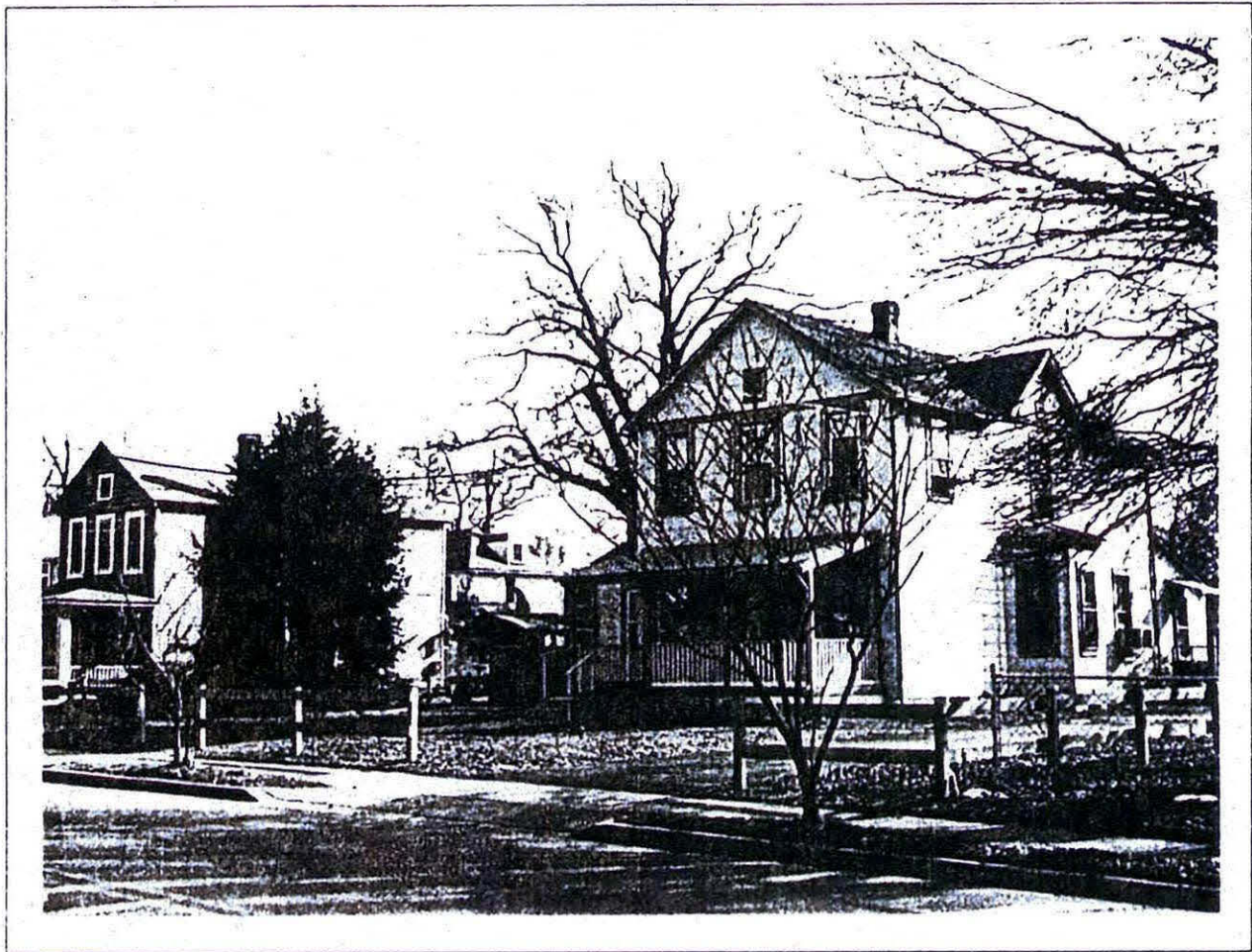


# EDMONSTON

## HISTORICAL SURVEY

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION





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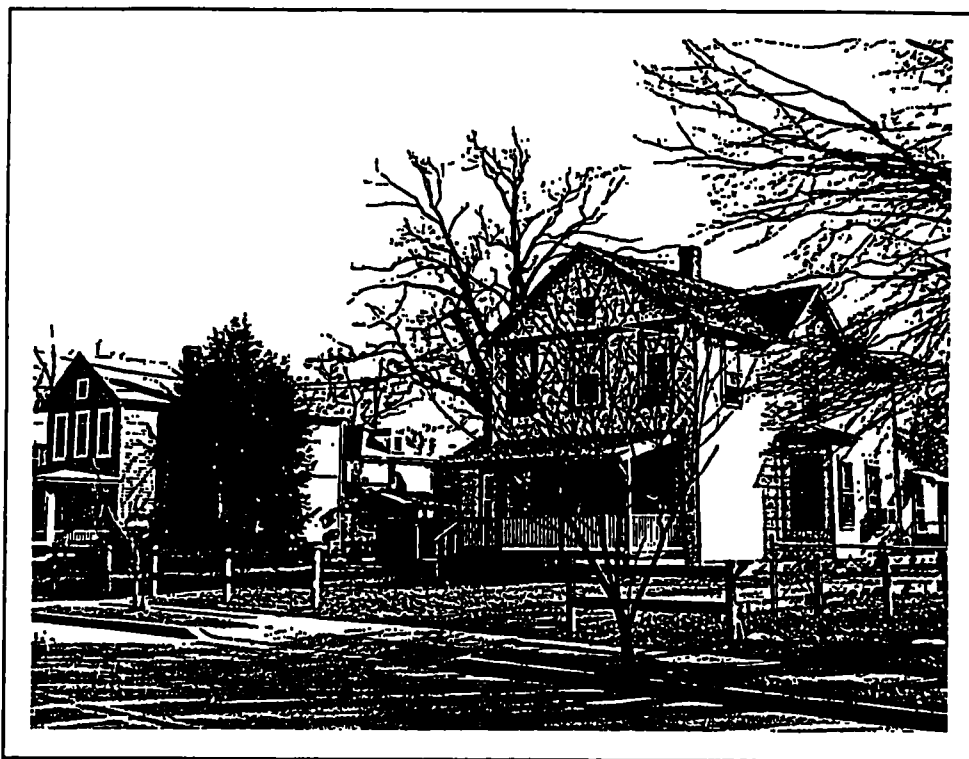




# EDMONSTON

## HISTORICAL SURVEY

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION  
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772



# ABSTRACT

**TITLE:** Edmonston Historical Survey

**AUTHOR:** Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

**DATE:** July 1993

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14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive  
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

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**ABSTRACT:** This report summarizes the findings of an historical/ architectural survey of Edmonston, requested by the Mayor and Council of the Town. The goals of the project were to document the earliest of the historic buildings still standing in the Town, and to prepare a written history of the community's development.

The Town of Edmonston is located outside of the northeast boundary of the District of Columbia; it lies on the southeast side of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, bounded by Hyattsville on the west, Riverdale on the north and east, and Bladensburg on the south. Development of the community began around 1900 on land platted by J. Harris Rogers of Hyattsville, and shortly afterwards on adjoining land called "Palestine Farm" by Dr. Charles A. Wells. The first residents were families attracted to the area by the easily accessible transportation to and from work in Washington, D.C., offered by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the City and Suburban streetcar line. The community was incorporated in 1924 as the Town of Edmonston.

The report is divided into five major sections: Pre-Subdivision History, The Rogers and Wells Subdivisions, Growth and Development of East Hyattsville, Continued Development and After Incorporation. The report includes background history on the earliest development of the community, and the first subdivisions by Rogers and Wells; it also describes the settling of the first families in the newly platted subdivisions. It describes and compares the first dwellings erected in the community, and analyzes by building type a representative group of dwellings which survive from the first building period. It then describes the community's development as it approached incorporation in 1924. The report is supplemented by photographs, plats and maps.

# The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency, created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties: the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission has three major functions:

- the preparation, adoption, and from time to time amendment or extension of the General Plan for the physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District;
- the acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system; and
- in Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire County public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board, appointed by and responsible to the county government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

The Prince George's County Department of Planning (M-NCPPC):

- Performs technical analyses and offers advice and recommendations regarding most matters related to existing and future...  
...use of land including the enhancement of the physical environment, and  
...provision of public facilities and services.
- Works on a set of specific projects and tasks annually set forth in a work program and budget adopted by the Prince George's County Council and performs such other tasks in response to emerging issues as resources permit.
- Works under the direction of the Prince George's County Planning Board.
- Is an organization of people that is here to serve people...our elected and appointed officials, our fellow public staffs, and our citizens...individually and/or collectively. The staff will maintain a partnership with people. It will assist and advise you, and will expect your assistance and advice.
- Maintains competent and professionally able staff to perform our duties and responsibilities.

## Prince George's County Council

The County Council has three main responsibilities in the planning process: 1) setting policy, 2) plan approval, and 3) plan implementation. Applicable policies are incorporated into area plans, functional plans, and the general plan. The Council, after holding a hearing on the plan adopted by the Planning Board, may approve the plan as adopted, approve the plan with amendments based on the public record, or disapprove the plan and return it to the Planning Board for revision. Implementation is primarily through adoption of the annual Capital Improvement Program, the annual Budget, the Ten-Year Water and Sewerage Plan, and adoption of zoning map amendments.





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# INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the findings of an historical/architectural survey of the oldest sections of the Town of Edmonston; this survey was conducted by the Historic Preservation Section of the Prince George's County Planning Department/M-NCPPC from July 1992 to June 1993 (FY93). The survey was requested by the Edmonston Town Council and the Honorable Paulette Horan, Mayor. The goal of the project was to document the earliest of the historic buildings still standing in the Town, and to prepare a written history of the community from the earliest period of its development at the turn of this century.

The Town of Edmonston is located outside of the northeast boundary of the District of Columbia; it lies on the southeast side of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, bounded by Hyattsville on the west, Riverdale on the north and east, and Bladensburg on the south. Development of the community began around 1900 on land platted by J. Harris Rogers of Hyattsville, and shortly afterwards on adjoining land called "Palestine Farm" by Dr. Charles A. Wells. The first residents were families attracted to the area by the easily accessible transportation to and from work in Washington, D.C., offered first by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and later by the City and Suburban streetcar line. The residents of this community would eventually incorporate as the Town of Edmonston.

This report includes background history on the earliest development of the community, and the first subdivisions by Rogers and Wells. It describes the expansion of the original subdivision, and the settling of the first families in the newly platted subdivisions. It describes and compares the first dwellings erected in the community; it also describes and analyzes, by building type, a representative group of dwellings which survive from the first building period. It then describes the community's development as it approached incorporation in 1924.

No individual buildings in the Town of Edmonston are currently listed as Historic Resources in the Prince George's County *Historic Sites and Districts Plan*, and therefore none is protected by the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance. However, a number of the early dwellings deserve consideration for Historic Resource or Historic Site status. It is hoped that as a result of this study, the owners, with the support of the Town, will request further analysis either individually or as a group, as well as evaluation by the Historic Preservation Commission.

# EDMONSTON

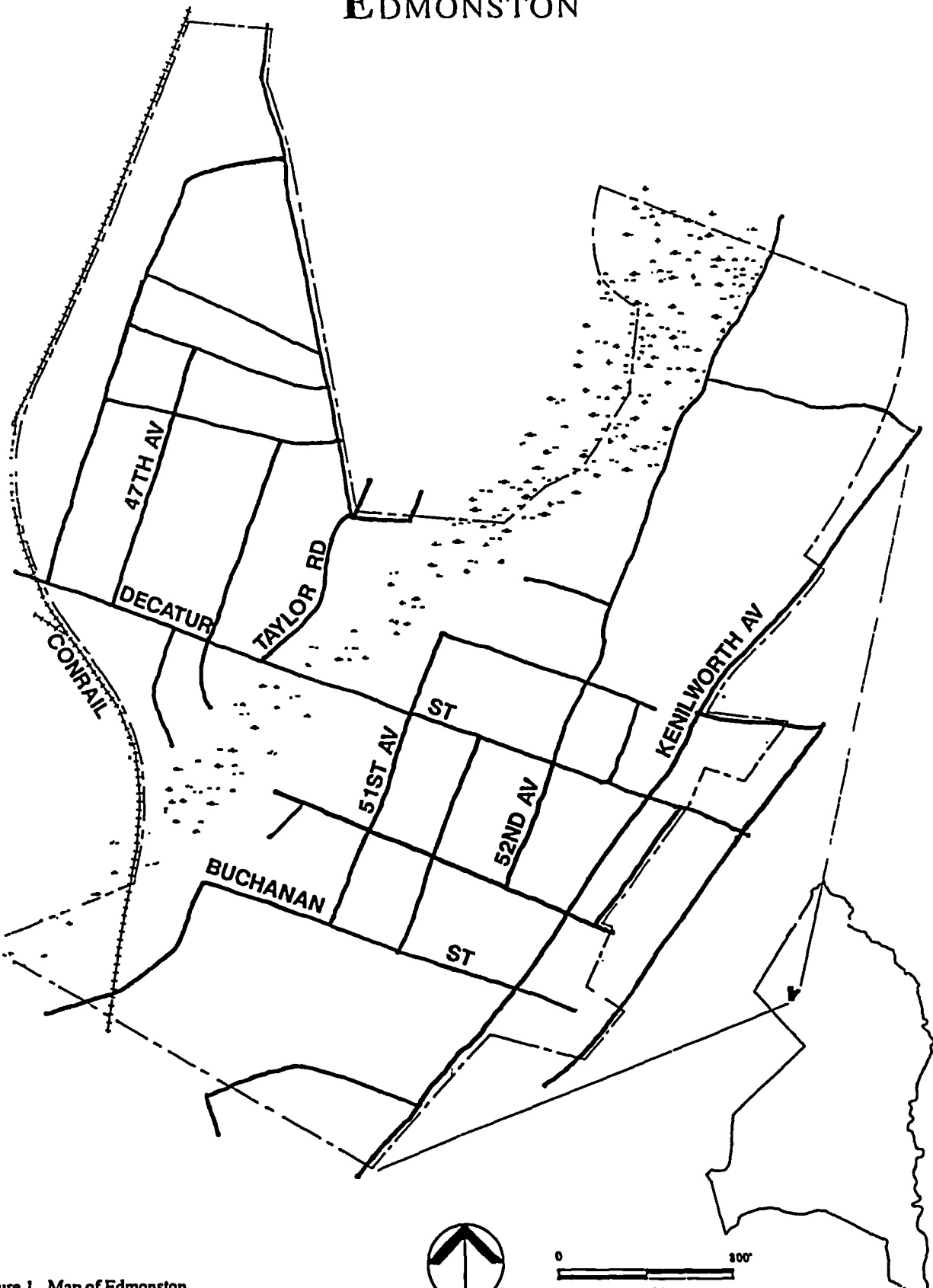


Figure 1. Map of Edmonston.

# **PRE-SUBDIVISION HISTORY**

Edmonston is one of the early twentieth-century subdivisions platted along the railroad and trolley lines running northeast out of Washington, D. C. (See Figure 1.) Much of the land that is now incorporated in the Town of Edmonston was platted for subdivision in 1903, following Hyattsville, Riverdale, College Park, North Brentwood, Brentwood and Mount Rainier. Families were attracted to the area because of the easily accessible transportation in and out of the District of Columbia. Individuals who worked in Washington began buying lots from the developers, and within a few years, began to build family homes in the new community

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUBURBS NORTH OF WASHINGTON, D. C.**

The 1880s represented a period of tremendous residential development in areas outside of major cities. Like New York City, where suburban communities were rapidly developing in Long Island and New Jersey, Washington, D.C., was also experiencing expansion. In Prince George's County, in the area north and east of the Federal City, suburban development clustered along the lines of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. This railroad line had been completed between Baltimore and Washington in the summer of 1835, and within a generation, Hyattsville and Beltsville were developing into substantial communities. Hyattsville especially, only two miles outside the District boundary, was becoming highly regarded as a summer or suburban residence for people who worked in the Federal City. Bladensburg had been bypassed by the line of the railroad, a fact which led to the decline of its earlier commercial status. By the period of the Civil War, the area immediately northeast of the District boundary was still principally rural and agricultural in character, with Hyattsville becoming the main commercial center.

