sides of the house are varied by flush crossgables centered in the east and west elevations. There is a one-story, shed-roof projecting bay at the end of the wraparound porch; its three windows light the dining room of the house. A one-story kitchen wing extends to the north. The original German siding is now covered with aluminum siding. The interior features a Classical Revival mantel, multiband moldings and staircase details typical of the period. In 1906 Pittman had won a national competition for the design of the Negro Building at the Tercentennial Exposition at Jamestown, Virginia. This exposition building, completed in 1907, assured Pittman widespread fame and respect in a new but increasing group of African-American architects. The Pittmans left Washington at the end of 1912, moving to Dallas, Texas, where Pittman spent the rest of his life. The house was sold in 1915 to Ellen Adams and is still owned and occupied by her descendants. The dwelling became a boarding house with a dance pavilion on the grounds, and later a private residence for the family. Typical of the suburban dwellings which were being built in the early years of this century, the Pittman House is significant because it was designed and occupied by one of the area's first and most prominent black architects.



## 72-09-23 *Alice Dorsey House*

**910 59th Avenue**

Built c. 1904

The Alice Dorsey House is one of the larger dwellings among the early housing stock in Fairmount Heights.

Basically square in plan, it is a variation on the Foursquare form which was very popular at the turn of the twentieth century, in this case varied by a pedimented crossgable asymmetrically placed on the main facade.

The Alice Dorsey House is a variation on the popular Foursquare house form and is two-and-one-half stories high, with a hip roof and of wood frame construction. Entrance is in the second (center) bay of the irregular four-bay east facade through a door with a single-pane transom and a plain board surround. A small pediment surmounts the northernmost two bays, an unusual feature for a house with a hip roof. This feature gives the house an irregular appearance and suggests that the house was significantly altered in the past. The main east facade is sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with turned posts and plain balustrade. The original wood siding is covered with synthetic siding.

Two lots in the first subdivision of Fairmount Heights were purchased by Alice R. Dorsey, who had the house built circa 1904. She listed herself as a messenger for the U. S. Treasury in the 1910 census; she was then 51 years of age, had been born in South Carolina, and lived in this house with her sister, Anne Bryant, and her daughters, Marion Dorsey and Daisy Thornton, and Daisy's two children.

## 72-09-24 *James F. Armstrong House*

908 59th Avenue

Historic site; built c. 1905

The James F. Armstrong House exhibits typical and fine detail in its wraparound porch, pediment and projecting bays. This house was built for Armstrong, who, like many of the other early settlers in Fairmount Heights, was a graduate of Tuskegee Institute. Armstrong had subsequently attended Howard University Law School, graduating in 1904. In the following year he purchased three lots in the original Fairmount Heights subdivision and had the house built. It remained in the ownership of his family for nearly 90 years.

The James Armstrong House is a two-and-one-half-story cross-gabled house of wood frame construction. Its principal east facade exhibits gable-front-and-wing plan, with the wing to the left and the gable front to the right. Entrance is in the second bay of the two-bay wing, and there is another entrance in the first bay of the front-gabled section. Both entrances are sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with plain rail balustrade, turned posts, jigsawn openwork brackets and a decorative rail frieze; this porch wraps around and shelters both the front-gabled section and the entrance bay of the wing. The wide,



three-bay front-gabled section is lit by a two-story projecting semi-octagonal bay with two-over-two windows in all faces; above this projecting bay, the modillioned cornice forms a pediment at loft level. Within the pediment is a four-pane round-arch window with wood keystone molding.

The Armstrong House is a good example of late-Victorian domestic architecture and one of the handsomest of the early dwellings in the Fairmount Heights community. In 1911 James Armstrong was appointed as a member of the building committee for the proposed Fairmount Heights Elementary School, and a few years

later was named Director of Manual Training at that school. He also served until 1919 as the Supervisor of Colored Schools in Prince George's County. He continued to be active in Fairmount Heights community affairs, serving as chairman of the citizens association and as one of the first council members after the town was incorporated.





72-09-25

*Fairmount Heights  
Methodist Episcopal  
Church*

**716 59th Avenue**

Historic resource; built 1911

Fairmount Heights Methodist Episcopal Church (now known as Grace United Methodist Church) was originally established in 1909, and the first services were held in Charity Hall. For a short

time after this, services were held in Pastor Joshua Barnes' home near the church's present location. In 1909, after Barnes' death, the trustees of the church acquired two unimproved lots on Fairmount Avenue and began to raise money for the construction of a church. The building was completed in 1911 and was a simple frame meetinghouse-style structure, with three gothic-arch windows in the principal gable front and a small belfry at the ridge. In 1950, under the pastorship of the Reverend Edward S. Williams, the church was enlarged, the entry tower was constructed and the entire structure was covered with stucco.

Fairmount Heights Methodist Episcopal Church is a large stucco-covered building of wood frame construction; it is cross-gabled in form, with a corner entry tower. The six bays of the main block are lighted by gothic-arch windows with tracery, and the principal east gable front is lighted by a tall gothic-arch window flanked by two smaller ones, all filled with stained glass. Entrance is into the east facade of the entry tower, through plain wooden double doors with a single pane transom. Above the transom, a wide arch is inset in the stucco surface, giving the entrance a round-arch enframement. Above the entrance a window in the form of a cross is inset in the stucco covering. The tower has a shallow pyramidal roof, and is lighted on the south side by a tall louvered window.



72-09-26

*Trammell-Taylor House*

**717 59th Avenue**

Historic resource; built c. 1910

One of the most substantial houses in the early development of this community, the Trammell-Taylor House was built for John and Martha Trammell, who purchased two unimproved

lots from developer Robinson White in 1907. John Trammell worked as a waiter in a restaurant when he first settled in Fairmount Heights. The Trammells remained in their family home until 1937.

The Trammell-Taylor House is a frame dwelling with Classical Revival decorative details. It is two-and-one-half stories high, side-gabled and of wood frame construction. It is distinguished by its deep boxed cornice returned at the gable ends, and its cornice decoration of jigsaw brackets alternating with smaller modillions. Entrance is in the central bay of the three-bay west facade and is sheltered by a one-story gabled entry porch with Tuscan columns. Above the entry porch is a narrow nine-pane diamond-shaped window, and a single-pane octagonal window lights the loft level in each gable end. In 1961 this house became the home and law office of Circuit Court Judge James H. Taylor, a Marylander who was educated at Howard University and was admitted to the Maryland Bar in 1956. During the 1960s, he served as Assistant State's Attorney for Prince George's County and Master for Juvenile Cases. In 1969 he was appointed to the Seventh Judicial Circuit Court and served there until 1988.



*72-09-27 Towles-Brooks House*

**708 59th Avenue**

Historic resource; built c. 1910

The Towles-Brooks House is a good example of a cross-gabled suburban dwelling with late-Victorian decorative detail. It is representative of a popular house form of the early twentieth century, particularly the type built on one large subdivision lot.

The Towles-Brooks House is two-stories high, cross-gabled, and of wood frame construction. It is clad with synthetic siding. Entrance is in the third bay of the three-bay main east gable front, sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch that wraps around the house and leads to a secondary entrance in the cross-gabled wing. The porch has turned posts with jigsaw brackets and an openwork criss-cross balustrade. The plain boxed cornice is returned at the gable ends.

This house was built circa 1910 by Samuel Towles, shortly after he purchased two unimproved lots from developer Robinson White. Samuel Towles, like many others who settled in Fairmount Heights, commuted to Washington, D.C., where he worked as a messenger for the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The property passed to his nephew, Lawrence Brooks, who served on the Town Council of Fairmount Heights and as its mayor from 1967 to 1972. Brooks died in 1990.

In the 1960s the Brooks family ran a store that stood nearby called the Brooks Market. According to Margaret Brooks, who was interviewed shortly before her death in 2009, the market sold a roster of items with an early-twentieth-century savor, including kerosene, cold cuts, candy, tobacco, and loose cigars. Coal oil was sold outside, from the porch.



## *72-09-28 Louis Brown House*

**701 58th Avenue**

Historic resource; built c. 1920s

The Louis Brown House is a Tudor Revival-style dwelling. It was built by and for Brown, a carpenter, who was associated with several other buildings in the town. The Brown House is a two-story asymmetrical cross-gabled dwelling of wood frame construction. It has considerable variety in the lines of its gables and dormers; a wraparound porch shelters the entrance into the asymmetrical west facade and wraps around to shelter much of the north elevation as well. The porch roof is supported by pairs of tapered wood posts on high bases of molded concrete block. The original wood siding is now covered by synthetic sheathing of two different colors and textures.

A small house was built on the lot as early as 1905, after the lot was purchased by Daniel Brown, and it was the home of Daniel Brown's family for nearly a generation. This earlier building was demolished when the present house was built in the late 1920s by Louis, son of Daniel Brown; the younger Brown resided in the house for the remainder of his life. The house stands on the boundary between Prince George's County and the District of Columbia.



## *72-09-29*

## *World War II Monument*

**701 59th Avenue**

Historic site; erected 1946

The World War II Monument was erected to honor the citizens of Fairmount Heights who served in the armed forces during the war. In the early years of the Fairmount Heights community this small park was the property of the Reverend Joshua Barnes. The earliest Methodist worship services were held in his house on this site before the construction of the Fairmount Heights Methodist Episcopal Church in 1911. The monument, together with the curved wall and grassy park area, serves as an entryway into the town from Eastern Avenue.

The World War II Monument is an obelisk, constructed of blocks of gray granite and orange sandstone in random arrangement. The principal section of the monument is a pyramid, rising from a square base of the same random stone. The base rests on a single, wide course of granite; a similar course of granite forms a line of demarcation between the base and the pyramid, and two more



courses form horizontal lines of decoration. The monument stands in a triangular lot with benches and shrubs fronted by a curved section of brick wall. Originally, on each face of the square base was a projecting rectangular panel and on each panel was attached an inscribed cast-metal plate (all plates are missing). It was documented that on the south (principal) plate was inscribed: "In honor of the men and women of Fairmount Heights who served in World War II/Erected in November 1946 by the Monument Memorial Committee." The monument and park are currently slated for restoration.



The Isaac Brown house, photographed in 1995.

### *72-09-30 Isaac Brown House*

#### **715 59th Place**

Historic site; built c. 1911

This is a good example of a house form that was popular in the developing suburbs of the early twentieth century. The house was built circa 1911 for Isaac and Maria Brown, who had purchased two unimproved lots from developer Robinson White in 1909. The Browns did not reside in the house but instead used it as a rental property. The house remained in the possession of the family until 1954, when it was sold by the heirs of Isaac and Maria Brown. For more than 30 years afterwards, this was the home of the Gordon family.

The Isaac Brown House is a two-story, front-gabled frame house. Entrance is in the first bay of the two-bay northwest gable front. This facade was originally sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with plain rail balustrade, and turned posts with jigsawn openwork brackets. There is a brick chimney centered at the ridge, and the boxed cornice is returned at the gable front. Siding is plain horizontal board. Houses of this type were built over a nearly 50-year time period; they were particularly suitable for the deep, narrow lots of early twentieth-century residential subdivisions. Similar dwellings, and those of a slightly larger form, can be found in communities like Fairmount Heights, North Brentwood, and Bowie. Although very simple in plan, this dwelling is a representative and therefore important example of a type of house popular in these developing suburbs.

Marjorie Osborne is a former long-time neighbor and recent owner of the Isaac Brown House. In an oral history related to Charlotte King in June 2008, Ms. Osborne recalls the Isaac Brown House as a gathering place for residents of the neighborhood. The previous tenant, Mrs. Hester Gordon, was an "aunt" to everyone on 59th Place. Ms. Osborne also describes the house as originally having no running water and no central heat. The bathroom is an addition to the rear of the house. The original porch collapsed in the 1990s and was rebuilt without the decorative brackets and turned posts.



72-09-31

## *William B. Coles House*

**730 60th Avenue**

Historic resource; built 1906

The William B. Coles House is prominently sited on one of the highest hills in the Town of Fairmount Heights. It was built in 1906 on a group of lots (amounting to approximately 1/3 acre) in the first subdivision of the town. It was built by Ezra and Florence Kemp, who bought four unimproved lots from developer Allen C. Clark in 1900. In 1908, after the death of Ezra Kemp, his widow sold the property to William B. and Isadora Coles, who raised their family in this house.

The Coles House is cross-gabled and two-and-one-half stories high, of wood frame construction. Entrance is in the third bay of the three-bay east gable front, through a door with a transom and sidelights; the facade is sheltered by a one-story porch with turned posts and plain balustrade. The original wood siding is now covered with white aluminum siding, and the windows have black synthetic louvered shutters. The grounds are defined by a low stone wall, with gateposts which lead to the main entrance. Like many of his neighbors, William Coles commuted to Washington, D.C., where he worked as a clerk in the U.S. Department of the Treasury. An interesting detail about the house is a surviving legal agreement in which it is recorded that, in 1914, William Coles contracted with the Detroit Heating Company to have a complete system of central heating installed in the house. The property passed, after the deaths of William and Isadora Coles, to their son, William T. Coles, and remained the home of his family until 1936.

*A similarly styled dwelling is the Juliet Hill House (72-009-34) located at 604 60th Place, and built for Juliet Hill circa 1910.*



72-09-32

## *John S. Johnson House*

**612 60th Place**

Historic resource; built 1911

The John S. Johnson House is a cross-gabled frame dwelling, typical of the houses built on larger lots or groups of lots in developing subdivisions of the early twentieth century. It was built in 1911 for John S. Johnson, who had settled in Fairmount Heights a few years earlier and rented a house three blocks to the north of the present house. In 1908, Johnson, who worked as a Pullman porter, purchased from developer Clark two unimproved lots on Addison Avenue (now 60th Place) and in 1911 had this house constructed. Johnson later became the first president of the United Citizens Associations of Fairmount Heights.

The Johnson House is two stories high and of wood frame construction; it is distinguished by its decorative wraparound porch and its setting on a partially wooded corner lot. Entrance is in the third bay of the three-bay principal gable front, sheltered by a one-story porch with turned posts and decorative jig-sawn brackets; the porch turns and wraps around part of the side elevation. The windows were originally two-over-two in configuration as shown in this photograph, but have since been replaced with vinyl in a one-over-one configuration.

## 72-09-33 *Henry Pinckney House*

**608 60th Place**

Historic resource; built c. 1905

The Pinckney House is representative of the American Foursquare, a popular dwelling type with a basically square floor plan. Wider than the standard front-gabled house form and typically built on several lots, the Foursquare was one of the most substantial house forms in the subdivisions of the early twentieth century.

The Henry Pinckney House is a large, two-story dwelling of Foursquare plan; it has a hip roof pierced by gable dormers on three planes of the roof. Entrance is in the center bay of the main east facade through a shallow projecting pavilion surmounted by a small pedimented crossgable which breaks the east plane of the roof. Unlike the pedimented dormers in the north and south planes, this east dormer does not include a window. The original wood siding is now covered by aluminum siding.

Henry Pinckney was born in South Carolina and moved to the area when Theodore Roosevelt did to serve as steward to Roosevelt during his vice presidency and then during his presidency. Pinckney was known throughout Washington, D.C., especially at Eastern Market, because he frequently made purchases for the President there. He also delivered



**LEFT:** The Pinckney House today  
**BELOW:** Henry Pinckney's son Roswell playing with Teddy Roosevelt's son Quentin at the south front of the White House, Washington, D.C.





messages for Roosevelt. The Pinckney children played with the Roosevelt children as well. His work under Roosevelt helped him to secure positions with other political figures following Roosevelt's tenure. Henry Pinckney died in 1911, leaving the house to his wife Lenora and three children, Roswell, Theodore, and Lenore Emily. Lenora Pinckney worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and was, with her husband, one of the founding members of the First Presbyterian Church of Fairmount Heights. Henry Pinckney's great-granddaughter, Emily McGhee, taught English at Fairmount Heights Senior High School. The current owner was one of her pupils. Henry Pinckney's great-grandson, Kevin Clay Pinckney, wrote an extended essay called "Henry Pinckney, White House Steward." Material from this work was used for a 2008 exhibition called *The Working White House: Two Centuries of Traditions and Memories*, held by the White House Historical Association and the Smithsonian Institute Traveling Exhibition Service.



72-09-35 *Cornelius Fonville House*

**602 60th Place**

Historic resource; built 1912

The Fonville House is representative of the Foursquare houses popular in the early years of this century; it is one of the larger houses of the early building period in this community. It was built by Cornelius Fonville, who worked as a messenger for the Bureau of Engraving, and who settled in Fairmount Heights with his wife and family in the early years of the development.

The Fonville House is two stories high with a hip roof; its floor plan is basically square, three bays by three. Entrance is in the central bay of the main, southeast facade, which is sheltered by a one-story porch. The original wood siding of the house is presently covered with white vinyl siding, and the original wood columns have been replaced by metal tracery supports. The house rests on a high brick basement, and a flight of steps provides access to the porch.

*"A fine eight room dwelling with cellar, furnace and all modern improvements. . . . Fairmount Heights is on a boom."*

In 1912, *The Washington Bee*, Washington's principal African-American newspaper, reported that it was "a fine eight room dwelling with cellar, furnace and all modern improvements. . . . Fairmount Heights is on a boom." Fonville was active in the citizens associations of Fairmount Heights and was one of the leaders in the movement toward the town's incorporation in 1935.

## 72-09-36     *Doswell Brooks House*

**6107 Foote Avenue**

Historic resource; built 1928

The Doswell Brooks House is a small bungalow, representative of a dwelling type that was frequently popular in the years between the world wars. This house is also significant for the prominence of its owner and resident, Doswell Brooks.

The Brooks House is one-and-one-half stories high, with hip roof, and of wood frame construction. The entrance is centered in the northeast façade, sheltered by a screened porch inset beneath the principal plane of the roof, supported by paneled, tapered posts set on molded block bases. Centered in the principal plane of the roof is a small hip-roof dormer that encloses two narrow windows. The original wood siding of the house is now sheathed with yellow synthetic siding, and the building stands on a high basement of molded concrete block.

