

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Area of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Landscape Architecture

Social History

**Period of Significance**

1873-1969

**Significant Dates**

1873; 1877; 1886; 1897; 1901; 1902; 1905; 1910; 1920; 1937; 1940; 1963

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Day, Hezekiah (builder)

Eisinger, Constantine (builder)

Harding, Brawner (builder)

Harris, A. L. (architect)

Ploger, W.S. (architect)

Reber, George (builder)

Samperton, John S. (architect)

Scott, W. A. (builder)

Woods, Elliott (architect)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

**Previous documentation on files (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Washington Grove Archives

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National Park Service

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## Summary Statement of Significance

### *National Register Criterion A*

Social History: The Washington Grove Historic District is significant at the state level under National Register Criterion A in the area of social history as an important example of a Methodist camp meeting founded at the height of the religious resort period of the American camp meeting movement and as a successful regional independent assembly Chautauqua. During the religious resort period, camp meetings were founded across the country and in Maryland as an alternative to the secular summer resorts that were gaining popularity among the middle and upper middle classes during the second half of the nineteenth century. Washington Grove represented the trend, drawing thousands from the Washington area to its annual outdoor revival while attracting a stable base of summer residents. Emblematic of the Chautauqua movement's long-running connection to American Methodism and camp meetings, Washington Grove established an independent assembly Chautauqua in 1902, which ushered in a new chapter of community growth and revitalization just as interest and support for camp meetings had begun to falter. The town's buildings, sites, and structures represent a continuity of the activities and traditions established in the camp meeting and Chautauqua periods that are firmly supported by residents today.

Community Planning and Development: The Washington Grove Historic District is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the area of community planning and development for its association with late nineteenth/early twentieth-century suburban migration from Washington, D.C., to Montgomery County via the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Planned as both an annual camp meeting site and a religious summer resort to serve Washington-area Methodists, Washington Grove evolved into a successful year-round community that influenced similar developments along the railroad corridor. Washington Grove is also locally significant in the area of community planning and development for its involvement in and influence on the suburbanization of Montgomery County during the post-World War II period. Washington Grove is an independent municipality whose town meeting tradition is a direct successor of the annual stockholders meeting of the Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association. It is one of only seven municipalities in Montgomery County with independent planning and zoning authority. In the face of unprecedented regional growth and overreaching development that threatened the social and physical fabric of established communities in the greater Washington, D.C., area, Washington Grove under home rule successfully promoted responsible growth and compatible new design while managing and protecting the physical manifestations of its camp meeting heritage.

### *National Register Criterion C*

Architecture: The Washington Grove Historic District is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion C in the area of architecture. Washington Grove possesses a significant collection of residential buildings that embody the built tradition of the American camp meeting movement and reflect important national

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trends in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century American domestic architecture. Of particular note is the high concentration of Carpenter Gothic cottages. These architecturally distinctive houses feature peaked, front-gable roofs and double doors that evoke the shape and massing of the canvas structures that initially made up the community and vividly express the Carpenter Gothic style using highly ornamental scrollsawn woodwork, bracketed pendants, decorative dressings over or around windows and doors, and turned or chamfered porch posts. Built using natural materials, the cottages reflect the rustic setting of Washington Grove and the importance of nature to the interpretation of the camp meeting as a place apart. Originally constructed as summer residences, these cottages were converted into year-round homes and adapted to modern living with each passing generation. The result is an architecture of accretions that gives Washington Grove's camp meeting cottages a highly eclectic and distinct character. The persistence of vernacular forms through the early twentieth century represents a continuity with the past, and the introduction of revivalist styles adds to the architectural diversity of the district. The new domestic forms and styles introduced in the modern era embody a local manifestation of national trends in residential design. In their simplicity of form, open plans, and affordability, these houses represent a continuity in design from the camp meeting era. Across the continuum of Washington Grove's residential buildings, there is an adherence to standard forms that have been altered through individual elaboration, renovations, and additions to meet the changing needs of homeowners.

Community Planning and Development: The Washington Grove Historic District is locally significant under National Register Criterion C as a notable expression of two important nineteenth-century trends in community planning and development. The spatial organization of the town combines a popular nineteenth-century camp meeting form – the wheel plan – with a residential grid emblematic of railroad and streetcar suburbs across the United States. Washington Grove's physical plan continues to evoke the historic delineations of the camp meeting era Tent Department, characterized by the Circle and the radiating avenues and interstitial alleys that surround it, and the Cottage Department, which features a system of alternating avenues for pedestrian use and roads for vehicular use. This circulation system served to reinforce the sylvan character of the landscape and improve the safety and appearance of the campgrounds, and it represents an early precursor of the Radburn scheme of community planning. In addition, the balance and combination of residential divisions, open spaces for assembly and recreation, and forested preserves has been a fundamental attribute of Washington Grove since its founding and remains intact today.

Landscape Architecture: The Washington Grove Historic District is locally significant under National Register Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture as a representative example of the vernacular tradition of American camp meeting planning and design. Although the site is not the work of a professional designer, gardener, or horticulturalist, the spatial organization, vegetation, circulation networks, and other physical characteristics of the landscape embody the qualities and associations of late nineteenth-century Methodist campgrounds. Washington Grove's first permanent shelter was its tree canopy, and before the construction of the tabernacle, a clearing in the woods was the setting for worship. The landscape provided a natural and healthy, inspirational and insular setting for religious activities and evolved through the twentieth century to support the

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residential, recreational, and social customs of a year-round community while maintaining its essential form and character.

### *Period of Significance*

The period of significance for the Washington Grove Historic District spans the years 1873 to 1969. This period begins with the establishment of the Washington Grove Camp Meeting and ends in 1969 (50 years before the present). During this period, Washington Grove achieved its design significance in the areas of architecture, community planning and development, and landscape architecture as a town founded on camp meeting principles that evolved to incorporate a range of vernacular and stylistic design trends. This period encompasses the formation and development of Washington Grove as a religious camp meeting, its location as an independent Chautauqua assembly, municipal organization, and the events and activities that contribute to its significance within the context of post-World War II planning and development in Montgomery County.

### **Resource History and Historic Context**

#### The Founding and Early Development of Washington Grove (1873-1901)

##### *Origins and Early Development of Camp Meetings in the United States*

Religious camp meetings have been an American phenomenon for over 200 years. While no standardized definition exists, a camp meeting is an outdoor preaching event at which participants sustain themselves and camp overnight, often in tents. Camp meetings are temporary gatherings, typically lasting a few days to a week at the end of the summer. Scholars have developed several theories as to the origin of the camp meeting, and there is still debate over the location and date of the first meeting. Historian Charles Johnson, in his classic work *The Frontier Camp Meeting*, advanced the concept that the camp meeting originated on the Kentucky frontier where populations were sparse and travel and communication were difficult. While preaching outdoors was common throughout the eighteenth century in rural and backwoods areas where churches, or even basic assembly structures, were not available, the element of overnight camping, often for several nights, was missing from these gatherings. Johnson asserted that camp meetings did not achieve universal popularity or standard form until 1800, the year Presbyterian minister James McGready organized several highly successful outdoor revivals in Logan County, Kentucky.<sup>121</sup> More recent scholarship suggests that the earliest camp meetings did not arise from circumstances created by the frontier and were organized in the Carolinas or Georgia during the last decade of the eighteenth century.<sup>122</sup> Many support the claim that the Rock Spring Camp Meeting near Denver, North

<sup>121</sup> Charles Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting* (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955), 32.

<sup>122</sup> Kenneth O. Brown, *Holy Ground: A Study of the American Camp Meeting* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), vii.

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Carolina, which dates to 1794, may have been the first camp meeting in the United States.<sup>123</sup> Camp meetings, often held in clearings in the woods, allowed preachers to reach a wide audience and did not require much in terms of infrastructure or planning, as attendees were expected to provide their own food and shelter for the duration of the event.

The earliest camp meetings were the work of Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists. While the Methodist church never institutionalized the camp meeting, this form of religious revival was embraced as an important part of the practice and led to Methodist dominance in American Protestantism in the nineteenth century.<sup>124</sup> The most famous, some argue notorious, early camp meeting took place at Cane Ridge in Bourbon County, Kentucky, in 1801. It lasted nearly a week, attracted tens of thousands of participants, and received wide coverage in the press, launching the camp meeting movement onto the national stage. Preachers at Cane Ridge and other early camp meetings spread the doctrine of universal redemption, and audience members were known to manifest their salvation by shouting, falling down, “jerking,” and dancing. The religious fervor of huge crowds often created a frenzied atmosphere of heightened emotions that resulted in disorderly conditions. Following the national trend, camp meetings emerged as an important practice for Methodists in the Washington area in the first half of the nineteenth century. Washington Grove historian Philip K. Edwards states that camp meetings for the Washington District of the Methodist Church occurred as early as 1815.<sup>125</sup>

By the 1830s, camp meetings had evolved into more sedate events, subject to rules of order, sometimes enforced by a civil officer. Attendees came for spiritual renewal and development. The revivals fostered a sense of religious kinship, and socialization and recreation became important facets of camp life. At some campgrounds, churches erected “society tents” to house church groups. Excessive socialization, however, described as the “pic-nic spirit,” was criticized by many of the movement’s detractors. Others, such as Reverend B. W. Gorham, author of a camp meeting manual published in 1854, embraced the extra-religious pleasures of camp meetings.<sup>126</sup> As historian John R. Stilgoe notes, “Much of the excitement of camp-meeting convocations derived from the pure pleasure of group activity. For families accustomed to week-long isolation and hard work, meetings offered a social release unlike that of raisings, bees, and funerals.”<sup>127</sup> In his camp meeting manual, Gorham also promoted the religious

<sup>123</sup> Brown, *Holy Ground*, 6.

<sup>124</sup> Charles H. Lippy, “The Camp Meeting in Transition: The Character and Legacy of the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Methodist History* 34, no. 1 (October 1995), 3.

<sup>125</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 16-17. The basic units of organization of the Methodist Church are annual conferences and districts. The Washington District was one of several districts within the Baltimore Conference.

<sup>126</sup> Ellen Weiss, *City in the Woods: The Life and Design of an American Camp Meeting on Martha’s Vineyard* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 7.

<sup>127</sup> John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America, 1580-1845* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 233.

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campground as a place of good health, forecasting the next phase of camp meeting development wherein existing camps as well as new revival sites were promoted as religious alternatives to secular summer resort communities. To Gorham, the “purity and constant freshness of atmosphere” was one of the many circumstances that rendered the campground “a healthful resort.”<sup>128</sup>

Isolation was an important factor in selecting a camp meeting site because it offered an environment free from disruptions – a place apart from worldly temptations. Wesleyan Grove, founded on the island of Martha’s Vineyard in 1836, was located in a grove of oaks close to Nantucket Sound on a gentle northwest-facing slope that faced away from the water “in an introspective fashion.”<sup>129</sup> The camp meeting on Deal Island (initially Devil’s Island and later Deil’s Island), Maryland, in the Chesapeake Bay, was located in a dense stand of trees called Park’s Grove.<sup>130</sup> Like Wesleyan Grove and Deal Island, many camp meetings had a forest setting, where man could be one with God and nature in a “sacred grove.” The sylvan landscape, in its function as a setting for worship, became, in effect, a holy ground. At night, these forest settings, lit by firelight, were both mysterious and awe-inspiring, creating a sense of otherworldliness. Trees also served the practical purpose of providing shade, privacy, fuel, and building material. By midcentury, other factors in selecting a camp meeting site held greater weight. Gorham’s 1854 manual emphasized finding a site with a bountiful supply of good water, adequate pasturage, a tree canopy for shade and shelter from the wind, easy access from principal thoroughfares, and a level topography, among other considerations.

The physical arrangement of the earliest camp meetings were not planned. In his book, *A Short History of the Methodists in the United States of America*, published in 1810, historian Jesse Lee describes a campground arranged in the shape of an “oblong square.”<sup>131</sup> At the center of the camp in a clearing was the assembly area with a preacher’s stand (pulpit) or sometimes two – one at either end of the assembly space. In its simplest form, the stand was a raised, wooden platform, although covered variants were common. Benches within the assembly area, if present, were hand-hewn and backless, arranged in rows, sometimes with a central aisle. Canvas tents or “board tents” were set up around the clearing in various configurations. Historian Charles Johnson has shown that three plans were widely used for early nineteenth-century frontier revivals – rectangular, circular, and open horseshoe.<sup>132</sup> An example of the latter was depicted by architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764-1820) in his

<sup>128</sup> Rev. B. W. Gorham, *Camp Meeting Manual, A Practical Book for the Camp Ground; in Two Parts* (Boston, MA: H. V. Degen, 1854), 64-65.

<sup>129</sup> Weiss, *City in the Woods*, 24-25.

<sup>130</sup> Paul Baker Touart, National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form, “Deal Island Historic District,” 2006.

<sup>131</sup> Jesse Lee, *A Short History of the Methodists in the United States of America* (Baltimore, MD: Magill and Clime, 1810), 360.

<sup>132</sup> Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting*, 42.

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1809 sketch of a camp meeting in Virginia. The spatial configuration of most campgrounds was the work of anonymous builders and planners. As historian Ellen Weiss has documented, the radial concentric plan at Wesleyan Grove is of particular interest because this plan type was little used in the United States. Its derivative, the wheel plan, however, was featured at a number of campsites across the United States by the 1870s. Campsites arranged in a wheel plan featured a central gathering space and radiating paths or streets arranged like spokes around a hub. In addition to Washington Grove, the wheel plan could be found at campgrounds in Pitman Grove, New Jersey; Lancaster, Ohio; and Plainville, Connecticut.

The earliest permanent building constructed at many campgrounds was a tabernacle. These were typically large, open, timber-frame pavilions located in a clearing at the center of camp to shelter both the pulpit and seating area. While the roof provided shade and shelter from the rain, its open sides offered natural ventilation, unrestricted sightlines, and clear transmission of the speaker's voice. Wesleyan Grove had a canvas tabernacle until 1879, when it was replaced with a permanent iron structure that could seat thousands under its three-tiered roof. The tabernacle as a building form eliminated the distinction between interior and exterior space, recognizing the campground as divine space and encouraging man's communion with nature.

Canvas tents provided the earliest and simplest form of shelter at camp meetings. They were inexpensive, easy to transport, and quick to set up and take down. As noted above, board tents, which were simple frame structures clad with weatherboard, were also used for temporary accommodation. Indian Fields, an active Methodist campground in Dorchester County, South Carolina, features a ring of ninety-nine board tents around a central tabernacle.<sup>133</sup> Gorham objected to the use of board tents, calling them "shanties," and recommended cloth tents. He described the construction of a 12-foot-wide tent with a 9-foot ridgepole that provided enough space for a family of six to eight. For society tents, he recommended a tent measuring 20 by 30 feet. Most tents were modest constructions, reinforcing the idea of primitive simplicity. Some camp meeting sites, however, maintained a tradition of embellishing tents. Fly tarps were ornamented with scalloped and sometimes embroidered front edges, and tent walls were hung with flags, bunting, or decorations fashioned out of tree branches or other vegetation. Often the tents were built on low, wood platforms to separate the tent floor from the damp earth. At Wesleyan Grove, some families erected wood-sided tents with canvas tops – a shelter form that bridged the gap between all-canvas tents and frame cottages.<sup>134</sup>

When the canvas walls of individual tents were raised or pulled aside, interior spaces became semi-public, encouraging socialization. A print depicting the Sing Sing Camp Meeting in New York in 1838 illustrates this aspect of camp life and anticipates the proliferation of front porches as tents were replaced with cottages. The owners of tents that adjoined the assembly area or tabernacle could simply open their tent to participate in religious

<sup>133</sup> Caroline Dixon, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, "Indian Fields Methodist Camp Ground," July 28, 1972.