By the mid 1880s, land speculators and developers began looking for ways of duplicating Hyattsville's success. One of the first was Edward Graves, who in 1887 purchased 383 acres east of the railroad and south of the old Branchville Road; the subdivision of Charlton Heights was platted in 1888 and the community which developed at this location is known today as Berwyn Heights. Fox and Lutz's subdivision of the Calvert estate (Riversdale) into Riverdale Park, John O. Johnson's establishment of College Park out of the northernmost section of the Calvert estate adjoining the Maryland Agricultural College, and Francis Shanabrook's Central Heights (now called Berwyn) were all laid out along the B & O Railroad in 1889. In 1891, subdivision began on part of the Thomas G. Clemson estate, a short distance west of the railroad and near the District boundary; spurred by the opening of the streetcar line, several syndicates platted further subdivisions, and development of what was to become Mount Rainier had begun by the end of that decade. Between 1891 and 1899, two farms located close to the railroad, between Hyattsville and the District of Columbia boundary, were subdivided into residential building lots. These two subdivisions, developed by the Holladay Company and the Brentwood Company, grew into the black community of Randalltown (now North Brentwood) and the adjoining (white) community of Brentwood.

During the 1890s, companies were being chartered to link Baltimore and Washington by trolley lines. The Columbia and Maryland Railway Company began

to buy up land for its right-of-way on a line which ran west of and nearly parallel to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Tracks were laid along this right-of-way, and by 1898 streetcar service was provided as far north as the Brentwood and Randalltown communities. In the meantime, the Maryland and Washington Railway had begun its trolley service from the District line at Mount Rainier, where settlement was just beginning, into the District of Columbia. By 1898, the two operating trolley companies merged to become the City and Suburban Railway Company. By 1899, City and Suburban service was extended farther north to Hyattsville and Riverdale; by 1902, with the extension of the Washington, Berwyn and Laurel Railroad Company, streetcar service was extended all the way to Laurel. Streetcar service continued until 1958, after which all of the tracks were taken up, and the right-of-way became the widened Rhode Island Avenue.<sup>1</sup>

With the advent of streetcar service at the turn of this century, the incentive for suburban development was substantially increased. A growing number of families who worked in the District of Columbia began to seek residence outside of its boundaries, attracted by two different and convenient means of commutation between home and work. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the area which a generation earlier had been essentially rural was developing rapidly into residential subdivisions.

It was in this situation that the community which would become Edmonston had its beginning. In 1903, two prominent men from Hyattsville subdivided two adjoining parcels of land just east of Hyattsville on the opposite side of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad: J. Harris Rogers, an area called East Hyattsville, and Charles A. Wells, the Palestine Farm. It was in these two subdivisions that the first houses were built in what was to become the Town of Edmonston, and the early development of these two subdivisions will be the focus of this report.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF HYATTSVILLE**

The community of Edmonston came about because of the existence of Hyattsville. By the end of the nineteenth century, Hyattsville was a successful residential and commercial community, and some of its prominent citizens were very much involved in the further development of the area. Some developers were extending the residential area to the north (e.g., Nichols Addition<sup>2</sup>) and others to the south (e.g., the Holladay Company's Addition to Hyattsville<sup>3</sup>). The development which would become Edmonston extended the populated area eastward from the nucleus of the Hyattsville community.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Christopher C. Hyatt had purchased property north of Bladensburg at the intersection of the old Washington and Baltimore Turnpike and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. He built his brick mansion (no longer standing) on the west side of the railroad, and opened a store directly across the tracks. In 1859, Hyatt was appointed postmaster of the new crossroads community which thenceforth was to bear his name.<sup>4</sup>

It was not until 1873 that Hyatt surveyed and platted a portion of his property into building lots. Before this time, during the period of the Civil War, Hyattsville was still just a small crossroads settlement at the Turnpike/railroad intersection, noted for several commercial enterprises as well as for the substantial residences of a few successful entrepreneurs, e.g., C. C. Hyatt and B. F. Guy<sup>5</sup>



In 1873, Hyatt had a section of his property surveyed and platted into 28 building lots approximately 60 by 280 feet. This approximately 20-acre area was known as Hyatt's Addition to Hyattsville. By 1878, the town was developing into a desirable place of residence for commuters to the Capital City (Figure 2). An 1878 account describes the new town as follows: "Hyattsville, on the Washington Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, is a beautiful village, tasteful houses in the modern style of architecture, ornamented with gardens and lawns, is largely indebted, for its prosperity to Christopher C. Hyatt, it has gradually increased in beauty and prosperity until it stands as one of the foremost villages between Baltimore and Washington."<sup>6</sup>

The development of the Victorian residential area began in 1882. In that year, developers George Johnson and Louis Wine purchased 196 acres adjoining the original section of Hyattsville, and initiated the development of what they called "Wine and Johnson's First Addition to Hyattsville." This section was surveyed and platted by Surveyor George W. Jackson in September 1882, to create approximately 100 building lots, with two areas of parkland and street names honoring the developers.<sup>7</sup> This residential development continued with Wine and Johnson's Second Addition, an area east of the First Addition and closer to the growing business district; the Second Addition was platted in 1884.<sup>8</sup>

In the meantime, the commercial area of Hyattsville was growing along the railroad and the Washington and Baltimore Turnpike. In the early years of the residential subdivisions, the business district clustered around Hyatt's store and post office and the railroad station, and to the south of the Turnpike/railroad crossing. As the residential subdivisions grew and prospered, the business district grew also, spreading generally northward. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, more and more stores lined the Turnpike north of the crossing. Also at the end of the century, a pumping station was established just east of the railroad; it supplied water to the growing Hyattsville community. It was in this area, east of the growing commercial area, that two Hyattsville residents planned for the development which would become Edmonston.

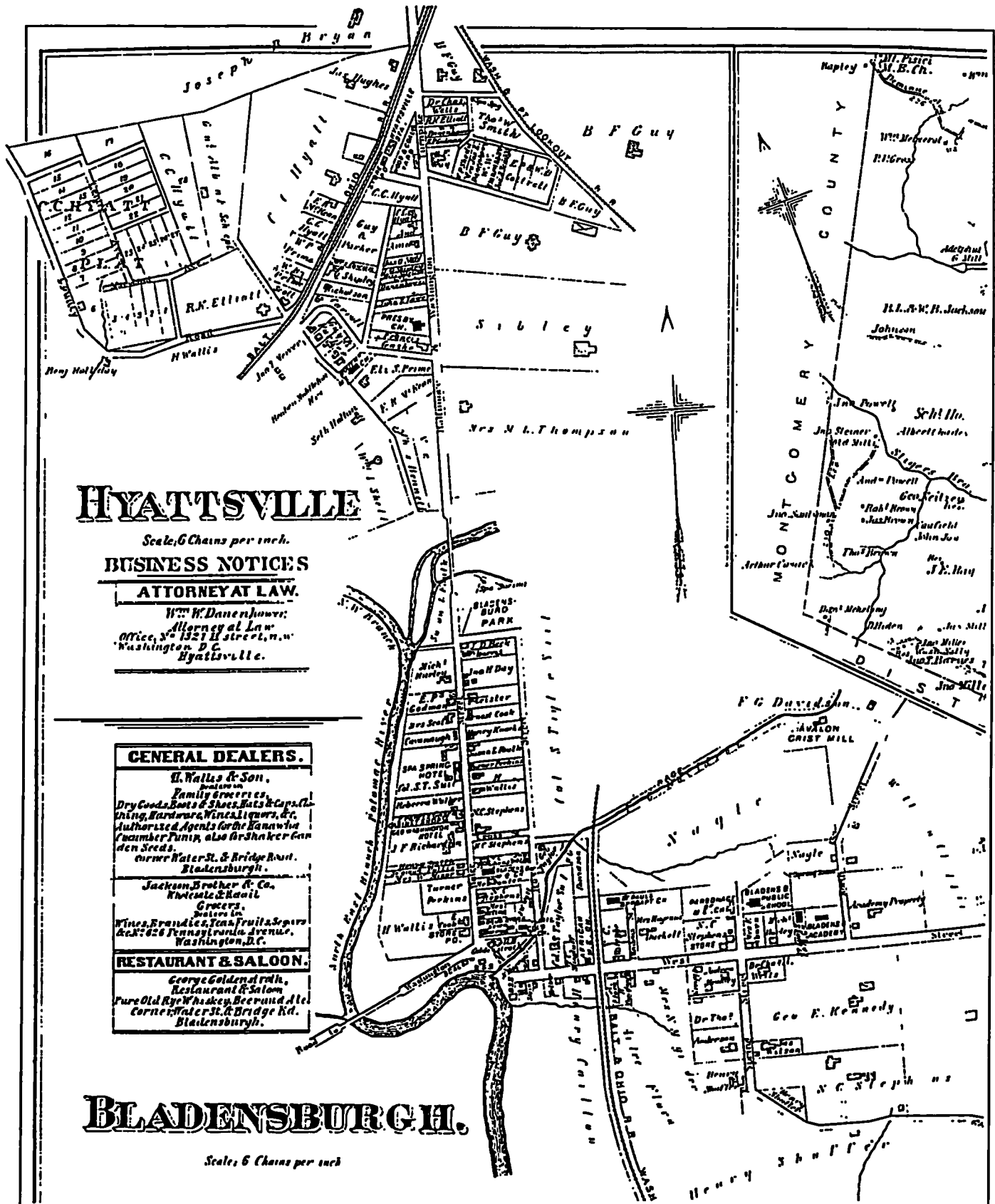


Figure 2. 1878 Map of Bladensburg-Hyattsville area (G.M. Hopkins Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including the County of Prince George, Maryland), Election District 2

# THE ROGERS AND WELLS SUBDIVISIONS

The oldest developed part of Edmonston was platted in two parts, the Rogers subdivision of East Hyattsville and the Wells subdivision of Palestine, both surveyed and platted in 1903. The easterly section, approximately 70 acres called East Hyattsville, was platted for subdivision in 1903 by J. Harris Rogers of Hyattsville; it was surveyed and platted out of two large parcels of land which Rogers had acquired in the 1880s and 1890s. In 1886, Rogers had purchased from Florence McLaughlin 216 acres of the tract "Charles and Rebecca" which made up the southeasterly part of the Calvert family's Riversdale plantation.<sup>9</sup> An adjacent parcel of land, also bounding on the mill race and lying east of the Turnpike, was purchased by Rogers in 1896 out of the real estate of John and Fannie Boteler. The 107-acre Boteler property was known as Spa Woods; it lay a short distance northeast of Bladensburg's Spa Spring Park, within the loop of the mill race for the Calvert family's Avalon Mill.<sup>10</sup> Out of these two large parcels of land, Rogers would eventually develop his East Hyattsville subdivision.

It was not until 1903 that Rogers initiated a plat of subdivision for this property as a residential expansion of Hyattsville. The land was surveyed and platted (by surveyor Edward L. Latimer) as "East Hyattsville"; approximately 70 acres were laid out as Blocks A through P, with each block having between 18 and 26 lots. The plat included approximately 170 long, narrow lots, usually 50 by 200 feet, and averaging 10,000 square feet; the northerly section included several larger parcels of land, irregular in shape, and averaging one to three acres (Figure 3). The plat, however, was not recorded, and during the early years of its development, all of the building lots were sold by metes and bounds rather than by lots and blocks.<sup>11</sup>

J. Harris Rogers (1850-1929) had lived in Prince George's County since 1877 (Figure 4). Educated in England, he moved with his family to this area in 1877, living first in the eighteenth-century frame house known as "Parthenon" in Bladensburg. J. H. Rogers later moved to Hyattsville, living at "Firwood," a handsome frame house on Johnson Avenue. He never married, but maintained a large household which included his mother, a brother and two sisters. Rogers became a well-known inventor, performing extensive experiments in the field of electrical science in the laboratory at "Firwood." Dr. Rogers received about 50 patents, the most important of which was the system of underground and undersea wireless communication, a major aid to the Allies during World War I.<sup>12</sup>

It was during and after World War I that Rogers became well known for his scientific achievement; in earlier years, at the turn of the century, he was, like many other prominent Hyattsville residents, involved in real estate and residential development in the area near Hyattsville. He began to sell parcels of land from both the Spa Woods and the Charles and Rebecca tracts in the late 1890s. Before Rogers subdivided his land in 1903, several individuals had purchased parcels of that land and had built fine houses; in fact two of the most prominent houses in present-day Edmonston, as well as six front-gabled vernacular dwellings, were built before the land was subdivided.<sup>13</sup>

Another, smaller, section of land was also platted for residential subdivision in 1903. In 1878 and 1879, Dr. Charles A. Wells purchased approximately 90 acres of farmland (known as "Palestine Farm") out of the real estate of Benjamin Franklin

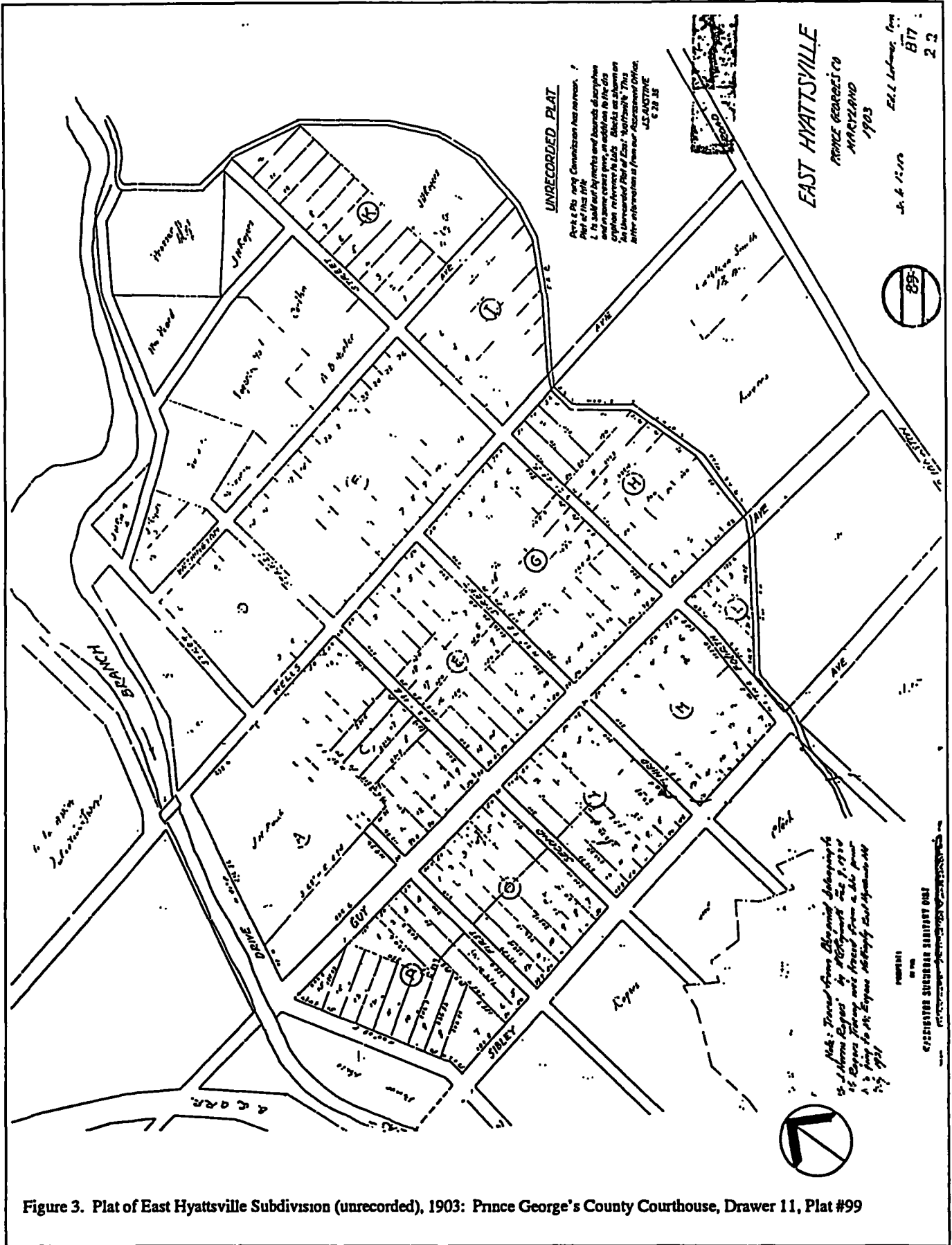


Figure 3. Plat of East Hyattsville Subdivision (unrecorded), 1903: Prince George's County Courthouse, Drawer 11, Plat #99