The Brooks House was built in 1928 on a lot in the Mount Wiessner subdivision of Fairmount Heights, the third subdivision to be platted in the community. It was built for Doswell and Anita Brooks after they purchased unimproved Lot 8. Doswell Brooks was active in the Prince George's County school system; he served as Supervisor of Colored Schools beginning in 1922, and in 1956 was appointed as the first African-American member of the Board of Education. He also served as a member of the Fairmount Heights Town Council and as mayor of the town from 1955 until shortly before his death in 1968. This bungalow remained the home of Anita Brooks for nearly 20 years after the death of Doswell Brooks.

**RIGHT:** The Doswell Brooks House.

*The James A. Campbell House (72-009-37) at 709 61st Avenue, was built by carpenter Louis Brown in 1921 and was similar in style to the Doswell Brooks House. A frame bungalow with a pyramidal roof, it was topped by a semi-octagonal dormer and was four bays across, with an entrance sheltered by a porch in the westernmost bay. Campbell served as the Mayor of Fairmount Heights from 1943–1955. The house was demolished in 1991.*





Charity Hall as it looks today.

## 72-09-38 *Charity Hall*

**715 61st Avenue**

Built c. 1908

Charity Hall, although drastically altered from its original form, is an important historic feature of the Fairmount Heights community. The main block of the building was constructed by the Fairmount Heights Mutual Improvement Company to serve as a public hall for religious, charitable, and social functions. The Mutual Improvement Company had been organized by architect William Sidney Pittman, and one of its purposes was to provide a social center for the community. In 1908 the company purchased two unimproved lots on Chapel (now 61st) Avenue and erected the main part of this building, following Pittman's design. The building then served not only as a social hall, but also briefly as the first location of Methodist church services in 1909. It also served as a classroom until the public school was completed in 1912. In 1924, the two lots were purchased by Malkiah Charity, one of the original directors of the Mutual Improvement Company, and the building continued to be used as a gathering place for a variety of religious, social and charitable events. It has, apparently, always been known as Charity Hall.

The hall suffered serious damage by fire and was rebuilt in the 1960s. In recent years, the building has been enlarged by both a rear wing and two asymmetrical flanking additions to the gable front. Consequently it bears little resemblance to its original form; it is, however, an important element in the history of the Fairmount Heights community.



*72-09-39     Robert S. Nichols House*

**802 58th Avenue**

Historic resource; built 1908

The Robert S. Nichols House was certainly one of the community's most handsome and substantial houses when it was built in 1908 by John F. Collins, who sold the house and two lots in 1909 to Robert S. Nichols. Nichols had come to Maryland from Texas and worked in the U.S. Pension Office in the District of Columbia. He settled with his young family in this new house on White (now 58th) Avenue and soon became active in community affairs. He headed the citizens committee which pursued and brought about the establishment of the public school in Fairmount Heights, and in 1912 served on the building committee of that school. Nichols worked toward the incorporation of Fairmount Heights and, in 1935, when the town was incorporated, he was elected as its first mayor. He served two consecutive one-year terms. The house remained in Nichols family ownership until after the death of Robert Nichols in 1960.

The Robert S. Nichols House is a two-part frame dwelling: the main block is two-and-one-half stories high with a hip roof, and attached to its north elevation is a two-story hip-roof wing inset from the principal east facade. The east entrance to the main block is sheltered by a porch with turned posts and jig-sawn brackets, which wraps around to shelter another entrance into the wing. There is a hip-roof dormer in the east plane of the roof.





72-09-41

## Bungalow Row

62nd Avenue between Foote Street  
and Addison Avenue

Built 1920

Pictured here are 611, 609, and 607 62nd Avenue. Since this photograph was taken in 1991, 609 has been replaced with a new house, 607 has been remodeled to serve as a church, and 611 is intact but its porch has been removed.

In 1920, developer Robinson White had 19 small frame bungalows, of identical form and style, built on the lots on both sides of a block of Fairview (now 62nd) Avenue in the original Fairmount Heights subdivision. These one-story, four-room dwellings closely resemble the “Rosita” style of bungalow being produced by Sears, Roebuck and Company during this period, and it is likely that they were all built from Sears material. Each had a hipped roof and central chimney and a shed-roof porch sheltering the three-bay principal facade. Most were built into a slope and rested on a high basement; others were built on more level ground and rested on a simple foundation. Robinson White began to sell these small, inexpensive dwellings as soon as they were completed; by 1926 he had sold seven of the bungalows and by 1929 three more. He rented to tenants some of the unsold bungalows, gradually selling all of the rest by the time of his death in 1939.

*Another identical bungalow, the Rice House (72-009-44) also built in 1920 by developer White, stood at 904 59th Avenue; it was purchased by the Town of Fairmount Heights and demolished circa 2001. These small bungalows illustrate the importance of mail-order houses in developing communities of the post-World War I era, and represent a significant trend in the development of Fairmount Heights.*

72-09-42

## Municipal Center Site

717 60th Place

1942–2000

The Fairmount Heights Municipal Center was constructed as a fire hall; it later served as a health clinic, library, general meeting space and, most importantly, as the town hall. The lots on which it stood were purchased by the town between 1939 and 1941, and two citizens undertook to erect a building to serve both as a fire house and a meeting place.

The Municipal Center was a two-part building, constructed of brick and concrete block. The main block was two-and-one-half stories and front-gabled, fronting west on 60th Place. The gable front originally had a wide garage door in the first bay; it had been partially filled in, and the closed inset space was lighted by a window. At the west end of the roof ridge stood a small gabled belfry which originally housed the fire bell. In the 1960s the walls of the entire building were covered with white stucco; a formstone veneer was applied to the first story of the west front, and formstone trim was applied around the windows.

The main block was completed and in use by 1942; a fire engine was purchased and stored in the garage space on the first story, and the second story was used as the town's principal meeting space. The south wing was built in 1946. Within a few years the Fire Department had moved out of the building, and offices were created for the mayor and council, the town clerk, and health and police departments. A health clinic was maintained in the building for several decades. In 1948 a library was established in the wing and was maintained for more than a decade.

**The Municipal  
Center in the  
1980s.**

In the 1990s the town offices and meeting space were reestablished in the newer community center building in Sylvan Vista, and the Town of Fairmount Heights demolished the older building.





# 72-09-43 Prince Albert Washington House

49 Eastern Avenue

Historic resource; built 1922-24

The Washington House was built on property purchased by Prince Albert Washington in 1921 in the West Fairmount Heights subdivision; this was the fifth subdivision (platted in 1911) to make up the community of Fairmount Heights. Washington spent the

next two years, with the help of friends, building a house (Model 3085) with plans and materials ordered from Sears, Roebuck and Company. This model was nearly identical to Sears popular "Westly" model.

The Prince Albert Washington House is a one-and-one-half-story, side-gabled frame bungalow. Principal entrance is in the central bay fronting on Eastern Avenue and is sheltered by a façade-wide front porch. The porch is inset beneath the principal plane of the roof and supported by four tapered, paneled wood posts that rest on bases of molded concrete block. The first story is sheathed with wood siding painted white, and the gables are sided with brown rectangular shingles. Centered in the front plane of the roof is a large balconied dormer, whose overhanging eaves are supported at the apex and corners by decorative stick-style brackets.

Prince Albert Washington's mother had emigrated from Darmstadt, Germany, and his father was from Columbia, South Carolina. Washington served in the armed forces during World War I before beginning work at the Department of the Interior.

## SEVEN ROOMS AND BATH



**THE WESTLY** is a high grade two-story home, retaining the architectural beauty of a modern bungalow. Built everywhere. Every customer satisfied. Praiseworthy letters from Westly owners tell of the fine interior arrangement, beautiful woodwork, our approved "Honor Bill" ready-cut system of construction, and of savings even as high as \$1,500.00.

**Exterior.** Sided with narrow bevel clear cypress siding in first story; dormer, roof and second story covered with best grade of thick cedar shingles. Large front porch, 30 feet by 8 feet. Porch can be screened or glazed.

Can be built on a lot 35 feet wide

**Honor Bill**  
*The Westly*  
No. P13085 "Already Cut" and Fitted  
**\$2,614.00**

### FIRST FLOOR

**The Living Room.** Size, 17 feet 8 inches by 13 feet 5 inches. An attractive feature is the open stairway that leads to the second floor. A coat closet with a mirror door is near the stairway. Furniture can be attractively arranged because of space. There are two windows at the side and one window at the front.

**The Music Room.** French doors connect with the living room. This music room is sometimes used for a bedroom instead. Size, 11 feet 2 inches by 9 feet 5 inches. Has a double window at the side and a high sash looking over the space for piano at the rear.

**The Dining Room.** A wide cased opening connects the living room and dining room. Size of dining room, 11 feet 2 inches by 12 feet 2 inches. Space for a complete dining set, including a buffet. Two side windows and one front window provide light and air.

**The Kitchen.** 11 feet 2 inches by 10 feet 8 inches. A swinging door connects with dining room. The space for sink, range, table and chair is laid out to save steps for the housewife. One side window and one rear window furnish light and cross ventilation. The pantry has five roomy shelves and a window.

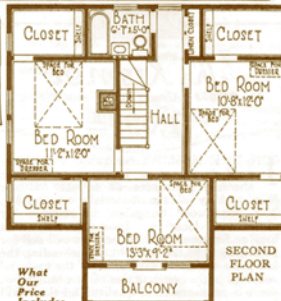
A door from the kitchen opens into the rear porch, which has stairs to basement and to grade.

### SECOND FLOOR

**The Bedrooms.** Stairs from the living room lead directly into a well lighted hall. This hall connects with the three bedrooms, bathroom and linen closet. The three bedrooms are all of good size. The front bedroom has a door to balcony. Each bedroom has two windows and a spacious clothes closet with a window. One bedroom has two clothes closets.

**The Basement.** Space for furnace, laundry and storage.

**Height of Ceilings.** First floor, 9 feet from floor to ceiling. Second floor, 8 feet 2 inches from floor to ceiling. Basement, 7 feet from floor to joists.



### What Our Price Includes

At the price quoted we will furnish all the material to build this seven-room house, consisting all:  
Lumber: Lath;  
Roofing, Best Grade Clear Red Cedar Shingles;  
Siding, Clear Cypress or Clear Red Cedar, Bevel;  
Framing Lumber, No. 1 Quality Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;  
Flooring, Clear Oak for Living Room, Dining Room and Music Room, Clear Maple for Kitchen, Pantry and Bathroom, Clear Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock for Balance of Rooms;  
Porch Flooring, Clear Edge Grain Fir;  
Porch Ceiling, Clear Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;  
Finishing Lumber;  
High Grade Millwork (see pages 110 and 111);  
Interior Doors, One-Panel Design for First Floor, and Two-Panel Design for Second Floor, All of Douglas Fir;  
Trim, Beautiful Grain Douglas Fir or Yellow Pine;  
Windows, California Clear White Pine;  
Medicine Case;  
Leave Trough Down Spout;  
40-Lb. Building Paper; Sash Weights;  
Chicago Design Hardware (see page 132);  
Paint for Three Coats Outside Trim and Siding;  
Stain for Two Brush Coats for Shingles on Gable Ends;  
Shells and Varnish for Interior Trim and Doors;  
Shells, Paste Filler and Floor Varnish for Oak and Maple Floors;  
Complete Plans and Specifications.  
We guarantee enough material to build this house. Price does not include cement, brick or plaster. See description of "Honor Bill" Houses on pages 12 and 13.

### OPTIONS

Sheet Plaster and Plaster Finish to take the place of wood lath, \$234.00 extra. See page 109.  
Oriental Asphalt Shingles for roof, guaranteed 17 years, \$40.00 extra.  
Oak Doors and Trim for living room, dining room, also Storm Doors and Windows, \$100.00 extra.  
Sewer Pipes and Ventilation, \$62.00 extra.  
For prices of Plumbing, Heating, Wiring, Electric Fixtures and Shades see pages 120 and 131.



For Our Easy Payment Plan See Page 144



Washington purchased the Fairmount Heights property, began the building project and then moved into the house with his new bride in 1924. His daughter, Anne Donelson, now a grandmother, still owns and occupies the house with her family.



**RIGHT:** The house under construction in the 1920s.  
**BELOW:** The house today.





## *72-09-48 Dorsey-Bush House*

**5603 Addison Road**

c. 1905

The Dorsey-Bush House was presumably constructed by Samuel Fowler, a carpenter by trade, who had purchased the lots in 1904 from Robinson White, the original subdivider. The dwelling remained in the Fowler family until 1919, when it was conveyed to Charles M. Dorsey. Dorsey enlarged the property with the purchase of Lot 3 in 1923. The Dorsey

family owned the property until 1984, when it was purchased by the current owners, Tyrone and Carolyn Bush. Although altered, the building still retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as an early twentieth-century dwelling constructed in the Town of Fairmount Heights.

This two story, two-bay single-family dwelling has a rectangular, detached row house form. The wood frame structure is covered with stucco that conceals the original German siding. Set on a solid stretcher-bond brick foundation, the dwelling is capped by a shed roof covered with asphalt shingles. The roof is finished with overhanging eaves, a boxed-wood cornice, sawn wood brackets and a wide fascia board on the façade (northeast elevation). A centered gable projects from the façade of the dwelling. A brick chimney rises from the interior of the dwelling and pierces the roof.

## *72-64 Fairmont Heights High School*

**1401 Nye Street, Capitol Heights**

Historic site; built 1950

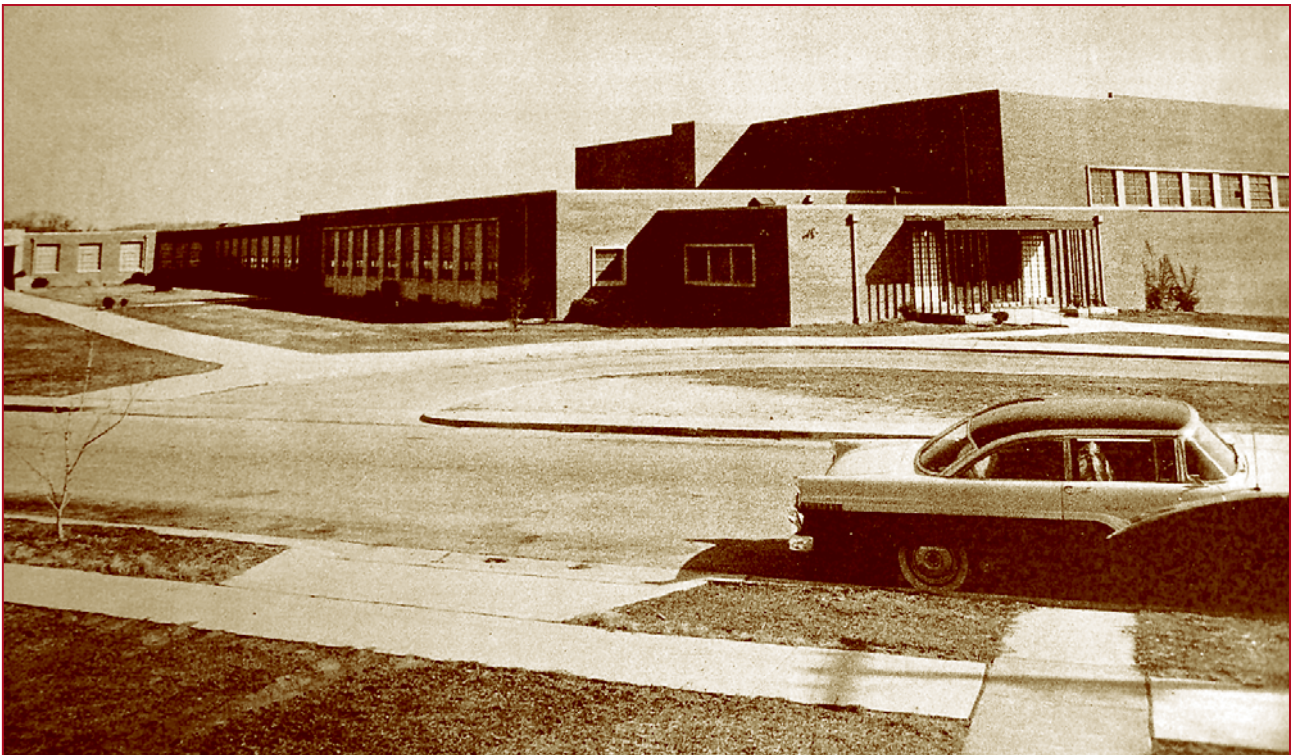
Fairmont Heights High School opened in September 1950 and was originally known as Fairmont Heights Junior-Senior High School. Constructed as the larger of two high schools for black students in Prince George's County, Fairmont Heights was the culmination of many years of struggle for the area's African-Americans seeking a modern school facility equal to those schools attended by white students.