<sup>134</sup> Lester Walker, *Tiny, Tiny Houses or How to Get Away from It All* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1987), 47-48.



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meetings and other revival activities. Tent walls could also be manipulated to regulate sun, shade, and the circulation of air.

Beginning in the 1840s, when the religious fervor that characterized the Second Great Awakening began to diminish, the camp meeting movement fell into a period of relative dormancy that lasted through the Civil War. Starting in the mid-1860s, however, scores of camp meeting sites were established in the East and the Midwest.<sup>135</sup> This period of camp meeting development is known as the Religious Resort Period, because it parallels the resort/excursion phenomenon that extended from the Civil War to World War I, when middle-class city dwellers eager to escape urban conditions retreated to lake, ocean, and mountain destinations made accessible by new forms of transportation.<sup>136</sup> The summer resort phenomenon had its origins in and was advanced by the development of American suburbs in the nineteenth century.

### *Nineteenth-Century Suburbanization and the Emergence of Summer Resorts in the Washington Region*

National trends in suburban development in the nineteenth century can be linked to the evolution of transportation systems and technologies that established both intra- and intercity connections and fostered residential growth outside the urban center. The earliest suburban communities were developed during the railroad era, when railroad companies, seeking new sources of revenue, built passenger stations along their routes to connect cities with small rural villages. The residential communities that developed around the stations became semirural enclaves where the upper and upper-middle classes built fashionable villas on large lots, finding reprieve from overcrowding and other issues afflicting America's rapidly industrializing cities. As historian Kenneth T. Jackson has documented, reformers such as educator Catherine Beecher (1800-1878), landscape gardener Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852), and architect and landscape gardener Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) were highly influential in shaping American attitudes toward family life, semirural living, and domestic architecture and in romanticizing the benefits of naturalistic settings.<sup>137</sup> Railroad commuting was well established in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and other major urban centers before the Civil War. Horse-drawn streetcars, also known as horsecars, were developed in the early 1830s and offered another mode of transportation to the early commuter class.

Washington, D.C., lacked several key conditions that drove early suburban development in other cities across the United States. With a population in 1860 of a little over 60,000 – less than one-tenth the population of New York City at the time – the District had yet to confront many of the issues afflicting larger metropolitan areas. Manufacturing existed within a narrow range of foundries, breweries, and mills, and heavy industry was scant.

<sup>135</sup> Charles A. Parker, "The Camp Meeting on the Frontier and the Methodist Religious Resort in the East – Before 1900," *Methodist History* 18, no. 3 (April 1980), 183.

<sup>136</sup> Lampl and Kelly, "A Harvest in the Open for Saving Souls," *The Camp Meetings of Montgomery County*, 2004, 7.

<sup>137</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 61-67.

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The city's poor air quality was primarily due to its topography and local climate rather than a proliferation of smokestacks. In 1860, only one line of horsecars operated in Washington, D.C. These omnibuses did not run on rails, however, and offered a primitive form of transit given the generally poor condition of the city's streets.<sup>138</sup> After the Civil War, however, living conditions within the city began to change, creating greater impetus for suburban development. The population of Washington expanded as migrants relocated to the city from surrounding rural communities and from the South. By 1870, the population had increased to over 109,000 inhabitants. Washington was located in a topographic bowl, and its low-lying areas suffered from drainage and sewage problems that were exacerbated by the city's growing numbers. The spread of malaria and other diseases was also a concern. In 1871, Alexander "Boss" Shepherd began a comprehensive public works project that included tearing up the streets to lay sewers, leveling and paving the streets and avenues, removing abandoned buildings and other nuisances, and burying the long-abandoned Washington City Canal. The prospect of semirural living offered a compelling alternative to the urban upheaval that would soon overtake the District.

Thus, by the early 1870s, suburban communities began to emerge along the major railroad lines entering Washington. These included Seabrook and Hyattsville along the Washington Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad, Huntington City (Bowie) along the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, which opened in 1872 and was operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Linden on the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O, which began operations in 1873. Linden, platted in 1873, was the first railroad suburb in Montgomery County.<sup>139</sup> The original plan of Linden identified approximately twenty lots on about 12 acres of former farmland.<sup>140</sup> Ten years later, New York Congressman Benjamin F. Gilbert purchased a 90-acre tract in Montgomery County about 6 miles outside the District, which he subdivided and platted as the suburb of Takoma Park. Gilbert capitalized on the existence of convenient and affordable commuter service on B&O's Metropolitan Branch, and Takoma Park quickly attracted buyers. To promote suburban development, the B&O offered discounted freight rates for lumber destined for sites on along the Metropolitan Branch.<sup>141</sup>

The first electric streetcar (or trolley) system began operations in Richmond, Virginia, in February 1888. The technology proved safe and reliable and was quickly adopted by cities across the country as a replacement for horse-drawn streetcars. Indeed, the first electric streetcar in the District – the Eckington and Soldiers' Home

<sup>138</sup> LeRoy O. King, Jr., *100 Years of Capital Traction: The Story of Streetcars in the Nation's Capital* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Company, 1972), 3.

<sup>139</sup> Cavicchi, *Places from the Past*, 39.

<sup>140</sup> Michael F. Dwyer, Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, Maryland Historical Trust Nomination Form for the National Register of Historic Places, "Linden Historic District," June 3, 1975 (amended).

<sup>141</sup> Cavicchi, *Places from the Past*, 39.

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Railway – was chartered in June 1888 and operations began that October.<sup>142</sup> Suburban streetcar lines soon followed, providing connections to nascent residential developments such as Tenleytown, Glen Echo, and others. Streetcar suburbs attracted a wide range of socioeconomic groups from the working to the upper-middle class.

While the physical plan of most early railroad and streetcar suburbs conformed to a gridiron street system, practitioners such as Downing, Vaux, and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, Sr. (1822-1903) were strong advocates for a more naturalistic approach influenced by the English Picturesque landscape tradition. One of the most influential planned railroad suburbs inspired by the Picturesque movement was Riverside, designed by Olmstead and Vaux in 1868-69. Located outside Chicago, Riverside featured public parks and gracefully curved and sunken roads that preserved and enhanced the natural features of the land.<sup>143</sup> Chevy Chase, a southern Montgomery County streetcar suburb that bordered the District, embraced the traits of picturesque suburban planning promoted by Olmsted.<sup>144</sup> The first section of Chevy Chase, platted in 1892, had an informal, sylvan character that featured curvilinear parkways and landscaped parklets.

Encouraged by the convenience of travel by commuter rail and streetcars, resort hotels and boarding houses proliferated in the countryside outside Washington, D.C., during the late nineteenth century. For those Washington residents who could not afford a permanent relocation to the suburbs, resort hotels offered the opportunity to spend their summers “in the country.”<sup>145</sup> Summer vacationers could take lodging by the week or on a more long-term basis. The High View, a resort hotel in Boyds, Maryland, built in 1887, catered to families and vacationers fleeing the hot city during the summer months.<sup>146</sup> Often, suburban real estate speculators built hotels within their communities to encourage local development. In 1893, Gilbert opened the 160-room North Takoma Hotel in Takoma Park. The developers of Chevy Chase built a hotel within one year after the community’s first residential subdivision was platted.

### *The Religious Resort Period of Camp Meeting Development*

Given that they were often organized in locations that offered clean sources of water, fresh air, crisp breezes, and generally salubrious conditions, Methodist camp meetings were promoted as religious alternatives to secular

<sup>142</sup> King, *100 Years of Capital Traction*, 17.

<sup>143</sup> Charles W. Snell, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, “Riverside Historic District,” February 10, 1970.

<sup>144</sup> Kimberly Prothro Williams, Elizabeth Jo Lampl, and William B. Bushong, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, “Chevy Chase Historic District,” 7:3, draft dated October 1998.

<sup>145</sup> Jane C. Sween, *Montgomery County: Two Centuries of Change* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, 1984), 95.

<sup>146</sup> Cavicchi, *Places from the Past*, 36.

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summer resort communities in the years after the Civil War. The seaside resort of Ocean Grove, New Jersey, founded as a Methodist camp meeting in 1869, epitomized the trend. One hundred miles to the south of Ocean Grove was the South Jersey Camp Meeting Association (established in 1875), which was located on a stop of the Cape May and Millville Railroad. Camps such as Ocean Grove and South Jersey attracted cottage owners, cottage and tent renters, and hotel guests, as well as daily excursionists.<sup>147</sup> The popularity of religious resorts is reflected in newspaper coverage of the period.

In Maryland, Methodists established camp meetings across the state, many of which became popular summer destinations. The Emory Grove Camp Meeting in Baltimore County was founded in 1868 on an elevated, wooded site along the route of the Western Maryland Railroad. Its popularity encouraged the nearby development of Glyndon (established in 1871) as a summer resort. The Emory Grove Camp Meeting is still active, hosting religious services and other events every summer. Today, the grounds consist of forty-seven cottages, a tabernacle, a hotel, which dates to 1887, and a temple built in 1909.<sup>148</sup> In Montgomery County, a group of former slaves and their descendants founded a camp meeting northeast of Gaithersburg. The gathering site was located in a grove of trees that had been used by African Americans living in the area for religious gatherings and praise services since the 1860s. By 1880, the ten-day, tent-style camp meeting, also called Emory Grove, was widely attended by people from Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and places farther afield who arrived by train and walked from the nearby Washington Grove railroad station to the camp grounds. Until access was restricted, part of their route from the station was through Washington Grove. Unlike many other camp meetings, Emory Grove's canvas tents were never replaced with cottages, reflecting the community's limited means. Camp meetings at Emory Grove continued into the post-World War II period, with crowds of 3,000 to 4,000 people attending in the 1950s. In 1967, the annual religious and community gathering was shut down by the local health department citing sanitation problems. By 2004, the only tangible sign of the campground was a small remnant grove of oak trees, located behind a baseball field in Montgomery County's Johnson's Park. Since that time, a historic marker has been erected.<sup>149</sup> In the tradition of Deal Island, Maryland, a camp meeting was established on Smith Island (Somerset County) in the Chesapeake Bay in 1887. Located in the community of Ewell, the camp meeting (incorporated as the Wilson Butler Camp Ground) was only accessible by boat. By the early twentieth century, the campground included thirty frame cottages and a large auditorium. After a fire in 1937, the camp meeting infrastructure was largely rebuilt, and annual camp meetings are still held in the historic tabernacle.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Parker, "The Camp Meeting on the Frontier and the Methodist Religious Resort in the East – Before 1900," 187.

<sup>148</sup> The Emory Grove Camp Meeting (Baltimore County) is located within the Glyndon Historic District. See Rodd L. Wheaton and Nancy Miller, National Register of Historic Places Inventory, Nomination Form, "Glyndon," 1973, and Emory Grove History, available at <https://www.emorygrove.net/>, accessed May 7, 2019.

<sup>149</sup> Lampl and Kelly, "'A Harvest in the Open for Saving Souls,' The Camp Meetings of Montgomery County," 2004, 35-61.

<sup>150</sup> Maryland Historical Trust, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, "Ewell Survey District, S-333."

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At Methodist campgrounds that transitioned into summer resorts, tents, which were comfortable for temporary revivals but impractical for longer periods, were often quickly replaced with cottages. Although inherently distinct from tents due to their permanency and building material, camp meeting cottages carried over many of the key characteristics of the earlier form – the peaked shape, large front openings, uninsulated walls, and economical use of interior space.<sup>151</sup> The Gothic Revival in architecture and the writings and works of landscape gardener Andrew Jackson Downing and architect Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-1892) had a profound impact on the design of camp cottages. The style's religious symbolism made it ideally suited for the spiritual nature of Methodist camp meetings, and the scale, massing, and materials of Carpenter Gothic-style cottages formed a logical step in the transition from tents to permanent buildings. (See additional text below on Carpenter Gothic.) Typically, cottages were built on existing tent lots, limiting the dimensions of the building footprint. Porches, which simulated tent awnings, extended interior space into the public realm and provided an area for socialization. Front-gable roofs evoked tent forms and created an additional half story that allowed for extra light, ventilation, and, in some cases, a sleeping loft. Cottages could be utilitarian or fanciful, depending on the period in which they were built, local traditions, and the socio-economic standing of the owner.<sup>152</sup> While at some campgrounds special sections of the site were set aside for cottages and platted with larger lots, it would not have been unusual for new cottages to stand side by side with their canvas neighbors. Some camp meetings, such as Ocean Grove, have retained their tent tradition. Approximately 100 family tents surround the auditorium there.<sup>153</sup>

Camp meeting associations acted as the governing body for many campgrounds during this period. Wesleyan Grove was institutionalized in 1868 when the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association was incorporated by an act of state legislature. A board of trustees and various committees were formed to order life in the community.<sup>154</sup> The Northport Wesleyan Grove Camp Meeting Association, formed in 1873 on Maine's Penobscot Bay, was authorized to acquire land and develop a wharf, key factors in its development as a summer colony.<sup>155</sup> These associations passed laws that regulated public conduct, commerce, the use of recreational facilities, and other aspects of camp meeting life.

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<sup>151</sup> Troy Messenger, *Holy Leisure: Recreation and Religion in God's Square Mile* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 49.

<sup>152</sup> Lampl and Kelly, "'A Harvest in the Open for Saving Souls,' The Camp Meetings of Montgomery County," 2004, 1.

<sup>153</sup> Walker, *Tiny, Tiny Houses*, 58-59.

<sup>154</sup> Weiss, *City in the Woods*, 34.

<sup>155</sup> Kirk F. Mohney, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, "Bayside Historic District," November 8, 1996.

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### *Carpenter Gothic*

In the early nineteenth century, Gothic Revival architecture emerged in the United States as a solution for Americans searching for an ideal ecclesiastical architecture. Many reasoned that because Christianity had flourished when Gothic architecture was in its prime in Europe, churches should be built in as close to the correct version of Gothic as possible.<sup>156</sup> The style was eagerly adopted for American church building, particularly in New England and the Mid-Atlantic states. American architects and builders drew inspiration from English writers such as John Ruskin (1819-1900) and Augustus Pugin (1812-1852), both of whom argued for the Gothic style in moralistic terms. Ruskin and Pugin declared that Gothic architecture should not just have decorative features like tracery, but that medieval building techniques should also be revived. Gothic Revival became a popular style for residential architecture as the nineteenth century progressed.<sup>157</sup>

Among the most influential voices in translating Gothic architecture for American domestic use were architect Alexander Jackson Davis and landscape gardener Andrew Jackson Downing. Davis's enthusiasm for Gothic architecture developed early in his career, as he was drawn to romantic literature and sought to capture that aesthetic world in his designs. Working on church projects in the office of architect Ithiel Town (1784-1844) furthered Davis's enthusiasm for Gothic architecture.<sup>158</sup> In his own practice, he designed a number of houses in the style. Davis's design for a gatehouse at the Blithewood estate in Barrytown, New York, which appeared in his 1837 book *Rural Residences*, was, according to architectural historian William H. Pierson, the first house in American architecture to be designed and published as a "cottage."<sup>159</sup> The gatehouse had a steeply pitched, cross-gable roof and gables fitted with bargeboards featuring tracery-like patterns, finials, and pendants. Its nearly cruciform plan was the result of two intersecting blocks. This massing, writes Pierson, "rejected altogether the single rectangular block of the classical tradition in favor of the dynamic opposition of strongly directional units."<sup>160</sup>

Downing, meanwhile, as a premiere tastemaker of the mid-nineteenth century, helped to popularize Gothic cottages and villas. In his book *The Architecture of Country Houses*, published in 1850, Downing devoted a

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<sup>156</sup> David P. Handlin, *American Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 87-88.

<sup>157</sup> Handlin, *American Architecture*, 87.