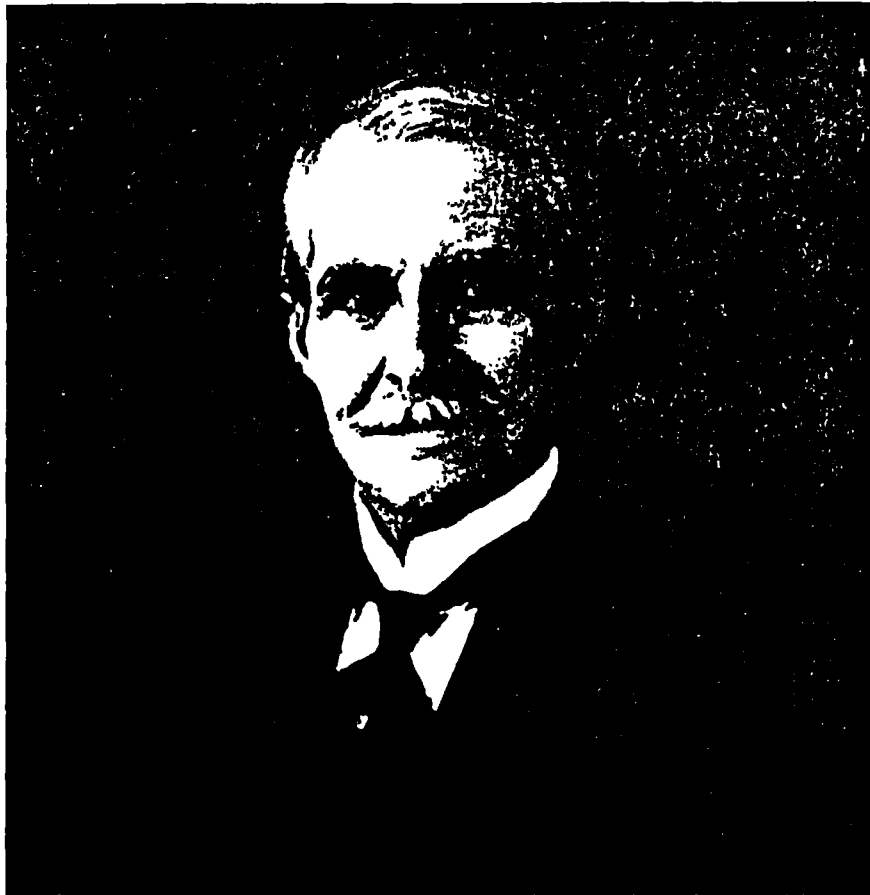
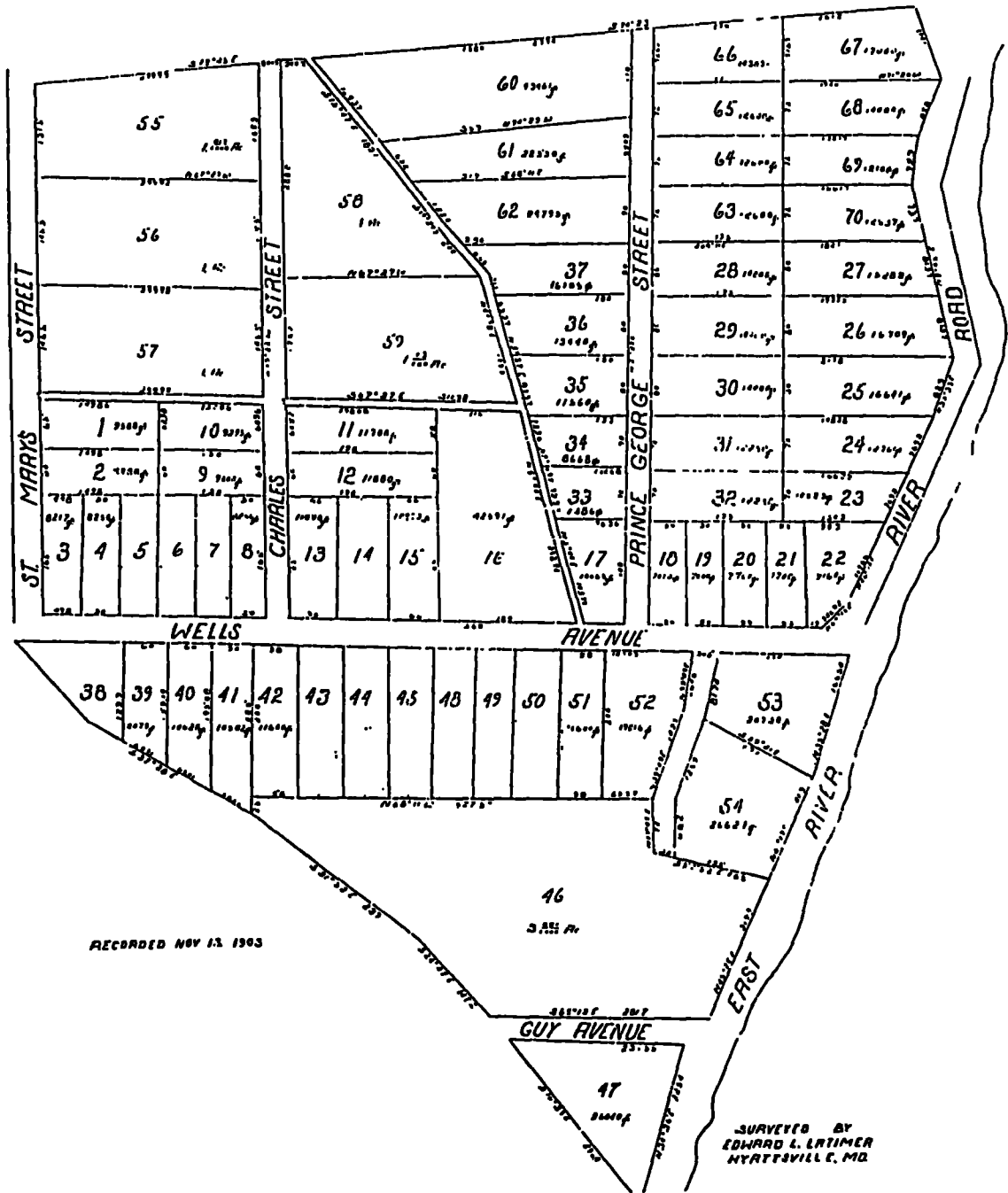


Figure 4. J. Harris Rogers (1850-1929), courtesy of Joseph S. Rogers (from Virta, *Prince George's County Pictorial History*, page 197)

Guy This land lay on the east side of Hyattsville, between the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River and the Alexandria Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. It was almost directly east of Wells' residence and surgery which fronted on the Washington and Baltimore Turnpike as it ran through Hyattsville. For many years, Wells operated a dairy farm (still calling it "Palestine Farm") on this land. In 1903 he had about 25 acres of this land surveyed by Edward L. Latimer (the same surveyor who platted the Rogers East Hyattsville subdivision) and platted for residential subdivision (Figure 5). Many of the 62 lots in the Palestine Farm subdivision were larger than the Rogers lots, averaging 75 by 175 feet, or 13,15 square feet. Many were of irregular sizes, and some (at 7000 square feet) were even smaller than the Rogers lots, which averaged 10,000 square feet.<sup>14</sup> Wells sold most of his lots unimproved, but he did build houses on five of the lots.

Charles Wells (1840-1924) was a native Prince Georgian (Figure 6). Born in 1840, he had grown up on a small plantation a short distance east of Bladensburg. He received a degree from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1862 and practiced with his uncle, Dr. Archibald Magruder, who operated out of his house (the Hilleary-Magruder House) in Bladensburg. After 1862, Dr. Wells set up his own doctor's office in Bladensburg, next door to the "Parthenon" where J. Harris Rogers lived when he first moved to Prince George's County. Both men later removed to Hyattsville. Around 1880 Wells set up his surgery in his residence on the east side of Maryland Avenue (the Turnpike) in Hyattsville and raised his family

WELLS AND WELLS  
 SUBDIVISION OF  
 PALESTINE FARM  
 ADJOINING HYATTSVILLE MD  
 1903



I hereby certify that the true and correct copy of this Plat recorded in Deed #15464 Prince Georges County, Maryland is as shown on the above Plat.

Figure 5. Plat of Palestine Farm Subdivision, 1903: plat filed in Prince George's County Deed #15:464 (Plat Book A-14)

in this house. The Rogers home, "Firwood," was on the opposite side of Maryland Avenue, a short distance away from the Wells' residence. Wells served as Mayor of Hyattsville from 1902 to 1906, receiving every vote (108) cast in the mayoral election of 1902. In 1910 he was elected to the Maryland Senate, and served two terms until 1914.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 6. Dr. Charles A. Wells (1840-1924), from *Hyattsville Our Hometown, 1886-1986*, 1988, page 245

By 1903, both the Rogers and the Wells parcels of land had been subdivided (although the Rogers subdivision was never recorded) and individual lots and parcels of land were being sold. The easterly portion was generally referred to as "East Hyattsville" or the "J. H. Rogers Tract," and the westerly as "Palestine," but both soon came to be known as East Hyattsville (Figure 7).

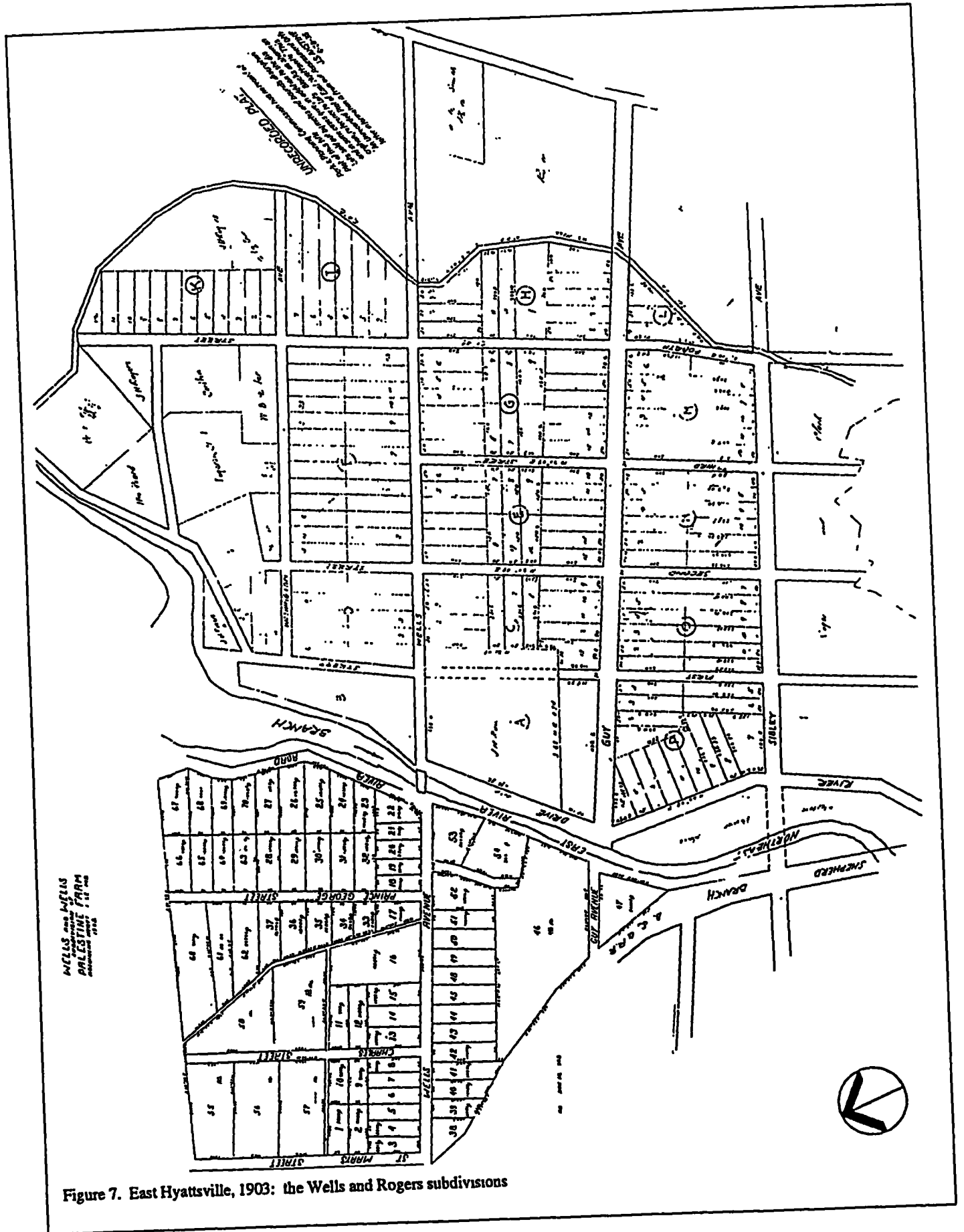


Figure 7. East Hyattsville, 1903: the Wells and Rogers subdivisions



# GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF EAST HYATTSVILLE

## THE EARLIEST HOUSES

In the Palestine subdivision, Wells had several houses built for the purpose of attracting purchasers of lots. As far as one can determine from tax assessments, Rogers did not do the same; he sold only unimproved lots by metes and bounds, and the purchasers erected their own houses. Several of these houses were built in the Rogers subdivision of East Hyattsville before the land was actually platted.

Among the first houses in the Rogers subdivision were those built by Elisha P Taylor. In 1899 Taylor purchased from Rogers six lots, each of approximately one-fourth acre; four of these lots fronted on Wells Avenue, the main road which led east from the Turnpike. (In 1941, all of the original street names were changed, and Wells Avenue became Decatur Street - see subsection entitled "Street Name Changes.") In the next year Taylor built a dwelling on each of the lots; they were front-gabled frame houses typical of those being built in the suburban subdivisions of the day and well adapted to the deep narrow lots. Each dwelling contained six rooms and "all necessary outbuildings." Taylor mortgaged his property to the Laurel Building Association, but then defaulted on his mortgage payments. Charles H. Stanley of the Laurel Building Association was appointed to offer the properties for sale, which he did, announcing the sale in the December 1900 issues of the *Hyattsville Independent*. In March 1901, all six improved lots were purchased by the Laurel Building Association, which managed them temporarily as rental dwellings; several were sold within a year, and all by 1909.<sup>16</sup> All six of these houses still stand; although many of them have been significantly altered, they are good representatives of the earliest dwellings in this community, typical of modest housing in developing suburbs of the period.