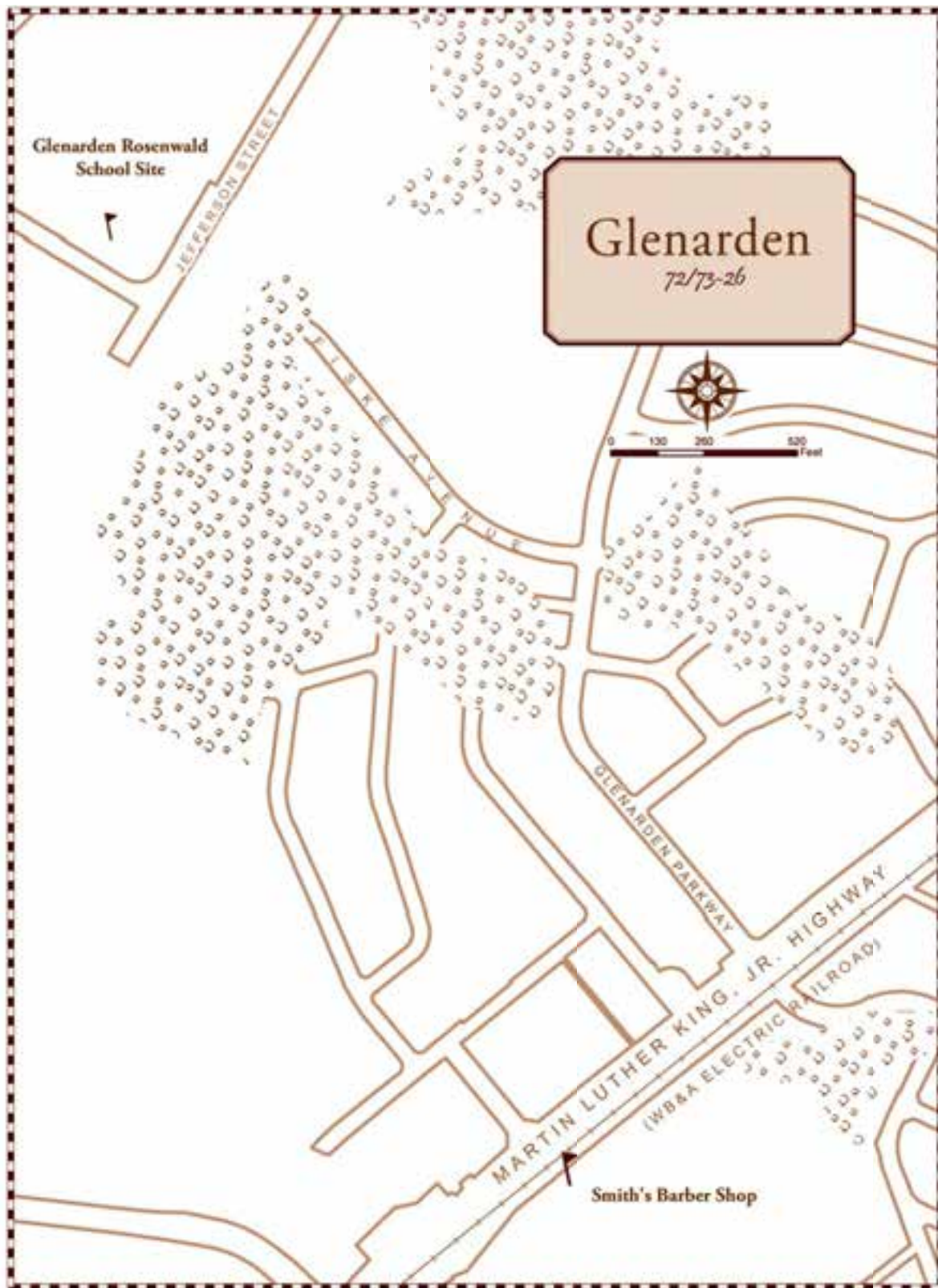
Fairmont Heights High School is a 174,128 square-foot building constructed of concrete block with a stretcher-bond brick veneer. The school has an irregular form loosely based on an H-shaped plan with large appendages on the southeast and northwest corners. Much of the building features a wide fascia composed of concrete panels over a stretcher-bond brick string. The main entry is located in a canted elevation in the northeast corner of the courtyard. Window types are predominantly casement and awning, with a small number of double-hung windows.



Serving the western part of the county, Fairmont Heights was the first school to offer the twelfth grade to its students. Under the leadership of its first principal, G. James Gholson, the students were afforded a broad curriculum focused on the humanities. With the landmark United States Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the school became the local focus for numerous initiatives over almost twenty years to desegregate the schools of Prince George's County. Such initiatives included the "freedom of choice" plan, becoming a "Model Urban School," and extensive busing of students to and from area schools. In 1972, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the American Civil Liberties Union filed a class-action suit on behalf of all African-American students, for nine African-American parents (one did not sign the affidavit) of students residing in the immediate community. John Williams, President of the Fairmont Park, North Englewood, Chapel Oaks Civic Association and Jesse Warr, newly elected first black member of the School Board, recruited all plaintiffs. (Williams served as lead plaintiff, though the suit was filed in the name of Sylvester Vaughns because Williams was the only plaintiff employed by Prince George's County Schools.) The action, filed in the United States Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit, 1972, sought to further eliminate segregation within the county's schools. *Vaughns v. Board of Education of Prince George's County* resulted in the transfer of approximately 32,863 students in an effort to abolish the last vestiges of the dual-school system. Several efforts to close the school in the 1970s and a proposal to change the name of the school in 1983 were thwarted by the dedication of students, faculty, alumni, and community. Fairmont Heights High School is a significant landmark as a point of pride and achievement in the black community.

**Fairmont Heights High School soon after construction. The car is a 1956 Ford Fairlane.**







## 72/73-26 *Glenarden* INC. 1939

### **Both sides of Martin Luther King, Jr. Highway**

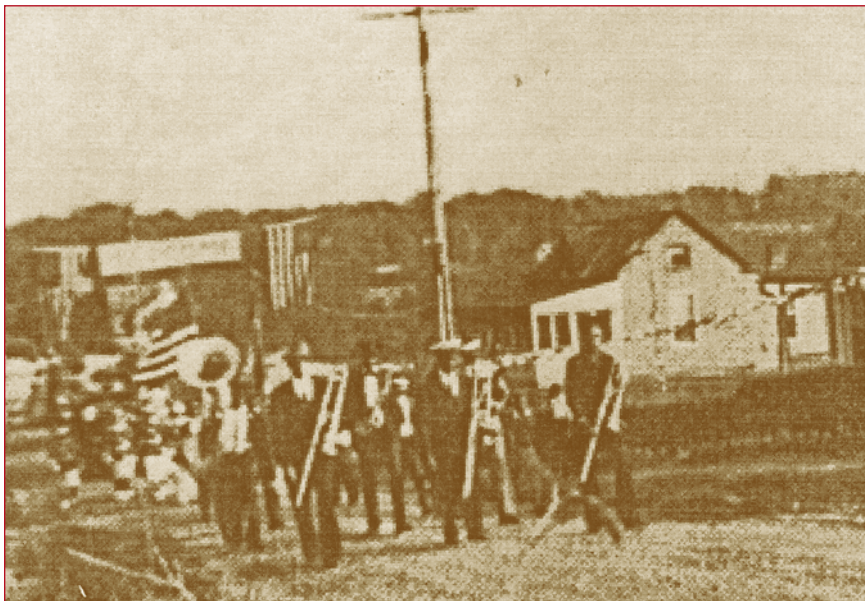
Between Barlowe Road and Dellwood Avenue

Glenarden developed along the line of the WB&A Electric Railway which opened in 1908. This high-speed, interurban line spurred the development of a number of new communities such as Lincoln, a garden suburb promoted by Thomas J. Calloway, that was easily accessible by the WB&A line and that attracted black professionals from Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. Lincoln was platted in 1908. Two years later, William R. Smith, a Washington businessman, began buying up property which fronted on the WB&A line three miles southwest of Lincoln. By 1913, Smith's property had been subdivided as Glenarden and Glenarden Heights; the subdivision featured a circle with a garden center and radiating lots at the location of the WB&A station. In 1921 an area on the opposite side of the tracks was subdivided as Ardwick Park and then later resubdivided as Glenarden Woods.

The first residents of the new Glenarden community built modest houses: small cottages and bungalows, as well as narrow, two-story front-gabled dwellings suited to the narrow lots. By 1920 there were 25 households in Glenarden, and the largest group of working men was employed by the railroad (both the Pennsylvania Railroad and the WB&A). A Rosenwald school was built in 1922, and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church opened in the same year, both located in the section known as Ardwick Park. (Established to serve the growing African-American population of Glenarden and the surrounding area, St. Joseph's Catholic mission was formed in 1921.)

During the 1930s the Glenarden Civic Association worked toward improved community services, and in 1939 Glenarden became the third (after North Brentwood and

Fairmount Heights) African-American municipality to be incorporated. By this time the WB&A Electric Railway had closed down, forced out by increased use of the automobile; its right-of-way was converted



This photograph taken in the early days in Glenarden shows a marching band in a parade.



into the George Palmer Highway (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Highway). During the 1940s a two-story municipal hall was constructed and a local post office was established. The 1922 schoolhouse was replaced with the modern Glenarden Woods Elementary School, which opened in 1957. Much of the early housing, however, was in deteriorating condition, and during the 1970s Glenarden qualified for and received U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funding for urban renewal and rehabilitation. Substandard housing was removed and replaced by new building stock. The town hall was replaced by a large municipal building, and a local branch of the county library system was constructed, both designed by resident architect Anthony Johns.

Although very little of early Glenarden remains to be seen, the community has a long history and has been described as “the heart and hub of the black community of Prince George’s County.”

72-60

### *Smith's Barber Shop*

**7907 Martin Luther King, Jr. Highway**

Built 1948

**R**aymond Smith opened a barbershop on George Palmer Highway in 1948. Smith recalls that there were a number of businesses owned by African-Americans on the block serving the community of Glenarden including his barbershop, two restaurants, a dry cleaner, and a gasoline station.

Raymond Smith was born in Prince George’s County in 1918. He moved to Glenarden as an adult when it was a small, unincorporated town. Raymond Smith is still a very active presence in the community. Smith’s daughter, Royette, notes that Smith’s Barber Shop supports many local sporting teams including baseball, softball and track groups.

Although Raymond Smith opened his barbershop in 1948, he began his entrepreneurial efforts ten years earlier, going door-to-door cutting hair. He learned his trade by observing his mother and then practicing on his brothers and sisters. He began cutting residents’ hair with hand clippers when he was between 12 to 14 years old. He charged “15 cents for a child and 25 cents for grown ups.” When asked how he became interested in being a barber he replied, “Well, there was another fellow around in Glenarden cutting hair for 15 cents for children and 25 cents for grown ups, and then he kind of got overgrown with cutting hair [sic], and he stopped and I started.” His barbershop is the only one in which he has ever worked.

When Smith was discussing how he saved enough money to open his barbershop he said that, “Well, when I came from the Navy, I was cutting hair in the Navy, and we used to get tips, we didn’t get paid for cutting hair, but the boys would tip you for certain haircuts that you’d give them that they could get. When I came home I had some money to build a barbershop.” He chose the location because he was living in the area on McLain Avenue



and was familiar with this piece of land on Glenarden Parkway. Smith and a few “fellows” built it brick by brick, “but I did most of the inside myself.” Raymond Smith stated that “this section was first [the barbershop], but the fellow that was helping me on the other side, he wanted a gas station, so he did that other side and used it for a gas station.” Later on, the former gas station became a restaurant, then a post office, then a cleaning establishment, and then a beauty parlor. When the last tenant left “I told my daughter I was going to rent it out and she said she wanted it.” Royette Smith opened

her own business, Royalty Hair Salon, in 1990.

People from various local communities come to Smith’s Barber Shop; the building has never been used for anything else. Years ago, it was an important social meeting place. “The police department would come in every Saturday, they would dress up, put on their new uniforms and come out and we would just inspect them. The community—it’s okay. I mean not like it used to be because a lot of the old people have died.” Royette Smith noted that “this is the only African-American-owned business in Glenarden. I

**Smith’s Barber Shop is a one-story commercial building with a rectangular-plan and two storefronts. Raymond Smith is shown at right in this 1994 photograph.**

guess he was one of the first and he’s still here. All the rest of them are gone now.” Raymond Smith says that his business has been very successful. It has given him four houses and the barbershop. Upon retirement he plans to give his daughter the entire property to run. Royette Smith states that “several people have expressed interest in the space to continue its use as a barbershop.” She plans to write “Smith’s Place” over the building to keep it “theirs.”



## 78-39 *Little Washington*

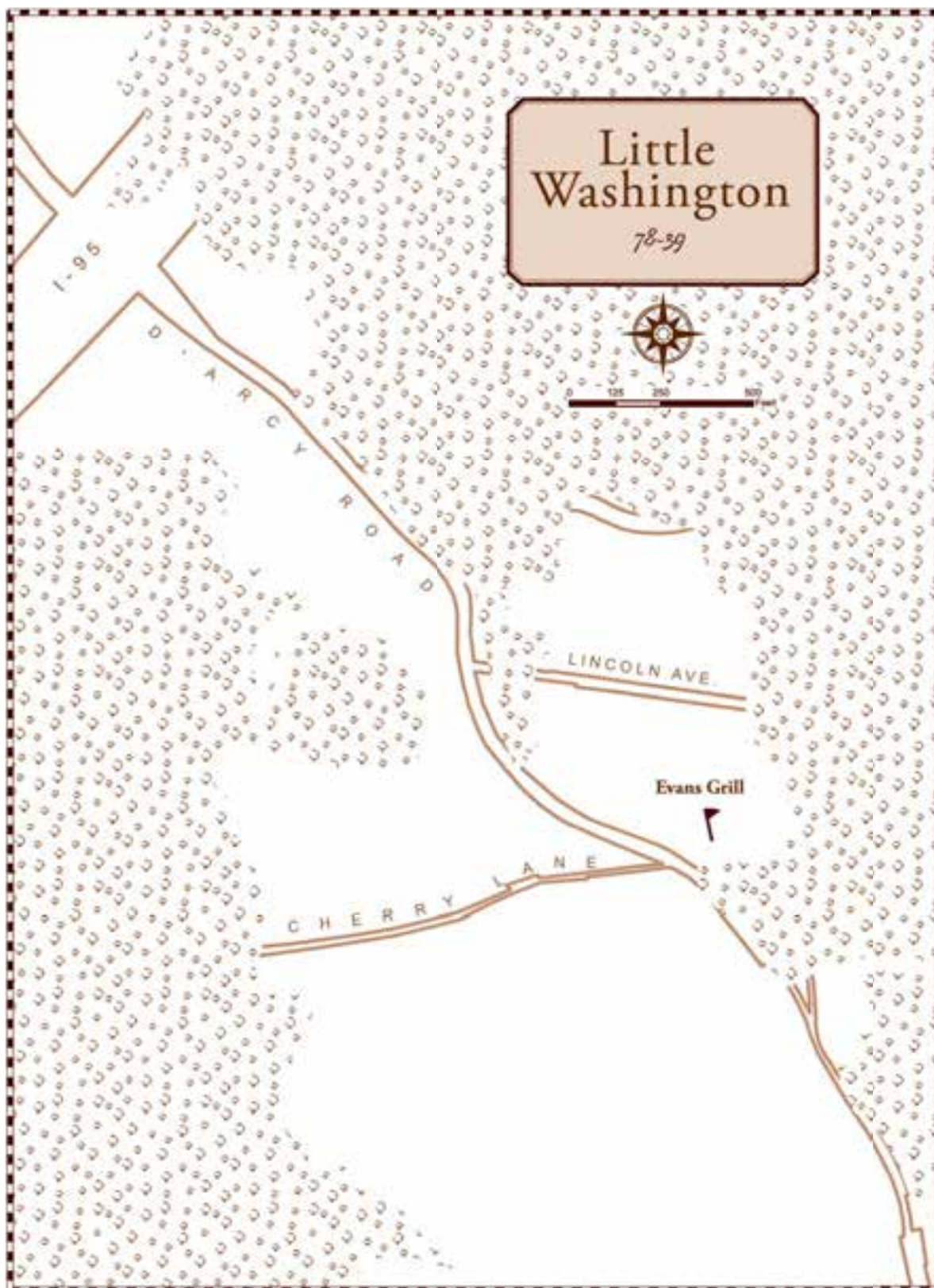
**Bounded by Washington Avenue on the north,  
Douglas Avenue on the northeast, Sansbury Road on the  
southeast, South Cherry Lane on the south, and  
D'Arcy Road on the southwest**

**L**ittle Washington is a small mid-twentieth-century neighborhood located north of the community of Westphalia. Historic maps document that the neighborhood was rural until the platting of the first subdivision in 1941. Martenet's Map of 1861 shows virtually no development in the area that became Little Washington. By 1878, the Hopkins Atlas documents a few dwellings constructed to the north and west of the present day neighborhood.

Little Washington was platted in three separate sections from 1941 to 1949. The first section, along Alms House Road (now D'Arcy Road) was platted in 1941 by Leon E. Tayman of Upper Marlboro. Section 1 contained nine lots, ranging in size from 0.32 acres to 0.88 acres. Lots were long and narrow, with approximately 100 feet of frontage along the main road. In 1947, Tayman platted Section 2, off of Alms House Road, on a newly established road known as South Cherry Lane. Section 2 included 22 lots on approximately 16 acres. Lots on the north side of Cherry Lane were very long and narrow, while those on the south side were shallower with the same frontage.

Little is known about subdivider Leon Tayman, who was a white man. He was a resident of Upper Marlboro, and the 1930 census notes that he was born in 1886 and lived with his parents, one brother, several nieces and nephews, and a domestic servant. Tayman's profession was listed as an agricultural day laborer. In 1949 after the death of his wife,





Tayman sold an undeveloped portion of his land to Charles Reithmeyer and Willy Grusholt, who subsequently platted Section 3 of Little Washington. Section 3 included 41 lots on almost 27 acres of land located between Alms House Road on the west and Sansbury Road on the east. Reithmeyer and Grusholt worked together on several other residential developments in Prince George's County including North Forestville (1946-1950) and Old Towne Village (1964-1965).

Similarities in building form and design of several buildings in Little Washington and in North Forestville suggest that Reithmeyer and Grusholt, or another development company, likely acted as operative builders, constructing several houses for sale in their new subdivisions. In Old Towne Village, a townhouse and condominium development, Reithmeyer and Grusholt acted as community builders for a fully planned community that included a pool, golf course, and tennis court. The flat land of the community is improved by buildings that date from circa 1941 to the present. The majority of buildings are wood-frame construction built between 1941 and 1955. Buildings in the survey district are typically located close to the road. The first houses constructed in the neighborhood have bungalow forms and are typically small, one-and-one-half-story front-gabled dwellings with a one-story entry porch or portico. The predominant architectural style in Little Washington is the Modern Movement, with a variety of minimal traditional, split-level, and ranch houses. Regardless of when constructed, the dwellings in Little Washington have minimal ornamentation. The community is surrounded by industrial development.