<sup>158</sup> William H. Pierson, Jr., *American Architects and Their Buildings, Volume 2: Technology and the Picturesque, Corporate and the Early Gothic Styles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 271.

<sup>159</sup> Pierson, *American Architects and Their Buildings*, 305.

<sup>160</sup> Pierson, *American Architects and Their Buildings*, 307.

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chapter to cottage designs and featured drawings by architects like Davis and others. The houses had steeply pitched gables, board-and-batten exteriors, porches, and decorative woodwork. Downing referred to the pointed gable as the most striking feature of such “rural Gothic” cottages.<sup>161</sup> A plate from his book for a “Symmetrical Cottage,” illustrates a house with a steeply pitched front gable fitted with decorative bargeboards and a finial and pendant. Like Pugin and Ruskin, Downing and Davis recommended natural materials and the honest expression of those materials. Given its affordability compared to other materials, wood was a logical construction material. Further, new technologies like the steam-powered scroll saw and building methods such as balloon framing allowed houses to be built more quickly and economically.<sup>162</sup>

In his writings, Downing cautioned against excessive ornamentation such as “overwrought verge boards” and “fanciful and flowing ornaments of a card-board character.”<sup>163</sup> However, as historians Alma deC. McArdle and Deirdre Bartlett McArdle have described, “...in many instances the simple gables and bargeboards of Downing’s unpretentious cottages quickly became a veritable riot of decoration.”<sup>164</sup> Carpenters made liberal, and at times fanciful, interpretations of the Downing/Davis cottages, partly because sourcebooks on Gothic architecture were not as widely available as those devoted to classical architecture. This interpretation of the Downing/Davis cottages by builders became known as Carpenter Gothic. The style often featured gable ends fitted with decorative bargeboards made of thin wood, the fragility of the ornament earned it the moniker “gingerbread.”<sup>165</sup> The bargeboards regularly featured Gothic-like tracery, such as that found on Davis’s Blithewood gatehouse. Carpenter Gothic embraced the new technology of the day, as scroll-sawn bargeboards and machine-turned knobs and spindles became common features.

Carpenter Gothic-style cottages found a receptive audience among Methodist camp meetings in the mid- to late nineteenth century, particularly as the physical presence of campgrounds transitioned from tents to permanent buildings. The style’s religious symbolism made it ideally suited for the ethereal escape camp meeting organizers hoped to establish. Indeed, the cottages often resembled churches, with double-door entrances, steeple-like finials, and scroll-sawn bargeboards that evoked tracery.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Andrew Jackson Downing, *A treatise on the theory and practice of Landscape Gardening* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1849), 402.

<sup>162</sup> James L. Garvin, *A Building History of Northern New England* (Hanover, NH: University Press of England, 2001), 23-24.

<sup>163</sup> Andrew Jackson Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses* (New York: Dover, 1969), 85.

<sup>164</sup> McArdle and McArdle, *Carpenter Gothic: 19th Century Ornamented Houses of New England*, 21.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Lampl and Kelly, “‘A Harvest in the Open for Saving Souls,’ The Camp Meetings of Montgomery County,” 2004, 99.

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### *The Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association*

During the post-Civil War period, Washington's Methodist community experienced a resurgence, led in part by Reverend B. Peyton Brown (1830-1896), the enthusiastic pastor of Foundry Church between 1866 and 1869 and again in 1876-79. By 1868, Foundry was actively joining with other area churches to plan for a series of regional camp meetings. After a succession of planning meetings, a revival was held that August at Haislip's Woods near Annapolis Junction on the Washington Branch of the B&O Railroad.<sup>167</sup> Local interest in camp meetings was intensifying at this time, and, three years later, Foundry helped organize another camp meeting a few miles from Annapolis Junction at Severn Circuit. Methodist leadership in Washington, however, desiring a campground that could be under their direct ownership and control, organized a committee to select a site for a permanent camp. The committee, which included Reverend Brown, William R. Woodward (an attorney), Flodoardo Howard (a doctor and pharmacist), and several others, likely carried out their search during the late winter and spring of 1873.<sup>168</sup> The site they decided on was a 267-acre tract in Montgomery County that comprised the corner of a farm owned by Elizabeth Magruder Cooke (1804-1886), the widow of Nathan Cooke Sr. (1803-1869). Elizabeth Cooke was described as a "consistent member and worker of the Methodist Church South."<sup>169</sup> Nathan Cooke was a successful Maryland farmer, landowner, and investor. Relying in large part on slave labor, he grew crops on his farm and raised sheep and swine.<sup>170</sup> The portion of Cooke's farm selected for the camp meeting site included two springs, wooded groves, and fields. It was ensconced in Montgomery County's agricultural landscape, yet conveniently located along the Metropolitan Branch, which commenced passenger and freight operations on May 25, 1873.

Reverend Brown and his committee presented their choice for the camp meeting site at a meeting that took place at Foundry Church on June 16, 1873. The site met all of the criteria for a suitable camp meeting location. The heavily wooded areas of the property offered privacy, protection from the elements, lumber for building and fuel, and provisions for camping. Its meadows offered open clearings for carts, wagons, horse pens, and mercantile stands. Moreover, it was easily accessible by rail from Washington yet far enough from the city to enhance the sense for participants that the camp meeting was "a place apart" from everyday demands and routines. These last

<sup>167</sup> Homer L. Calkin, *Castings from the Foundry Mold: A History of Foundry Church, Washington, D.C., 1814-1964* (Nashville, TN: Parthenon Press, 1968): 107-108.

<sup>168</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 30.

<sup>169</sup> John Bowie Ferneyhough, ed., *Year Book of the American Clan Gregor Society* (Richmond, VA: Curtiss-Neal, Inc., 1928), 25.

<sup>170</sup> Archives of Maryland, Biographical Series, Nathan Cooke Sr. (MSA SC 5496-035312), available at <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/035300/035312/html/035312bio.html>.



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two factors were particularly important to the organizers of Washington Grove, who planned for the camp meeting to become a popular summer resort in addition to a successful religious revival.

The organizers took stock subscriptions at the June 16 meeting to raise capital for the acquisition of the property and initial improvements to the grounds. On July 3, 1873, the Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association of the District of Columbia and Maryland purchased the land and the railroad right-of-way from Cooke's widow for the sum of \$6,636.25.<sup>171</sup> The following day was the Fourth of July, and the association held a promotional picnic on the grounds. A description of the event read, "Yesterday a large number of Methodists of the District spent the day at the new campground – about one thousand going out on the Metropolitan branch road. The parties separated into small picnic parties, and rambled through the woods, all being well pleased with the location."<sup>172</sup>

The first camp meeting at Washington Grove began on August 13, 1873, and lasted for ten days. Although the weather was poor, with days of torrential rain, the event was declared a success. On a plateau of high ground within a clearing in the woods was the preacher's stand and rows of wood benches. Initially, the tents at Washington Grove were arranged in a grid pattern, with their entrances facing the preacher's stand and assembly area. This arrangement has its origins in early nineteenth-century campgrounds, which, as previously noted, were typically laid out along one of three plans – rectangular, circular, or open horseshoe. By the second camp meeting in 1874, the initial rectangular grid plan had been altered to accommodate an octagonal central gathering space. A newspaper article dated July 6, 1874, describing an excursion to Washington Grove in advance of the ten-day camp meeting read, "Numbers who are contemplating a sojourn in the grove...inspected the newly-arranged grounds, and endeavored to located their proposed homes in the woods. The stakes show that the inner court has been changed in shape from a square to an octagon, with radiating avenues entering upon it from four opposite directions."<sup>173</sup> Eventually, the octagon evolved into a circle, and the camp meeting took on a wheel plan featuring a central gathering space, the "Sacred Circle," surrounded by tent sites and six radiating paths, also lined with tent lots. The radial paths were designated First Avenue through Sixth Avenue. As previously noted, this arrangement was a derivative of the radial concentric plan most notably used at the Wesleyan Grove camp meeting on Martha's Vineyard. Washington Grove is the only known example in Maryland of this layout. Washington Grove historian Philip K. Edwards postulates that the rectangular plan may have evolved into a wheel form due

<sup>171</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 35. Per research conducted and compiled by Gail Littlefield, Washington Grove Historic Preservation Commission, the Nathan Cooke farm was comprised of parts of several eighteenth-century land grants patented by tobacco planters. By 1829, Jesse Leach, a wealthy landowner, had accumulated the parts of the tracts that comprised most of Nathan Cooke's farm. Cooke acquired Jesse Leach's holdings at a public sale in 1847. The property surveyed at 512.5 acres and sold for \$1,281.25. Cooke had acquired the rest from the heirs of Jeremiah Crabb, a Revolutionary War hero, in 1846. See Montgomery County Historical Society tax rolls for 1796 (page 72) and 1813 (page 3) and Montgomery County Land Records (Deed Book STS 1, page 522 and Deed Book STS 4, page 210).

<sup>172</sup> "At the New Camp Ground," *Evening Star*, July 5, 1873.

<sup>173</sup> "Pic-nics and Excursions," *Evening Star*, July 6, 1874.

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to the weather, writing that, “There must have [been] much moving about of boundaries as tents were placed where they were practical instead of in neat rows.”<sup>174</sup> The site’s topography may have also influenced the spatial configuration of the grounds. The founders of Washington Grove placed the preacher’s stand and assembly area at a high point within the site (roughly 522 feet or 159 meters above sea level), and the principal pedestrian route into the grounds (Grove Avenue) followed along the crest of a ridgeline. Because the ridgeline curved slightly east around the assembly area, the wheel plan may have been a more natural fit for the shape of the land.

A flyer distributed by the Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association in advance of the first camp meeting offered three sizes of canvas tents for rent – 10 by 12 feet, 12 by 16 feet, and 14 by 20 feet.<sup>175</sup> These tents came with a fly and were erected on wood platforms. Participants could also provide their own tent, but were charged a fee to rent a lot. According to Edwards, tent lots measured 15 by 20 feet or 15 by 30 feet.<sup>176</sup> An article in the *Evening Star* newspaper from August 13, 1873, reported that tents were “mostly about 14 feet square,” perhaps indicating that most attendees furnished their own tents rather than renting them from the association.<sup>177</sup> In addition to the tents used by individual families and by church groups, open air tents were used to shelter “boarding saloons” that provided meals for campers and for daily excursionists. Market stands sold straw, furniture, perishables, and other goods. In September 1873, one month after the official opening of the camp meeting, the *Evening Star* reported that “the railroad had erected a station house at the grounds.”<sup>178</sup> (While nineteenth-century newspaper articles refer to this building as both a station house and as a depot, the term depot will be used to describe the building, which was a large frame structure with a gable roof that sheltered an open waiting area. The term station will be used to refer to the enclosed structure built across from the depot in 1906.) In 1877, the preacher’s stand and assembly space were replaced with a permanent pavilion known as the tabernacle. It was open on all sides, and heavy timber posts and beams supported a wide hipped roof. Bracing at the top of the posts resembled tree branches.

The founders of Washington Grove intended from the start that it would also operate as a summer resort. A promotional pamphlet from July 1873 read, “After the land has been plotted, it is the intention of the Trustees to issue renewable leases to sites suitable for summer residences, for which its nearness to the railroad, its elevated position...its salubrity, and numerous other advantages, renders it more desirable to the public than any other

<sup>174</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 44.

<sup>175</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 39.

<sup>176</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 42.

<sup>177</sup> “The Washington Grove Camp Meeting, Description of the New Grounds and Arrangements for the Meeting,” *Evening Star*, August 13, 1873. The same figure was reported by the *Baltimore Sun*. See “The Washington Grove Camp Meeting,” *Baltimore Sun*, August 15, 1873.

<sup>178</sup> *Evening Star*, September 17, 1873.

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place in the vicinity of Washington.”<sup>179</sup> In fact, newspaper reports reveal that Washington Grove was being used as a summer retreat rather than simply a temporary revival site by many from Washington as early as 1878.<sup>180</sup> These families set up house well before the camp meeting, making good use of the grounds and its amenities. Features such as Maple Spring were popular destinations for nature walks, picnics, and other passive recreational activities. While many resided in tents, Washington Grove had its first cottages by the summer of 1878. A newspaper account reported that they were painted white, “so as not to mar the beauty of the contrast made under the thick green foliage of the forest trees and the clear white of the tents.”<sup>181</sup> The same article noted that the houses were “handsomely arranged with Venetian doors, and divided into rooms to suit the convenience of their families, and ornamented according to the taste of the inmates....” As was customary at Methodist camp meetings, the trees, tabernacle, and fire stands at Washington Grove were whitewashed.<sup>182</sup> This tradition encouraged a “beautiful and cleanly appearance” and allegedly protected the trees from insects and fungus.<sup>183</sup> Lamplight and moonlight reflected off the painted trunks, helping with nighttime visibility.

For those who resided at Washington Grove, whether for a week or two to attend the camp meeting or for the entire summer season, the association provided many of the civic amenities offered by contemporary suburban communities. The most viable and enduring nineteenth-century suburban developments offered a range of facilities such as hotels, schools, libraries, churches, club buildings, athletic fields, public parks, and sometimes small business districts.<sup>184</sup> The suburb of Kensington had the first public library (the Noyes Library) in the Washington, D.C., area, which opened in in 1893. Francis G. Newlands, the founder of Chevy Chase, induced buyers to his community by providing a post office/library, public schools, a hotel, a recreational lake, and a country club. While Washington Grove did not have a school or a library, there was a hotel, a market, and open spaces for games and organized sports. The hotel (variably called the Albany Hotel or Hotel Albany) served long-staying seasonal guests as well as day-trippers. It was built in 1881 and located within Howard Park. The hotel’s design and construction were supervised by one of the Grove’s founding trustees, Richard H. Willet, who operated large lumberyards in Washington, D.C., and Maryland.<sup>185</sup> In 1884, the Grove could also lay claim to a barbershop

<sup>179</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 39.

<sup>180</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 95.

<sup>181</sup> “God’s First Temple,” *Washington Post*, August 3, 1878.

<sup>182</sup> “The Camp Meeting Season,” *Evening Star*, August 11, 1881.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> Kimberly Prothro Williams, Elizabeth Jo Lampl, and William B. Bushong, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, “Chevy Chase Historic District,” 8:56, draft dated October 1998.

<sup>185</sup> “The Camp Meeting Season,” *Washington Post*, May 7, 1881, and Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 160.

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and a dentist.<sup>186</sup> Starting in 1886, a seasonal post office operated out of the hotel; year-round postal service began in 1890.<sup>187</sup>

Although the site selected by the association possessed natural springs that sparkled with “life-invigorating properties,” one of the first improvements to the landscape was to dig several wells and install pumps to draw the water.<sup>188</sup> The wells provided a reliable and convenient source of water for drinking and other daily needs. By 1886, there were at least seven pumps within or near the Tent Department. As residential development expanded to other parts of the Grove, additional wells were added. By the late nineteenth century, the list included the Allen (also known as Broadway) well, the Jackson Park well, the depot well, the Hotel Park well, the well in the superintendent’s yard, the Dorsey well, the Wide well, the Platt well, the Benson well, and the Sixth Avenue well. In 1897, a water tank on a raised stand was erected in the hotel yard. Water from the hotel well was pumped into the tank and routed to a boiler in the kitchen, providing guests with hot water.<sup>189</sup> In the off-season, the pumps were removed from the wells and well covers were put in place. Over time, repairs included relining the wells with terra cotta pipe, partially filling them to prevent excess standing water, and re-drilling.<sup>190</sup>

Washington Grove had a dedicated stop on the Metropolitan Branch, and the Humpback Bridge, built by the B&O in the 1870s, greatly facilitated local travel, trade, and communication by providing a safe above-grade crossing at a blind curve in the tracks. The subdivision of Oakmont on the west side of the tracks – immediately adjacent to Washington Grove, outside the historic district -- was platted in 1888 by Henry Beard and James G. Craighead of Washington, D.C. Oakmont’s developers hoped to take advantage of the popularity of the camp meeting and the convenience and proximity of the railroad to subdivide and sell the land for residential development. The initial plat for Oakmont included a park “dedicated for public recreation,” that was located directly across from the Washington Grove railroad depot.<sup>191</sup> The parcel north of the park was owned at the time by the Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association. (This land was later sold.) The parcel to the south (today 17030 Oakmont Avenue) was improved in 1889 when Beard and Craighead built a two-and-a-half story, frame building on the

<sup>186</sup> “A City in the Woods: Religious Services as Washington Grove – The Guests of the Hotel,” *Washington Post*, August 15, 1884.