Two of the earliest houses in the Rogers subdivision (the Piggott-Sikken House on Lot 5 of Block F, and the Poppleton-Roberts House one block to the north) are outstanding examples of late Victorian domestic architecture, and are very noticeable landmarks in the community

### THE PIGGOTT-SIKKEN HOUSE: BLOCK F, LOT 5 OF THE J. HARRIS ROGERS SUBDIVISION

The house which stands on Lot 5 of Block F is a variant of the basic front-gabled form; it is 2-1/2 stories high, and is distinguished by decorative gable treatment and projecting bays. Several elements vary the lines of the basic front-gabled form. Entrance is in the easternmost bay of the principal south gable front, inset and sheltered by a corner porch with heavy segmental panelled arches. Above the entry porch in the southeast corner, a small square pyramidal-roof tower projects slightly from the east elevation at second-story level, and rises to a third story. Behind it, the next bay to the north consists of a projecting oriel window at second-story level. And nearly centered on the west elevation is a two-story semi-octagonal projecting bay, covered by a hip roof which is itself enclosed within a cross gable in the west plane of the main roof. The house is sheathed with slate-blue asbestos shingle on

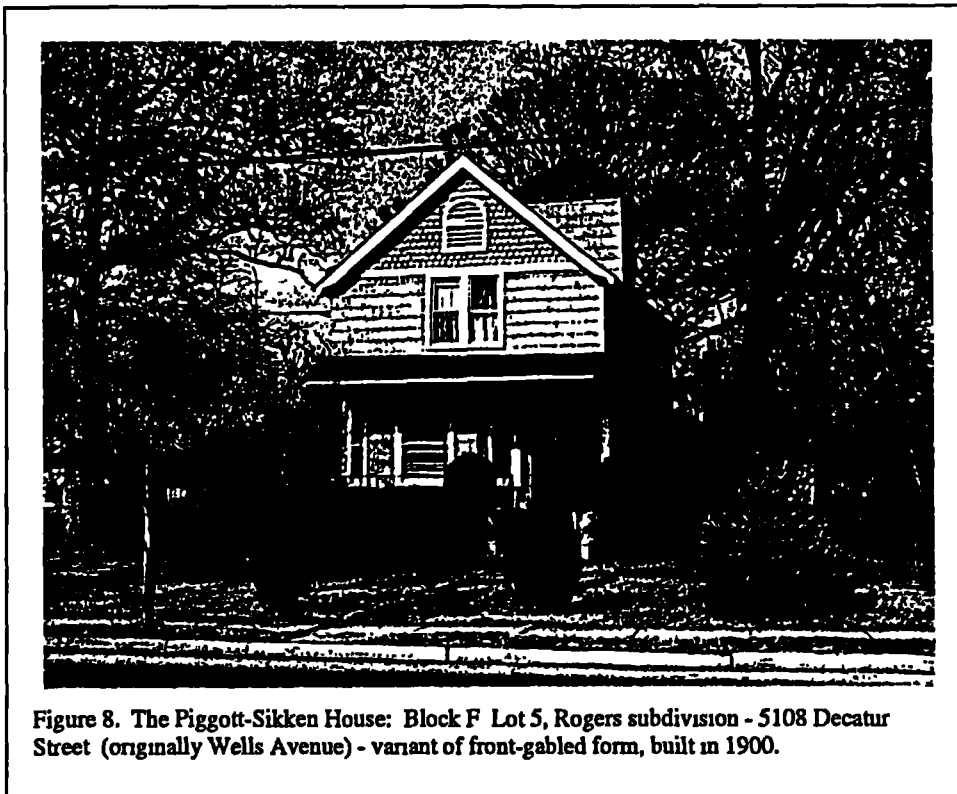


Figure 8. The Piggott-Sikken House: Block F Lot 5, Rogers subdivision - 5108 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) - variant of front-gabled form, built in 1900.

the first and second stories; the gables are sided with fishscale shingles of the same color. The house lot is flanked by two undeveloped lots (Figure 8).

In 1900, J. Harris Rogers sold 2/3 acre of this land to Charles Piggott, who completed construction of the subject house in that year. The following year, 1901, Piggott and his wife sold the house and 2/3-acre lot to Ernest A. Sikken, who worked as a clerk in the Government Printing Office. In 1903, when the land around the Sikken family property was subdivided, their land came to be designated as Lots 4, 5 and 6 of Block F in the new subdivision. The house remained the Sikken family home for 35 years.<sup>17</sup>

The Piggott-Sikken House is derived from the basic front-gabled house form, but is distinguished by projecting bays, oriel window and tower, which vary its lines, and make it a noticeable landmark in the community of Edmonston.

### THE POPPLETON-ROBERTS HOUSE

The house which stands at 5104 Emerson (formerly Washington) Street is unique not only in the Edmonston community but also in the County. Much larger than the standard dwelling in this community, it is two stories high and five bays long and two bays wide. The principal facade and gable ends are sheltered by a deep covered porch whose hip roof is integral with that of the house; the porch posts are chamfered with jigsaw brackets. Above the central entrance, a large dormer, set into the slope of the porch roof below, forms a central cross gable and dominates the second story of the principal facade. On each side of the central dormer is a very shallow "eye brow" shed dormer. Some of the gable surfaces are sided with clipped-corner shingles (Figure 9). There are several large evergreen trees in the front yard of the



Figure 9. The Poppleton-Roberts House: 5104 Emerson (originally Washington) Street - unique house form in updated French Colonial style, built in 1901.

house, and lining the street to the east are several large old magnolias which were probably planted near the time of construction of the house.

This house is a unique example of its type in Prince George's County. Its gable-on-hip roof and wrap-around porch are reminiscent of French Colonial dwellings of the deep South, while its late Victorian trim and the shallow shed dormers look forward into the twentieth century. It was built on land purchased from J. Harris Rogers before that area was platted for subdivision.

In 1901 A. D. Poppleton contracted to purchase two acres in the northernmost section of the Rogers subdivision. This section, north of Washington Avenue (now Emerson Street), was sold in one- to three-acre parcels. Poppleton paid Rogers a deposit of approximately 40 percent of the cost of the property, but a deed was not executed. In spite of this, Poppleton contracted construction of a large and unusual residence on land which was not yet legally his. He purchased lumber and hardware, and hired a mason, plasterer, painter and several carpenters; the house was essentially complete by the end of 1901 and the Poppleton family had taken up residence early in 1902. Poppleton had run up a bill of over \$1800 for construction of the house, and was unable to pay his debts. One of his largest creditors, The Frank Libbey Company, suppliers of lumber, brought suit against Poppleton for nonpayment of debt, and the Equity Court appointed trustees to sell the property in order to pay the debts.<sup>18</sup> A public sale was set for 12 May 1902; the property was advertised as including a handsome new eight-room house with a porch all around, a summer kitchen and all necessary outbuildings, on 2 acres of rich land only 1/2 mile from the steam and electric cars.<sup>19</sup> The high bidder was Rufus Clarke of Washington, D. C., who offered \$1500; the trustees conveyed the property to Clarke in June 1902. A month later, Poppleton still occupied the property, and Clarke requested and received from the Court an order for Poppleton to vacate the property and deliver it to Clarke, now the legal owner.<sup>20</sup>

The Equity Court case which describes Poppleton's situation is particularly interesting and informative. The case itemizes the work of the various craftsmen in their attempts to receive payment. Carpenter John Decatur worked for 43 1/2 days (at \$2 per day) to complete the house, and carpenter Lenthel Poppleton (almost certainly a relative) worked for 50 days at \$1.50 per day. Painter George M. Suit applied one coat of paint to the exterior of the house, and two to the interior in December 1901 and January 1902. A bill for a large variety of building supplies was owed to William P. Magruder, Hyattsville lumber and hardware dealer. The Bill of Complaint made it clear that Poppleton had undertaken construction before he owned the land, that the dwelling was "large, handsome and valuable," and that by early 1902 it was entirely complete and occupied by the defendant (Poppleton) as his private residence.<sup>21</sup>

The house and two-acre Poppleton lot were legally conveyed to Rufus and Annie Clark in June 1902, but it is not certain whether they ever lived there; the Clarkes sold the property within a year to Helena Grove of Washington, D.C. In 1905 Helena and Edward Grove sold the two-acre property to F. Ambrose Armstrong, who owned, but did not occupy, the house until 1919.<sup>22</sup>

In order to secure payment, Helena Grove held a mortgage on the property which she had conveyed to Armstrong. Armstrong took out a second mortgage at the same time, but defaulted on payments for the second mortgage, and suit was brought to recover payment.<sup>23</sup> In 1919 the property was offered at public sale; it passed through several short-term owners, and in 1928 was purchased by James A. and Edna F. Roberts. The Roberts raised their family in this house, and it has remained the home of their heirs to this day.<sup>24</sup>

The Poppleton-Roberts House is one of the earliest dwellings built in the East Hyattsville subdivision. It provides important information about local construction of the period, e.g., labor costs, names of local contractors, and time spent in the various phases of construction. Combining an updated French Colonial profile with late Victorian decorative elements, it is a unique and prominent feature of the Edmonston community.

## **TYPICAL DWELLINGS OF THE EARLY SUBDIVISIONS**

Survey of these two original subdivisions reveals that 31 houses still stand from the earliest building period. Eleven still stand in the Rogers subdivision, half of the 22 houses built in the first decade of this community's development. In the Wells Palestine subdivision, 20 early houses still stand, well over half of the 33 houses built within that subdivision's first decade. Assuming that the houses which still stand are representative of the original group of houses, one can extrapolate the most frequent and popular types of dwellings which were built in the two subdivisions in this earliest period of building activity. All but one of these earliest dwellings were of wood frame construction. They were, as one might expect, typical of the dwelling types being built in all of the developing suburbs at that time.

## THE I-HOUSE

The traditional I-house type (two stories, side-gabled, with central stairhall and a single parlor on each side, often with a central cross gable at loft level), had been a frequent farmhouse type for the preceding generation; it was borrowed from its original rural context and translated into a suburban setting. Simplified and adapted to the deep narrow urban building lots, the I-house form continued to be built throughout the first decade of this century

Of the 31 earliest houses still standing in the Edmonston community, four are of the I-house type; all four are in the Palestine subdivision.

In order to attract buyers, Dr. Wells built houses on five of the lots in the Palestine subdivision, and four of these were traditional I-houses; all four of them survive. The four I-house dwellings were built by Dr. Wells in 1903; they were built on lots 9, 11, 12 and 57. These I-houses were the most basic type of dwelling, with four rooms in the main block (two rooms up and two down) and usually a rear kitchen wing. They were assessed in 1904 at \$600 each, the lowest assessed value of any of the dwellings then constructed.

The house on Lot 9 was purchased in 1905 by the family of Annie Ammon; Mrs. Ammon, a widow, lived there with her son George; the house is presently sheathed with white asbestos shingle, and its principal facade is dominated by a (modern) pedimented porch (Figure 10). The house on Lot 11 was retained by Wells and managed as a rental property for over a decade; it is presently covered with white stucco and its principal facade is sheltered by a facade-wide Tuscan porch (Figure 11). The house on Lot 12 was purchased from Wells by Charles and Wilma Glass; Charles Glass worked as a government clerk; the house is presently sheathed with white asbestos shingle and its principal facade is sheltered by a hip-roof porch with turned posts (Figure 12). The house on Lot 57 was purchased by Annie Brown; this dwelling was soon substantially enlarged and became the family home of Annie and Charles Brown.<sup>25</sup> The house is presently sheathed with gray synthetic siding, its main facade is sheltered by a porch with square panelled posts, and it has a large rear addition (Figure 13).

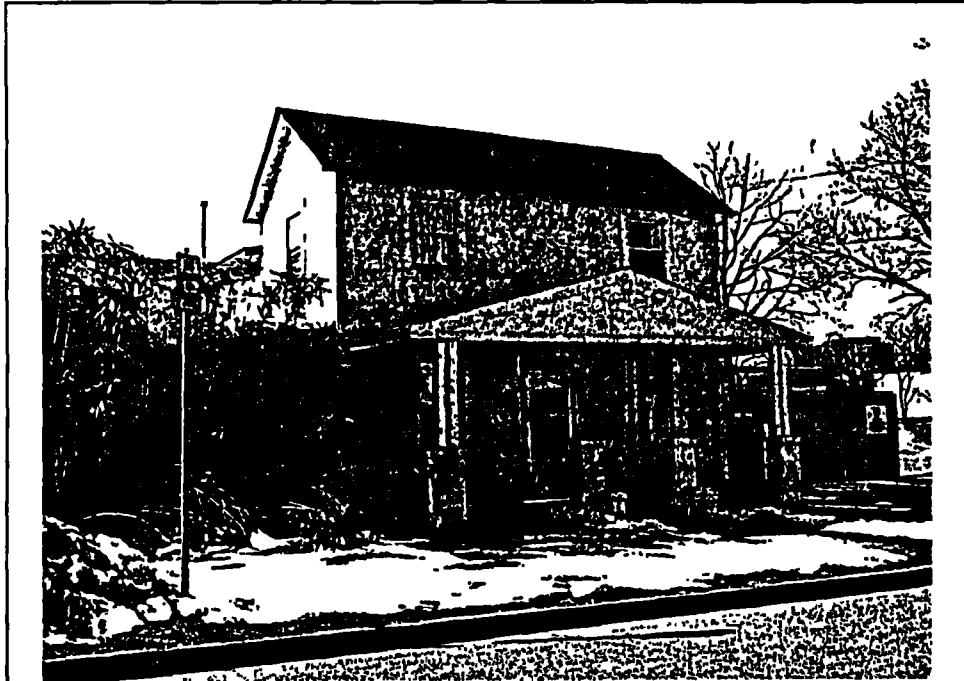


Figure 10. The Wells-Ammon House: Lot 9, Palestine subdivision - 4902 47th Avenue (originally Charles Street) I-house type frame dwelling built by Dr. C. A. Wells in 1903.



Figure 11. The Wells (rental) House: Lot 11, Palestine subdivision - 4905 47th Avenue (originally Charles Street) I-house type frame dwelling built by Dr. C.A. Wells in 1903.



**Figure 12. The Wells-Glass House: Lot 12, Palestine subdivision - 4903 47th Avenue (originally Charles Street) I-house type frame dwelling built by Dr. C.A. Wells in 1903.**



**Figure 13. The Wells-Brown House: Lot 57, Palestine subdivision - 5002 47th Avenue (originally Charles Street) - I-house type frame dwelling built by Dr. C.A. Wells in 1903.**

## THE CROSS-GABLED HOUSE

Another popular farmhouse type, the two-and-one-half-story cross-gabled house, was also adapted for the narrow lots, and for nearly a decade was the favorite among those who could afford to build a larger dwelling. These dwellings were substantially larger than the I-house type, and were typically assessed at a considerably higher value (e.g., between \$900 and \$1200, compared to the \$600 of the I-house). The cross-gabled dwellings were generally characterized by a two-and-one-half-story front-gabled main block to which was attached a wing of comparable size at right angles. The main entrance was usually in the front-gabled section, and was often sheltered by a Victorian porch which wrapped around part of the wing. Six of these cross-gabled dwellings survive in Edmonston (five in the Palestine subdivision, and one in the Rogers tract), and they probably represent the relatively small number of this type of dwelling among the original early buildings.

One of the best examples of the cross-gabled house type was built by John McDonough circa 1910. McDonough lived in the center of Hyattsville proper, and his house on Lot 60 of the Palestine subdivision was apparently managed as a rental property. It is a particularly fine example of a Victorian cross-gabled house, unusual for a rental property. The principal front gable is three bays wide, and all gable ends have prominent pediments with bull's-eye windows, and the handsome wraparound porch has turned posts with openwork brackets (Figure 14).<sup>26</sup>



Figure 14. The John McDonough House: Lot 60, Palestine subdivision - 4920 49th Avenue (originally Prince George Street) - Cross-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1910.

Several other cross-gabled houses built in the early years of the community have been altered or modernized, and do not retain all of their original Victorian trim, but the lines of the original cross-gable plan are still visible. In 1902, before the East Hyattsville property was subdivided, Rose Dent purchased a parcel of land on the northwest corner of Wells and Second Streets (known as Block D, Lot 5 in the subdivision). Rose Dent soon married Frank White, who worked for the Government



Printing Office, and later dealt in real estate. In 1903 the Whites had a cross-gabled frame house erected on the lot; they lived in the house until 1914 when they sold the house and lot to the McQuin family who resided there until 1982. Today the lines of the house have been altered by the construction of an addition which fills the corner formed by the perpendicular sections of the house, but the form is still recognizable, and some of the Victorian porch trim survives (Figure 15).<sup>27</sup>



Figure 15. The White-McQuin House: Block D, Lot 5, Rogers subdivision - 5008 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) - Cross-gabled frame dwelling built in 1903.