## 78-39-1 *Evans Grill*

9206 D'Arcy Road

Built 1946

A frame roadhouse which was in its heyday nearly triple its current size, Evans Grill was the home to many famous R&B performers of the 1950s and 1960s. It later went on to become a hot spot for go-go music in the 1980s.

In February 1946, Clarence and Pearl Evans purchased Parcel 4 in Section 1 of Tayman's Little Washington. Born in 1915 and raised in Prince George's County, Clarence Evans served in the United States Army during World War II. After retiring from the military, he oversaw construction of Evans Grill, a small roadside tavern catering to locals and local bands. Evans, who received his beer and wine license on June 27, 1946, "noticed that crowds of as many as 300 people were gathering on weekend nights in the park outside a nearby convenience store, often playing guitars and



The dance hall was to the left of the existing building.





A poster from the 1980s. See page 254 for information on Baltimore's Globe Poster Printing Corporation.

keep in mind: black people couldn't go anywhere downtown, so if you had the ability to set up a place like this and they wanted to have fun and see live entertainment, they had to come through this. That's how the Chitlin' Circuit really got started, off this kind of environment." In his book *Hog and Hominy*, Frederick Douglass Opie states, "The routine went: drive for hours, stop, set up the bandstand, play for five hours, break down the bandstand, and drive for several more hours. On the road, performers often settled for sandwiches from the colored window of segregated restaurants until they arrived at the next venue." Evans Grill provided patrons and performers alike a comfortable social environment.

socializing." Interviewed in 1994 by *The Washington Post*, Evans remembered, "It was all black and all I seen was black and they couldn't stay in the place, just go in and buy what they wanted to, come back out in the yard and sit on logs and trees... That's what made me go build Evans Grill—to get them from outdoors in the hot sun or the cold and rain." Evans shortly thereafter purchased an adjacent vacant lot from Tayman, increasing the size of his property to approximately 1.61 acres. This additional land allowed Evans to expand operations and construct a large music hall capable of holding 1,500 people that became a must-stop for performers on the Chitlin' Circuit.<sup>1</sup>

Before the civil rights movement gained widespread traction, during the Jim Crow era, African-American entertainers could not eat at the same establishments in which they performed, and often had trouble purchasing meals before and after shows in proximity to the venues. Evans put his establishment in context, stating, "Another thing you had to

<sup>1</sup> See the entry on Wilmer's Park in "Other Resources" for more on the Chitlin' Circuit.



The grill steadily climbed in stature from a place to see live local bands to a bona fide stop on the Chitlin' Circuit. Clarence Evans recalled how he first attracted the big names in African-American entertainment to his venue in the country, "I went and saw a lot of people at the Howard Theater and Turner Arena and talked to them, and then I started working the big entertainment." And big entertainment he provided.

**E**vans Grill was known best for its Wednesday-night showcases, which materialized out of a matter of convenience for Evans and the entertainers. Wilber Fletcher, author of Clarence Evan's biography, explains, "They'd [performers] often just be sitting around, trying to put ends together to go to the next place for the next week. They were very glad to get that stopover—it was a good booster for them." Evans Grill "provided a post-war venue for beloved performers such as Duke Ellington, B.B. King, Ray Charles, James Brown, Bill Doggett, Sam Cooke, and the Drifters." Smaller venues such as Evans were integral to the success of the Chitlin' Circuit and the entertainers "because it offered the only way for them to perform for their fans during a period when the white media did not cover and mainstream venues did not book black artists." Many African-American entertainers got their start on the small stages afforded by clubs like Evans Grill. The larger city venues and the smaller clubs such as Evans Grill did not compete in this way; instead, they harmoniously spread and fostered the musical talents of America's black entertainers. For African-Americans in the Washington metropolitan area, Evans Grill quickly became the spot for mid-week entertainment. One of those musicians was Diz Russell. Commenting on Evans Grill's heyday during the 1950s, Russell said playing there "wouldn't get in the way of a weekend engagement in D.C. And if you were heading south or north, you always had that drop-over where you could make a few bucks with Evans. We'd call him up and say, 'Well, whatcha got for next Wednesday or the one after?' Ike and Tina, B.B. King—everybody coming through here would make that Evans Grill stop. We always knew we could pick up a few bucks cause we were coming through Evans."

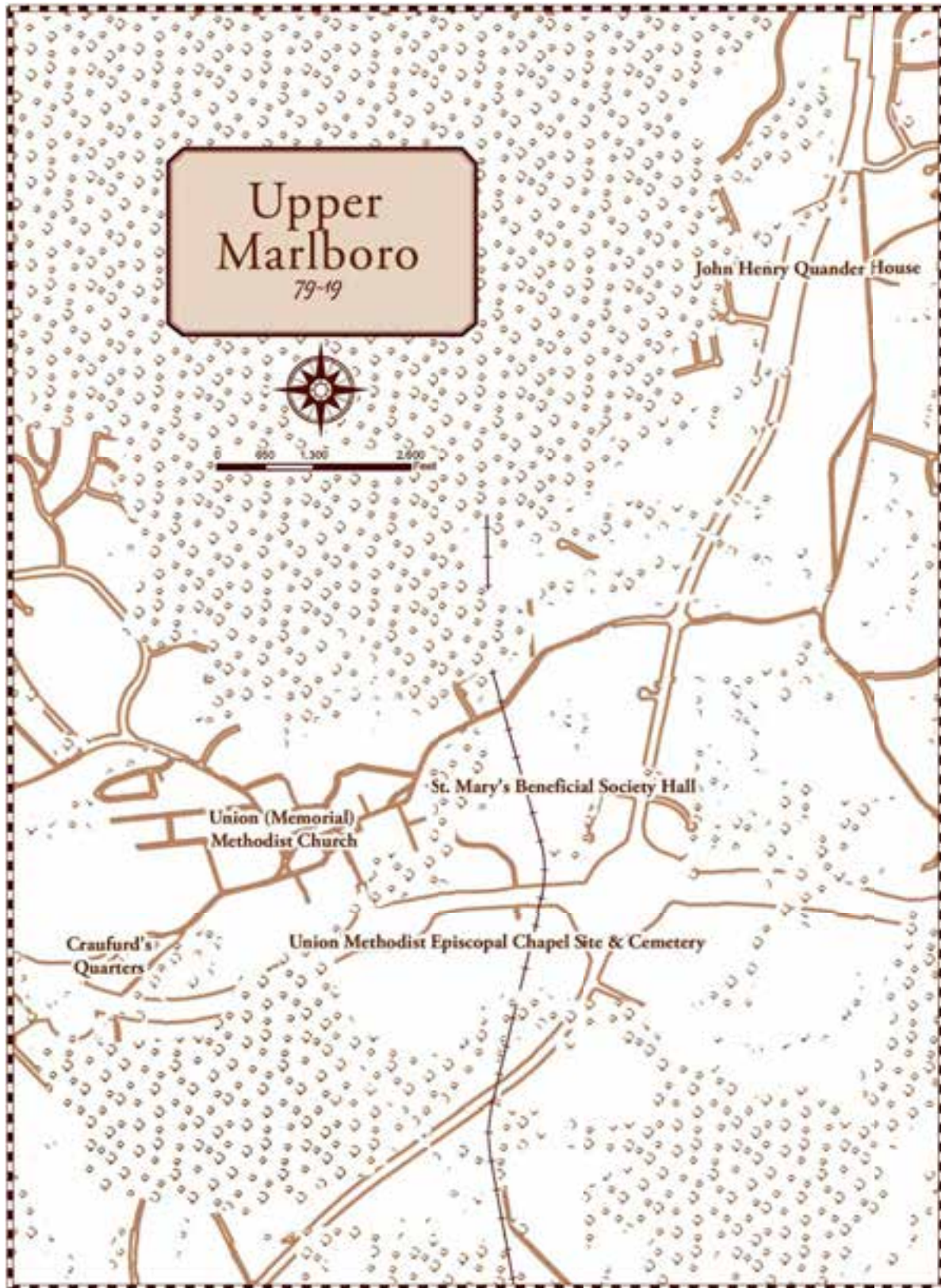
Clarence Evans' hands-on management approach paid dividends in the numbers of people attending shows at the grill and the quality of musicians clamoring to play there. Eddie Daye, who sang at Evans Grill with the Four Bars, remarked that it was "just a down-home, country place, even had the appearance of just a country building that housed a lot of people fortunate to be able to see name entertainment." For Evans, the appearance of the building was not as important as the social function it served, and the music it showcased. Although Evans Grill was relatively isolated in Prince George's County, people would see the posters for shows and "get dressed up...have new shoes to go to this place down long, dark, dusty roads in Forestville." Show-goers would "meet in front of it for show-and-tell, where you'd stand up with a new outfit so everybody could see it. Rain or shine, you were there and it was a ball."

Evans Grill's audience was, for the most part, entirely African-American. Ironically, the erosion of segregation, which had given rise to the success of Evans Grill, led to its eventual decline. By the start of the 1960s, Washington, D.C., clubs had started opening their doors to African-Americans, effectively luring away the same people who had cemented Evans Grill's place on the Chitlin' Circuit. Patron Millie Russell recalls

*Rain or shine,  
you were there  
and it was a  
ball.*

the shift. “After being denied going to ‘quality’ places you’d read about, well naturally you want to venture out and you don’t look back at what you used to go to.” The advent of rock ’n’ roll, “which promised—or threatened, depending on your view—to bring the two races together” began in the District when “Elvis Presley hit town on his first national tour in ’56, followed by Dale Hawkins and Roy [Orbison] in 1958, the same year Bo Diddley moved to Washington from New Orleans.” Downtown Washington, D.C., had developed a music scene accessible to African-Americans. As a result, Evans Grill was no longer able to attract the big-name talent.

Undaunted by the end of an era of live music at the grill, Clarence Evans adapted his venue to serve the music community that grew out of the 1970s disco era. Embracing this era, Evans Grill played host to scores of disco parties. The 1980s brought a change to go-go music, and the venue once again adapted to function as one of the areas well-known go-go clubs. It is not known when the last event took place, but demolition of the large music hall occurred between 1993 and 1998. Although the remainder of the building is currently vacant, its history is still fondly remembered by many.





## On the Western Branch of the Patuxent River

Historic sites (6)

When Prince George's County was established in 1696, the already-established port town of Charles Town on the Patuxent River (at the mouth of the Western Branch) was selected as the seat of government. After the establishment of Marlborough and other port towns in 1706, however, Charles Town began to fade in prominence, and by 1718, residents petitioned for the removal of the County Seat to Marlborough, approximately three miles inland on the Western Branch. This was accomplished in 1721, by which time Marlborough was known as "Upper" Marlborough to distinguish it from Lower Marlborough in Calvert County. (Early in this century, the name of the town came to be abbreviated to Upper Marlboro', and today is consistently spelled Upper Marlboro.) From 1721 until early in the 20th century, Upper Marlboro was the commercial, political and social center of Prince George's County.

Upper Marlboro society was dominated by some of the county's most prominent white planters, politicians, merchants, and lawyers, but the town has always had a substantial black population and a long-standing free black population. During the early part of the nineteenth century, blacks were part of the congregation of the Methodist Church on the western edge of the town and of the Roman Catholic Church near the eastern edge of town. As soon as the Civil War ended, a group of free blacks purchased land and built a Methodist meetinghouse on the south side of town near the Western Branch, and then worked with the Freedmen's Bureau toward the establishment of schools for their children. The Freedmen's Bureau school was built in 1867; until it was completed, classes were conducted in the Methodist meetinghouse. This little enclave, clustered around the school and church, became one of the centers of the African-American community in post-Civil War Upper Marlboro; several black families acquired and moved frame tenant houses to this community

from the nearby large farms of their former masters. In 1921, when the new Marlboro High School was opened for white students, the older high school (a four-room wood frame building) was moved to this community, reassembled and opened as the county's first secondary school for black students. It was replaced in 1934 by the first Frederick Douglass High School, located just south of the County Courthouse.

During the late-nineteenth century, black members of St. Mary's Catholic Church established a local benevolent society for social and cultural activities and to provide financial assistance for emergencies. A small complex of black-owned businesses developed around St. Mary's Beneficial Society Hall. This complex included the home of James Diggs, a graduate of Hampton Institute who taught for nearly 50 years in the black schools of Upper Marlboro, as well as the Diggs family sweet shop and a popular pool hall. Except for the benevolent society hall, this streetscape of modest frame buildings was demolished during the 1980s.

Another community of African-American families began to develop on the east side of Upper Marlboro, after the construction of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad through the town. This area, sometimes known as Sugar Hill, grew up along the road toward Hills Bridge on the Patuxent, and was in part populated by the families of men working on the construction of the railroad between 1868 and 1873.

Today Upper Marlboro is a bustling government center, with busy court activity and a greatly enlarged modern courthouse, an equestrian center which draws crowds from near and far, as well as law offices, planners' offices, churches and numerous shops. Upper Marlboro has always had a special importance in the history of the county, and has always had a substantial and active black community.

79-29

## *Craufurd Quarters*

5611 Old Crain Highway

Historic site; built late 18th Century



Quarter 1 in 1986.

These two wood-frame, brick-nogged structures are located on a tract of land patented as Bacon Hall, purchased in 1741 by David Craufurd I.<sup>1</sup>

His grandson, David Craufurd III, inherited this property that by 1801 consisted of around 700 acres, with several buildings and at least 36 enslaved laborers. The building technology employed in the two houses indicates that they were probably constructed during the ownership of the first two David Craufurds, between 1741 and 1801.

*"The impact of African architectural concepts has ironically been disguised because their influence has been so widespread; they have been invisible because they are so obvious."*  
—John Michael Vlach

Quarter 1, with its wood-shingled walls, corrugated metal roof and front porch, can easily be mistaken for an early-twentieth century tenant house. Quarter 2 was badly burned circa 1975 and is little more than a shell. Both have long been unoccupied, but are basically identical: each a story-and-one-half with a moderately pitched gable roof, oriented to the south with entry doors in the long wall. Each is framed of hewn timbers, mortised together and filled with brick nogging. The interiors consist of two downstairs rooms with an undivided loft above accessed by a boxed stair. The stove flues which run through the center are late-nineteenth century replacements for the original fireplaces, which were probably located in walls where, in Quarter 1, there is a 5 foot, 6 inch section without nogging. Quarter 2 is too deteriorated to furnish clues to its original fireplace location. Along the bank of the creek to the west of Quarter 1 are an outhouse and a long, low shed of unknown purpose. Both structures are framed with hewn members joined by mortise and tenon, and may be of comparable age to the cabins. Both were whitewashed on the interior.

The cabins were possibly built by Craufurd's enslaved laborers. David Craufurd II's will of 1801 mentions two slave carpenters. It is likely that if the cabins were constructed by slave labor, they were African-Americans: by 1730 the population of enslaved laborers was largely American-born. The cabins were likely erected with specific instructions, at the direction of the owner.

The information on these two houses is largely taken from a December 1985 paper written by Elizabeth Hannold in the archives of M-NCPPC's Historic Preservation Section. Drawing on a diverse selection of secondary resources, Hannold makes some observations about early plantation life that are worth repeating here, as they speak directly to these structures and the lifeways of those who inhabited them. While noting that the cabins "seem uncommonly luxurious in the number

<sup>1</sup> Historic Site 72-029 is technically the "Site of Overseer's House." This house, built in 1745, was moved to 6601 South Osborne Road in 1993, completely restored, and is now known as Bacon Hall (Historic Site 82A-044).

of rooms, the size of the windows, the wood floors, [as opposed to earth] the enclosed staircase, and in the quality of their construction” she also writes:

*The [relative] lack of space in the cabins should be viewed from a number of perspectives. Firstly, slave life did not allow much opportunity for passing time in the house. Theirs was a life of work and the primary function of the quarters was to provide a place to eat, usually, and to sleep. Secondly, these structures would have been very sparsely furnished. Thirdly, it seems likely that few whites of the day enjoyed significantly better housing. Dell Upton claims that 80 to 90 percent of the white population of the Chesapeake region lived in one-room houses through the eighteenth century. And in the nineteenth century, George McDaniel asserts, the houses of the poor, white landowners and laborers in rural southern Maryland were quite similar in form, size, and design to those of the slaves.... Whether they were perceived as miserably cramped or as sufficiently spacious, these houses would have had an important psychological value for their inhabitants, as they provided the one space in which the slave could feel autonomous. In them, away from the sight and power of the white masters, the slave was free, or relatively so, to do as he wished. Moreover, in the house the role of the slave could be discarded for that of a father, a mother, or a child.<sup>2</sup>*

Hannold further notes that scholars of African-American architecture “caution against looking for overtly African elements in slave-built structures.” Quoting John Michael Vlach “the impact of African architectural concepts has ironically been disguised because their influence has been so widespread; they have been invisible because they are so obvious,”<sup>3</sup> Hannold concludes, “At the very least it can safely be stated that if the cabins were constructed by slaves for slaves, the care taken in their construction gains added significance.”<sup>4</sup>

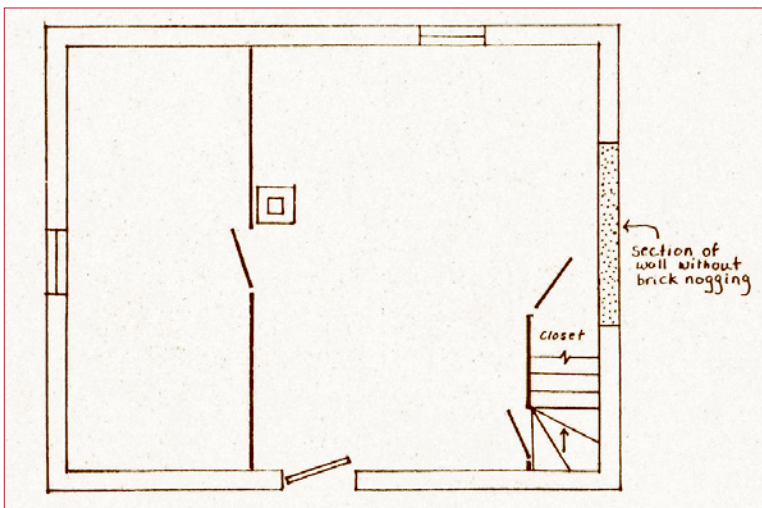
**BELOW LEFT:** Plan of the first floor of Quarter 1, drawn by Elizabeth Hannold, 1985.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Quarter 2.