<sup>187</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 168-69.

<sup>188</sup> “Washington Grove, A Delightful Resort – the Grounds and Cottages – Opening of the Camp,” *Washington Post*, August 5, 1883.

<sup>189</sup> President’s Report, May 1897, WGA, Box D-1, File DA.0001.23.

<sup>190</sup> Grounds Committee, July 1890, WGA, Box H-4, File DA.00H4.06 and Grounds Committee, August 1897, WGA, Box H-4, File DA.00H4.19.

<sup>191</sup> Montgomery County, Circuit Court Land Records, Book JA 9, page 490, June 23, 1888.

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lot, which operated as a general store.<sup>192</sup> In 1894, the Washington Grove post office moved into a section of the store, where it remained for over eighty years.<sup>193</sup> As much as wholly uncommercialized suburban retreats were idealized, in reality, the market and post office just outside the Grove offered residents convenience and practicality that improved everyday living.

Like many religious campgrounds, the transition from tents to permanent cottages at Washington Grove took place over a number of years. While the massing and form of Washington Grove's camp meeting-era cottages evoked the canvas structures that initially made up the community, development was strongly influenced by nineteenth-century trends in architecture and vernacular building. Nationally, the Carpenter Gothic style, which was advanced by builders as an American domestic interpretation of the Gothic Revival, was pervasive among Methodist campgrounds. At Washington Grove, this style was expressed using scroll-sawn bargeboards, bracketed pendants, decorative dressings over or around windows and doors, and turned or chamfered porch posts.<sup>194</sup>

As previously noted, the cottages at Washington Grove were initially built on tent lots, which constrained their size and massing. As a result, many cottages had a rectangular plan that measured 14 feet wide by 30 feet deep.<sup>195</sup> Frequently, cottages were expanded as more space was needed. A newspaper article from 1880 noted that while new cottages continued to be put up, "many of those already built have been enlarged by the addition of kitchens and dining rooms."<sup>196</sup> Since outdoor space within the building lots was limited, some families planted small gardens in front of their cottages.

While the names of many of the carpenters and builders who worked at Washington Grove are unknown, records indicate that one pioneer cottage builder was W. A. Scott.<sup>197</sup> Scott was an African American who was living in the area when Washington Grove was founded. In 1883, he was appointed superintendent of the grounds and was given year-round use of a one-and-a-half-story, frame house located near the corner of Center Street and Chestnut

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<sup>192</sup> "Washington Grove Restaurant a Hub since 90-year Post Office Stint," *Montgomery County Gazette*, September 9, 2009, available online at [http://www.gazette.net/stories/09092009/damanew231658\\_32546.shtml](http://www.gazette.net/stories/09092009/damanew231658_32546.shtml), accessed March 29, 2019.

<sup>193</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 170.

<sup>194</sup> According to historian Clare Lise Kelly, Washington Grove is the only intact collection of Carpenter Gothic cottages in the state and one of the few in the country.

<sup>195</sup> These dimensions represent a unifying module that has guided the development of Washington Grove, helping to maintain the modest scale of its houses.

<sup>196</sup> "At Washington Grove, Sixteen Cottages Already Occupied – Improvements During the Year" *Washington Post*, July 3, 1880.

<sup>197</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 135-136.

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Road (the site of the current parsonage at 101 Center Street). Behind the superintendent's cottage were several outbuildings, fields, and pasturage.

Initially, the Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association issued stock at \$20 a share. Around 1880, the association embraced the concept of "located stock," wherein ownership of stock ensured the investor one vote at stockholders' meetings and a tent or cottage site depending on the number of certificates she held. One share entitled the stockholder to one tent site. Once the tent site was selected, it was said to be "located." Five shares entitled the stockholder to one cottage site. Administration of this system was difficult, as most of the Grove had not yet been platted. As Edwards has noted, this quickly created a messy state of affairs that involved "leaseholders without stock, stockholders without lots, and lots without leases."<sup>198</sup> The association corrected the situation in 1882 when it adopted a new charter and bylaws (submitted to the Maryland legislature in 1883) that included a provision for 99-year leases.

Although Washington Grove's initial layout (comprising the Tent Department) derived from camp meeting traditions, its later development had a gridiron plan typical of many late nineteenth-century suburbs. Outside the Tent Department, the layout of the roads and the arrangement of lots within Washington Grove was primarily guided by two plans – the 1886 Lang plan and the 1897 Maddox plan. As previously mentioned, the association adopted an amended charter in 1882, which prompted an evaluation of its undeveloped lots and open spaces. Thus, around 1885, it hired surveyor and civil engineer J. C. Lang to survey and prepare a plan for the grounds. The plan, which was dated 1886, created new building lots along a system of alternating avenues (for pedestrian use) and roads (for vehicular use). This scheme reinforced the sylvan character of Washington Grove and had a beneficial impact on the health, safety, and appearance of the grounds. It can be seen as an early precursor of the Radburn scheme of community planning, which derived from Garden City principles and became popular in the late 1930s and 1940s as an alternative to standard suburban subdivisions that placed houses facing the street and sidewalks. The Radburn system utilized a circulation system that separated pedestrian and automobile traffic by grouping houses on a common green facing a network of pedestrian paths. Access roads and driveways were located at the back of the lots. In theory, this plan increased neighborhood safety by reducing traffic accidents.<sup>199</sup> The Lang plan also dedicated several blocks of land for public parks and set aside the undeveloped, wooded area in the northeast quadrant of the Grove, now known as the East Woods, as a "Laundry Reserve" and "Carriage Park."

The later plan, prepared by Montgomery County surveyor C. J. Maddox in 1897, carried over many of the concepts of the Lang plan, but took into account the entire property, with the exception of the West Woods. In

<sup>198</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 111.

<sup>199</sup> Linda Flint McClelland, David L. Ames, and Sarah Dillard Pope, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960," E: 20-21.

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the Cottage Department, the Maddox plan laid out generous building lots, measuring 50 by 150 feet or larger, 50-foot-wide avenues, and 25-foot-wide roads. The plan identified by name several small parks within the Tent Department, including Wade Park and Knott Park, and set aside three blocks within the Cottage Department as a public park named in honor of William R. Woodward, one of Washington Grove's founding trustees. The Maddox plan eliminated many of the irregular lots of the earlier plan and defined a gridiron system. The gridiron plan was an efficient and inexpensive way to subdivide and sell, or, in the case of Washington Grove, lease the land. In this way, the physical plan of Washington Grove reflected the organization of many railroad and streetcar suburbs across the United States. As Edwards has noted, "The Maddox subdivision plan is almost indistinguishable from the present town plan, a testimony to both its sensibility and its adaptability."<sup>200</sup>

The original, 267-acre tract of land purchased by the organizers of the Washington Grove camp meeting included nearly 47 acres on the west side of Laytonsville Road (now Washington Grove Lane). As the location of two springs (Whetstone Spring and Maple Spring), this wooded area was a vital source of water and an essential part of the camp meeting grounds. Separated by a roadway from the Tent and Cottage departments, the woods were never platted for building lots. In fact, the West Woods were not included in the 1897 Maddox survey. Instead, the woods were harvested for timber, and camp meeting attendees and summer residents used the logging trails for picnics and excursions. A contemporary description of the West Woods read, "Beyond the buildings rustic rambles lead to the mineral springs and many other beautiful shade spots, which lie outside the fence that surrounds the settlements. It is a model picnic ground, where every spot is shady, and a pump or spring lies at every turn...."<sup>201</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, Washington Grove was an established resort community with hundreds of residents that made it their home for the entire summer. It boasted a popular hotel, postal service, some gravel roads, a fine collection of summer cottages, and recreational facilities, including tennis courts. One newspaper account characterized it as "a veritable *urbe un rus*, a sylvan city...nature and modern improvements combined."<sup>202</sup> While annual camp meetings were still taking place, canvas tents had become a memory of the past.

As families began to extend their stays across the summer months, demand increased for a place for religious assemblies that would provide greater comfort in poor weather than the open tabernacle. In 1894, the market house that stood near the hotel in Howard Park was converted into an assembly building by creating large openings along its sides and building a platform at one end. It was used as a temporary chapel during inclement

<sup>200</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 127.

<sup>201</sup> "Opened by Leaguers: They Hold a Camp-Meeting at Washington Grove," *Washington Post*, August 21, 1895.

<sup>202</sup> "In the Old Fashioned Way," *Washington Post*, August 7, 1892.

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weather and later was dedicated as the “Young People’s Hall.”<sup>203</sup> A permanent place of worship, however, one that was more suitable than a converted warehouse, remained a priority. To provide such a space, the association built an assembly hall (today known as McCathran Hall) at the south end of Howard Park near the hotel. It was designed by architect A. L. Harris of Washington, D.C.<sup>204</sup> Completed in 1901, the assembly hall was comprised of an octagonal hall that measured 20 feet to a side and an attached meeting room that measured 20 feet square. The windows were generously proportioned to bring ample light to the interior, and at the peak of the octagonal roof was a louvered cupola. In addition to church services, the building was used for Sunday school activities and for Chautauqua, which had its first season at Washington Grove in 1902.

### Washington Grove in the Early Twentieth Century (1902-1937)

#### *Suburbanization in the Progressive Era*

Historians continue to debate the nature of progressivism and the Progressive Era, which lasted roughly from 1890 to 1920, but those who identified as progressives in the early twentieth century were generally committed to enacting economic and social reforms at local, state, and federal levels on behalf of the public interest. The depression of the 1890s, increased urbanization, the closing of the American frontier, discoveries by investigative journalists of governments corrupted by the influence of business interests, and the transformation of American society through immigration led Americans to believe that existing institutions could not meet the needs of a rapidly changing country. Progressives argued that the nineteenth-century faith in unrestrained individualism and an unregulated marketplace had created a nation controlled by greed and blind social forces that were destroying American society and ideals. Progressives broadly favored intervention into economic and social life to bring industrial change under control and alleviate its worst conditions.<sup>205</sup> A powerful faith in environmental determinism convinced reformers that improving the physical environment would “elevate” rural social life.<sup>206</sup> Society could be improved and government could be reformed to serve the public interest, progressives argued, by employing technocratic experts who could apply their knowledge to specific problems.

At the turn of the twentieth century, American families investing in the suburbs could expect to buy a detached home in a safe and sanitary environment that offered every modern convenience. Across the country and in the

<sup>203</sup> Grounds Committee, May 1894, WGA, Box H-4, File DA.00H4.010.

<sup>204</sup> “Families in Summer Quarters,” *Washington Evening Star*, June 18, 1901.

<sup>205</sup> John Whiteclay Chambers, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 136.

<sup>206</sup> Stilgoe, *Borderland*, 196.



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region there was massive public investment in roads, storm sewers, playgrounds, and other services.<sup>207</sup> As the new language of illness associated with great cities, industrialism, and technological advance entered into the American consciousness, reformers advocated for “permanent residence among the trees,” writes historian John Stilgoe.<sup>208</sup> Utilities and essential services became a prerequisite for creating the best environment for suburban living.

### *The Impact of Infrastructure Improvements at Washington Grove*

At Washington Grove, one of the most aggressively pursued undertakings of the Progressive Era was the issue of sanitation. Widespread public belief that disease was caused by dirt, stagnant water, and “miasmas” in the air coupled with the threat of periodic summer outbreaks of cholera, dyptheria, and other diseases led the association to take active measures to maintain a clean well water supply, drain the grounds, and dry out low, swampy areas and locations prone to recurring puddling and flooding. Concurrently, the association encouraged growth in undeveloped areas of the grounds, as cramped conditions within the Tent Department were equated with urban overcrowding and raised concerns over the spread of disease and the increased risk of fire. In 1886, the president of the association warned stockholders, “Living as we do – many of us – in closely built avenues, one careless and uncleanly family might cause serious trouble for all.”<sup>209</sup> As a result of increased attention to these issues, the residents of Washington Grove began to reframe their relationship with the built environment. The preference for the shelter, shade, and enclosure of the forest setting was cast aside in favor of open spaces characterized by the circulation of fresh air and penetrating sunshine.

By 1885, the association had created a Committee on Grounds and Supplies, whose most pressing matter was perceived to be “the proper sanitation of the place.”<sup>210</sup> The wells were frequently inspected and the water tested to ensure a clean supply. Subsequent work included digging ditches to channel surface water, filling sunken lots and poorly drained sections of the parks, and laying terra cotta sewer pipes to facilitate drainage. Clearing the drains and culverts was the responsibility of the superintendent of the grounds, and residents were encouraged to properly dispose of their waste water. The association hired a scavenger service to remove “night soil,” and camp

<sup>207</sup> Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 131.

<sup>208</sup> Stilgoe, *Borderland*, 189-90.

<sup>209</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 131.

<sup>210</sup> “Timeline: Sanitation, Health, Disease, Clean Water, Safety, Alcohol, Fire,” prepared by Wendy Harris, Washington Grove Historic Preservation Commission.

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privies were located in the East Woods where the waste was treated with lime. One long-time scavenger was J. H. Nugent, who lived in Emory Grove.<sup>211</sup> The hotel's sewerage was deposited in a cesspool in the West Woods.<sup>212</sup>

By 1880, the Grove had installed an 18-inch drain pipe within the Circle to eliminate standing water around the tabernacle.<sup>213</sup> The pipe channeled water under Grove Road and into the East Woods. Early improvements such as these, however, were ultimately found insufficient. In 1905, a sewer was constructed by private means along the west side of Grove Avenue, but it only served a small number of residents. Finally, in 1912, the association installed a sewer under Grove Road with professional assistance from a sanitary engineer, and its success triggered additional study of the issue. The following year, the *Washington Post* reported, "At a recent meeting of the stockholders of Washington Grove, Md., new members were elected to the board of trustees on a progressive ticket, and last week the stockholders authorized...the installation of an electric street lighting system and an examination of a civil engineer of the present sewage system with a view to making a new system."<sup>214</sup> Washington Grove, however, would not have a modern water and sewer system until 1927. The design and construction of the sewer system, which would serve Gaithersburg as well as Washington Grove, was the responsibility of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, which was created in 1916. Water and sewer lines were run under the avenues, the old sewers were disconnected, and a much-needed fire hydrant system was installed. It was largest engineering project at the Grove to date. Despite the convenience of the modern system, however, some residents were slow to install indoor plumbing and connections.<sup>215</sup> The Grove discontinued its scavenger service around 1930, and by 1938, all of the wells were filled and most of the pumps were pulled.<sup>216</sup>

Another essential service introduced in the Grove during this period was electricity, which was supplied by the Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) and powered an electric street lighting system. The Grove's first streetlamps burned kerosene (coal oil) and were affixed to rough-hewn wood posts. From around 1890 to 1895, gasoline lamps were used, but the cost became prohibitive. In 1896, to save money, the association reinstalled its kerosene lamps so that the oil could be used during the months of May, June, September, and October, when fewer people were living on the grounds.<sup>217</sup> Eventually, all of the gasoline lamps were sold at public auction. The

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>212</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 316.