The house on Lot 21 of the Palestine subdivision was built in 1903 by Dr. Wells himself. This larger cross-gabled house was also operated as a rental property until circa 1910 when Wells sold it to Otto Ulrich. Ulrich worked as a bricklayer. He purchased four adjoining lots fronting on the main street in the Palestine subdivision, and lived in the subject house. The house is presently covered with green asbestos shingle and has awnings at the windows; the porch, which does not wrap around, retains much of its Victorian trim (Figure 16).<sup>28</sup>

Before 1910, Dr. Wells sold Lot 24 of the Palestine subdivision to William and Martha Smith, and within a year they built a substantial cross-gabled house on the lot. William M. Smith worked in the construction trades, principally as a housewrecker. The Smiths' lot was one that faced the river, and fronted on the main road north to Riverdale. Their house, although somewhat altered by the enclosure of part of the wraparound porch, clearly exhibits the lines of the original building; its siding is of natural wood, and it is a handsome and substantial component of the present-day community (Figure 17).<sup>29</sup>

Another cross-gabled house was built circa 1910 on Lot 15 of the Palestine subdivision. It was built by Bertha Davis, who apparently did not live in the Hyattsville area. The Davis house, smaller and more modest than that of John McDonough, also served in its early years as an investment property. It is presently



Figure 16. The Wells-Ulrich House: Lot 21, Palestine subdivision - 4906 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) Cross-gabled frame dwelling built in 1903.



Figure 17. The William and Martha Smith House: Lot 24, Palestine subdivision - 4906 Taylor Road (originally River Road) - Cross-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1909.



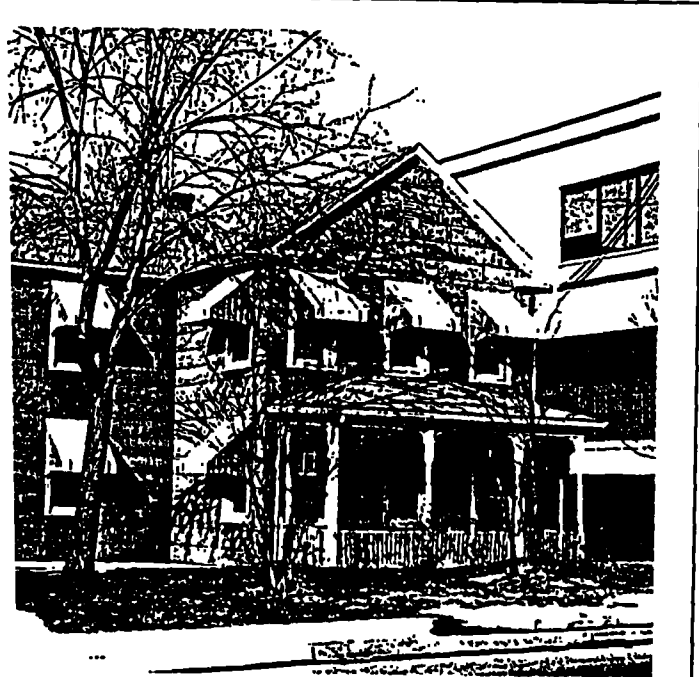
Figure 18. The Davis House: Lot 15, Palestine subdivision - 4706 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) Cross-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1910.

covered with bricktex asphalt shingles, and the porch, partially enclosed, has plain posts and railing (Figure 18).<sup>30</sup>

Another interesting cross-gabled house stands on Lot 40 of the Palestine subdivision - this house is unique in the community in that it is built of molded concrete block. This handsome house (Figure 19) was built in 1911 for William W. Rush, the operating engineer at the adjacent pumping station. The molded block is painted beige with dark brown trim, which defines a pediment in the principal gable front; both the pedimented gable and the secondary cross gable are sided with fishscale shingles.<sup>31</sup>

### URBAN VERNACULAR - THE FRONT-GABLED HOUSE

The majority of the houses built during this earliest building period had a narrow, deep floor plan suited to the narrow building lots. By far the most popular was the front-gabled dwelling: a two- or two-and-one-half-story dwelling with gabled roof, with entrance in the gable front which faced the street. In the larger, wider versions of this house type, the gable front was three bays wide; in the narrower, more modest versions, only two. In some of these houses, a flush cross gable at loft level varied the lines of the long side elevation; in others, a long side elevation might be interrupted by a one-story projecting bay. In the early years, the front-gabled house was generally assessed at between \$700 and \$900, as compared to \$600 for the I-house and \$900 to \$1200 for the cross-gabled type. Of the 31 houses which survive from the early building period, 21 are of the front-gabled type. Ten of these houses still stand in the Rogers subdivision, and 11 in Palestine.



House: Lot 21, Palestine subdivision - 4906 Decatur Street  
Cross-gabled frame dwelling built in 1903.



Martha Smith House: Lot 24, Palestine subdivision - 4906  
Road) - Cross-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1909.



House - 4607 Decatur Street  
Built of concrete block in 1911.

**ROGERS SUBDIVISION**

The earliest building period in the Piggott-Sikken House or houses of this type in its the subsection entitled "The this type were, at the time of ny of them have been altered he basic front-gabled house

The Rogers subdivision were r in 1900 (see the subsection 1 on his mortgage payments, ling Association, and sold to . is one of the wider versions, it picked out with fishscale sssie and August Blase, who

urel Building Association to from Germany as a child in 1 immigrated from Germany ren, and the house remained what narrower than the Blase ys wide. It rests on a high side elevations (Figure 21).



**Figure 20. The Taylor-Blase House: Block E, Lot 4, Rogers subdivision - 5105 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) Front-gabled frame dwelling built in 1900 by Elisha P Taylor.**



**Figure 21. The Taylor-Fluhrer House: Block F Lot 7, Rogers subdivision - 5112 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) Front-gabled frame dwelling built in 1900 by Elisha P Taylor.**

The house which stands on Lot 10 in Block F was sold by the Laurel Building Association to Alfred and Emma Johnson in 1903, and in the next year the Johnsons purchased from J. H. Rogers the unimproved lot (11) immediately to the east. Alfred Johnson had immigrated from Sweden and been naturalized in 1889; he worked as a tailor, and his family retained the house until 1933.<sup>34</sup> The Johnsons' house is also of the wider, three-bay form, with a projecting bay on one of the long side elevations; it has undergone some modern alterations, including the application of chartreuse asbestos shingle and permanent awnings, but its lines and form are still easily recognizable (Figure 22).

The house on Lot 14 of Block F was sold by the Laurel Building Association to Kate Schlossen in 1902, and she in turn sold it to Neville Dowden in 1907. It is unlikely that Dowden ever lived in the house, but probably managed it as a rental property.<sup>35</sup> This house, like the others built by Taylor, is three bays wide and has a flush cross gable as well as a one-story projecting bay in one of the long side elevations. The house has two major additions, and today is used as a day care center (Figure 23).

The house on Lot 23 of Block F was sold by the Laurel Building Association to George and Anna Curtis in 1908. George Curtis worked as a storekeeper.<sup>36</sup> Their house also was three bays wide, and had a flush cross gable and projecting bay in one of the long side elevations. It is today sheathed in beige vinyl siding with green trim (Figure 24).

The last of the six front-gabled houses built by Elisha P. Taylor stands on Lot 1 of Block G, fronting, as do three of the others, on the main east-west street through the Edmonston community. This house was sold in 1901 by the Laurel Building Association to Mary Ella Cooke, an artist who ran her own china decorating business. She lived in the house with her parents; her father, Alfred Cooke, was a retired artist. In the next year, through two deeds, Mary Ella Cooke acquired the rest of the lots (2 through 6) in Block G which fronted on the main street, Wells Avenue. (These lots are now improved by side-gabled and front-gabled bungalows of the 1920s.) Like others of the Taylor-built houses, the Cookes' family house was three bays wide, with a flush gable and one-story projecting bay on one of the long side elevations (Figure 25). The Cookes' lot (1) had a significantly higher assessed improvement value than the other five lots improved by Taylor, which suggests that the Cookes may have built a separate studio on the property.<sup>37</sup>

Three other basic front-gabled dwellings still stand in the Rogers subdivision of East Hyattsville, all built during the early years of that community. The house on Lots 2 and 3 of Block E was built by Charles Norris in 1908.<sup>38</sup> Like many of the Taylor-built dwellings, it is three bays wide, with a flush cross gable and one-story projecting bay in one of its long side elevations. It is presently sheathed with light blue-gray asbestos shingle with darker gray trim, and has a one-story side addition (Figure 26).

Another similar dwelling was built in 1901 by James and Mary Sansbury on Lot 8 of Block F, which they purchased from Rogers in 1900.<sup>39</sup> The house is three bays wide, and it is now covered with brown horizontal siding with white trim. Its front porch has been enclosed. The Sansbury house differs from some of the others in that it has stencil trim on the raking cornice, and a gable-front loft window with decorative incised wood lintel (Figure 27).



**Figure 22. The Taylor-Johnson House: Block F Lot 10, Rogers subdivision - 5118 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) Front-gabled frame dwelling built in 1900 by Elisha P Taylor.**



**Figure 23. The Taylor-Schlossen House: Block F, Lot 14, Rogers subdivision 5101 Emerson Street (originally Washington Avenue) - Front-gabled frame dwelling built in 1900 by Elisha P Taylor.**



**Figure 24. The Taylor-Curtis House: Block F Lot 23, Rogers subdivision 5119 Emerson Street (originally Washington Avenue) Front-gabled frame dwelling built in 1900 by Elisha P Taylor.**



**Figure 25. The Taylor-Cooke House: Block G, Lot 1, Rogers subdivision - 5111 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) - Front-gabled frame dwelling built in 1900 by Elisha P Taylor.**





**Figure 26. The Charles Norris House: Block E, Lots 2 and 3, Rogers subdivision 5103 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) - Front-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1904 by Charles Norris.**



**Figure 27. The Sansbury House: Block F, Lot 8, Rogers subdivision 5114 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) Front-gabled frame dwelling built in 1901 by James and Mary Sansbury.**

The house on Lot 6 of Block E was built for Rachel Sampson, who purchased Lot 6 from Rogers in 1901, in the following year she purchased the adjoining lot (5) to the west and completed the construction of a house which straddled the line between the two lots. There have been window changes, and there is a major side wing built at right angles to the main block giving it a cross-gabled plan, but it appears that the house was originally of the traditional front-gabled form. Mrs. Sampson was a retired teacher; she remained in the house until her death in 1918, and devised the property to her grandson, Kinjiro Matsudaira, who would later become the first mayor of the incorporated town of Edmonston. The Sampson house remained the home of Mayor Matsudaira until his death in 1963.<sup>40</sup> The house is presently sheathed with white aluminum siding with black trim (Figure 28).

A noticeably different variant of the front-gabled house was built some years later in the northern section of the Rogers subdivision; it stands a short distance east of the Poppleton House. This northerly section was not divided into blocks and lots as was the area south of Washington Avenue, but like the Poppleton property, was sold by acreage.

In 1907 Rogers sold to William H. Carlton 1 1/6 acres immediately east of the Poppleton (by then Armstrong) house. It was not until about 1918, however, that Carlton built the house; it is somewhat different from the traditional front-gabled houses in that it has a two-story rectangular bay projecting from the gable front (Figure 29). This bay, which takes up the first (westernmost) bay of the gable front, renders it asymmetrical and different from the other front-gabled dwellings which were so popular in the early twentieth-century suburban communities. Carlton worked at the pumping station; he and his wife sold the house and property in 1922.<sup>41</sup>

### ***FRONT-GABLED HOUSES IN THE PALESTINE SUBDIVISION***

Eleven houses of the front-gabled form still stand in the Palestine Subdivision west of the Northeast Branch. All were built between 1903 and 1911. The Palestine subdivision did not develop as fast as the Rogers subdivision to the east; by 1904 only two front-gabled houses had been erected in the Palestine subdivision, and the only other houses standing in that subdivision were the four I-Houses built as rental properties by Dr. Wells.<sup>42</sup> But within the next several years, nine more front-gabled dwellings were built in the subdivision, and thus became the most frequent and popular house form.

The earliest of the front-gabled houses in the Palestine subdivision was built on Lot 13. In 1903 John and Carrie Anderson purchased Lot 13 which fronted on the main east-west street (Wells Avenue) running eastward from Hyattsville proper through the East Hyattsville community. John Anderson worked as a printer. Within the year, the Andersons built a fairly large version of the front-gabled house, three (irregular) bays wide. It remained the Anderson family home until 1918 (Figure 30); it stands on a prominent corner in the community, now sheathed with white asbestos shingle.<sup>43</sup>

Another front-gabled house was built in 1904 for the family of Annie Hoge McLeod on Lot 30.<sup>44</sup> The house is three bays wide, with boxed returned cornices. Today it is sheathed with pale green synthetic siding (Figure 31).



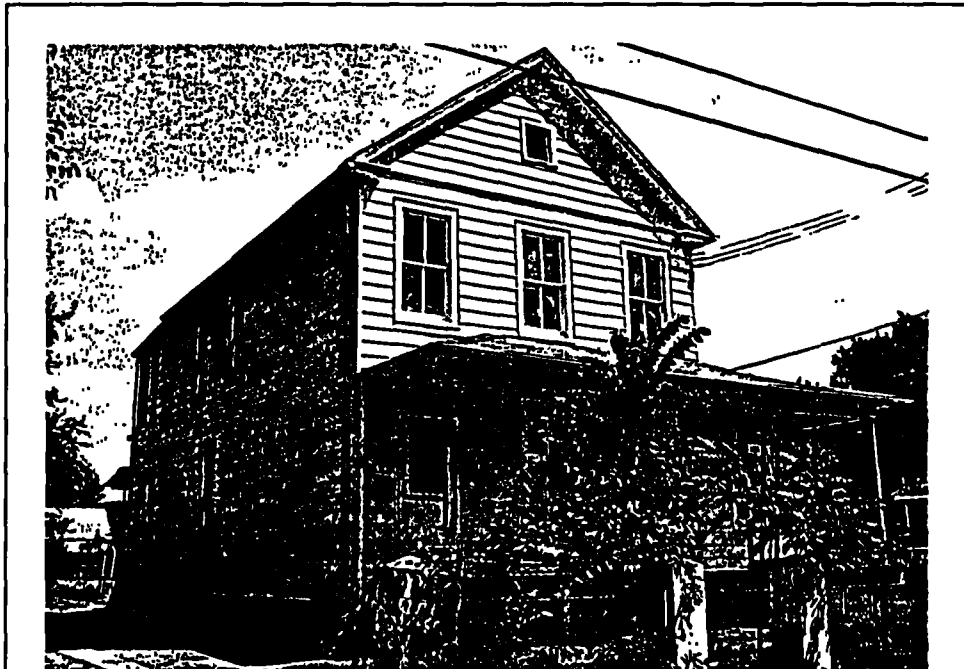
**Figure 28. The Sampson-Matsudaira House: Block E, Lots 5 and 6, Rogers subdivision 5109 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) - Front-gabled frame dwelling built in 1901 by Rachel Sampson.**



**Figure 29. The William Carlton House: northern section of Rogers subdivision - 5110 Emerson Street (originally Washington Avenue) a variant of the front-gabled house form, built in 1918 by William Carlton.**



**Figure 30. The Anderson House: Lot 13, Palestine subdivision - 4702 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) - Front-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1904 by John and Carrie Anderson..**



**Figure 31. The McLeod House: Lot 30, Palestine subdivision 4907 49th Avenue (originally Prince George Street) - Front-gabled frame dwelling built in 1904 for Annie Hoge McLeod.**

Nine more houses of similar form were built before 1912. On Lot 28, Dr. Wells himself built a handsome front-gabled house for rental purposes; it has returned cornices and turned bracketed porch posts and its wood siding is painted a light blue-gray, with white trim (Figure 32).<sup>45</sup>

On Lot 32, J. R. Young built a similar front-gabled house, and apparently managed it as a rental property.<sup>46</sup> The Victorian details cannot now be distinguished on this house, for it has been sheathed in aluminum siding. An attempt has been made to retain some of the Victorian decorative detail, however, in the novelty shingle which defines a pediment in the gable front. The cornices also are returned, although they are now encased in aluminum (Figure 33).