<sup>2</sup> Hannold, Elizabeth. “An Examination of Two Cabins on the Craufurd Plantation,” for AMCV 351, December 2, 1985, pp. 16-17. Collection of Historic Preservation Section, M-NCPPC.

<sup>3</sup> Vlach, John Michael. *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts*. 1978, Cleveland Museum of Art, p. 136.

<sup>4</sup> Hannold, “An Examination of Two Cabins on the Craufurd Plantation,” p. 14.







## 79-19-20 *Union Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church*

**14418 Old Marlboro Pike**

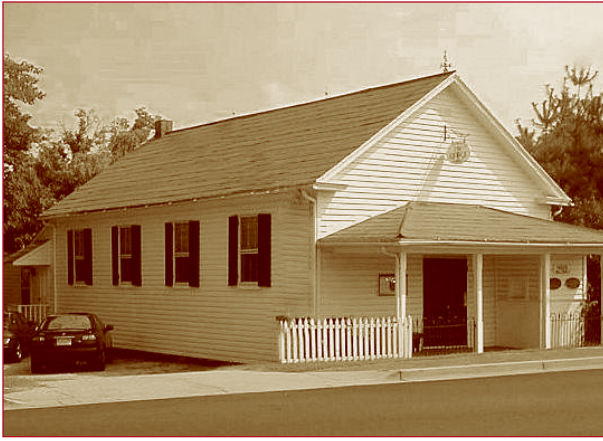
Historic site; built 1916

Known today as Union United Methodist Church, this building is a significant landmark in the African-American history of Upper Marlboro. Although it has been altered by the addition of a large modern wing, it is an important symbol of the local black Methodist community.

Union Church is a front-gabled church of meeting-house style, and of wood frame construction. It is distinguished by its three-story entry tower which projects from the west gable front of the building; entrance is through a paneled double door with a pointed-arch transom. Marking the division between the second and third stories of the tower is a pent roof on all four sides, and above this an open belfry surmounted by a steep eight-faceted pyramidal roof. Flanking the entrance tower in the gable front are two pointed-arch windows, and five similar windows light the long south side elevation of the nave. The windows are filled with colored glass memorial panes dating from 1973. The original wood siding of the church is covered with white aluminum siding. A long modern addition extends north at right angles to the original church building.

Union Church has been a symbol of the local black Methodist community for 80 years. Opened in 1916 as Union Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, it continued the tradition of Union Chapel (see 79-046), the black Methodist chapel established in Upper Marlboro at the end of the Civil War. During the early years of this century, plans were made to replace the deteriorating Union Chapel at a location closer to the center of Upper Marlboro and farther from the swampy land near the Western Branch. In 1913, one-half acre fronting on the Old Washington-Marlborough Turnpike was deeded to the trustees of Union Chapel. This land was about 1,500 feet north of the old chapel and just across the turnpike from the site of the antebellum Methodist Church. Construction of the new Union Church was under the direction of Joseph Wyvill, a white carpenter/builder associated with many buildings in the Marlboro area, and much of the construction work was done by members of the Union Chapel congregation.

Union Memorial Church was opened in 1916 and has since that time been an established landmark in the community, closely associated with Upper Marlboro's African-American population. It was used for high school graduation exercises and other special events until the construction of the first Frederick Douglass High School in the 1930s. In 1968, through Conference policy, the church was renamed Union United Methodist Church. In 1992 the large wing was added, significantly enlarging the church building. In spite of this change, Union Church is still a local landmark and continues the 130-year-old tradition of the black Methodist community of the county seat.



## 79-19-25 *St. Mary's Beneficial Society Hall*

**14825 Pratt Street**

Historic site; built 1892

National Register of Historic Places

St. Mary's Beneficial Society Hall was, for nearly a century, the center of the social, religious and charitable activities of the black Roman Catholic community of Upper Marlboro. In the 1980s it was adapted for a new use, but is still a visible symbol of its former role.

The hall is a one-story, front-gabled building of wood frame construction, with molded returned cornice in the gable front. Entrance is through a double door, centered in the principal west gable front, and sheltered by a hip-roof porch. There are no other openings in the gable front. At the south end of the porch is a small square, flat-roof box-office that was built after 1940 for the social events that took place in this building. The building is sheathed with German wood siding painted white; the four windows which light the side walls have new louvered wood shutters, painted black. The porch is framed by short stretches of white picket and wrought-iron decorative fences.

St. Mary's is one of only two surviving black benevolent society lodges of the nineteenth century. The building is representative of the growth during Reconstruction of black benevolent societies, which, together with schools and churches, were the main forces that sustained the newly freed population during this time. The St. Mary's Beneficial Society was founded in 1880 with the purpose of providing financial assistance for emergencies, as well as death benefits, to its members. Four of the charter members were Matthias Simmons, Stephen Perry, James Forbes and Dominic Quander, all active in the black community of Upper Marlboro. In July 1887, the society purchased a lot a short distance from St. Mary's Catholic Church, and the lodge building was completed by 1892. Membership in the society assured emergency financial assistance and provided a center for social and cultural events. The building resembled the school buildings of the period: one-story and front-gabled, with a simple entrance porch.

During the construction of the present St. Mary's Catholic Church (May 1898 to May 1899), the Beneficial Society Hall was consecrated and used for church services. The building has seen many uses over the years. The society continued to function, but with the increasing availability of life and health insurance, it gradually lost its Benevolent Society purpose. The hall then became a meeting place for special events, as well as a rental facility for local group meetings. In the late 1980s, the property was sold to an Upper Marlboro law firm, who carefully rehabilitated the building for use as their law offices. Its original name and use, however, are clearly displayed on the front of the building, and the building is still a symbol of one aspect of the African-American heritage in the county seat. The hall was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.



79-46

## *Union Methodist Episcopal Chapel Site and Cemetery*

### **Valley Lane**

Historic site; markers dating from 1865

This is the site of the first Methodist church and cemetery for the black community of Upper Marlboro. Built in 1865, the church building served also as the location of the first classroom for black students until the Freedmen's Bureau school opened in 1868 on adjoining land. Today it is a tranquil grassy area bordered by woods and dotted with gravestones commemorating more than a century of burials.

In October 1865, Dr. Frederick Sasscer, a leading citizen of Upper Marlboro, deeded five acres along the Western Branch in Upper Marlboro to three black men, brothers Henson and Nicholas Greenleaf and George Bowling, who had been appointed trustees by the Washington Colored Methodist Conference. The land, somewhat removed from

the main part of town, was to be used for the establishment of a church and a burying ground for members of the local black Methodist community. The period immediately following the Civil War saw the building of many black churches, principally Methodist, and the Upper Marlboro church was completed early in this period. It was known as Union Chapel and belonged to the Methodist Circuit which also included Brooks Chapel at Nottingham, Niles Chapel at Centreville and Carroll Chapel at Mitchellville.

Members of Union Chapel were, from the beginning, active in the Negro education movement. The three trustees became the president, secretary and treasurer of the Free Colored School Society which pushed for the

establishment of a school in Upper Marlboro. For two years before the Freedmen's Bureau school was completed, classes were held in Union Chapel. For more than a half century, Union Chapel was a focal point for the black community of Upper Marlboro. In 1916 Union Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church was built to replace the old chapel. The building served for several years as a community gathering place. After it was torn down, its site was the scene of camp meetings. The graveyard has continued to be used and is cared for by the congregation of the newer Union Church. Now a quiet and secluded area apart from the center of town, the chapel site and graveyard are reminders of the historic church that once stood there.



## 79-63-14     *John Henry Quander House*

**3708 Old Crain Highway**

Historic site; built c. 1870

The Quander House is a rare example of a post-Civil War freedman's dwelling. Although many of these modest dwellings must have been built by the newly freed people during the early years of Reconstruction, few have survived.

The Quander House is a small, two-story side-gabled dwelling of wood frame construction. The gable roof is covered with metal painted green, and the eaves are highlighted by scalloped vergeboards. The main block originally consisted of two small parlors on the first story and two small bedrooms above, lighted by windows in the gable ends; a one-story kitchen wing, with shed roof and brick chimney, was later built onto the rear of the main block. The building fronts on the south side of the old road which led to the Mount Pleasant Ferry and is adjoined by an extensively planted garden.

John Henry Quander had been a member of the large enslaved workforce of Mordecai Plummer, one of the county's most extensive slaveholders; Plummer's plantation, Poplar Ridge, was located near the Patuxent River about two miles north of Upper Marlboro. In 1870, John Henry Quander and his wife, Henrietta Tilghman, were still living with their seven children in the area of Poplar Ridge, but within a few years they had moved their family south to the outskirts of Upper Marlboro. In October of 1875, Quander

The Quander House,  
looking southwest  
along Mount Pleasant  
Road with the garden  
to the left.



purchased from Henry W. Clagett, nephew of Mordecai Plummer, approximately one-and-one-half acres on the road which led to the Mount Pleasant Ferry. The deed clearly indicates that this small house was already standing at this time; it was very likely built by Quander himself. The Quanders' new home was immediately south of the large new house, Bowling Heights, built circa 1870 for the daughter of Mordecai Plummer at the time of her marriage to John Bowling. The men of the Quander family worked as farm laborers, and it is likely that they relocated in order to work on the Bowlings' developing new farm, especially after the death of Mordecai Plummer in 1873.

*"The tea parties were held outside on the beautiful lawn... under the walnut tree."*

The large Quander family continued farming their own and other land in the Marlboro vicinity, and for several generations remained very active in the black community of Upper Marlboro. Members of the Roman Catholic Church, they were among the founders of the St. Mary's Beneficial Society. Gabriel Quander, son of John Henry, was a delegate to the Colored Catholic Congress,<sup>1</sup> which first met in Washington in 1889. His brother, William Dominic Quander, served for some time as trustee for the Upper Marlboro school, and William's daughter, Henrietta Quander Walls, continued after him in the same position. The extended Quander family has continued to be much involved in church and in education. This modest house is fondly remembered by the third generation of Quander children who grew up in it: for the family and church gatherings there and the huge walnut tree which provided shade and fruit.

Evelyn Quander Rattley was interviewed when she was 83 years old in 2008. Her father and his siblings were born in the house and grew up there. "We were there for Thanksgiving, Christmas, birthdays, weddings, picnics, lawn parties, teas...oh, we had so many of the teas. We dressed up for teas...[the house] seemed large, and very comfortable and just so warm and loving...there was a big potbelly stove in the main room that kept the whole house warm....All the linens in the house had beautiful lace on them...We would pray, we would sing... The tea parties were held outside on the beautiful lawn...under the walnut tree. Outside there was a meat house...where they smoked the meat. And then there was an open space with an awning over it where we ate in the summer time....They raised chickens and had hogs and cows...one cow. And a vegetable garden...The kitchen was outside... there was plenty of food always. Plenty of food and just happiness."

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<sup>1</sup> This movement was an initiative born in the black Roman Catholic community to address the injustices facing the country's African-Americans.



## 80-18 Chapel Hill

Old Fort Road between Gallahan Road  
and Washington Lane, Piscataway area  
Historic resources (2)

**ABOVE:** Long Quarters, on the Hatton farm. Although demolished long ago, it is likely that, before they built their own dwellings and developed their own small farms, some of the Chapel Hill families lived in this converted farm building. Long Quarters was later used to house soldiers stationed at Fort Washington during World War I.  
**BELOW:** The residence of William Delaney at 12510 Old Fort Road, which was demolished after 1993.

Chapel Hill is a small rural community which grew up near the intersection of the old roads connecting Fort Washington, Fort Foote, and the village of Piscataway. This was land that, before the Civil War, had been the large plantations of the Hatton, Edelen, Thorne, and Gallahan families, located on tracts known as “Boarman’s Content” and “Frankland.” The community took its name from the ancient private Roman Catholic chapel erected for the Digges family on their Frankland tract; by the end of the nineteenth century the chapel was gone, but gravestones marking a group of burials can still be seen on its site.

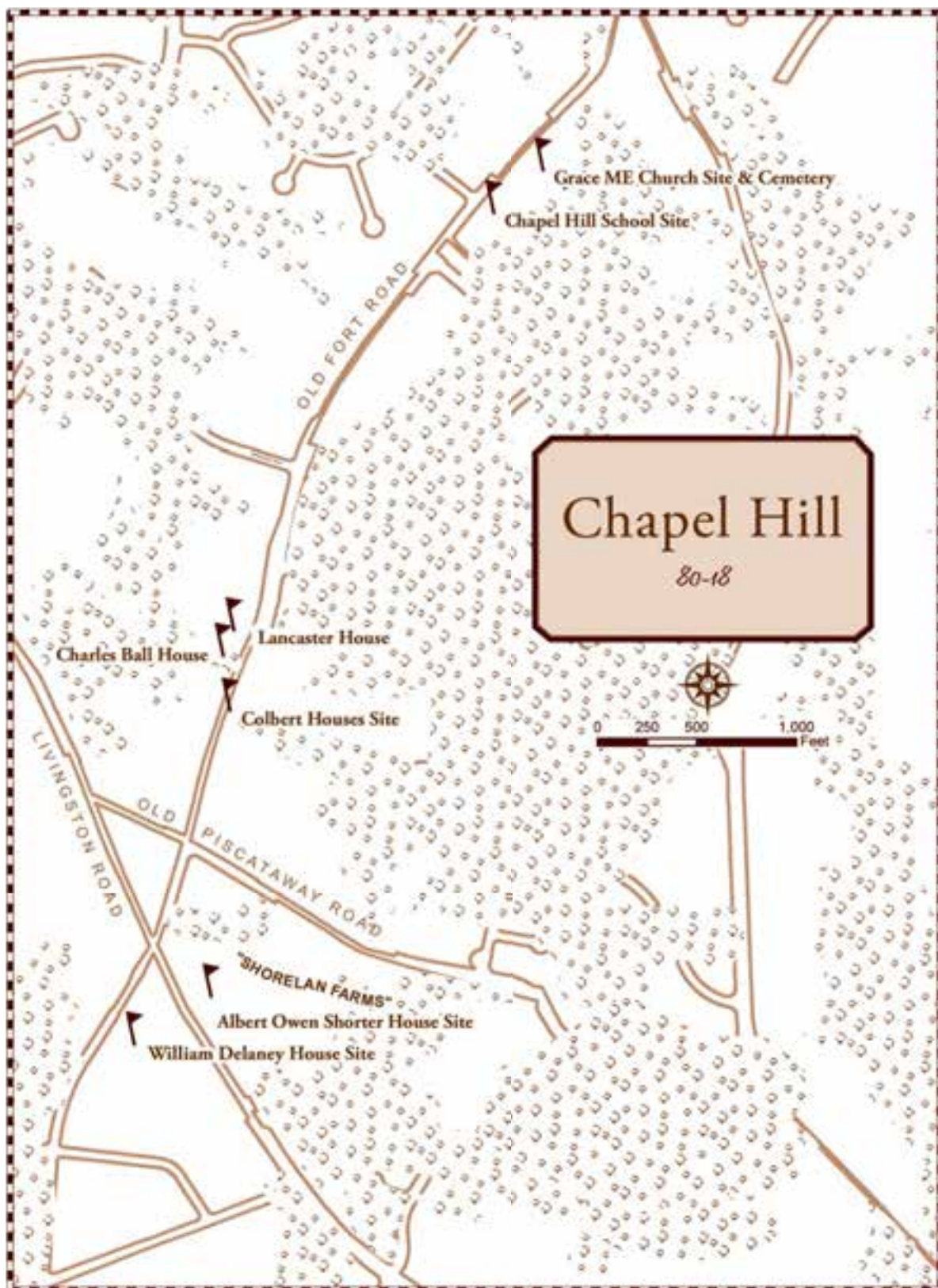
By the 1880s several families of free blacks and freedmen began to settle and establish farms on land that they purchased from the families of former plantation owners. Descendants of these first African-American families still live in the community today.

The Freedmen’s Bureau School was established here in 1868; following an established pattern, it served also as a place of worship before the construction of a Methodist meetinghouse on the adjoining land. The first meetinghouse was constructed probably by 1880 and certainly before 1883, when the two-acre parcel immediately north of the schoolhouse (on which the Methodist meetinghouse had already been constructed) was legally conveyed to the church trustees. By this time, the two buildings, church and school, had become the focal point of what was to become the Chapel Hill community.

In 1887, several five-acre parcels owned by the Hatton family were sold to two black men, Jeremiah Brown and Albert Owen Shorter. Brown served as the pastor of the new Methodist Church at Chapel Hill and also taught classes at the school. Shorter was a member of a free black family that had worked for the Hatton-Robey family and he had married Alice, the daughter of Jeremiah Brown, in 1872. During this period, Albert and Alice Shorter lived on part of the Hatton family farmland, known as Pleasant View, located close to the crossroads which would become the community of Chapel Hill.







By 1905, several other African-American families, including the Hensons, Colberts, Brooks, Hawkins, and Delaneys, had settled in the Chapel Hill area. In 1906, Albert Owen Shorter purchased another, larger parcel of land north of and adjoining the Hatton land. On this land Shorter built a frame dwelling and developed a fruit and vegetable farm. Many of his grown children lived on this property or on nearby small farms.