<sup>213</sup> "At Washington Grove," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1880.

<sup>214</sup> "Washington Grove Elects," *Washington Post*, June 8, 1913.

<sup>215</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 316-19.

<sup>216</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 377.

<sup>217</sup> President's Report, May 1896, WGA, Box D-1, File DA.0001.22.

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Grove also had a gas lamps starting in 1891. A newspaper report noted, “In one of the cottages, that of Mr. Cissel, natural gas is employed, and he has connected his machine with two jets in the tabernacle with such satisfactory result that it has been determined to employ the gas next year.”<sup>218</sup> Gas lamps would remain the primary fuel for streetlights until 1914, when they were replaced by the electric streetlights. The new system used iron poles with elegant curved tops. Power was turned on that July to fifty-one customers, including the association, which lit the assembly hall and the Chautauqua auditorium.<sup>219</sup> The introduction of electric streetlights was seen as an important step toward a new era of development in Washington Grove.

Yet another major infrastructure project of this period involved Washington Grove’s roads. By the 1920s, the condition of the Grove’s streets and alleys became a critical issue. Increased automobile ownership meant more traffic that required tougher road surfaces. During the nineteenth century, improvements to the roads and paths within Washington Grove occurred as funds became available. However, urban families wishing to relocate to the suburbs had many options, and Washington Grove needed to compete. Thus, by 1928, the Grove had all of its roads paved with a thick base of cinders (donated by the B&O) that was then packed and oiled, which acted as a binder.<sup>220</sup> This vastly improved access and movement through the grounds.

Finally, reflecting national concerns shared by many American suburban families about “protecting the self and family from intrusion,” improvements to the Grove’s perimeter fence became a priority in the early twentieth century.<sup>221</sup> Since the mid-1870s, fences were used to mark boundaries and land use divisions, to provide privacy and protection to participants in the camp meeting, and to deter the use and distribution of alcohol. By 1892, a “handsome and substantial fence” had been erected around the entire grounds, replacing the first generation of fencing that had fallen into disrepair. For a time, African Americans were permitted to walk through Washington Grove, using Grove Avenue, to get to Emory Grove. However, later, with Jim Crow segregation and the doctrine of “separate but equal” confirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in the Plessy v. Ferguson decision of 1896, the B&O trains and stations, including Washington Grove’s, were segregated. Washington Grove’s perimeter gates were closed to Emory Grove camp meeting attendees in 1897.<sup>222</sup> In 1910, the association enclosed the entire property with “good, strong wire fencing.”<sup>223</sup> In addition to the perimeter fence, picket, split rail wood, and wire fencing was used around public parks and buildings, to demarcate and secure pastures owned by the association,

<sup>218</sup> “Inland Asbury Park,” *Washington Post*, August 17, 1891.

<sup>219</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 250.

<sup>220</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 352.

<sup>221</sup> Stilgoe, *Borderland*, 196.

<sup>222</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 137.

<sup>223</sup> Grounds Committee, May 1910, Box H-4, File DA.00H4.38.

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and by homeowners to delineate property lots. In 1908, a wire fence was put up around the auditorium in Woodward Park. Historically, some cottage lots were fenced, although fences between or in front of cottages within the Tent Department were less common than fences within the Cottage Department, where lot sizes were generally larger. Hedges and porch blinds were also used by families to provide privacy and protection from intruders.

### *Park Beautification and Recreational Amenities*

This period also saw Grove residents shift their focus from the spiritual and restorative attributes of the environment to its aesthetic and recreational qualities. In suburban communities across the country, beautification efforts were seen as a moral necessity. Village improvement by beautification, Stilgoe writes, was “no whimsical pastime, but a vitally urgent effort at turning back city evil.”<sup>224</sup> In many instances, these beautification efforts were undertaken by women’s groups, as they were perceived to be an extension into the public realm of a female’s role in the home. A growing number of American families were also privileged with increased leisure time, which came with it a growing acceptance of physical activity and sport. The benefit and value of recreation shaped the development of suburban landscapes, where “real nature was forgotten in the midst of manicured greens and all-weather tennis courts.”<sup>225</sup>

Following the construction of the assembly hall in 1901, the tabernacle in the Circle had become obsolete. In 1905, the 28-year-old timber structure was demolished. After clearing away debris, draining the space, and filling and leveling the ground, the association took steps to “beautify” the grounds of what was then called the “Plaza.” This included planting grass seed and laying drainage pipes.<sup>226</sup> It was also around this time that the Washington Conference of the Methodists’ Ladies Guild established a tradition of park beautification projects in the Grove. The organization sponsored improvements to Knott Park, Jackson Park, Wade Park, and Morgan Park. The association carried out grounds improvements as well. In May 1913, the president boasted that 200 fruit and shade trees had been planted over the course of the year. Later, in 1920, the Grounds Committee reported that a “landscape gardener” by the name of Mr. Murphy had visited the Grove and submitted an estimate for furnishing and planting evergreens and shrubs. These would be planted following a design by Washington Grove resident Nettie Craig, a member of the Ladies Guild.<sup>227</sup>

<sup>224</sup> Stilgoe, *Borderland*, 214.

<sup>225</sup> Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 99.

<sup>226</sup> Grounds Committee, June 1908, WGA, Box H-4, File DA.00H4.34.

<sup>227</sup> Grounds Committee, September 1920, WGA, Box H-4, File DA.00H4.73.

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In 1905, the Woodward Park was informally expanded west to Grove Road. That same year, the area bound by Oak Street on the north, Maple Avenue on the east, the building lots on Pine and Maple avenues on the south, and Grove Road on the west were set apart for recreational purposes and dedicated as an “Athletic Park.”<sup>228</sup> This land was poorly drained and consisted of mainly thicket and bog before it was adapted for recreational use.<sup>229</sup> Concurrently, the eastern half of Oak Avenue and Maple Avenue were cleared and graded, and an auditorium for Chautauqua was constructed in the park. (See additional text on Chautauqua below.) In addition to the auditorium, built structures in Woodward Park included a men’s clubhouse (no longer extant), a girls’ clubhouse (built in 1910), which was used by the Woman’s Club before being destroyed by fire in 1939, and a stone fireplace, built in 1935. Woodward Park’s tennis courts and athletic fields were popular with residents and the public. For a period beginning in 1903 and continuing through at least 1916, track and field events were held in the park every summer.<sup>230</sup> They attracted athletes from Maryland as well as from neighboring states.<sup>231</sup> Private tennis courts, laid out on empty building lots, also proliferated in this era. Edwards writes that at one time there were twenty or more active courts scattered across the grounds.<sup>232</sup>

In 1910, the association initiated a project to create an “artificial lake” in the West Woods that would be fed by Maple Spring. The lake (now known as Maple Lake) was used for recreation in the summer and to harvest ice in the winter.<sup>233</sup> However, since water sports were discouraged by the Methodists, the recreational function of the lake did not immediately flourish. Its use as an ice pond was also short lived. As a result, the lake fell into disuse for a number of years until the summer of 1927, when it was briefly revitalized.

### *Development of the Commercial Corner*

As Washington Grove and the neighboring subdivision of Oakmont developed in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the surrounding area mainly supported family operated farms. Wheat and dairy farms located along the railroad benefitted the cheap and efficient means of transportation it offered. Laytonville Pike (now Washington Grove Lane) was also an important part of the local transportation network, connecting Gaithersburg with Laytonville and points north. One local farm, which bordered Washington Grove to the west, was owned by

<sup>228</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 195.

<sup>229</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 120.

<sup>230</sup> “Sports at the Grove,” *Washington Post*, September 8, 1903, and “Hold Athletic Meet of Numerous Events,” *Washington Post*, September 5, 1916.

<sup>231</sup> Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., *A Rural Survey in Maryland* (New York: n.p., 1912), 47, 49.

<sup>232</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 177.

<sup>233</sup> Grounds Committee, May 1910, WGA, Box H-4, File DA.00H4.38.

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Thomas I. Fulks, a prominent Gaithersburg farmer and businessman. South of Ridge Road was a 48-acre farm that was purchased by Washington Grove as part of the original land acquisition for the camp meeting but sold in 1890. These agricultural properties and others formed the setting of Washington Grove well into the twentieth century and contributed to its appeal to visitors and homeowners as “a place apart.”

Although platted for residential development in the 1897 Maddox plan, the lots facing the corner of Washington Grove Road and Railroad Street (Lots 1 and 2 of Block 1) had been used for a nonresidential purposes since the camp meeting era. Thomas I. Fulks owned shares of the Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association and located them on the corner lots. In 1897, he was granted permission by the association to operate a general store on Lot 2. Given the Methodists’ condemnation of “worldly habits,” Fulks was prohibited from selling alcohol from his establishment, which he called the Washington Grove Store. Five years later, in 1902, Fulks, then president of Gaithersburg Milling and Manufacturing, purchased a 238-acre farm west of Washington Grove and across Washington Grove Lane from his store. The purchase of the farm was subject to a lease of part of the property that bordered on the railroad tracks to Henry C. Miller for the period 1900 to 1906. It is not known what type of business Miller conducted on the property, but when his lease expired, Fulks did not renew it. Around 1910, Fulks rented the general store to Marshall Walker and opened a feed supply business on the property adjacent to the railroad tracks that had formerly been leased to Miller. The operation included a feed mill (built circa 1910 from an old hay barn that stood on his farm), a feed store, and an office. In addition, the property featured a rail siding and a scale, which was embedded into the ground next to the store.<sup>234</sup> In 1919, the local Odd Fellows lodge purchased Lot 1 from Fulks, and the following year the organization built a large hall on the property for their meetings. The Odd Fellows Hall was a two-story building designed by architect W. S. Ploger of Washington D.C. It was built of concrete block molded to resemble rusticated ashlar stone and dressed quoins and featured a stepped front-gable roof.

In 1896, after the railroad freight siding was moved from the east side of the Humpback Bridge to the west side, the association sold the small triangle of land it owned between it and Railroad Avenue to John B. Diamond. Later, likely in the first decade of the twentieth century, it was acquired by the Washington Grove Manufacturing Company. Standard Oil purchased the property in 1914, and by 1933 it had been improved with a one-story brick building, adding another commercial presence to the corner of Washington Grove Lane and Railroad Street.

### *Decentralization and Residential Development*

Taken together, concerns over health and sanitation, infrastructure improvements, the construction of the auditorium in Woodward Park, the beautification of the parks, and the development of recreational facilities had

<sup>234</sup> Information on Fulks, the Washington Grove Store, and the feed mill complex comes from Gail Littlefield and Judy Christensen, draft Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form, “Gaithersburg Farmers’ Supply, Wayne Feed, Sunshine Feed, Thomas I. Fulks Store,” no date. Copy provided courtesy Gail Littlefield.

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the effect of encouraging residential development outside of and away from the historically sacred precinct of the Circle and represented a decentralization of community life at the opening of the twentieth century.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, several avenues platted in the Maddox plan were cleared and graded, creating new building lots for development. While these newly opened areas were attractive to Washington Grove residents who wanted larger lots and more sanitary conditions, not everyone had the means or desire to build new homes. As such, this period witnessed a series of cottage relocations wherein residents moved existing cottages, often from the Tent Department, to new lots. In 1905, the cottage that stood next to 15 the Circle, was moved to the southeast corner of Oak and Maple. (Later, in the 1960s, this cottage was demolished.) The same year, a cottage that stood on a Circle lot that is now part of 402 Fifth Avenue was moved to 205 Maple Avenue. In 1906, a cottage in the yard of 413 Grove Avenue (the Teepee cottage) was moved to 105 Grove Avenue and renovated. Also in 1906, a cottage in the yard of 1 the Circle was relocated to 102 Center Street and renovated. In some instances, cottages were combined to create larger homes. The house at 102 Ridge Road, for example, is the result of two nineteenth-century cottages that were moved to Ridge Road in the second decade of the twentieth century and joined to form one residence. By and large, the repositioning of cottages created open pockets of space, relieved crowded conditions, and mitigated the threat of devastating house fires within the Tent Department while expanding the built environment of the Grove.

Shortly after the turn of the century, Frank R. Rynex became the first resident to build a year-round house in Washington Grove – a watershed moment marking the transition from religious summer resort to suburb. According to Edwards, Rynex, who had been living with his young family in a cottage on the Circle, purchased five shares of stock and “located” them on Chestnut Avenue. Records suggest Rynex was not alone in speculating on Chestnut Avenue. In 1903, the president of the association reported, “The lots on Chestnut Avenue are mostly taken and that avenue [is] fast building up...”<sup>235</sup> The Rynex house at 202 Chestnut Avenue, which was completed in 1903, is a one-and-a-half-story, Carpenter Gothic-style, frame house with a cross-shaped plan and a deep, wraparound, front porch. The Rynex family enjoyed leading a “country life” at Washington Grove, and soon other “pioneers” joined them in year round living. While some families built new houses, many more winterized existing cottages and built additions to give them more space.

New residential development within Washington Grove in the early twentieth century encompassed a diverse range of architectural forms and styles, reflecting the evolving preferences of middle-class American families. Some of the new houses had vernacular forms that echoed the Carpenter Gothic architecture of the camp meeting era. Early twentieth-century pattern books, however, offered American families a wide selection of houses at affordable prices and helped popularize Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and other styles at the local level.

<sup>235</sup> President’s Report, May 1903, WGA, Box D-1, File DA.0001.30.

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Houses demonstrating the vernacular tradition included the cottage at 409 Fifth Avenue, built in 1909, which had a gable-front-and-wing plan with a shed-roof porch located within the L made by the two wings. 405 Brown Street, built in 1914, was a two-and-a-half-story, gable front house. It was clad with German lap wood siding. While the front porch extended across the entire front façade, it lacked the Carpenter Gothic decorative details that characterized the earlier era. A more compact version of the gable front form was built at 311 First Avenue. This one-story cottage was built between 1920 and 1935.

In communities across the nation during this period, the Craftsman style peaked in popularity. This style, influenced by England's late nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts movement, emphasized simple, informal floor plans and rustic detailing and appealed to progressive ideals that stressed simplicity and efficiency. Craftsman-style bungalows typically used natural materials, such as stone or wood shingles, and featured sheltering rooflines and inviting porches. The bungalow, as well as the larger foursquare form, were sold by catalogs that offered detailed architectural plans for a small fee, a process that helped to democratize home building. The house at 127 Chestnut, built around 1920-35, is a notable example of a Craftsman-style bungalow in Washington Grove.

Although not seen as frequently as vernacular or bungalow forms, Colonial Revival-style houses were also built in the Grove. The Colonial Revival was the most prominent residential style in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. Colonial Revival homes in Washington Grove, as elsewhere, borrowed elements from Georgian and Federal buildings and typically featured pedimented entrances and entry porches, elaborate doorways and window treatments, plain or decorated cornices, pilasters, and roof balustrades. In form, the style emphasized symmetrically arranged, two-story massing under side-gabled or hipped roofs.

During the Great Depression, new construction nearly came to a standstill across the country and in Washington Grove. Locally, families put off improvements, and many of Washington Grove's cottages were leased to generate rental income or sat empty.<sup>236</sup> In 1933, the association found itself in debt and unable to pay the salary of the superintendent. Development slowly picked up, however, around mid-decade. In a show of confidence for the next stage of Washington Grove's development, the association adopted its first street numbering system in 1935.

### *Chautauqua Comes to Washington Grove*

The Chautauqua Movement developed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to provide programming and courses for cultural uplift and recreation. Those who established Chautauquas across the country largely based their program on their namesake, the original Chautauqua Institution in western New York. The Chautauqua Institution was founded by Methodist bishop John Heyl Vincent and business leader and philanthropist Lewis Miller as a summer school for Sunday school teachers. It was located at a Methodist camp meeting facility on New York's Chautauqua Lake. Vincent and Miller's institution added an education component to the Methodist

<sup>236</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 346.