Before 1910, John and Lisette Schwartzmann built a front-gabled dwelling on Lot 33, and made it their family home. John Schwartzmann had immigrated from Germany in 1868, and worked as a blacksmith.<sup>47</sup> The Schwartzmanns' house was narrower than most of the other front-gabled houses of this period in the community; only two bays wide, it is today sheathed in white asbestos shingle, with brown trim (Figure 34).

Also before 1910, John and Margaret Salzman built a house on Lot 61, fronting on Prince George Street, one of the secondary streets in the Palestine subdivision. John Salzman worked as a telephone lineman, during this period of intensive installation of telephone service in the suburbs of Washington. The house which he built was only two bays wide, narrower than most of the others being erected during this period, but its compact lines were varied by a one-story hip-roof projecting bay on one of the long side elevations. Today, this small and handsome house is covered with gray-green asbestos shingle, and the trim is painted white (Figure 35).<sup>48</sup>

At about the same time, Robert and Christiana McLeod built a front-gabled house on Lot 17. It fronted on the principal road (Wells Avenue) through the community, on a corner with one of the secondary roads. The McLeods had immigrated from Scotland as newlyweds in 1870, and Robert McLeod worked as a stone mason. Their house was somewhat narrower than the standard front-gabled house, an irregular two bays wide. Today the house is covered with yellow stucco, and the hip-roof front porch is enclosed. The house does, however, retain a few elements of its Victorian trim, in the fish-scale shingle and Stick-style wood ornament of the upper gable (Figure 36).<sup>49</sup>

Four more front-gabled houses were built circa 1910, fronting on the three secondary streets north of Wells Avenue. On Lot 37, Charles Ingalls built this type of house, fronting on Prince George Street. Ingalls apparently never lived in this house, but managed it as a rental property.<sup>50</sup> On Lot 58, Homer Lemon built another of this type of house. Three bays wide, the Lemon house fronted on Charles Street; it also was apparently managed as a rental property. Today, the house is sheathed with white aluminum siding, and one of the second-story front windows has been structurally closed; the house does, however, retain the Victorian trim of the porch in its turned posts and openwork jigsaw brackets (Figure 37).<sup>51</sup>

The two remaining front-gabled houses still standing in the Palestine subdivision were built by members of the Barnes family. These two houses were built on two adjoining lots, fronting on River Road (now Taylor Road) and facing the river. River Road ran north and south along the west bank of the Northeast Branch, following the line of the river and forming the eastern boundary of the Palestine subdivision.



**Figure 32. The Wells (rental) House. Lot 28, Palestine subdivision - 4913 49th Avenue (originally Prince George Street) - Front-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1910 by Dr. C.A. Wells.**



**Figure 33. The J.R. Young House: Lot 32, Palestine subdivision - 4901 49th Avenue (originally Prince George Street) Front-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1910 by J.R. Young.**



**Figure 34. The Schwartzmann House: Lot 33, Palestine subdivision - 4900 49th Avenue (originally Prince George Street) Front-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1909 by John and Lisette Schwartzmann.**



**Figure 35. The Salzman House: Lot 61, Palestine subdivision - 4916 49th Avenue (originally Prince George Street) - Front-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1909 by John and Margaret Salzman.**



Figure 36. The Christiana McLeod House: Lot 17, Palestine subdivision - 4804 Decatur Street (originally Wells Avenue) Front-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1909 for Robert and Christiana McLeod.



Figure 37. The Homer Lemon House: Lot 58, Palestine subdivision 5009 47th Avenue (originally Charles Street) Front-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1910.



Both of the Barnes family dwellings were substantial structures, but of the two-bay-wide variety. Emma and Edward Barnes built their house on Lot 26 (Figure 38). Edward Barnes was retired by 1910, but his son Walter, who lived in this house with his parents, was a stone mason, working in the cutting of marble. Next door, on Lot 27, immediately to the north, Edward and Emma Barnes' older son, James R. Barnes, built a similar house (Figure 39). James Barnes also worked in marble, and lived in this house with his wife, Sadie, and their small children.<sup>52</sup> Both houses have been altered and retain very little of the original trim. They were probably nearly identical when they were first built, essentially mirror images of one another, with the boxed cornice defining a pediment in each gable front.

The survey shows that the earliest houses built in the East Hyattsville community were of the front-gabled and the I-house form. Somewhat larger and more substantial cross-gabled houses soon followed, particularly on slightly larger lots. The most popular and frequent house type, however, was of the front-gabled form, well suited to the deep and narrow lots of the new subdivisions. Although the front-gabled houses followed a fairly standard form in accommodating to the urban lots, they exhibited variety in width as well as in decorative trim. In the two East Hyattsville subdivisions which would later become Edmonston, the 21 surviving dwellings of this type provide examples of this variety.

## THE AMERICAN FOURSQUARE

As the East Hyattsville community entered its second decade, another popular house form made its appearance. The American Foursquare became one of the most substantial house forms in the subdivisions of the second and third decades of the twentieth century. Wider than the front-gabled house form, the Foursquare was typically built on larger building lots or on a group of adjoining narrow lots. Two interesting examples of this form still stand in the Edmonston community - one in the Rogers and one in the Palestine subdivision. Both were built after the end of World War I.

The Foursquare had a basically square floor plan. Some had a central entry-stair-hall flanked by four corner rooms; others had a side entry hall which formed one of the four nearly equal spaces of the floor plan. This house almost always had a hip roof, and usually had a shed, hip or gable dormer in the principal plane of the roof. All variants were fronted by a facade-wide porch.

On Lot 59 of the Palestine subdivision, Charles Luebner in 1920 built a modest and relatively small variant of the Foursquare form. Entrance was in the side bay, and loft level was lighted by a very shallow hip dormer. The house is now covered with gray bricktex asphalt shingle, and there is a small one-story wing on one side (Figure 40).<sup>53</sup>

A larger version of the Foursquare was built in 1932 on parts of the lots which Kinjiro Matsudaira had inherited from his grandmother, Rachel Sampson. In September 1930, Haru Matsudaira, daughter of the Mayor, married Malcolm Dent. In the following year, Kinjiro Matsudaira sold the southern 50 feet of Lots 5 and 6 of Block E to the newlyweds. In 1932, the Dents built a handsome Foursquare house, located just south of the Matsudairas' house, but fronting on Fourth Street. Years later, an adjoining portion of Lot 7 to the south was acquired by the subsequent owner of the house, increasing the size of the yard around the house. Then in 1948



**Figure 38. The Emma and Edward Barnes House: Lot 26, Palestine subdivision - 4910 Taylor Road (originally River Road) - Front-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1910 for Emma and Edward Barnes.**



**Figure 39. The James Barnes House: Lot 27, Palestine subdivision - 4914 Taylor Road (originally River Road) - Front-gabled frame dwelling built circa 1910 for James and Sadie Barnes..**



**Figure 40. The Luebner House: Lot 59, Palestine subdivision - 5001 47th Avenue (originally Charles Street) - Foursquare frame dwelling built in 1920 for Charles Luebner.**



**Figure 41. The Dent-Matsudara House: Block E, parts of Lots 5, 6 and 7, Rogers subdivision - 4808 51st Place (originally Third Street) - Foursquare frame dwelling built in 1932 for Malcolm Dent.**

the house and entire grounds were purchased by Robert, son of Kinjiro Matsudaira and younger brother of Haru Matsudaira Dent, thus bringing the property back into the Matsudaira family. It remains the home of the Matsudaira family to this day.<sup>54</sup>

The Dent-Matsudaira house is a large and handsome version of the Foursquare form. Entrance is in the side bay of the principal three-bay facade, leading to a side stairhall. Windows on both first and second stories of the main facade are double, i.e., side by side, with 8/1 sashes. The loft level is lighted by a hip dormer in the principal plane. The hip porch across the main facade is supported by groups of square columns (Figure 41).

## THE BUNGALOW

As the East Hyattsville community entered its third decade, the bungalow emerged as the most popular house form. With its distribution facilitated by the mail-order companies such as Sears, Roebuck and Company, Montgomery Ward, and Gordon-Van Tine, the bungalow became the most frequent house form of the twenties, both for tract building in new subdivisions and for infill construction between existing older houses. This popular form will be examined later in the context of the new subdivisions of the 1920s.

# CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT

## THE PUMPING STATION

The pumping station was located on Lots 38 and 39 of Palestine and supplied water for the City of Hyattsville from the end of the nineteenth century. It included a deep well, a pumping station, and the underground water storage, which consisted of a brick reservoir approximately 50 feet in diameter and 20 feet deep, with a capacity of 100,000 gallons. The pump delivered water from the underground reservoir to an elevated tank on the west side of Hyattsville. On the adjacent Lot 40, William Rush, operating engineer of the pumping station, lived in a molded concrete block house which still stands.<sup>55</sup> The pumping station employed several of the early residents of the East Hyattsville community, as did the nearby Hyattsville ice plant. The pumping station closed in the 1920s, after its functions were taken over by the newly established (1918) Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission.<sup>56</sup>

## THE PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1915

Immediately east of the pumping station was the first school in the community; it was built in 1915 on Lots 45 and 46 of the Palestine subdivision, on the south side of Wells Avenue (now Decatur Street) at the foot of Charles Street. Originally only three rooms, this elementary school was for the white children who lived south of the railroad, and in East Hyattsville. The school was enlarged by 1930, and rebuilt to its present form in 1967 with a new two-story building constructed across the front to accommodate the primary grades. The school closed in 1979 and was transferred to the County in 1984. It was later sold and now houses the National Technical Institute.<sup>57</sup>

## INCORPORATION IN 1924

The movement toward incorporation began after World War I with the pursuit of better services for the growing population. Hyattsville had been incorporated since 1886, and had a growing population of well over 1000, as well as many of the desired services not yet available to the residents of East Hyattsville. In general, the buildings of East Hyattsville were more modest than those of the older Hyattsville, and the residents of the newer community were working-class families as opposed to professionals, many having recently immigrated from Europe. A relatively small number of black families settled in East Hyattsville, particularly on the lots which fronted on the railroad tracks and in the northern section of the Rogers subdivision.<sup>58</sup> By 1920 there were 503 residents in the East Hyattsville community, and they began to press for incorporation and self-government.

Incorporation was achieved in 1924 with the act to incorporate as the Town of Edmonston. The boundaries took in the wedge-shaped area between Hyattsville and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad on the west, Riverdale on the north, and Bladensburg on the east and south.<sup>59</sup> The incorporated town spanned the Northeast Branch, and the unpaved main street (Wells Avenue) crossed the branch on a narrow wooden bridge.

The new municipality did not retain the name "East Hyattsville," as might have been expected. It is likely that the town leaders intended, by choosing another name, to avoid the appearance of being only a part of the larger and more prominent City of Hyattsville. Instead the new community took the name of the old north-south road which historically had connected Bladensburg with Vansville to the north. The new municipality lay to the west of Edmonston Road; this ancient roadway was named for members of the Edmonston family who had owned land and managed plantations along its path.

The new Town was to consist of two wards, the First Ward on the west side of the river, and the Second Ward on the east. It was to be run by a Mayor and four Councilmen, two from each ward. Some of the first actions taken by the first elected Mayor and Council were the paving and resurfacing of roads, street lighting, a concrete bridge, and water and sewer services provided by the newly established Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission in place of the pumping station in the southwest section of the town.

The census records of 1920 give a clear demographic picture of the community which was developing just before the incorporation of Edmonston. One hundred and three families lived in 98 dwellings, making their way up in the world, striving to own their own homes and raise their families in safe and healthful surroundings. The residents represented a cross-section of a working-class community, including all the trades and occupations which make a small town function. There was an elementary school, several small industries, and a scattering of small stores. A relatively large group of persons (13) worked as clerks in government offices (Departments of War, Treasury, Internal Revenue, etc.), while 6 worked for the Government Printing and Engraving offices, 4 in various capacities for the Post Office, and 2 for the Department of Agriculture; commuting to all of these government offices was easily done by railroad or streetcar. These transportation lines, so important to the development of the town, employed 16 other men: 5 as train engineers, 6 others in railroad jobs, 3 as telegraphers, and 2 as motormen for the trolley line. A significant number of men worked in the building trades: six carpenters, one bricklayer, five painters, four electricians, two plasterers, one plumber, one paperhanger, one foundation digger, three metalworkers, four stone cutters, one wood turner, and one worker in cement. Five men worked at the Navy Yard, and five as machinists; there were nine stonographers, six bookkeepers, and three salesmen.

This was a working-class community, and the professions were not represented in the early years; more representative of the small town atmosphere were the eight laborers, two telephone workers, one nurse and one blacksmith. Nine women were employed as domestics, three as laundresses and two as seamstresses; six men worked as chauffeurs, one as a waiter, two as janitors and one as a night watchman. Five men were employed by the local pumping station, gas company and ice plant. Two grocers, one baker, two barbers, two firemen, and two policemen completed the working population of the community in 1920 - providing the variety of services which makes a community work.<sup>60</sup>

# AFTER INCORPORATION

## FUNKHOUSER SUBDIVISION, 1925

The second major building phase in the community began soon after its incorporation as the Town of Edmonston. In 1925, Robert E. Funkhouser, who was also active in the development of nearby Mount Rainier, purchased a large portion of the Palestine subdivision south of Wells Avenue, including parts of Lots 45 and 46, and all of Lots 47 through 54. He had the land resubdivided in 1925 by surveyor Edward L. Latimer, and began the development of Funkhouser's Addition to Hyattsville (Figure 42).<sup>61</sup> The resubdivision provided 40 building lots, smaller than the lots in the earlier subdivisions, averaging 40 by 90 feet as opposed to the 50 by 200 foot lots of the two earlier subdivisions. Funkhouser immediately had a small frame bungalow erected on each lot, and in the same year began to sell the individual houses.

The houses of the Funkhouser subdivision were essentially identical: small bungalows of 1-1/2 stories, side-gabled, two bays by three, with entrance in the first bay of the two-bay main facade, sheltered by a facade-wide shed-roof porch supported by tapered wood posts on molded block bases. The loft level was lighted by a shallow shed dormer enclosing two narrow six-pane windows (Figure 43). Many of these small bungalows have been enlarged, some with side additions and some with full second stories, but the lines of the original modest dwellings are easily recognizable (Figure 44). They are similar but not identical to the Savoy and Hazelton models distributed by Sears, Roebuck and Company during this period, and to several popular models distributed by other mail-order companies (Figure 45). When these bungalows were completed in 1926, each was assessed at a value of \$2000, and they sold quickly. With the addition of new families in these houses, Edmonston's population increased from 503 residents in 1920 to 717 in 1930.<sup>62</sup>

Bungalows were the most popular small dwelling type during the 1920s, and they were built throughout the emerging suburbs during those years. Bungalows of this period can be found not only in Funkhouser's Addition, but on many of the other streets of Edmonston, just as they are in Hyattsville, Riverdale, Brentwood, Mount Rainier and other similar suburbs. In Edmonston fine examples can be found, particularly on Decatur and Crittenden Streets, and 51st Avenue (Figure 46). These bungalows are generally larger than the bungalows built on the small lots of Funkhouser's Addition.

By far the majority of dwellings built in Edmonston during the 1920s were bungalows. Building slowed during the years of the Great Depression, but began again in the mid 1930s with the construction of small cottages. The Franklin Atlas shows that by 1940 there were 89 dwellings on the west side of the branch, in the original Palestine subdivision (Figure 47); 38 of these were bungalows of the Funkhouser subdivision. There were 60 dwellings on the east side of the branch in 1940 in the original Rogers subdivision (Figure 48), at least 21 of which were bungalows.<sup>63</sup>

# ROBERT E. FUNKHOUSER'S ADDITION TO HYATTSVILLE MARYLAND

BEING A RE-RECORDING OF PLAT RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK SDH.3 FOLIO 4

Scale 1-50'

WELLS & WELLS  
KNOWN AS PALESTINE

SUB-DIVISION  
EAST HYATTSVILLE, Md.