**T**he Chapel Hill community continued to grow as children of the original families married, built additional dwellings and raised their own families. A benevolent society lodge was built in 1922, offering emergency support for members as well as a gathering place for community events. Most of the families continued to farm the land and transport their produce to the markets in Washington, D.C. Many worked in District and Federal government offices and commuted to Washington every day; others held jobs at nearby Fort Washington, which was still the headquarters of the Defenses of the Potomac and the 12th Infantry.

In 1922, a new Rosenwald school was constructed immediately adjacent to the 50-year-old Freedmen's Bureau schoolhouse, and three years later another new classroom building replaced the older building. This 1920s schoolhouse complex continued in use until 1952 when students were transferred to the new Sojourner Truth School in Oxon Hill. For the next 20 years the Rosenwald complex was used as a community center by Chapel Hill citizens.

The period from the 1920s to the 1940s was probably the heyday of the Chapel Hill community. In 1927 the new Livingston Road was constructed, providing a direct route southeast from Broad Creek on the Potomac to the village of Piscataway, but the main concentration of Chapel Hill's farms and dwellings was along the old north-south road, by this time known as Old Fort Road. By the late 1930s the Chapel Hill neighborhood included approximately 35 houses, several general stores, the church and two connected schoolhouses, and a benevolent society lodge. Families still farmed and carried produce to the Washington markets, commuted daily to their employment with the District and Federal governments, and attended local school and church. Memories of childhood in Chapel Hill reflect a strong, stable community of closely related families who took care of one another and were largely self-sufficient.

The last 35 years have seen many changes to Chapel Hill, including the demolition of many of the older buildings. Several commercial establishments have been constructed at the south end of the community along Livingston Road; older houses have been replaced by new, and several new residential subdivisions are developing along Old Fort Road. Reminders of the old community are becoming harder to find, but archival records and the recollections of those families who have spent their lives there make it possible to get a glimpse of the small rural African-American community of Chapel Hill.

80-18-1

## *Grace Methodist Episcopal Church Site and Cemetery*

**11700 Old Fort Road**

Historic resource, 1902–1989

**T**his is the location of three sequential building stages of black Methodist worship in the rural community of Chapel Hill. The modern church building, constructed in 1975, now occupies this historic place; the site, however, is of considerable importance because it was the focal point of the historic Chapel Hill community.

The 1902 sanctuary was typical of the Methodist churches of the period: a simple front-gabled meetinghouse of wood frame construction with gothic-arch windows. A generation later, in 1927, a corner tower was added, and the entrance to the sanctuary was relocated in the tower.

The first meetinghouse for Methodist worship was built here sometime before 1883; in October of that year, members of the Edelen family (local white landowners) sold to six black trustees of the “Methodist Episcopal Church on Chapel Hill” two acres of land on which the church stood. The trustees included Jeremiah Brown, who served as the church’s first pastor, and a member of the Shorter family who would settle much of the nearby land. The church was located on land adjoining the Freedmen’s Bureau school which had been established in 1868, and it is likely that the first worship services had been held in the schoolhouse before the Methodist meetinghouse was completed. These two buildings became the focal point of the rural farm community of Chapel Hill.

In 1902, a new Methodist church was constructed to replace the original meetinghouse. This 1902 church building continued in use until 1975 when the present brick church was built. Renovated and connected to the new church by a modern breezeway, the older building was used for more than 10 years for auxiliary church functions, but was

destroyed in 1989 to allow for construction of a modern addition to the 1975 church. The bell from the old church tower was preserved and installed in a freestanding lattice bellcote which stands on the church grounds, the only physical remnant of the historic church. It symbolizes the important early stages of the Methodist center of this historic community.



**The church as it  
looked in the 1980s.**





**ABOVE:** The two-part 1920s schoolhouse before it was demolished.

**BELOW:** The east facade of the 1923 schoolhouse. Note the unusual row of two-over-two windows, each surmounted by the three-light transom.



**BELOW:** Excerpt from the "Survey of Colored Public Schools," 1924.

The "ancient leftover" refers to the Freedman's Bureau School.

## 80-18-2 Chapel Hill Rosenwald School Site

### Parcel 165, Old Fort Road

1922, 1923—c. 1981

This is the site of the first school in the important post-Civil War farming community of Chapel Hill. Together with the nearby Methodist meetinghouse, the three phases of this school complex formed the focal point of the community.

A Freedmen's Bureau school was established here in 1868; located on the east side of the road between Fort Washington and Upper Marlboro, this one-room schoolhouse housed up to 57 pupils during its first few years of operation. It was probably used also as a place of worship before the construction of a Methodist meetinghouse (on adjoining land to the north) some years later. After 1872 when the Freedmen's Bureau ceased operations, this schoolhouse (Colored School 2 in Election District 5) was operated by the Board of School Commissioners as part of the public school system.

In 1922, a new school building was constructed immediately west of and adjacent to the 50-year-old Freedmen's Bureau schoolhouse.

Partially supported with funds from the Rosenwald program, the new schoolhouse was constructed on the same plan as the schools built at Fletchertown and Muirkirk in the same year. Classes for grades 1 through 3 of the Chapel Hill students continued to be held in the older building, while grades 4 through 7 had their classes in the new building. The 1924 survey of "Colored Public Schools" reported on the fine new Rosenwald building, but stated that "the other [in which 35 primary children are penned] is an ancient leftover that ought to have been torn down."

The next year, a new classroom building was indeed provided, also partially supported by the Rosenwald fund. The old Freedmen's Bureau school structure was moved on

logs to the adjoining church property, where primary classes continued to be held while a new structure was built in its place. When the new building was complete, it became the classroom for grades 1 through 3; it was connected to the 1922 Rosenwald school building. For the next several years, the old Freedmen's Bureau school remained on the church grounds as an auxiliary storage building, and was later destroyed.

After the two-part 1920s schoolhouse was closed in the 1950s, it continued in use as a community center for Chapel Hill citizens for 20 more years. It was demolished c. 1981.

#### CHAPEL HILL—SCHOOL 2, DISTRICT 5.

Miss Lela Scott, Mrs. Luella Craig, Teachers.  
Trustees—Daniel Brooks, Jesse H. Colbert, W. H. Henson.

One room is a new Rosenwald building. The other is an ancient left-over that ought to have been torn down. The principal and her assistant seem to have aroused a fine community co-operation. Money has been raised to supplement that available from the Board of Education for the purchase of new school desks. The old building is used for the children of the primary grades. Here we found them sitting on boxes and even blocks of wood. A new room to supplement the one recently built and to replace the antiquated house in which 35 primary children are penned is an urgent need. Chapel Hill is near Fort Washington and seems likely to add to its thrifty population.



80-18-3

## Albert Owen Shorter House Site

12506 Livingston Road

c.1906—c.1950

This is the site of the house built by one of the patriarchs of the Chapel Hill community. Albert Owen Shorter lived and worked his entire life in this area; like many others he made the transition from the end of the plantation society to the developing early years of small farming communities.

The plat for the “Shorlan Farms” subdivision undertaken by Marguerite Shorter Lancaster. (“Shorlan” is a contraction of Marguerite’s family and married names.) The Albert Owings Shorter House was located near the center of Lot No. 1.

Much of the land in this area had been owned before the Civil War by the Hatton family, and it was on one of the Hatton family farms that Shorter worked. He was born in the early 1850s of a free black family which had worked for the Hatton-Robey family before the Civil War, and Shorter continued in their employment during the Reconstruction period. In 1887 he purchased five acres from Hatton descendants for “services rendered.” By this time he had married Alice Brown, the daughter of Jeremiah Brown, who was the pastor of the new Methodist meetinghouse. During the later years of the nineteenth century, the extended Shorter family, the Brown family and several others lived on part of the old Hatton farmland (known as Pleasant View) near the crossroads which would become the community of Chapel Hill; these families began to develop their small farms.

The Albert Owen Shorter House was two stories high and side-gabled, of wood frame construction. Its entrance was in the central bay of the three-bay main facade, and above this entrance was another door that led out to a second-story porch. The main facade was dominated by this facade-wide two-story porch; it had a plain rail balustrade on both stories. The Shorter house was somewhat different from the traditional farmhouse in that it had a shallow two-story wing extending from one gable end of the main block. Unfortunately, no photographs are known to exist of this house, which was destroyed many years ago, probably in the mid-twentieth century.

In 1906, Shorter purchased another, larger parcel of land (78.8 acres) adjoining the smaller parcels he was already farming; it was probably at this time that he built the subject house. Over the years he developed a fruit and vegetable farm. Many of his grown children lived on this property or on nearby small farms. When the road to Piscataway (Livingston Road) was cut through in 1927, his farmhouse fronted on this new road. Many of the families who lived in Chapel Hill during its heyday were close relatives of Shorter, and his house and farm constituted the family gathering place. Shorter willed the farm to his son, Albert Owen Shorter, Jr., and his daughter Marguerite Shorter Lancaster subdivided the property in 1950. By 1965 a modern house was built on the property, which today is owned by a Lancaster. Although the original dwelling and the farm buildings are gone, their site is significant in the history of the Chapel Hill community.



80-18-4

## Charles Ball House

12127 Old Fort Road

Built c. 1915

Typical of the modest farmhouses built around the turn of twentieth century, the Charles Ball House is one of few surviving examples of the early building stock in the community of Chapel Hill.

The Charles Ball House today is two stories high and side-gabled, of wood frame construction. Entrance is in the central bay of the east facade, and this facade is sheltered by a one-story porch with turned posts that wraps around and shelters part of the north gable end. There is a two-story rear wing at right angles to the main block, flush with the north gable end. A new one-story wing has been added on the south gable end, extending the lines of the main block and slightly inset from the east facade.



Charles Ball, who had moved to this area from Virginia and who worked both on road construction and as a chef at Fort Washington, had married Ommie Lancaster, a widow from Accokeek; they raised their family in this house. Later, in the 1920s, they sold part of the three-acre lot to Ommie Ball's son, who built a dwelling on it.

The Ball House was constructed on a tract of land known as "Rich Hill." Charles H. Ball purchased three acres of this tract in 1915 from William T. Thorne, Jr., a prosperous farmer, and Ball most

likely had the dwelling constructed during his ownership. The property was conveyed to his daughter, Agnes Ball Beck, and her husband, Clarence, in 1946. The property remained in the Ball-Beck family until 1995.



**ABOVE:** The Charles Ball House today.

**LEFT:** When photographed in the mid-twentieth century, the house had a facade-width screened porch and was surrounded by a well-tended garden. Note an automobile of the period parked at far right.





**TOP:** The Lancaster House today.  
**ABOVE:** A mid-twentieth century photo of the house looking north on Old Fort Road. Although the hydrangea bushes have disappeared, the Adirondack chairs appear to be in their same location today.

## 80-18-5 *Lancaster House*

**12123 Old Fort Road**

Historic resource; Built 1925

The Lancaster House is a cross-gabled cottage, framed by a porch which gives it a bungalow appearance. It is one of a few surviving early buildings in Chapel Hill. Entrance is nearly centered in the east facade, and the entire east facade and south gable end and wing are sheltered by a wraparound porch. The building is sheathed with plain board siding, and part of the southerly section of the porch is screen-enclosed. The tapered square porch posts rest on bases of molded concrete block, making the wraparound porch the most noticeable feature of this house.

The Lancaster House represents one of the few surviving early dwellings associated with the Shorter family, among the earliest settlers in the Chapel Hill community. It was built in 1925 for Arthur Lancaster and his wife, Marguerite Shorter, on land subdivided from the property of Lancaster's mother and stepfather. Charles and Ommie Ball in 1915 purchased three acres along the main road through the developing community, on which they built their house (Historic Resource 80-018-04). Arthur Lancaster, son of Ommie Lancaster Ball, was raised in this house, and when he married Marguerite Shorter, the Balls divided their three-acre lot and deeded to Lancaster the northernmost 1.1 acre. On this land the Lancasters built this house and raised their family. Marguerite Shorter was a granddaughter of Albert Owen Shorter and had been raised on the farm that her grandfather developed during the early years of the twentieth century.

## 80-18-6 *Colbert Houses Site*

**12210 and 12212 Old Fort Road**

1910–2007

The Colbert Houses Site illustrates two generations of house building by the Colbert family, members of which were among the early settlers in Chapel Hill. The house was the main dwelling of the second generation of the family and the small cottage was built for the third generation.

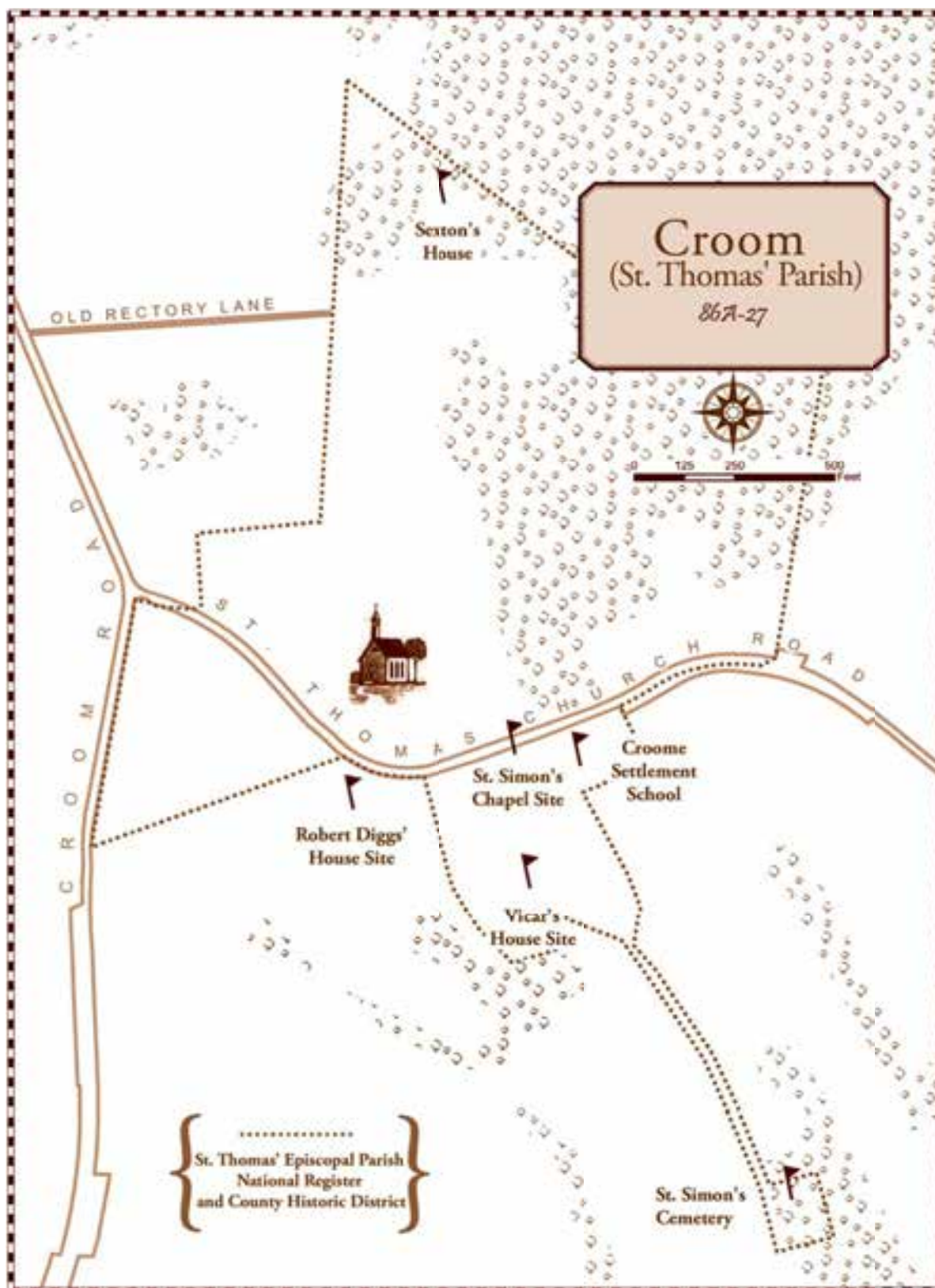
The main building was a two-story, cross-gabled wood frame dwelling which fronted (westward) on the road. Entrance was through the west gable front, through a one-story porch that had been enclosed. The house was sheathed with narrow board siding, painted yellow. A short distance to the south, also fronting on the main road, was a tiny, one-story front-gabled wood frame cottage.

Members of the Colbert family came from Charles County and settled in the Chapel Hill area as early as 1905. Family tradition suggests that before building their first family home, the family lived in “Long Quarters,” an earlier farm building on the Hatton family property that had been converted into a dormitory-like structure. In 1905 William and Isabella Colbert built their first house and worked their farm, located at the southernmost edge of the developing community of Chapel Hill near the intersection of the roads to Fort Washington and Piscataway. The subject house was built by Jesse Colbert, son of William and Isabella, the second generation of the family in this community. In 1910, shortly after his marriage, Jesse Colbert purchased five acres along the main road of the community and built the cross-gabled frame house for his growing family. In this house, Colbert and his wife raised their large family; a generation later they built the small cottage to be used sequentially by their children as they grew up and started their own families.

**RIGHT:** The main building.  
**BELOW:** The cottage.











This picturesque frame dwelling was photographed in 1983 at 14305 Croom Road. Built in 1918, it was owned free and clear by Robert H. Diggs. Diggs was a farm laborer of mixed race, who lived here with his wife Mamie and their seven children.

The house is no longer standing.

## Croom

(St. Thomas' Parish) 86A-27

Croom Road at St. Thomas Church Road  
Historic sites (3)

Croom is a rural village in the southeastern portion of the county, named for the tract “Croome” a short distance to the northwest. This was the location of the chapel-of-ease built (1742–45) for St. Paul’s Parish, one of the original two Episcopal parishes in the county. This chapel, known as Page’s Chapel until 1850, was located less than five miles inland from Nottingham, the principal Patuxent River port in this area; Nottingham was a busy commercial port town during the eighteenth century. As siltation caused a decrease in commerce on the river and an increase in inland

population movement, a small village began to develop around the 1740s chapel early in the nineteenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century the village included a blacksmith and wheelwright shop, several general stores, and several cobblers’ and carpenters’ establishments near the century-old St. Thomas’ Church. In 1857, a post office was established in Croom, located in the principal store; it operated until 1948.