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camp meeting program, and, because of these origins, Chautauquas had a long-running connection to American Methodism and camp meetings.

Vincent and Miller's interest in Enlightenment educational ideals, as well as the success of the first summer Sunday school class in 1874, led them to introduce secular courses in arts and sciences. The expanded curriculum had as antecedents the popular educational movements of the antebellum period. Lyceums, athenaeums, mechanics' institutes, mail-order book clubs, and other public-focused education programs were well attended in the nineteenth century. In addition to educational courses, the Chautauqua Institution soon offered musical performances and lectures on a variety of topics. Given the institution's natural surroundings on the lake, recreation in a healthful setting also became an important tenet of the Chautauqua ideal.<sup>237</sup>

In 1878, Vincent began the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC), a four-year, mail-order reading program that provided a full curriculum, complete with textbooks and exams.<sup>238</sup> Participants were required to read four to six substantial books per year in literature, history, sociology, and science. Students had the choice of either reading on their own or joining a local reading circle.<sup>239</sup> By 1900, around 50,000 people had completed the program.<sup>240</sup> At the end of the program, CLSC participants were awarded a diploma and encouraged to attend a ceremony known as "Recognition Day" at the New York Chautauqua, at an independent assembly, or at a village reading circle.<sup>241</sup> Students of Chautauqua summer school programs tended to be young adults interested in teaching careers. Much of the success in building the Chautauqua Movement can be attributed to women, who dominated CLSC membership, hosted fundraisers, and led efforts in small towns to incorporate Chautauqua assemblies.

Because Vincent and Miller were not interested in franchising Chautauqua, the movement it inspired was non-hierarchical.<sup>242</sup> What became the Chautauqua Movement manifested itself in two distinct forms: the independent assembly and the circuit Chautauqua. The independent assembly was intended to be in a permanent location and

<sup>237</sup> Andrew C. Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment: Protestants, Progressives, and the Culture of Modern Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 101-03.

<sup>238</sup> Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment*, 104.

<sup>239</sup> John C. Scott, "The Chautauqua Movement: A Revolution in Popular Higher Education," *The Journal of Higher Education* 70, no. 4 (July/August 1999), 396.

<sup>240</sup> Martha Vail, National Historic Landmark Nomination, "Colorado Chautauqua," June 15, 2005, 47.

<sup>241</sup> Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion, and the Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 58.

<sup>242</sup> Martha Vail, National Historic Landmark Nomination, "Colorado Chautauqua," June 15, 2005, 47.

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was modeled on the original Chautauqua Institution, with lecture and entertainment programs, academic programs, and recreation in a resort setting.<sup>243</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century, more than 100 towns hosted independent assemblies. At least twenty-two assemblies were formed on preexisting Methodist campgrounds.<sup>244</sup> In many cases, Chautauquas operated alongside regular camp meeting activities. The Mountain Chautauqua, for example, was founded in 1882 by a group of Methodists as part of the summer resort community of Mountain Lake Park in Garrett County, Maryland. It was the first Chautauqua held in Maryland, and, during its heyday between the 1880s and World War I, the Chautauqua's educational and cultural activities attracted thousands to Mountain Lake Park. The annual summer program spurred the development of numerous cottages, hotels, and public buildings, many of which remain in excellent condition today.<sup>245</sup>

The circuit Chautauqua was a traveling production that featured a roster of entertainers and educators that visited towns across the United States for just a week or two at a time.<sup>246</sup> These tent shows were more entertainment focused than the independent assemblies. The first circuit Chautauqua was presented in summer 1904 in Marshalltown, Iowa.<sup>247</sup> The success of the circuit Chautauqua, however, came at the expense of the independent assemblies. Organizers of assemblies found it difficult to compete with the consumer-oriented tent shows. In response, many independent assemblies became more entertainment focused and less overtly religious. This shift drove away the Christian fundamentalists who contributed to much of the movement's early development.

The number of independent assemblies declined dramatically in the first decade of the twentieth century. They suffered from widespread budgetary problems, and Progressive Era politicians increasingly dedicated funding to establish libraries, parks, and lecture series – formally providing what Chautauqua offered in its programs and classes.<sup>248</sup> By 1911, only thirty-two assemblies remained.<sup>249</sup> The CLSC also declined in membership during this time, and, despite their initial popularity, circuit Chautauquas grew scarce by the late 1920s. Automobiles allowed

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<sup>243</sup> Scott, "The Chautauqua Movement: A Revolution in Popular Higher Education," 394.

<sup>244</sup> Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment*, 47.

<sup>245</sup> Geoffrey B. Henry, Maryland Historical Trust, National Register of Historic Places Inventory, Nomination Form, "Mountain Lake Park," 1983.

<sup>246</sup> Martha Vail, National Historic Landmark Nomination, "Colorado Chautauqua," June 15, 2005, 46.

<sup>247</sup> James R. Schultz, *The Romance of Small-Town Chautauquas* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 8.

<sup>248</sup> Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment*, 242-43.

<sup>249</sup> Scott, "The Chautauqua Movement: A Revolution in Popular Higher Education," 395.

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Americans in small towns to travel to cities for entertainment and lectures, and radio brought year-round entertainment into homes.<sup>250</sup> The last circuit shows folded during the Great Depression.<sup>251</sup>

A chapter of the CLSC was formed in the Washington, D.C., area in 1883, and interest in forming a local Chautauqua emerged in the 1890s, leading to the founding of the National Chautauqua Assembly in Glen Echo, Maryland, in 1891. The location boasted a spectacular natural setting, rustic stone buildings, an 8,000 seat amphitheater, and electric railway service from Washington, D.C. The venture, however, was short lived. The Chautauqua closed before the beginning of its second season because of a malarial fever scare.<sup>252</sup> In 1901, Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association trustees, some of whom were behind the Chautauqua in Glen Echo, established an exploratory to study the feasibility of a Washington Grove Chautauqua. The committee, according to Washington Grove historian Philip Edwards, not only investigated its viability, but planned a complete season of Chautauqua programs, with camp and temperance meetings worked into the schedule. Chautauqua programming officially began at Washington Grove on July 4, 1902, to an enthusiastic reception. Approximately 100 events were planned for the first season, which ran through the month of September. Additionally, outdoor games and recreation were encouraged.<sup>253</sup> The Chautauqua concept was not entirely new to Washington Grove. Recitation, music, and reading had been a regular fixture of the association's hotel, and camp meeting speakers had engaged with social and political topics. Musical performances had also been common there since at least 1889.<sup>254</sup> Before Chautauqua, the Grove was relatively quiet for much of the year, until the camp meeting attracted guests by the thousands. The arrival of Chautauqua brought new energy to the Grove and meant that its streets were busy throughout the entire summer.

Like its counterparts across the country, Washington Grove's Chautauqua offered a diverse array of programming and classes, including scientific lectures, political speeches, Stereopticon picture shows, minstrel shows, self-improvement instruction, and recitations from Shakespeare.<sup>255</sup> The roster of performers and speakers included musicians, professors, and religious leaders. A 1906 program of the Washington Grove Chautauqua listed classes

<sup>250</sup> Schultz, *The Romance of Small-Town Chautauquas*, 147.

<sup>251</sup> Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment*, 285.

<sup>252</sup> "Chautauqua Era," National Park Service, available at <https://www.nps.gov/glec/learn/historyculture/chautauqua-era.htm>.

<sup>253</sup> "The Grove Chautauqua: Washington Grove, Maryland," promotional pamphlet, WGA, Box D-7.

<sup>254</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 183.

<sup>255</sup> John H. Pentecost, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "Town of Washington Grove," April 1980, 8:8.

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in physical culture, art, music, kindergarten, and self-expression.<sup>256</sup> At the end of the season, “Recognition Day” ceremonies were held for CLSC program graduates in the auditorium.<sup>257</sup>

After the successful first year, Chautauqua attendance remained steady at Washington Grove through the first decade of the twentieth century, bucking the trend of decline in the rest of the country. The Chautauqua Committee was skeptical of shifting towards more entertainment programming, as other independent assemblies had done. They argued to the association’s board that educational features that were either historical or engaged with the latest political questions would be better received by their audience than the lighter fare that had become more common.<sup>258</sup> The religious component of the Chautauqua also continued.<sup>259</sup> In 1910, the Chautauqua Committee reported a deficit for the first time, and committee members feared that public interest had waned. It recommended introducing lighter fare, while still avoiding entertainment that ventured toward vaudeville.<sup>260</sup> It is not clear, however, whether this recommendation was implemented or when Chautauqua programming officially ended at the Grove. Camp meeting attendance also began to decline during this period.

Chautauqua organizers aimed to create an exotic fantasyland of healthful recreation and learning for their guests. A variety of strategies, many borrowed from Methodist camp meeting sites, were employed to relocate guests to a “‘natural’ landscape to evince a recuperative state of mind.”<sup>261</sup> Additionally, elaborate gates, sometimes decorated with classical or biblical design elements, often welcomed guests, further suggesting that one had arrived at a sacred space.<sup>262</sup> Washington Grove embraced the escapist concept as well. A promotional pamphlet from 1902 declared, “[the Grove] affords a delightful place for those who desire to escape the oppressive heat of summer and to get out into the woods and fields alongside the quieting and uplifting influence of nature.”<sup>263</sup>

Chautauqua assemblies’ built presence varied. Spaces for cultural programming, educational instruction, and recreational purposes ranged from a single building to a resort campus. The signature building and principal focal

<sup>256</sup> “Summer Assemblies for 1906,” *The Chautauquan* XLIII (March-August 1906), 479.

<sup>257</sup> “Washington Grove, MD,” *Washington Post*, August 12, 1906.

<sup>258</sup> Report to the Board of Trustees, Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association, January 6, 1908, WGA, Box D-7.

<sup>259</sup> Report to the Officers of the Washington Grove Association, November 1, 1909, WGA, Box D-7.

<sup>260</sup> Report to the Board of Trustees, September 15, 1910, WGA, Box D-7.

<sup>261</sup> Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment*, 70-71.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> “The Grove Chautauqua: Washington Grove, Maryland,” promotional pamphlet, WGA, Box D-7.

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point of many Chautauqua assemblies was the auditorium, or amphitheater.<sup>264</sup> These structures were typically large, frame buildings with simple massing, usually in the form of a rectangle, circle, or polygon. The level of exterior decoration varied, but many were austere. Indeed, some were essentially wooden shells that kept out inclement weather. One assembly admitted its auditorium “makes no claims to architectural beauty.”<sup>265</sup> Popular cladding materials for auditoriums included wood siding or shingles. Other signature features were clerestory windows for natural light and ventilation and generous window and door openings that let in cross breezes. Creating a space that was readily open to the elements was also meant to emulate the outdoor assembly areas and open-air tabernacles of Methodist camp meetings.<sup>266</sup> Dissolving the divisions between exterior and interior was usually accomplished by either wall openings filled with sliding doors or leaving the walls entirely open. Auditorium interiors usually consisted of a single volume with seating and a stage. The stage was usually at one end of the building, even in those that were circular or polygonal.

In its first three years, the Washington Grove Chautauqua was held in both the camp meeting-era tabernacle and in the assembly hall. As described earlier, the hall was built as a year-round place of worship for Washington Grove residents.<sup>267</sup> However, several points raise the possibility that it might also have been planned to shelter Chautauqua guests. First, the assembly hall was formally dedicated on the opening day of Washington Grove’s inaugural Chautauqua season, July 4, 1902.<sup>268</sup> Second, newspaper articles from the period describe its anticipated use for Chautauqua assemblies. The *Evening Star* reported in May 1901, “A new assembly auditorium is to be built, octagonal in shape and inclosed [sic] on all sides, and capable of seating several hundred people. The contracts for the building will be given out next week. As soon as completed a program of summer Chautauqua schools will be arranged...”<sup>269</sup> Similarly, the *Washington Post* reported in June 1901, “In this building will be held the Chautauqua assembly meetings, lectures, and concerts.”<sup>270</sup> Lastly, its polygonal form and materials were in keeping with trends in Chautauqua auditorium design. Although the building only had one principal entry point, the windows were generously proportioned to bring ample light and ventilation to the interior. A newspaper article

<sup>264</sup> Paul M. Pearson, “The Chautauqua Movement,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 40 (March 1912), 211.

<sup>265</sup> “Eighth Annual Session of the Cumberland Valley Sabbath School Assembly” (Carlisle, PA, 1892), Cumberland County Historical Society, 5. Quoted in Rieser, 77.

<sup>266</sup> Martha Vail, National Historic Landmark Nomination, “Colorado Chautauqua,” June 15, 2005, 25.

<sup>267</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 162-65.

<sup>268</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 185, and “Washington Grove Meeting,” *Washington Post*, May 25, 1902.

<sup>269</sup> “Holds Annual Meeting,” *Washington Evening Star*, May 31, 1901.

<sup>270</sup> “Washington Grove Camp,” *Washington Post*, June 1, 1901.

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published in May 1902, describing the dual secular and religious functions of the assembly hall read, “The past year...many improvements have been made upon the grounds and cottages, the principal one being the erection of a handsome and commodious octagonal building, known as the Assembly Hall, for the social and literary as well as religious gatherings of the community.”<sup>271</sup>

Washington Grove leaders soon realized, however, that the assembly hall and tabernacle were both insufficient for the number of Chautauqua events at the Grove and the size of its audiences. To provide better accommodation, the association built an auditorium specifically for Chautauqua activities in 1905. The builder was Hezekiah Day. It was located within Woodward Park, north of Oak Street. The building soon became the epicenter of public life in Washington Grove, hosting Chautauqua programming, camp meetings, and fraternal and political meetings.<sup>272</sup> This had the effect of shifting the focus away from the camp meeting-era Circle and provided yet another impetus for relocating cottages from the Tent Department.

The Washington Grove auditorium had a generous rectangular plan under a gable-on-hip roof with hipped dormers. Wood siding clad the lower level of the frame building, while the upper level’s gable ends and dormers were covered with wood shingles. The lower level was fenestrated at the front and sides with large openings, each fitted with double sliding doors with divided-light glazing. When the doors were opened the building became an open-air pavilion. Divided-light, pivot windows and dormers provided light and ventilation. The roof was supported by triangular trusses supported by iron posts. Interior surfaces were left unfinished, revealing the building’s frame structure. At the back of the building was a stage flanked by men’s and women’s dressing rooms. The auditorium could be used as a theater or an arena, depending on the seating arrangement.<sup>273</sup>

### *The Conservation Movement and its Impact on Washington Grove*

By the late nineteenth century, industrial forces were rapidly consuming American natural resources in the name of progress. Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau announced in 1890 that the western frontier, previously thought of as limitless, had closed. While economic growth had expanded opportunity, many Americans began to worry that unbounded expansion had reached its limits. They argued that conserving natural resources would be needed for society’s survival.<sup>274</sup> The designation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 had marked an important departure in national policy. Whereas previous policy had been dedicated to transferring lands in the public domain to private use, the designation of Yellowstone demonstrated that the federal government was concerned

<sup>271</sup> “Washington Grove Meeting,” *Washington Post*, May 25, 1902.

<sup>272</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 195-203.

<sup>273</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 197.

<sup>274</sup> Chambers, *Tyranny of Change*, 182.