**NOTE.** THE RED FIGURES (IN PARENTHESES), INDICATE EXCESSIVE DATA SHOWN ON PLAT RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK SDH.3, FOLIO 4



**SURVYOR'S CERTIFICATE**

I, EDWARD L. LATIMER, the undersigned, hereby certify to the following:

WHEREAS, Subdivision to the recording of plat of Robert E. Funkhouser's Addition to Hyattsville, is recorded among the Prince Georges County Land Records in Plat Book SDH.3 of Folio 4, discrepancies and mistakes were noted in the said plat, and such these discrepancies and mistakes will occasion conflicts in attempting to locate and measure all the Lots, Blocks and Blocks Highways on the said in accordance with the aforesaid erroneous plat;

THEREFORE, I, EDWARD L. LATIMER, do hereby re-record the said plat as shown hereon with the correct dimensions and data, and do present the same herewith, as a corrected plat for re-recording;

AND, do further certify to the following:

THAT there indicated in Red ink, hereon, the dimensions and data given on the previously recorded plat as the erroneous data;

THAT the Lots, Blocks, and Blocks Highways indicated on this plat were found carefully and accurately surveyed and that they are a subdivision of the parcel or parcels named;

THAT the parcels indicated within the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z, to be all of the tract of Land conveyed by CHARLES L. EPSTEIN (deceased) to ROBERT E. FUNKHOUSER, master of this plat by a deed recorded among the Land Records of Prince Georges County, Maryland in Liber \_\_\_\_\_ folio \_\_\_\_\_;

THAT the lines of this Sub-Division do not conflict with any adjacent Sub-Division heretofore made and recorded among the Land Records of Prince Georges County, Maryland;

THAT the monument stones designated on the plat as Nos. 1 and 2 have been accurately set so as to appear on the surface, and extend into the ground not less than three feet below the surface, and that the lines are not less than six inches minimum dimension on top;

THAT all the bearings refer to True Meridian as established by NADINGTON SURVEYOR GENERAL'S COMMISSION.

**OWNER'S DECLARATION**

WHEREAS, Subdivision to the recording of Plat of ROBERT E. FUNKHOUSER'S ADDITION TO HYATTSVILLE, among the Prince Georges County Land Records in Plat Book SDH.3 of Folio 4, as set forth in the Surveyor's Certificate and subdivision hereon, do not conform to the original intention of the owner, do Re-Divide and Re-Record this Sub-Division of land into Lots, Blocks and Blocks Highways, as set forth in the Surveyor's Certificate herewith, as a corrected Plat, the same with due notice, on the year 1925, and further;

WHEREAS, I, EDWARD L. LATIMER, Surveyor of Prince Georges County, Maryland, being the owner of Lot 46, which was sold to the County of Prince Georges, and that of Lot 46, which was sold to SEANE B. HOBBS, Lots 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000;

HYATTSVILLE, MD.  
DECEMBER 12, 1924

EDWARD L. LATIMER  
Surveyor to PG County Md.  
Nov 21, 1925

WITNESS  
*Edward L. Latimer*

ROBERT E. FUNKHOUSER, Owner

THIS PLAT SUPERSEDES  
H.S.D. PLAT #62

RECORDED  
PLAT BOOK SDH.3  
PAGE 19

Figure 42. Plat of Funkhouser's Addition to Hyattsville, 1925: Prince George's County Plat SDH #3:19.

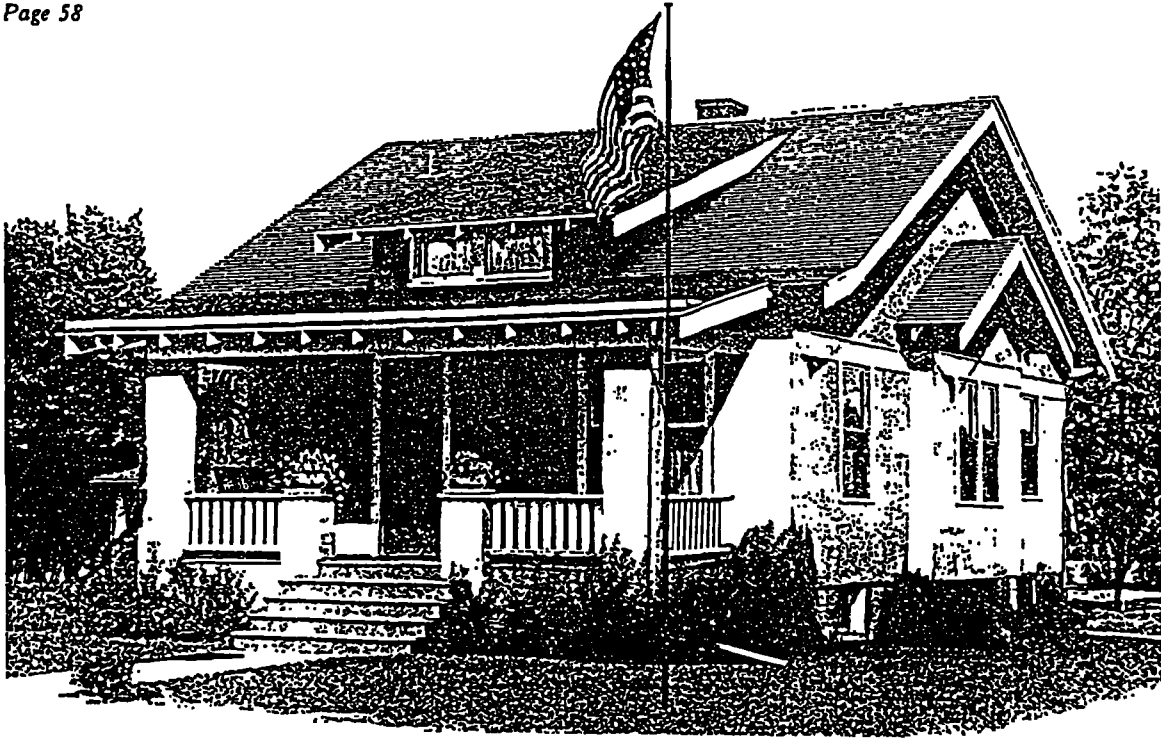




**Figure 43. Funkhouser bungalow: Lot 19, Funkhouser's subdivision - 4809 48th Avenue (originally Prince Edward Street) Side-gabled bungalow built by Robert Funkhouser in 1925.**



**Figure 44. Funkhouser bungalows: View on 48th Avenue (originally Prince Edward Street) Side-gabled bungalows built for Funkhouser's subdivision in 1925.**



Gordon-Van Tine Home No. 554

# Large Bedrooms in This Inexpensive Bungalow

This House Can be Furnished with Siding or Shingles on Outside Walls Instead of Stucco. Write for Prices.

For Prices on This Home, See First Page.

Read Pages 9 and 10 for Full Description of Materials

**T**HIS is not an expensive house, but it has a most attractive exterior. Its lines are all simple and practical with nothing to detract from the harmony of plan. Good judgment has been used in achieving the bungalow ideals of simplicity and coziness and above all practicability.

Any possible monotony of line has been avoided by the dormer, which breaks the roof before it extends over the porch. Further variation has been introduced through the more abrupt slope of the house roof, as well as the hooded bay. This projecting window improves the exterior of the house, and at the same time adds a bit of space to the width of the dining room.

The exterior walls and the square porch pillar are stucco, for which we furnish Byrknitt patent sheathing.

The dormer walls are shingled, with rafter ends and cornice, like those of the main roof. The plainness of line is further emphasized in the outlined belt course and the porch rail and balusters.

A vestibule can seldom be arranged for in a house of this size, but here you find a vestibule and a closet for coats opening off of it. The all year round advantage of this arrangement needs no explanation.

**PAINT** — Unless otherwise instructed we will furnish white paint for the trim. The walls are stucco.

You will like the living and dining room thrown together, with the two sets of twin windows, good furniture space, and pleasant outlook.

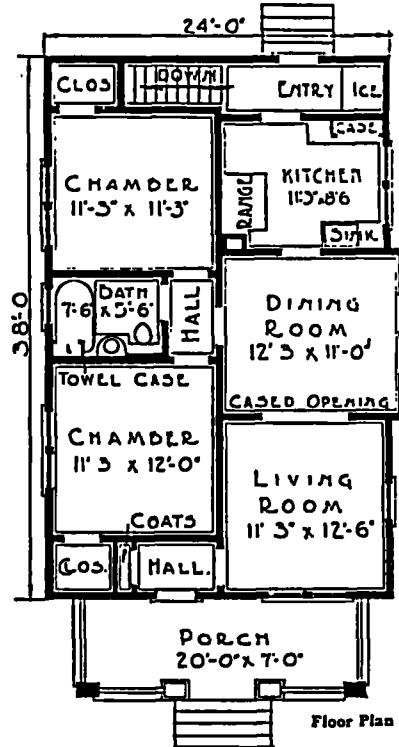
An absolute through draft can be gained at any time by opening the door that leads to the carefully worked out Gordon-Van Tine kitchen.

This is fitted with a kitchen wall case design "B". You will admit it is planned to make work simple and pleasant. The sink is placed between the work table and range. This conforms to the approved ideas of kitchen arrangement.

The rear entry provides a recess for the refrigerator which is thus out of the way and can be iced without the iceman's entering the kitchen. The basement stairs descend here to a full sized cellar lighted with six cellar windows.

A small inner hall opening from the dining room connects the two large chambers, each having twin windows, really unusually large closets, and well arranged wall space. Both are adjacent to the bath. For the bath, we furnish a wall towel case, as shown in the colored-section.

From front to back door every foot of space has been economically taken care of, a fact that is vouched for by those who have already lived in this comfortable home.



**"VERY MUCH PLEASED"**  
Lucas, Iowa, December 12, 1918.  
Messrs. Gordon-Van Tine Company, Davenport, Iowa.  
Gentlemen: We are very much pleased with the house and I believe it made a sale of a barn erected just recently by my neighbor, J. St. Long. There are about two new houses going up here in the spring, and I should not be surprised if you would hear from some of the prospective builders soon. Will inclose snapshot of the house.  
Yours truly (Signed), F. L. Pim.

For Plumbing, Heating, Lighting for This Home, See Last Pages of Book

Figure 45. Gordon-Van Tine Home No. 554; typical small bungalow of the 1920s.



**Figure 46. Typical bungalow: Block E, Lot 16, Rogers subdivision - 4807 51st Avenue (originally Second Street) Side-gabled bungalow built in 1920s.**

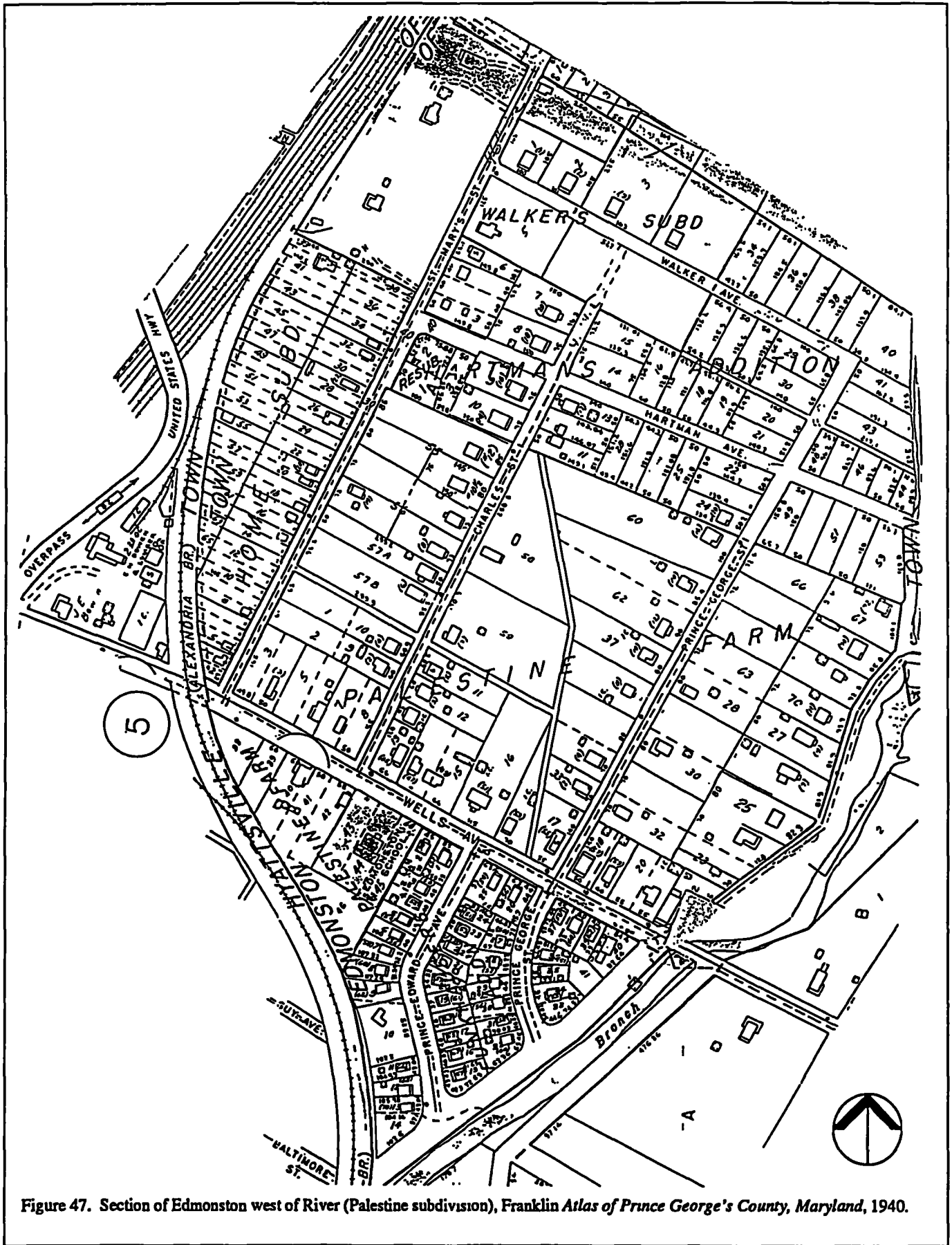


Figure 47. Section of Edmonston west of River (Palestine subdivision), Franklin Atlas of Prince George's County, Maryland, 1940.