The community of Croom was located in an area of intense agriculture, and that part of the county that, before the Civil War, had the largest ratio of enslaved persons per total population. After emancipation, many members of this large labor force remained in the Croom area to work as tenant farmers and sharecroppers, making up a significant proportion of the population. During that period, a school was built for black children in Naylor, the area just south of Croom; known as Croom School (Colored School 2 in Election District 4) it was replaced by a new building on the site early in the twentieth century. By the early 1890s, another school (Colored School 3 in Election District 3) was built near the northern edge of Croom, adjoining the property which would, after 1900, become the site of St. Mary’s Methodist Episcopal Church. (See 86A-013, page 220.)

**RIGHT:** The Sexton’s House, built c. 1860, is located behind the old St. Thomas’ Church Rectory (Historic Site 86A-027-08). A small frame building now used for hay storage, this was the residence of the church caretakers, who were African-Americans. The building is referenced in the reminiscences of May Bolton, whose husband Richard served as St. Thomas’ rector from 1917–1919. She writes in her unpublished memoirs that “[Alice] a big and strong Negro woman...lived in a little cottage behind the rectory...and had two or three babies.” A man called “Uncle Bill” tended a large garden nearby, and “besides being the Sexton and our gardener he was ‘the grave digger.’”<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> “Our Story” by May Bolton, wife of the Rev. Richard C. Bolton, undated, collection of St. Thomas’ Parish Archives.

Both of these schools were influenced and supported by the opening of the Croom Industrial and Agricultural Institute in 1902. That institute, a major element in the black education movement of southern Prince George's County, was established in connection with St. Thomas' Parish, in order to prepare "young colored men and women"

for employment in scientific agriculture and household economics.

Croom also was the location of St. Simon's Chapel, one of only two chapels established in the county for black Episcopalians. St. Simon's was built in 1894 for the African-American members of the St. Thomas' congregation. For many

years, St. Simon's maintained a substantial black congregation; it merged again with the congregation of St. Thomas' in 1964. Croom today remains a quiet rural agricultural community, served by two small stores and St. Thomas' Church. The St. Thomas' Episcopal Parish National Register and County Historic Districts have recently been designated.

86A-12

## *St. Simon's Episcopal Church Site and Cemetery*

### 14201 St. Thomas' Church Road

Historic Site, 1894–1970s

By the 1890s, St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Croom was already 150 years old. St. Simon's Mission, established in 1894, started as a Sunday school for African-American children of the parish shortly after the election of the Reverend Francis P. Willes as rector in 1892. In 1894 a small chapel (St. Simon's) was built for black congregants on the grounds of the rectory, and religious instruction was offered by Suzanne and Katharine Willes, sisters of the rector. Although St. Thomas' Parish had been ministering to members of the black community for generations, the construction of St. Simon's allowed for separate educational and social events among the black community and attracted a larger black congregation. By 1896, the church school at St. Simon's was flourishing, a success that led to the establishment of the Croom Industrial and Agricultural Institute by Suzanne Willes a few years later.

In 1902, the congregation of St. Simon's petitioned the Bishop Henry Yates Satterlee of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington for a full-time Negro priest, and the Reverend August Jensen was installed in that year. Soon after his arrival, the chapel was moved; the small frame structure was lifted onto rolling logs and transported by this means to the south side of St. Thomas Church Road. Services were held in the chapel en route during the moving process, which took several weeks. After the chapel was stabilized in its new location, a vicar's house was built on the lot immediately adjoining. By May 1902, St. Simon's recorded twenty-three communicants, with a total increased to sixty-two one year later. The St. Simon's vicar served not only St. Simon's but St. Phillips in Aquasco (before the move to Baden in the twentieth century) and St. Mary's, Charlotte Hall in St. Mary's County. The vicar always lived at



**ABOVE:** Shown here before 1903, St. Simon's was a front-gabled meetinghouse-style church of wood frame construction, typical of country chapels of the period. Below: This 1942 photo of St. Simon's shows that a square bell tower with a pyramid-shaped roof was added at some point. The church has also been painted a light color. By 1959 it would be clad in dark asphalt shingles. (Both photos courtesy the Reverend Francis P. Willes, St. Thomas' Parish Archives.)







**ABOVE:** The Reverend Robert Wellington Bagnall (1883-1943) served as vicar of St. Simon's from 1904–1906.

**BELOW:** St. Simon's Sunday School, 1953. Courtesy of Ms. Janice Diggs (front row, center).

**BOTTOM:** Myrtle Pinkney, Gloria Spencer, and Frances Spencer at St. Simon's Church, Easter Sunday, 1959. Photograph courtesy of Ms. Janice Diggs.



the St. Simon's vicarage but served all of southern Maryland's Episcopal congregations on the Prince George's County side of the Patuxent River.

The Reverend Jensen experienced a personal tragedy in 1903 when his daughter died from whooping cough. Her death raised the question of whether the new mission should have its own cemetery. The congregation overwhelmingly responded in the affirmative, and St. Simon's Cemetery was established approximately one-quarter-mile to the southeast of the chapel, in an one-acre clearing through the woods. That same year Eloise Constance Jensen became the first of many whose bodies are interred there.

With the exception of Willes and the last priest, the Reverend Richard D. Hartman, the vicars of St. Simon's were all African-Americans and deployed and supported by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. According to Pauli Murray, whose uncle, the Reverend John E. G. Small, served as vicar from 1921–1931, the diocese supplied the vicar with an automobile—a rare privilege in those days. It was used to travel the circuit holding services and visiting parishioners scattered throughout Prince George's and Saint Mary's counties.<sup>1</sup> Murray wrote that, "The people who attended the two churches [St. Thomas' and St. Simon's] were intimately acquainted with one another's families, and the easy familiarity common to rural life marked their daily interchange."<sup>2</sup> St. Simon's Chapel was closed in 1964 and its congregation re-merged with St. Thomas' congregation. The chapel and the vicarage were demolished in the mid-1970s. The cemetery is secluded in a wooded area one-quarter mile south of the chapel site, visible neither from the road nor from the chapel site. It is tranquilly beautiful and well maintained by the Cemetery Committee of St. Thomas' Parish, whose congregation includes many members of the families buried there. Both the chapel and the cemetery have been commemorated with a roadside historic marker installed by St. Thomas' Parish.

<sup>1</sup> Pauli Murray, *Songs in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987), 50–52.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, 53–54



**RIGHT:** The partially restored main building at the Croome Settlement School.



**ABOVE:** Miss Lilly (Elizabeth) and Katharine Willes, daughters of the Reverend Willes, have tea in Croome, early 20th century.

86A-27-24

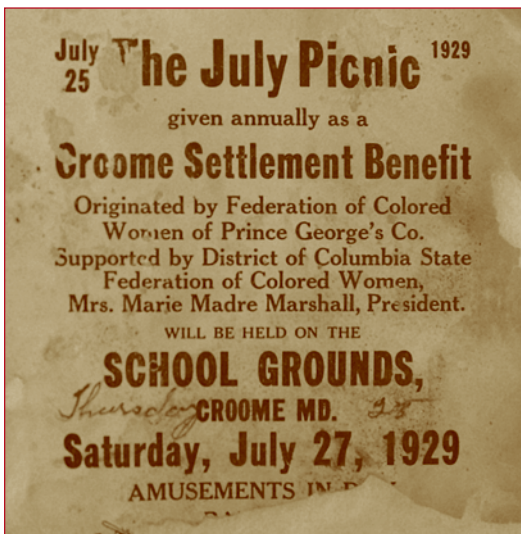
## *Croome Settlement School*

14409 St. Thomas Church Road

Historic Site; c. 1905, 1920s

Only two buildings survive from the Croome Settlement School, but they mark the site of an important effort in the Negro education movement. The principal among the surviving buildings has been converted into a residence; it is two stories high, cross-gabled and of frame construction, now partially restored. This dwelling, constructed 1905, once served as the principal building of the school, and included two classrooms, kitchen and dining room, with dormitory rooms on the second story. On the immediate grounds of this building were five small, one-story, front-gabled accessory buildings, built after 1925, that also served as small classrooms and dormitories. Only one is extant.

In 1894, St. Simon's Chapel was established for Negro members of the local Episcopal parish; religious education was offered by Suzanne and Katharine Willes, sisters of the rector of St. Thomas' Church. After the success of this school, Suzanne Willes took up the cause of Negro education as her life's work, following the well-known principles of Booker T. Washington regarding practical preparation of black youth for the work force. By 1899 she had begun to solicit funds not only locally, but from New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, to establish an institute for the education of African-American boys



**ABOVE:** A 1929 notice for a benefit picnic.

**RIGHT:** Rachel A. Henry was a teacher and the head of the school for many years at the Croome Institute. This photograph was taken circa 1930, when she was 52. She is standing near the porch of the institute's main building. In 1930 the Croome Institute had 27 boarding students, all female, ranging in age from 11 to 18.



and girls. In 1902 she was able to purchase 60 acres of land to be used for the establishment of her school. (In that same year, the small St. Simon's Chapel was moved to the newly acquired school property.) By 1903, Suzanne Willes had arranged for the construction of a large hall that was to serve as the center of the school activities, as well as other smaller school buildings. The Croom Industrial and Agricultural Institute of Prince George's County, Maryland, was incorporated in 1903, and had as its chief object the "extension and improvement of industrial education as a means of opening better and wider avenues of employment to young colored men and women." The Institute gave instruction in cooking, household economics, sewing and dressmaking, as well as scientific agriculture.

By 1918 the institute was in financial difficulty, and the trustees filed a petition for dissolution. The court approved the dissolution of the institute, but allowed Miss Willes to continue the school under management completely separate from the Episcopal Church. Reopened as the Croome Settlement School, the establishment worked toward the “industrial and educational betterment of the colored boys and girls of Southern Maryland...[on a] non-sectarian foundation but broadly religious.” Again scientific agriculture and household skills were the principal courses, and students came from various parts of southern Maryland; the school also served for many years as a home for District of Columbia Child Welfare wards. For more than 20 years the Croome Settlement School prepared African-American youth for the working world, until it was again beset with financial difficulties during World War II. The school closed finally in 1952; two years later, the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision would lead to school desegregation throughout the south.

Catherine (Kitty) A. Tomes Pinkney (1912-2009) following her graduation from the Croom Institute, stayed on as Supervisor of Matrons. After the closure of the school in 1952, Mrs. Pinkney and her husband, George Wilmer Pinkney, purchased the one-acre property that included the school buildings and converted the large main building on the school property into their home. Mrs. Pinkney, a foster child herself, and her husband, raised not only their own three children, but opened their home to twenty-three foster children throughout the next three decades. Mrs. Pinkney was also the first African-American to attend St. Thomas’ Church after integration and the closing of St. Simon’s in 1964. Mrs. Pinkney continued to live in the dwelling on the Croom Institute’s site until 2005, when she conveyed the property, which included 1.08 acres and various foundations and remnants of the former workshops and dormitories, to the present owners.



87B-36

## Woodville/Aquasco

**Both sides of Aquasco Road (MD 381)**

One mile north of the county line

Historic sites (3)

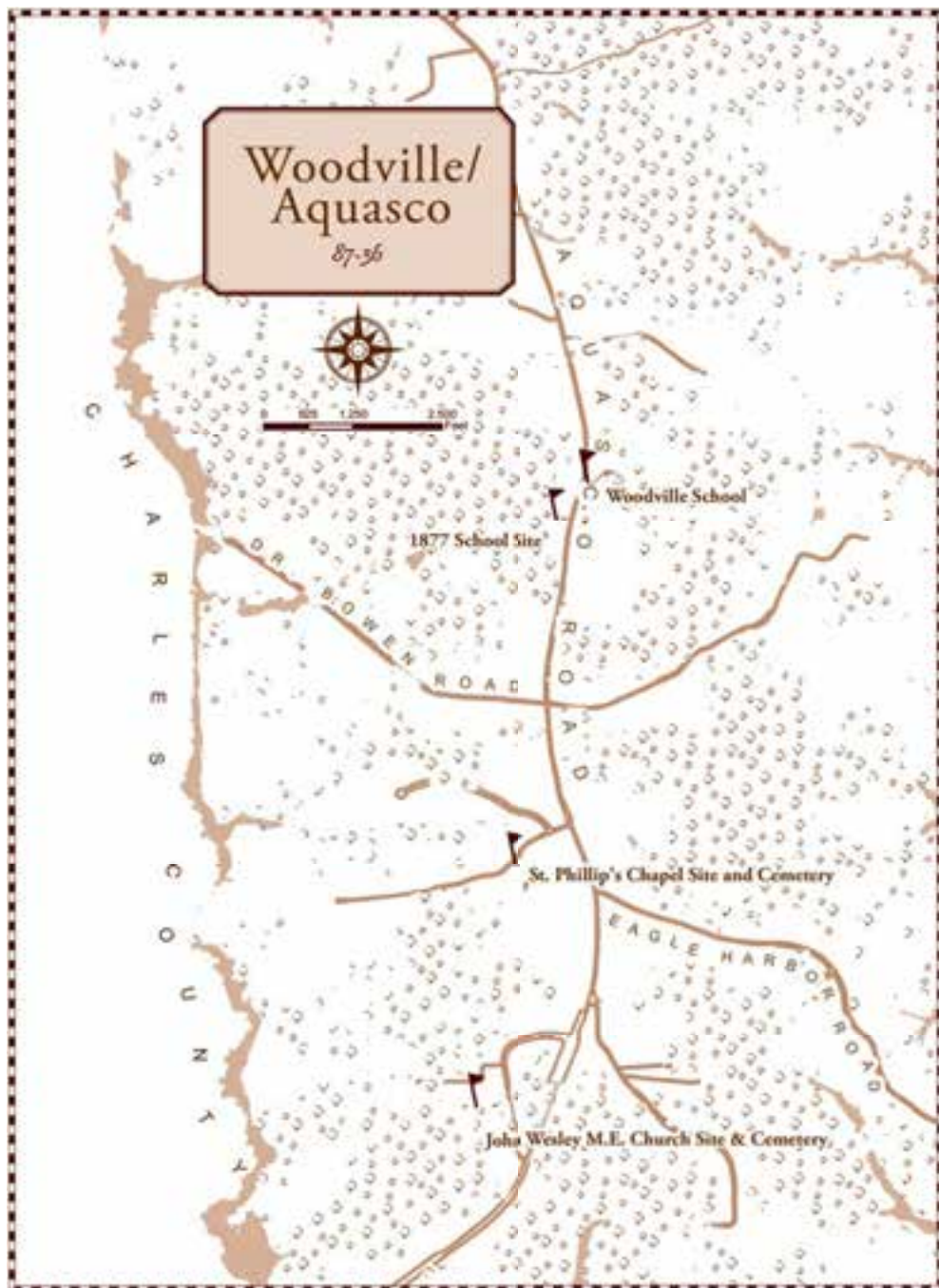
Aquasco is a rural village near the southeast corner of Prince George's County, named for a nearby tract (known by the Native American name "Aquascake") first surveyed and patented in 1650. This area was intensely agricultural and characterized by fertile farmland fed by Swanson's Creek on the west and the Patuxent River on the east. The river was also crucial to the history of this area, providing a transportation route for shipping the tobacco crop to market. By 1747, tobacco production in the area was sufficient to warrant the proposal of a tobacco inspection warehouse site at Trueman Point, the landing on the Patuxent just two miles north of the southeasternmost tip of the county. As it happened, an inspection station was never established at Trueman Point, but the landing played an important role in commerce and transportation from its earliest period.

During the eighteenth century, tobacco plantations were scattered around the area on large tracts of land, and there was no definable concentration of population. The main road through the area was developed by the end of the eighteenth century, and a village began to form along it during the early years of the nineteenth century. It was known as Woodville, after the Wood family, one of the early families to settle there. Farming continued to be the principal occupation of the area, but by the mid-nineteenth century, the little village had also a grist mill, several small stores, a local tavern, a blacksmith's shop, an Episcopal and a Methodist church, a school and a post office.

The southeastern section of the county, always principally agricultural, had the largest ratio of enslaved persons per total population before the Civil War. After emancipation, many members of this large labor force remained in the Woodville/Aquasco area to work as tenant farmers, making up a significant percentage of the population. In 1867, during the Freedmen's Bureau period, a school was built for black children at the southern edge of the village, and it served also as a site for Methodist services. Ten years later, a second schoolhouse was established for black children at the northern edge of the village, and the Freedmen's Bureau school building continued as the John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church. Much later, in 1934, the 1877 schoolhouse was replaced by the large Woodville School.

**This small house at 21601 Aquasco Road was built in 1877 as the second school for black children in Aquasco. It served this purpose for 57 years until it was replaced by the Woodville School in 1934. The building was demolished early in 2011.**





Woodville was also the location of the first chapel, St. Phillip's, established for black Episcopalians.

The village of Aquasco is today a loose grouping of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings, with some modern infill, clustered along both sides of Aquasco

Road. The area around it is still principally agricultural. Near the southeast edge of the village, a road leads eastward to Eagle Harbor, a 1920s black retreat community on the Patuxent. Many African-American families still farm the nearby land but there are few physical reminders

of the substantial early black population of the area. The sites of John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church and St. Phillip's Episcopal Church, as well as the Woodville School, are therefore important landmarks in the African-American history of the area.

87B-33

## *John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church Site and Cemetery*

**22919 Christ Church Road**

Historic site; 1906–1961

The John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1906 on the site of a house of worship that dated from the 1870s. The church that stands on the site today was built in 1961. Along the west side of the present church is an extensive graveyard, which covers the site of the earlier church, a simple frame meetinghouse with belfry and bell.

The first church on this site was built soon after the end of the Civil War. In 1866, James Gray, a freedman, purchased two acres of land on the south side of Woodville (Aquasco) from one of the white landowners of the area. Within two months, Gray conveyed this land to himself and four other black trustees, with the understanding that they were to erect a house of worship for members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A Freedmen's Bureau school was erected by the fall of 1867, and, as was the usual pattern, there was a strong association between the school and the church; of the five trustees of the church, three (James Gray, Walter Thomas, and Richard Douglas) served for many years as trustees of the school. Worship services soon began in the new school building, but it was not until the spring of 1868 that the Freedmen's Bureau provided a teacher to begin classes there. By the end of the first academic year, the school had come to be known as the John Wesley School (Colored School 1 in Election District 8).

A headstone  
at the cemetery.



When the Freedmen's Bureau ceased operations in 1872, the administration of black schools was taken over by the County Board of School Commissioners. In May 1877, this board authorized construction of a new schoolhouse on the north edge of the Woodville community, nearly two miles north of the John Wesley building. After that time, the Freedmen's Bureau building was used exclusively for Methodist services and, as John Wesley Methodist Church, continued to serve the local black population.

Early in this century, John Wesley Church began a building program to replace the 40-year-old meetinghouse. The new building, a plain frame front-gabled meetinghouse with bell tower, was dedicated in November 1906. In 1961, the present church building was constructed just to the east of the 1906 church, and the older building was demolished. Since that time, the graveyard has been extended over the site of the older building. Then in 1973 the congregation of St. Thomas Methodist Church at Baden merged with that of John Wesley; the combined congregation is now known as Christ United Methodist Church, and services take place at the former John Wesley Church. Although nothing remains of the two earlier forms of the John Wesley Church, its site (together with its cemetery) is significant because it represents one of the early church/school complexes established by freedmen immediately following the Civil War.





## 87B-34 *Woodville School*

**21500 Aquasco Road**

Historic site; built 1934

The Woodville School is a rare and outstanding example of the rural schoolhouses of the county. It is a one-story, three-classroom frame building; built in 1934, it is the largest of the schoolhouses built in that period for the black children of Prince George's County.

The original German lap siding of the schoolhouse is covered by white aluminum siding, and the main west facade is lighted by two banks each of five large windows. The entrance, a double door sheltered by a small gabled canopy, is centered between the two banks of windows. This double door leads into an entry hall, which in turn leads to a small transverse hall which gives access to the kitchen in the rear central space, the single classroom on the north and the two classrooms on the south. Set in each of the north and south planes of the hip roof is a chimney; these chimneys served the stoves that warmed the three classrooms.

The Woodville School is the third school built to serve the black children of the Woodville/Aquasco area. The first school building was established in 1867 on the south side of Aquasco. Methodist worship services were held in this building, known first as the John Wesley School, and in the spring of 1868 the Freedmen's Bureau provided a teacher to begin classes there. When the Freedmen's Bureau ceased operations in 1872, the administration

of black schools was taken over by the Board of School Commissioners, and the John Wesley School came to be known as Colored School 1 in Election District 8.

In 1877, the Board of School Commissioners authorized construction of a new school for black students on the north side of the village, and after that time the Freedmen's Bureau building was used exclusively for Methodist services. The new school served until 1934 when the present Woodville School was constructed. In March of that year, after frequent requests from local residents, the County Board of Education (which superseded the Board of School Commissioners) agreed to build a new school. The Rosenwald school program had officially closed in 1932, and the new Woodville School was erected by labor furnished by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, with materials purchased by the County Board of Education. Designed by Washington, D.C., architects Upman & Adams for a considerably larger number of pupils than the average rural school of the period, the new school was the largest and best-equipped school building of its type.

After 1954 and the integration of the county's schools, the Woodville School was closed and sold; it was purchased by the Knights of St. John's Commandery 373, the black auxiliary of the local Roman Catholic Church. Since that time, the building has been used as a meeting place and social hall for the African-American Roman Catholic population of the Woodville/Aquasco area; it is possibly the best-surviving example of the schoolhouses built before the advent of school integration.

## 87B-36-12 *St. Phillip's Episcopal Church Site and Cemetery*

**16205 St. Phillip's Road**

Historic site; 1878–1976

This is the site of the first chapel established for black Episcopalians in Prince George's County. The church itself no longer stands, but the old bell survives, enclosed in a freestanding bellcote on the edge of the graveyard.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church was established in Woodville (Aquasco) in the mid-nineteenth century, a mission chapel of St. Paul's at Baden and part of St. Paul's Parish. There were blacks numbered among the congregation of St. Mary's, as there were in other Episcopal churches, but after the Civil War, the congregation divided along racial lines. In 1878, under the leadership of the Reverend Josiah Perry, rector of St. Paul's Parish, the vestry purchased one acre of land on the west side of Aquasco. St. Phillip's chapel was erected there soon afterwards for the use of the black Episcopalians of the Aquasco area. It was a small, front-gabled meetinghouse with entrance through a vestibule in the gable front, and four pointed-arch stained-glass windows lighting each side of the nave. In 1894, the second Episcopal chapel for black communicants in the county, St. Simon's in Croom, was established, out of the congregation of St. Thomas' at Croom.

St. Phillip's Chapel was repaired and remodeled in 1932, with the construction of a low apse on the south gable end and the enlargement of the north vestibule. Like St. Simon's in Croom, St. Phillip's had a sizeable and active congregation through the middle of the twentieth century; in 1964, St. Simon's Chapel was closed and its members merged again with the St. Thomas' congregation. Services continued at St. Phillip's until 1976 when the chapel was destroyed by fire. Since that time, the congregation has maintained the old graveyard and its grounds, and has purchased and taken over the old St. Michael's Catholic Church building in Baden.

There are approximately 108 marked graves and an unknown number of unmarked graves in the cemetery, which is still in use.





87B-38

## *Eagle Harbor* INC. 1929

Southeasternmost point of Prince George's County

The summer colony of Eagle Harbor began to develop in the 1920s at the site of the early eighteenth-century river port, Trueman Point, on the Patuxent River. This is the southeasternmost point of Prince George's County and an area that has always been exclusively agricultural.

Trueman Point on the Patuxent served as the river port for local farmers throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1747 it was considered for the designation of an official tobacco inspection warehouse. Although this designation was never realized, Trueman Point did connect the farmers of southern Prince George's County with Baltimore and other ports, and it continued to be heavily used by local planters for shipping tobacco and other merchandise.

Although its closely-set, small dormers give it a charmingly ancient appearance, this cottage at 18401 Elm Trail was constructed about 1940. Its early or perhaps first owner was the widowed Sylvia Van Loo, a Washington, D.C., native. In the 1930 U.S. Census she listed her occupation as "maid" in a private house. Standing alone on the northwest corner of Block 15 since it was built, the house was sold by Van Loo in the early 1950s and has since had several owners.

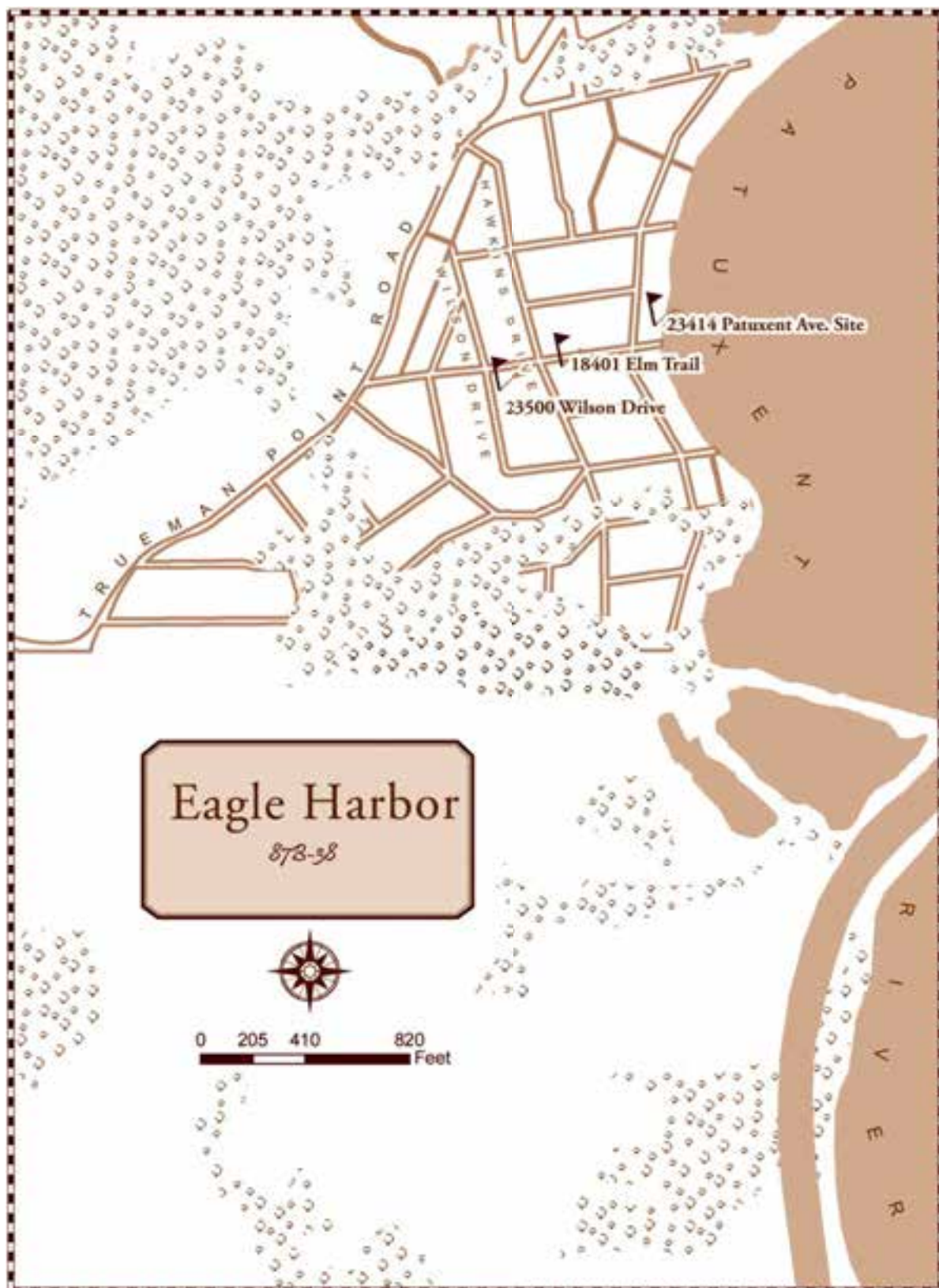
In 1817, George Weems established the Weems Steamboat Company and acquired landings, including Trueman Point, up and down the Patuxent River. This steamboat traffic continued on the Patuxent from that time until the early 1930s; during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a considerable amount of this traffic was recreational. A small farming village began to develop during the first half of the nineteenth century, several miles inland from Trueman Point, along the public road between Brandywine to the north and Benedict in Charles County. Known as Woodville during the nineteenth century, it is today known as Aquasco.

In 1925, developer Walter L. Bean purchased several parcels of land from families who had long owned considerable amounts of property in this section of the county. Bean purchased this land, adjacent to Trueman Point, with the idea of creating a

resort community for middle-class African-Americans from the Washington metropolitan area. The land was surveyed and platted in small lots which were then heavily advertised in the black newspapers of Washington, D.C. The sales manager for Eagle Harbor was M. Jones, who during the years of 1925 and 1926 released voluminous advertisements for the new vacation and recreation spot. Boating, fishing, tenting, bathing, hunting and sports would be offered; there would be 4,000 feet of sandy beach, and a \$50,000 hotel was under







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**M. Jones, Sales Manager**

An advertisement for Eagle Harbor in the  
*Washington Tribune*, 1926.



construction. Eagle Harbor was only 30 miles from Washington, D.C., over fine roads, and the community would be “a high class summer colony for the better people.” Lots were offered for \$50 or less, and prospective buyers could (for \$1.00 round-trip bus fare) visit the resort for inspection. The sales office was located in the Shaw section of Washington, D.C., a busy quadrant of theaters, offices, and successful black businesses. This was a period when Highland Beach, north of Annapolis, was a popular summer community, and Eagle Harbor also began to attract a good number of middle-class black residents of Washington. People began building small cottages for their summertime use, and by 1928 the Eagle Harbor Citizens Association was already exploring the idea of incorporation; the town was officially incorporated in 1929.

Eagle Harbor is still a small and quiet river community today; there are piers for fishing and boating, a town hall and public parkland, but not a trace of the hotels that once attracted visitors. There are approximately 60 dwellings, only four of which are from the early building period; most of the buildings are for summer use only, and for most of the year the atmosphere of the community is quiet and rural. As summer approaches, however, activity increases considerably, for Eagle Harbor is still a popular family gathering place.



**TOP:** An early cottage at 23500 Wilson Drive, photographed in 1993. Originally owned by Charles T. Moran and Carrie Stokes, the property was purchased for \$14.63 by Joseph A. Wade at tax sale “at the Court House door in the town of Upper Marlboro”<sup>1</sup> on September 15, 1941.

**BOTTOM:** 23414 Patuxent Avenue: a Craftsman-style c. 1930s bungalow on the river. Note the exposed rafter tails, low-pitched gables and flat-sawn porch balusters so characteristic of this style. Now demolished, this cottage was photographed in April 1993.

<sup>1</sup> Land Records of Prince George’s County, Liber 628, folio 184.





87B-39

## Cedar Haven

**Southeasternmost point of Prince George's County**

North of Eagle Harbor on the Patuxent River

*Members of the community often gathered at the waters' edge to watch ships go up and down the Patuxent River.*

Established in 1927, Cedar Haven was designed as a summer refuge for African-Americans. The community was located on a three-hundred acre parcel, about an hour outside of Washington, D.C., and along the Patuxent River. The founders of Cedar Haven hoped it would rival the adjacent summer colony of Eagle Harbor to the south, established just a year earlier. Although Cedar Haven never achieved the popularity of Eagle Harbor, it was an important place for African-Americans in Prince George's County. Cedar Haven, like Eagle Harbor, was built on lands that were once a part of the Trueman Point Landing (Historic Site 87B-028), a river port along the Patuxent. In 1817, Trueman Point was acquired by Weems Steamboat Company and served as a steamboat port into the twentieth century. The steamboat company went bankrupt not long after Cedar Haven and Eagle Harbor were established, leaving the wharf open for use by the new resorts. Early advertisements for the community spoke of an "exclusive" community of hills, beaches, woodlands, and meadows with fishing and crabbing, sports, hotels, dinners, and dancing. The promotional literature claimed that a "60 foot boulevard sweeps across the stately crescent shaped beach, lined with stately cedars from end to end." All the streets and avenues were fifty feet wide and every lot fronted on a street, avenue, or boulevard. Advertisers claimed that Cedar Haven was a safe place for children, where they could escape the dangers of city streets and learn the names of the country's greatest black leaders from the street names. They could swim at the natural beaches or enjoy the playground. Visitors could enjoy the summer activities by the water and stay for the fall foliage. For summer visitors, there was a bathhouse on Crispus Attucks Boulevard equipped with an 80-locker dressing room, separated for men and women, as well as trained attendants. A lounging porch faced the water. Members of the community often gathered at the water's edge to watch ships go up and down the Patuxent River. Those without houses could stay at the Cedar Haven Hotel, a large bungalow with a full length porch resting on stone piers, which was equipped with gas, electricity, a garage, and a dance hall; the hotel was renowned for its chicken dinners. Early construction in Cedar Haven consisted of small bungalows and cottages with porches and large setbacks. Many trees were cleared to make room for new houses, but trees were also planted along the roads to provide shade. Sears, Roebuck, and Company kit homes, such as the Magnolia, the Bellhaven, and the Whitehall, were used as models for new homes in the community. Residents were encouraged to order homes from Sears or model homes after their patterns. Some of the most notable





**A typical sun-dappled street in Cedar Haven today.**

houses in the neighborhood included “Sojourn,” “White Cedars,” and “Bellana.” The first house, “Sojourn,” was built in 1927 by Mr. and Mrs. William H. Thompson and was a small, front-gabled house clad in wood shingles with an enclosed front porch. It was later improved with a large addition, fireplace, and paved driveway. “White Cedars,” owned by Mrs. Z. Ella M. Gunnell and Mrs. Mary Hawley, was a ten room, two-apartment bungalow, with a screened porch surrounding the entire dwelling. The “Bellana,” named after owner Anna E. Bell, still stands and is a front-gable house on a raised pier foundation with an open flat-roofed porch. The “Bellana” was built in the style of the Sears, Roebuck, and Company “Magnolia” model, although it is unknown whether the house was actually purchased as a kit from Sears.

The streets in Cedar Haven were laid out in a grid, with the north/south thoroughfare, Banneker Boulevard, anchoring a number of smaller streets. Richard Allen Street is the main road running east and west, though it is quite narrow and without curbs or lighting. Most of





**An early bungalow at 22801 Booker Washington Avenue.**

the other streets are small, and many do not run far off the main road. Most of the streets were never fully extended or paved. Some streets, like Coleridge-Taylor, have only one house on them. The roads are narrow, with no curbs, street lights, or sidewalks, and are heavily shaded by rows of trees and dense woods to the west. Many of the lots are undeveloped and dense foliage has grown over them. All the streets in Cedar Haven were named after significant figures in African-American history, such as the poet Paul Dunbar, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Richard Allen, and Mr. Blanche K. Bruce, the first African-American to serve a full term in the U.S. Senate. Other important figures after which streets were named include John Cook, Henry Garnett, John Langston, Charles Young, Phyllis Wheatley, Crispus Attucks, Benjamin Banneker, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Alexander Crummel, Daniel Payne, and Mary McLeod Bethune. Although Cedar Haven never achieved the success Eagle Harbor did as a resort community, its history, landscape, and architecture make it a significant African-American site in Prince George's County.