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with the management of public land.<sup>275</sup> Still, such federal interventions were rare, and the timber, mining, and railroad companies, who had powerful sway in Congress, fought hard against efforts at land reclamation.<sup>276</sup>

The term “conservation” was first proposed by U.S. Forest Service chief Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946) in 1907 to describe the goals of like-minded progressives who sought regulation of the use of nature. While the word had been previously understood in a general sense as protecting something for the future, Pinchot applied conservation explicitly to environmental concerns.<sup>277</sup> Pinchot helped define the conservation movement’s mission as advocating for the efficient, scientific management of natural resources by trained professionals.<sup>278</sup> This message of professional management fit comfortably within the Progressive Era mindset of government-by-experts.<sup>279</sup> Pinchot, who presided over the U.S. Forest Service from 1898 to 1910, was instrumental in the adoption of sustainable-yield forestry practices in the United States.<sup>280</sup>

One of the conservation movement’s most prominent supporters was President Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919). A known outdoors enthusiast, Roosevelt signaled early on in his administration that the conservation of forest and water resources would be a priority. Although he at times adopted moralistic rhetoric to describe the cause, Roosevelt ultimately shared Pinchot’s utilitarian view of conservation for economic benefit. He declared in his first State of the Union in 1901, “The fundamental idea of forestry is the perpetuation of the forests by use. Forest protection is not an end in itself; it is a means to increase and sustain the resources of our country and the industries which depend upon them.”<sup>281</sup> Nevertheless, as president, Roosevelt took unprecedented steps to protect the environment. The U.S. Forest Service was established in 1905. Over the course of eight years, Roosevelt’s administration created five national parks, four big game preserves, fifty-one bird refuges, nearly twenty national monuments, and 150 national forests.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Leroy G. Dorsey, *Theodore Roosevelt, Conservation, and the 1908 Governors' Conference* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2016), 36.

<sup>276</sup> Michael B. Smith, “The Value of a Tree: Public Debates of John Muir and Gifford Pinchot,” *The Historian* 60, no. 4 (Summer 1998): 771.

<sup>277</sup> Mark V. Barrow, Jr., “From Crisis to Consensus to Schism: Revisiting the Progressive Conservation Movement,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 17, no. 2 (April 2018): 416.

<sup>278</sup> Smith, “The Value of a Tree: Public Debates of John Muir and Gifford Pinchot,” 757.

<sup>279</sup> Smith, “The Value of a Tree: Public Debates of John Muir and Gifford Pinchot,” 770-71.

<sup>280</sup> Smith, “The Value of a Tree: Public Debates of John Muir and Gifford Pinchot,” 762-63.

<sup>281</sup> *The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, 1790-1966*, vol. 2, ed. Fred L. Israel (New York: Chelsea House, 1967), 2026.

<sup>282</sup> Dorsey, *Theodore Roosevelt, Conservation, and the 1908 Governors' Conference*, 14.

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The principle counterpoint to Pinchot and Roosevelt's approach within the conservation movement was provided by naturalist John Muir (1838-1914). Situated firmly in the tradition of Henry David Thoreau, Muir argued that wilderness and natural resources should be protected not to serve economic ends, but as a sanctuary for spiritual renewal and an escape from modern society. Muir's approach, however, failed to gain traction the way that Pinchot and Roosevelt's ideas had. The utilitarian approach became synonymous with conservation, a term coined by Pinchot, after all, and its goals were institutionalized by Theodore Roosevelt's presidency.<sup>283</sup>

The movement's influence extended to Washington Grove, where residents came to understand their woods in more managerial and economic terms. They began to see their trees as a harvestable crop. Washington Grove established a Forestry Committee in 1913 to oversee its hundreds of acres of woods and to advise on forestry management.<sup>284</sup> One of Pinchot's protégés was Fred W. Besley (1872-1960), Maryland's first state forester, who visited Washington Grove and toured its woodlands in July of 1913. Besley's inspection of the Grove's forests was part of a statewide cooperative forest improvement program.<sup>285</sup> Trees that were mature or past maturity, Besley wrote, required an "improvement cutting," which would bring revenue to the owner and improve the condition of young growth.<sup>286</sup> After dividing the Grove into sections, the forester provided recommendations for cutting, reforestation, and other custodial practices. The present-day West Woods were found to be the best source of firewood, while reforestation was recommended for Morgan Park, which was located along the southern edge of Washington Grove. A "plan of operation" was crafted based on Besley's recommendations, and the Forestry Committee recommended a balance between the need for firewood and the "injudicious [*sic*] felling of trees."<sup>287</sup> Assistants trained in scientific forestry were tasked with selecting and marking trees for cutting based on species, maturity, and marketability.<sup>288</sup> The Grove generally followed this approach to maintaining its forested landscapes

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<sup>283</sup> Smith, "The Value of a Tree: Public Debates of John Muir and Gifford Pinchot," 760.

<sup>284</sup> Document titled "Forestry Committee," November 15, 1982, WGA, and Wendy Harris, News Dispatches from Other Centuries, "Portrait of a Founding Mother: Amelia Elmore Huntley, Part Three," 2017, available at [http://washingtongrovemd.org/town-history/featured-from-the-town-archives\\_0217](http://washingtongrovemd.org/town-history/featured-from-the-town-archives_0217).

<sup>285</sup> Fred W. Besley to Washington Grove Association, 1915, WGA, Box L-4.

<sup>286</sup> Maryland State Board of Forestry, "Plan of Co-Operation Between Woodland Owners and the State Forester," Forestry Leaflet No. 18, WGA, Box L-7.

<sup>287</sup> Secretary of Washington Grove Association to Fred W. Besley, September 23, 1913, WGA, Box L-7; and Report of the Forestry Committee, August 1, 1913, WGA, Box L-7.

<sup>288</sup> "Timber Marking Agreement," 1945, WGA, Box L-7.



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throughout the next half-century.<sup>289</sup> Besley continued to be involved with Washington Grove in the following decades.<sup>290</sup>

In her study on women's contributions to the early twentieth-century conservation movement, historian Carolyn Merchant writes, "Propelled by a growing consciousness of the panacea of bucolic scenery and wilderness, coupled with the need for reform of the squalor of the cities, women burst vividly into the public arena in the early twentieth century as a force in the progressive conservation crusade."<sup>291</sup> Indeed, women took a leading role in many Progressive Era causes. In Washington Grove, the mantle of conservation was carried by Amelia Elmore Huntley. In 1913, Huntley was the first woman to serve on the board of trustees of the Washington Grove Association. As a member of the Forestry Committee, she was instrumental in bringing Besley to the Grove.<sup>292</sup>

### *Early Steps Towards Incorporation*

Of equal importance to the physical improvements and decentralization that transpired in the first decades of the twentieth century were the social and cultural changes affecting Washington Grove and its residents. During this period, the annual summer camp meeting lost its prominence among Washington Grove's attractions, which included Chautauqua programs, an annual track meet and other athletic events, and a kindergarten. In fact, "camp meeting" had been dropped from the association's name since 1906. Physical vestiges of early camp meeting life, including the tabernacle, the hotel, and the market house, were simply dismantled as they became deteriorated and obsolete. As interest and support for camp meetings faltered, the first open discussion of ending the gatherings came in 1922. After five decades, the tradition finally came to an end at Washington Grove around 1929.<sup>293</sup>

By the late 1920s, a group of stockholders, led by former president Major Samuel H. Walker and several family members, began to question the Washington Grove Association's system of government and property ownership. As a result, in 1929, a committee was formed to investigate the matter of stockholders' rights and land titles. The

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<sup>289</sup> Wendy Harris, News Dispatches from Other Centuries, "Our Woods and Walkways: Are They Historic? (Part Two)," 2017, available at <https://washingtongrovermd.org/town-bulletins/town-bulletin-may-2017>; Wendy Harris, News Dispatches from Other Centuries, "Our Woods and Walkways: Are They Historic? (Part One)," 2017, available at <https://washingtongrovermd.org/town-bulletins/town-bulletin-april-2017/>.

<sup>290</sup> "Examination of Trees at Washington Grove," leaflet by F.W. Besley, State Forester, July 29, 1924, WGA, Box L-7.

<sup>291</sup> Carolyn Merchant, "Women of the Progressive Conservation Movement: 1900-1916," *Environmental Review* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 58.

<sup>292</sup> Wendy Harris, News Dispatches from Other Centuries, "Portrait of a Founding Mother: Amelia Elmore Huntley, Part Three"; Wendy Harris, News Dispatches from Other Centuries, "Our Woods and Walkways: Are They Historic? (Part Two)."

<sup>293</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 306.

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committee's recommendations, delivered in August of that year, recommended a) that each property holder was to be issued a fee simple deed, not subject to the bylaws of the association, b) that the government be changed to a municipal corporation, and c) that the association be dissolved.<sup>294</sup> The deeds would be subject to three covenants – houses had to conform to setback lines and cost no less than \$1,000, property could not be used for commercial activities, and property could not be sold, leased, or otherwise transferred to “anyone of a race whose death rate is of a higher percentage than that of the white or Caucasian race.”<sup>295</sup> While the covenant setting a minimum cost on dwellings was set forth to ensure that the community maintained a consistent character, the racially restrictive covenant was intended to prohibit African Americans and other minorities from obtaining property in Washington Grove. The use of deed restrictions to qualify prospective owners and residents based on factors such as race, ethnicity, and religion were used across the United States at the time. They would be challenged in courts by midcentury.<sup>296</sup> The committee's recommendations received wide support, and work continued toward planning a new government.

Washington Grove's initiative to seek incorporation followed national trends. Starting in the early twentieth century, many camp meeting associations across the country began to transition into independent municipalities or transferred their assets to other local government entities. Although Washington Grove's initial effort lost considerable momentum during the economic collapse of the Great Depression, the initiative was resumed in the mid-1930s. Finally, in 1937, the stockholders voted in favor of incorporation. The charter for the Town of Washington Grove became effective on May 30 of that year.<sup>297</sup>

### The Early Municipal Period (1937-1945)

#### *New Government and New Initiatives*

As a municipal corporation under state law, the Town of Washington Grove possessed the legislative and administrative power to write its own charter, make its own ordinances, and levy taxes for much needed infrastructure improvements and modernization projects. Washington Grove's original charter “was similar in form to other town charters, but with special provisions respecting the Town Meeting tradition, which had grown out of the annual Stockholders Meetings during Association days,” writes Washington Grove historian Philip

<sup>294</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 335-36

<sup>295</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 336.

<sup>296</sup> Linda Flint McClelland, David L. Ames, and Sarah Dillard Pope, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960,” E: 12.

<sup>297</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1873-1937*, 370.

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Edwards.<sup>298</sup> At the first Town Meeting on July 10, 1937, Roy McCathran was elected mayor, a position he would hold for the next twenty years. Among the immediate concerns facing the new mayor and town council were the roads and walkways, the maintenance of public buildings, the town's financial health, and residential growth. Volunteer committees were established to focus on specific issues and topics.

One of the first major initiatives of the new mayor and town council involved the public wells, which had supplied water to Washington Grove residents for over fifty years. Since the installation of water and sewer lines in 1927, however, the public wells had become obsolete. By 1938, all of the wells were closed, and most of the pumps were pulled.<sup>299</sup> Road improvements were another priority. In 1939, the first of the Grove's roads were paved with asphalt, and changes were made to the circulation system within the Tent Department to allow for the passage of automobiles. (The pedestrian-only avenues remained unpaved.) Following the road improvement project, a local stonemason was hired to build stone culverts to route stormwater under the new pavement.<sup>300</sup> Street signs and other traffic signs were posted along the roads and avenues. The street signs were wood and consisted of boards painted brown with white lettering and mounted to wood posts. The signs reflected the town's rustic and quaint character and had the added benefit of being inexpensive. This model of street signs would be replicated with few changes until the 1980s. In 1939, the Woman's Club building in Woodward Park burned, and the town decided that a new building could be constructed on the site of the old hotel in Howard Park. The builder was Brawner Harding of Gaithersburg. The clubhouse was completed in 1940 for \$1,551.<sup>301</sup> The same year, the town made improvements to the assembly hall, including the construction of an addition on the north side of the meeting room.

### *Commercial Corner*

The general store and Odd Fellows Hall that stood on the lots facing the corner of Washington Grove Road and Railroad Street were the last victims of the Depression, when, in 1940, they were seized by the First National Bank of Gaithersburg.<sup>302</sup> The bank tried to market the properties as residential, but several factors made this difficult – the buildings across the street were commercial/industrial and included a large feed mill complex, the lots faced a busy intersection, and there was little buffer between the lots and the nearby railroad tracks. The bank soon appealed to the town for rezoning, and a measure was passed in 1941 approving the change and officially declaring Lots 1 and 2 in Block 1 a commercial zone, with restrictions against alcohol and gaming. By the late

<sup>298</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 141.

<sup>299</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 15.

<sup>300</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 33.

<sup>301</sup> Horan, *A History of the Woman's Club of Washington Grove*, 21.

<sup>302</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 45.

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1960s, the area, which came to be known as the commercial corner, would become the center of a long-fought battle that would test the town's civic identity.

Thomas I. Fulks died in 1935, and the next year his farm and feed supply business were purchased by W. Lawson King. King sold the farm property in 1940, but retained the feed supply business, which he improved and incrementally expanded. King razed the feed store and built a new feed mill at the eastern end of the property in 1942. Then, in 1945, he added a farmer's supply store at the western end of the site. King's new four-story feed mill was built of cinderblock and corrugated metal. Four silos, constructed of concrete reinforced with steel straps, stood east of the mill. The supply store was a cinderblock building with an L-shaped plan. In 1952, he built an addition to the supply store, extending the complex to the west. King eventually leased the feed supply operation to Sunshine Feeds, which was succeeded by Wayne Feeds and finally Gaithersburg Farmers' Supply, which closed in 1989.<sup>303</sup> While many of the feed stores that served Montgomery County communities have vanished, Gaithersburg Farmers' Supply still stands as an important physical remnant of the regional agricultural economy that persisted into the mid-twentieth century.

In December 1944, the Standard Oil property across Railroad Street from the Odd Fellows Hall was sold to Oscar L. Evans, who established an ice cream factory in the brick building on the lot. By 1948, Evans sold the property, along with his machines and equipment, to Burtis Slaybaugh and Kenneth Reck.<sup>304</sup> Their company, Rex, Inc., soon had a small retail operation that was popular with Washington Grove residents. Building on their success, the partners built an annex and opened a restaurant.

### *Residential Development*

Mayor McCathran and the citizens of Washington Grove were eager to put the deprivations of the Depression behind them. While the early municipal period saw a gradual decrease in the abandonment of properties and lots being listed for tax sale, deferred home maintenance that had started in the Depression continued to cause concern.<sup>305</sup> In 1941, for example, two adjacent houses on Fourth Avenue that had not been occupied for several years were found to be "an actual and definitive menace to the health of the community" and nearly condemned.<sup>306</sup> (The houses were ultimately preserved and, in the 1960s, were combined to become what is now 404 Fourth

<sup>303</sup> Gail Littlefield and Judy Christensen, draft Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form, "Gaithersburg Farmers' Supply, Wayne Feed, Sunshine Feed, Thomas I. Fulks Store," no date. Copy provided courtesy Gail Littlefield.

<sup>304</sup> Montgomery County Land Records, Deed Book 1136, page 312.

<sup>305</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 37-38.

<sup>306</sup> Irving McCathran to Kate M. Purdum and Mary E. Murphy, May 21, 1941, Clare Kelly House History files, WGA.