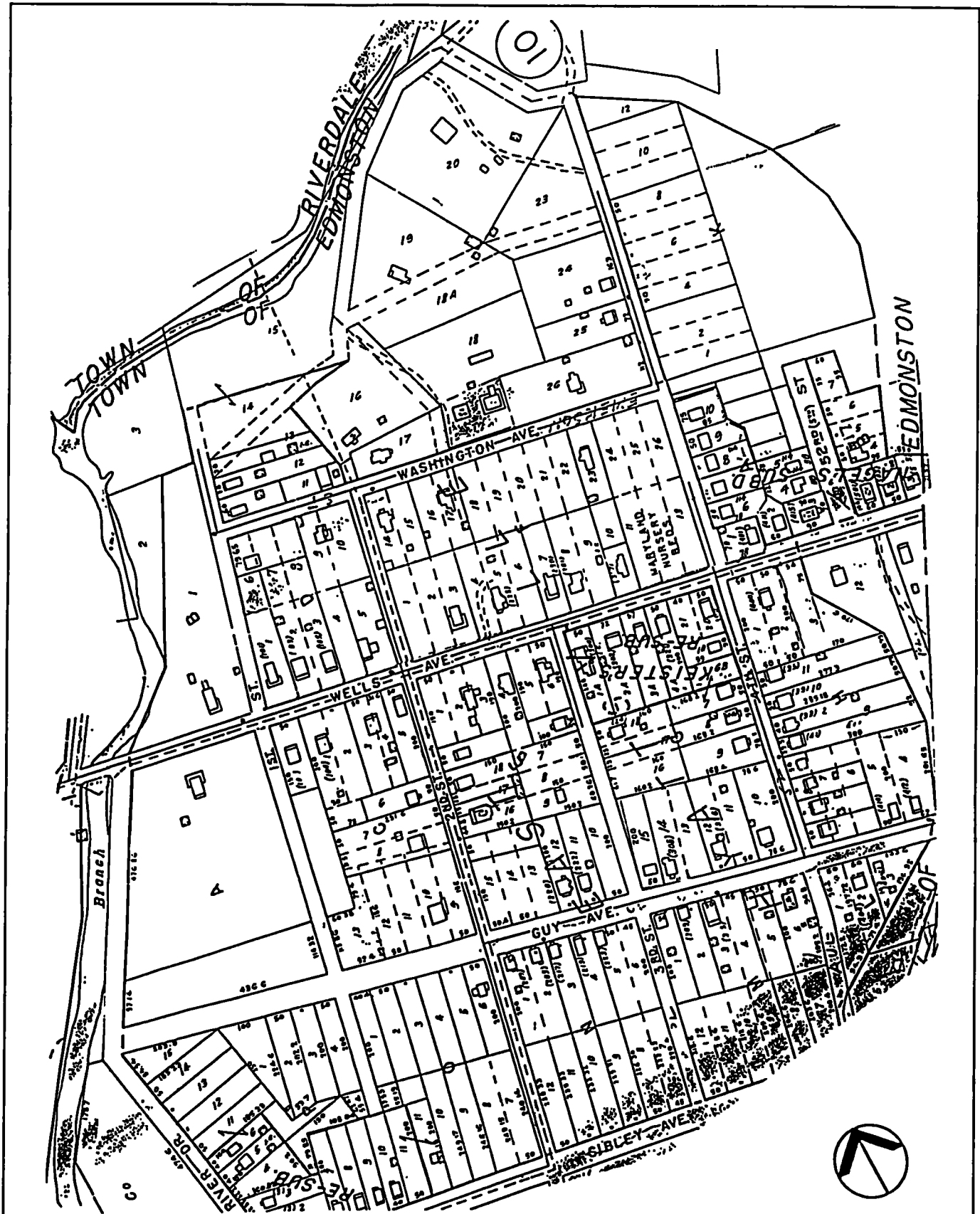


Figure 48. Section of Edmonston east of river (Rogers subdivision), Franklin Atlas of Prince George's County, Maryland, 1940.

## **STREET NAME CHANGES, 1941**

During the years of World War II, development continued slowly. Streets were paved and extended. When, in August 1941, a new system of street names was adopted throughout the Washington suburban area, the names of Edmonston's streets were changed. The surnames of the original landowners and developers were abandoned, and replaced by the alphabetical (east-west) and numerical (north-south) system established in the District of Columbia. Wells Avenue, the principal east-west artery through both the Palestine and Rogers subdivisions, became Decatur Street. Parallel to Decatur, Washington became Emerson Street, Guy became Crittenden Street, and Sibley became Buchanan Street. As for the north-south streets in the Palestine subdivision, St. Mary's became 46th Avenue, Charles became 47th Avenue, Prince Edward became 48th Avenue and Prince George became 49th Avenue. River Road, which ran along the west side of the Northeast Branch, became Taylor Street. In the Rogers subdivision, River Drive (on the east side of the Branch) became Tanglewood Drive. First Street became 50th Avenue, Second Street became 51st Avenue, Third Street became 51st Place, and Fourth Street became 52nd Avenue.

## **EDMONSTON TERRACE, 1945**

Development continued in Edmonston, but it was sporadic, and did not follow a regular pattern. Generally, small cottages, typical of the 1930s and 1940s, were built on unimproved lots between older dwellings, creating a sort of development by infill. This pattern changed at the end of World War II with the development of Edmonston Terrace in the area just north of the Palestine subdivision. The nine-acre Edmonston Terrace subdivision was platted in 1945 (Figure 49), and consisted of nearly identical two-story side-gabled brick residences, constructed on 41 small (average 5500 square feet) lots on both sides of Gallatin and Hamilton Streets (Figure 50).<sup>64</sup> Edmonston Terrace represents a departure from the sporadic development pattern of the previous two decades. It also contributed to a substantial increase in the population of Edmonston in the immediate post-war period. By 1950, the population had increased to 1190, from the 717 count of 1930.<sup>65</sup> After the construction of Edmonston Terrace, development returned to its sporadic pattern, with occasional infill between older dwellings by 1950s and 1960s ranch-style houses.

## **THE WIDENING OF DECATUR STREET, 1946**

In 1945 and 1946, the Town of Edmonston made a series of contract agreements with individuals whose properties fronted on Decatur Street, for the purpose of establishing a wider right-of-way for that important street. Through deeds of right-of-way, worked out through agreements between the Town and the owners of properties fronting on Decatur Street, the Town acquired 10 feet on the north side and 10 feet on the south side of the street, and Decatur Street was widened by 20 feet, and repaved in 1946.<sup>66</sup>

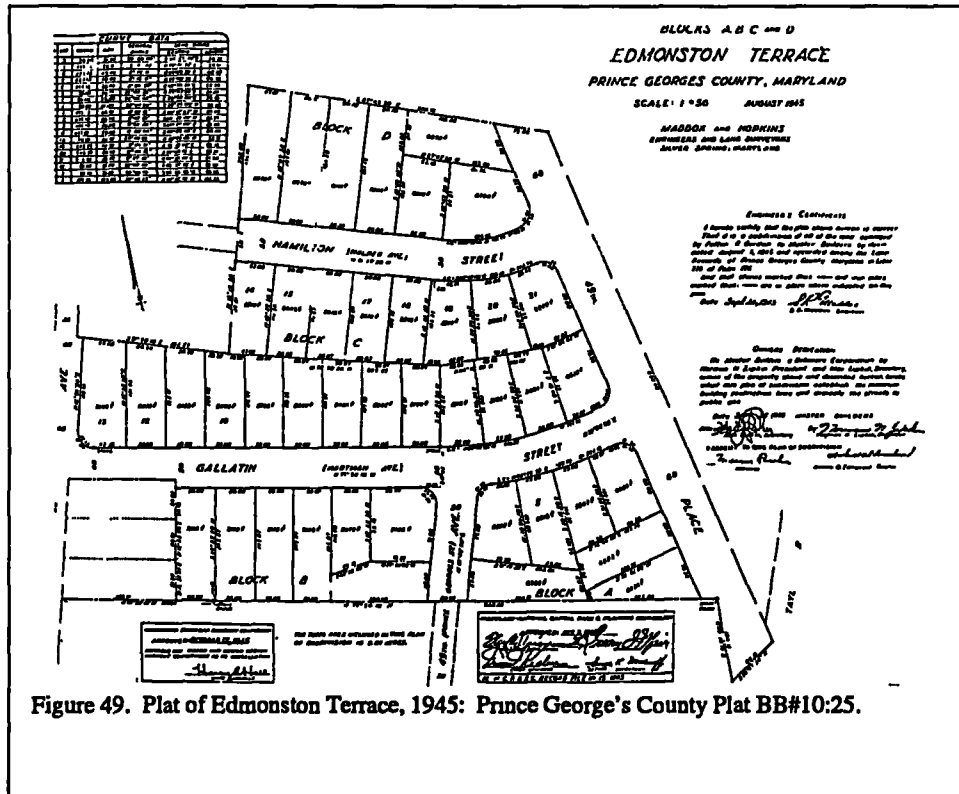


Figure 49. Plat of Edmonston Terrace, 1945: Prince George's County Plat BB#10:25.

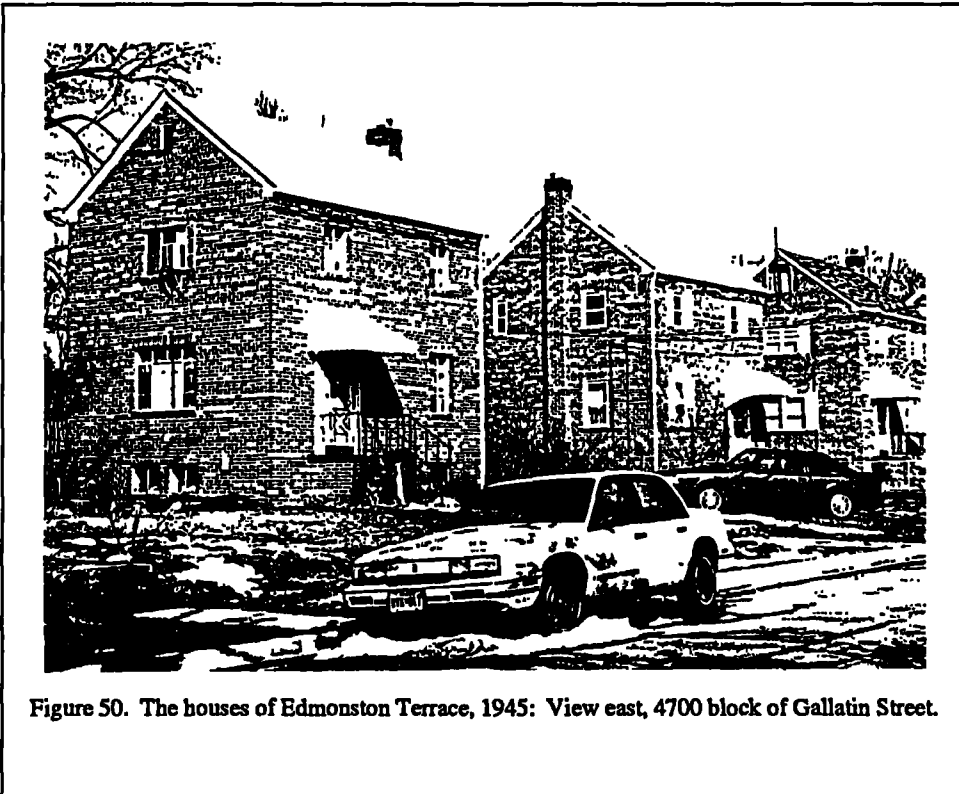


Figure 50. The houses of Edmonston Terrace, 1945: View east, 4700 block of Gallatin Street.

## **FLOOD CONTROL, 1950s**

Edmonston had always been subject to flooding from the Northeast Branch, and residents sustained considerable damage to houses when severe flooding occurred. This problem was alleviated in the 1950s with the Army Corps of Engineers' flood control project. The river was dredged, the stream path widened, and earthen dikes were constructed along the edges of that widened path. Several dwellings were demolished during the course of this project, and one early front-gabled house which stood on Decatur Street near the river's edge was moved south to its present location at 4913 Crittenden Street.

## **THE MODERN PERIOD**

After World War II, development continued slowly in Edmonston, particularly with the construction of industrial facilities along the railroad and in the southernmost section. With the influx of government workers and the construction in the 1960s of the Fountain Park apartment complex in the northeast section of the town, the population increased to over 1400. After that time, the population stabilized and then began to decline, registering at 1441 in 1970, 1109 in 1980, and then decreasing to 851 in 1990.<sup>67</sup> Hemmed in on all sides by Hyattsville, Riverdale and Bladensburg, the Town of Edmonston has no opportunity for expansion, and new development is limited to lots where older buildings once stood. The Town, in spite of these pressures, retains more than half of its original building stock (31 out of the 55 dwellings built in the first decade) as well as a majority (21 in the Rogers subdivision, and 38 in Palestine) of the bungalows built in the 1920s.

Today Edmonston is principally a community of commuters, of middle-class housing in a convenient location close to the District of Columbia and easily accessible by automobile along Rhode Island Avenue, the old streetcar line. It is a community where families can find affordable homes, where many of the old-time residents have stayed, and where second or third generations still live. It is a close-knit community which, while retaining a hold on its older families, still welcomes newcomers, and which periodically holds a Founders Day parade. A significant number of Edmonston's earliest dwellings still stand, and provide a visible history of the growth and development of the community



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- 2 Prince George's County Plat JWB#5:491, A-24.
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- 4 Prince George's County Deeds JBB#1:280; JBB#2:481, JBB#4:113,337; CSM#3:476-477
- 5 G. M. Hopkins, *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington including the County of Prince George, Maryland*, 1878, "Historical Sketch;" Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1850, 1861-68; Federal Census Records for Prince George's County, Enumeration District #2, 1850, 1860, 1870; Plat filed in Deed HB#8:176 (Plat A-36).
- 6 G. M. Hopkins, *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington including the County of Prince George, Maryland*, 1878, "Historical Sketch."
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- 11 Prince George's County Plat (unrecorded): Prince George's County Courthouse, Drawer 11, #99.
- 12 Files of the Hall of Fame of Prince George's County.
- 13 Prince George's Plat (unrecorded): Prince George's County Courthouse, Drawer 11, #99; see Inventory forms for the Piggott-Sikken House (PG#68-79-2) and the Poppleton-Roberts House (PG#68-79-1).
- 14 Prince George's County Deeds HB#14:244, WAJ#2:619; Plat filed in Prince George's County Deed #15:464 (Plat Book A-14).
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- 17 Prince George's County Deeds JB#10:503, #11:80; Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1900-1905.
- 18 Prince George's County Equity #2840.
- 19 See endnote 18.
- 20 See endnote 18; Prince George's County Deed #9:35.
- 21 See endnote 18.
- 22 Prince George's County Deeds #11:505, #25:37
- 23 Prince George's County Mortgages #25:39, 41, 44; Prince George's County Equity #5181.
- 24 Prince George's County Deeds #143:166, #303:373, #5066:495; Prince George's County Estate File #25617; Prince George's County Equity #5181.
- 25 Prince George's County Tax Assessments, Election District #16.
- 26 Prince George's County Deed #7745:771, Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1900-1915.
- 27 Prince George's County Deed #27:34, #6669:722; Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1900-1915; Nelson, Justus C., *Nelson's Suburban Directory of Maryland and Virginia Towns Adjacent to the District of Columbia*, 1912-1913, 1918; Federal Census Records for Prince George's County, Enumeration District #16, 1910, 1920.
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- 38 Prince George's County Deed #15:252; Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1900-1915.
- 39 Prince George's County Deed JB#10:189; Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1900-1915.
- 40 Prince George's County Deeds #11:60, #361:235; Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1900-1915; Federal Population Census for Prince George's County, Enumeration District #16, 1910; Nelson, Justus C., op. cit., 1918.
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- 45 Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1900-1915.
- 46 Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1900-1915; Federal Population Census for Prince George's County, Enumeration District #16, 1910.
- 47 Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1900-1915; Federal Population Census for Prince George's County, Enumeration District #16, 1910; Nelson, Justus C. op. cit., 1912-1913.
- 48 Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1900-1915; Federal Population Census for Prince George's County, Enumeration District #16, 1910; Nelson, Justus C., op. cit., 1912-1913.

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- 50 Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1900-1915.
- 51 See endnote 50.
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- 54 Prince George's County Will GPH#1:392; Prince George's County Deeds #361.171, #472:399, #518:291, #1032:410; Prince George's County Marriage Licenses.
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- 57 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1906, 1911, 1922 and 1933; Prince George's County Deeds #63:458, #6146:40; *Atlas of Prince George's County, Maryland*, Vol. I, Franklin Survey Company, 1940.
- 58 One of the black families of East Hyattsville was that of Benjamin F Chunn, who ran a barber shop on Maryland Avenue (the old Turnpike) in Hyattsville; Chunn's barber shop was a well-known landmark in old Hyattsville. The Chunn family owned and occupied a house in the northern section of the Rogers subdivision.
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- 65 **Community Renewal Program, op.cit.**
- 66 **Prince George's County Deeds #952:306-346; Community Renewal Program, op.cit.**
- 67 **M-NCPPC, "Municipal Population Prince George's County," 1991.**



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# EDMONSTON

HISTORICAL SURVEY

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION