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Avenue.) According to oral tradition, some houses in the Grove still retained canvas elements through the 1940s.<sup>307</sup>

In an effort to increase municipal revenues and attract families to the community, the town began to sell off platted but unoccupied lots. As a result, Washington Grove experienced a boomlet of home improvements and new construction. Nationally, Minimal Traditional dwellings, which offered simplified versions of prewar Colonial Revival styles, were built in great numbers during this period, and this trend is reflected in Washington Grove. The Minimal Traditional style was developed largely out of necessity. During the Great Depression, banks collapsed, mortgages piled up, and many Americans lost their means to purchase new homes, bringing the housing construction industry to a virtual standstill. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was established in 1934 under the New Deal programs of President Franklin Roosevelt to set standards for construction and insure loans banks made for home building. The FHA also produced their own technical bulletins on house design that proved influential. In fact, a number of these house plans were published in journals and pattern books in the 1930s and 1940s, promoting an economical take on the traditional house.<sup>308</sup>

The FHA's technical bulletin in 1940 was called *Principles for Planning Small Houses*, which laid out a number of recommendations for an economical, efficient home. Many of the basic forms and variations of what became the Minimal Traditional style were illustrated in the pamphlet. The FHA recommended simple compositions within limited variation in form. Unnecessary gables, dormers, and breaks in the roofline were to be avoided. Instead of adding ornamentation, character and variation could be achieved through the spacing and grouping of windows, use of materials, and design of minor details.<sup>309</sup> "Porches, bay windows, and platform steps," the bulletin states, "are useful as a means of making small houses more livable without adding greatly to their costs."<sup>310</sup> Efficient floor plans that maximized available space were advised, as higher building costs increased the difficulty in qualifying for FHA loan insurance.<sup>311</sup>

During World War II, the relocation of workers for proximity to defense-related factories created an immediately pressing need for small houses that could be built quickly. Builder-developers constructed nearly 2.3 million homes, most in the Minimal Traditional style, for war and defense purposes between 1940 and 1945.<sup>312</sup> Such

<sup>307</sup> Washington Grove Round Table Discussion, August 31, 2018, recording available in WGA.

<sup>308</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, second edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 589.

<sup>309</sup> U.S. Federal Housing Administration, *Principles for Planning Small Houses* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1940), 37-40.

<sup>310</sup> U.S. Federal Housing Administration, *Principles for Planning Small Houses*, 39.

<sup>311</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 589.

<sup>312</sup> Joseph B. Mason, *History of Housing in the U.S., 1930-1980* (Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company, 1982), 31-44.

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small houses were also a response to the wartime reduction in the supply of building materials.<sup>313</sup> When World War II ended in 1945, the Minimal Traditional house again proved to be the solution to a pressing national need. Housing accommodation had to be provided for the 10 million returning soldiers and their families. Approximately 5.1 million new homes, many in the Minimal Traditional style, were built between 1946 and 1949.<sup>314</sup> Because these houses continued to be promoted by the FHA, developers could get faster approval of loans for construction to start. Much of the postwar construction in emerging suburban communities like Levittown, New York, consisted of mass-produced Minimal Traditional-style houses.<sup>315</sup> The World War II Cottage is a variation on the Minimal Traditional style. These houses were typically a single story, simple in form, and covered by a hipped roof.<sup>316</sup>

Many Minimal Traditional-style houses were built in Washington Grove during this period and after World War II. Examples can be found on Washington Grove Lane, Ridge Road, and Pine Street. Examples of World War II Cottages are located at 108 Maple Avenue and 401 Brown Street. The latter, built in 1943, has a rectangular form under a moderately pitched, hip roof. These houses are representative of an important period of Washington Grove's development, when the new municipal government supported residential growth that responded to the needs of American families. In their simplicity of form and affordability, these houses represented a continuity in design from the camp meeting era.

### Post-World War II Period (1946-1969)

#### *Post-World War II Suburbanization*

The decades that followed World War II witnessed a transformation in American life brought by suburbanization. Americans returning from the war in large numbers left crowded, dense cities for detached houses with generous lawns. A strong economy, low inflation, and federal subsidies made conditions ripe for Americans to own their own homes. Such subsidies, including mortgage insurance by the FHA and a similar Veterans Administration mortgage program, underwrote a vast new construction program.<sup>317</sup> The Bureau of Labor Statistics conducted a

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<sup>313</sup> Clifford Edward Clark, Jr., *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 193.

<sup>314</sup> Mason, *History of Housing in the U.S., 1930-1980*, 48-49.

<sup>315</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 589.

<sup>316</sup> "WWII Era Cottage," Docomomo WEWA, available at [http://docomomo-wewa.org/styles\\_detail.php?id=41](http://docomomo-wewa.org/styles_detail.php?id=41), accessed December 6, 2018.

<sup>317</sup> Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 233.

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survey of homebuilding in 1946-47 that revealed that suburbs accounted for 62 percent of construction in the metropolitan regions studied.

Following the national trend, Washington, D.C., suburbs in Maryland and Virginia grew exponentially after the war. In 1953, for the first time, less than half of the metropolitan region's population lived in the city proper.<sup>318</sup> In the postwar era, Washington suburbs extended to areas considered remote in the nineteenth century. By the early 1950s, Montgomery County, in particular, emerged as the "bedroom of Washington," in the words of the president of the county council.<sup>319</sup> The county's population nearly doubled between 1946 and 1950 and more than doubled between 1950 and 1960. New transportation options, particularly after the creation of the Interstate Highway System in 1956, facilitated the commuter lifestyle. By the mid-1950s, Washington was connected to Montgomery County cities via Interstate 270, a new highway that supplanted the old U.S. Route 240.<sup>320</sup> Additionally, a bypass was built around Rockville in 1951 and the Capital Beltway opened in 1964.

The Washington suburbs were unique in that most of their residents were new to the region. County and city residents returning from the war accounted for only a small percentage of the incoming population. Many of the new Montgomery County suburbanites were professional-managerial workers, who supported the kind of professional, technocratic planning bodies leading postwar suburban development.<sup>321</sup> New county residents not only commuted into Washington, but also took advantage of expanding opportunity in Montgomery County itself. As the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union intensified, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations oversaw a decentralization of the federal government. A government concentrated in a central city, officials reasoned, made it more vulnerable to nuclear attack.<sup>322</sup> Federal agencies moved to the suburbs beginning in the 1950s. The Atomic Energy Commission was established in Germantown in 1955, and the National Bureau of Standards moved to Gaithersburg in 1960. Industry also expanded in the county. IBM, for instance, opened a systems development center in Bethesda and established its division headquarters in Rockville. Interstate 270, in particular, became a major corridor for industrial growth.

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<sup>318</sup> Zachary Schrag, *The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 17.

<sup>319</sup> Stella B. Werner testimony, U.S. House of Representatives, *District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia Mass Transit Compact: Hearings before House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee No. 3, on H.J. Res. 402*, 86th Cong., 1st sess., 1959.

<sup>320</sup> Richard K. MacMaster and Ray Eldon Hiebert, *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1776-1976* (Rockville, MD: Montgomery County Government, 1976), 351.

<sup>321</sup> Isabelle Gournay and Mary Corbin Sies, "Modern Movement in Maryland," Context Essay (University of Maryland, 2002), 39.

<sup>322</sup> MacMaster and Hiebert, *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1776-1976*, 351.

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Locally, the major planning institution was the Montgomery County Council, while the Montgomery County Planning Board served as their primary advisers.<sup>323</sup> County residents took an active role in planning discussions and organized their own advocacy groups. Most influential among these was the Montgomery County Citizens Planning Association (MCCPA), which began in 1950, but achieved its current name in 1958.<sup>324</sup> Regional-level planning was carried out by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which coordinated among Washington, D.C., and Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The expansion of the Washington metropolitan area had a major impact on Montgomery County. Rural areas were rezoned for high-density residential, commercial, and light industrial uses, despite an inadequate distribution of schools, hospitals, recreational areas, and basic amenities, such as grocery stores.

As a result of postwar growth, Americans across the country were becoming alarmed at how development was disrupting the natural world and the social and physical fabric of towns and cities. Unchecked development and reports from scientists on the impact of human beings on nature inspired the modern environmental movement that took shape in the early 1960s. Whereas the conservation movement of the early twentieth century had focused on the efficient management of natural resources, the environmental movement pressed for a broader, more aggressive agenda that emphasized environmental quality and ecology.<sup>325</sup> The environmentalists of the 1960s, for instance, argued that a forest should be seen as an "environment for home, work, and play rather than as a source of commodities."<sup>326</sup> Protection of natural resources was prioritized in the policies of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. In response to growing public concern, Congress passed a host of environmental protections, including the Wilderness Act (1964), the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (1964), the Clean Air Act (1967), the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968), the National Trails System Act (1968), and the National Environmental Policy Act (1969).

In the years following World War II, many older buildings and neighborhoods were threatened by suburban development, federally funded urban renewal programs, highway building, the construction of office buildings, and other factors. In response, preservationists formed a quasi-public advocacy group that would become the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which was chartered by Congress in 1949.<sup>327</sup> That year, the construction

<sup>323</sup> Lucile Harrigan and Alexander von Hoffman, "Forty Years of Fighting Sprawl: Montgomery County, Maryland, and Growth Control Planning in the Metropolitan Region of Washington, D.C." (Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University, October 2002), 1.

<sup>324</sup> Schrag, *The Great Society Subway*, 225.

<sup>325</sup> Samuel P. Hays, "The Environmental Movement," *Journal of Forest History* 25, no. 4 (October 1981): 219.

<sup>326</sup> Hays, "The Environmental Movement," 219.

<sup>327</sup> Robert E. Stipe, *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 9.



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of the Whitehurst Freeway in Georgetown – an elevated highway along the waterfront designed to reroute high-density traffic from Georgetown’s small, crowded streets and connect to a renovated K Street – sparked protests by District residents who claimed that the bypass freeway was incompatible with the character of its neighborhood. Prompted by the freeway’s construction and an increase in the alteration of the city’s historic fabric, the Old Georgetown Act was passed in 1950 designating Georgetown as an historic district. Encouraged by the National Trust and state officials, in 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the National Historic Preservation Act into law. The act expanded the National Register of Historic Places, authorized state funds for surveys and preservation planning, and created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In time, the preservation movement expanded to include historic places important to communities, not just nationally significant properties.

### *Regional Trends in Postwar Residential Architecture*

In response to the burgeoning postwar economy, growing population, and urban housing shortages, the Washington, D.C., of the late 1940s began to spread far into the surrounding counties of Maryland and Virginia. Federal housing policies established in the early 1950s were predominantly suburban in focus. In Washington, nearly two-thirds of the mortgage guarantees were located outside of city limits.<sup>328</sup> Suburban living was a desirable alternative for much of Washington’s middle class who were contending with crowded urban conditions and rising rental costs. Relocation was accessible to many families through the help of federal housing and loan programs. Following the onset of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act (GI Bill), many families had enough money leave the city for single-family homes in the suburbs.

Locally, mass-produced residential developments appeared in Virginia and Maryland to accommodate the region’s growing number of new residents. Among the first postwar subdivisions in Montgomery County was Veirs Mill Village in Rockville. Started in 1947, the development included 1,105 identical Cape Cod houses on a 328-acre tract of former farmland.<sup>329</sup> Several pioneering communities, such as Hollin Hills in Alexandria, Virginia, were developed as showcases of modern living. The enclave was a collaboration between the developer Robert Davenport and architect Charles Goodman (1902-1992). In planning roadways and siting houses, the developer and architect prioritized the preservation of the wooded, rolling character of the natural landscape. Houses were oriented to optimize views and maintain privacy. Typical building materials included recycled brick, stained vertical wood siding, and floor-to-ceiling window units.

<sup>328</sup> Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 212-213.

<sup>329</sup> Kelly, *Montgomery Modern*, 42.

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The ranch house was the most popular American housing form during the postwar period.<sup>330</sup> Historian Kenneth Jackson writes that Americans were drawn to ranch houses because their departure from traditional residential architecture presented “newness.”<sup>331</sup> A survey conducted by the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1945 reported that only 14 percent of Americans were interested in renting or living in a “used” house.<sup>332</sup> Whatever the reason for its popularity, the ranch house soon became seen as an integral part of the suburban ideal in the United States.

The “newness” of the ranch house was partly derived from its embrace of modern architecture. Modernists saw older housing models as inflexible and unsuitable for modern life. The modern houses designed by the movement’s foremost intellectual leaders, including Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, were reduced to pure form, emphasizing lines, planes, and geometries. Technological advances were celebrated in the choice of building materials, including steel, reinforced and precast concrete, and large expanses of plate glass. Most ranch houses were never as austere as the typical modernist house, but some of the movement’s general principles became part of standard ranch design. Ranch house architecture, particularly in the earlier models, embraced modernism’s simplicity – a single roof covered the entire structure, a clear form was expressed by the rectangular massing, and ornament was minimized. The openness of the interior plan, with public rooms that seamlessly flowed into one another, was also a hallmark of modernist design. Ranch houses also embraced technology, in both their mass-produced construction and interior space devoted to the latest appliances.

One of the most radical innovations of the ranch form was the space devoted to the automobile. Although garages and carports had been built throughout the twentieth century, they were often either detached from the house, integrated into the basement, or connected to the house, but located on a side elevation. It was in the ranch house that space for automobiles (either garages or carports) became a primary feature of the building’s footprint and took a prominent spot at the front of the house. Soon, even the path from the front door to the sidewalk, an enduring landscape feature of American lawns, was bent toward the garage and driveway.<sup>333</sup>

A variation on the ranch form was the split-level, which emerged in the 1950s and continued its popularity into the 1970s. Used to denote a form and not a formal style, the split-level generally consisted of separate, staggered levels separated by a partial flight of stairs. The bi-level split consists of two floors of living space and an

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<sup>330</sup> Thomas C. Hubka, “The American Ranch House: Traditional Design Method in Modern Popular Culture,” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 7, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 34.

<sup>331</sup> Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 240.

<sup>332</sup> *Urban Housing Survey: The Saturday Evening Post, Ladies' Home Journal, Country Gentleman* (Philadelphia: Curtis Publishing Company, 1945).

<sup>333</sup> Hubka, “The American Ranch House: Traditional Design Method in Modern Popular Culture,” 35-37.

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intermediate-level landing between them. The tri-level split consists of a two-story mass intercepted at mid-height by another mass.<sup>334</sup>

### *Postwar Growth in Washington Grove and Home Rule*

The period after World War II was a time of intense residential building and remodeling at Washington Grove. With many empty lots and many lots with dilapidated houses, the town was eager for new development that would enhance its appeal to homebuyers and increase its tax base. Long-time residents and newcomers alike worked to revitalize the town by renovating older cottages and building new houses that reflected modern tastes and demands. Home Rule in Maryland gave Washington Grove the power to exercise its own planning and zoning regulations. Finally, the town's plans to fill itself out could be realized.

Washington Grove attracted individuals seeking a closeness to nature and a connection to the past, a combination not available in many postwar planned communities often characterized by standardized houses set in denuded landscapes. Classified ads for new and older homes for sale in Washington Grove appealed to "tree lovers" and emphasized the Grove's reputation as a "town within a forest" that was "convenient to transportation, yet out of the hubbub."<sup>335</sup> New residents included government officials, professionals, and scholars who worked in Washington, D.C., or in nearby federal facilities.<sup>336</sup>

The houses constructed during the post-World War II period in Washington Grove followed national trends in residential building. Although earlier styles continued to be built, new styles and forms such as the ranch house made their appearance. Architecture of the period emphasized clean lines, functional plans, modern materials and building techniques, and the integration of interior and exterior space. Stylistically, some homes featured traditional detailing, while others demonstrated the influence of modernism. The use of prefabricated materials, developed for wartime mobilization but adapted for postwar building, was also evident. Houses were constructed by merchant-builders using standardized plans, sometimes in pairs or groups, or custom designed by architects.<sup>337</sup>

As the town made decisions about new areas for residential growth, blocks of land became available for development. Lots were also sold by individuals.<sup>338</sup> One area of new residential development was the eastern end

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<sup>334</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 613.

<sup>335</sup> Classified Ads, *Washington Post*, March 15, 1959, and May 30, 1959.

<sup>336</sup> *Washington Post*, July 21, 1958.

<sup>337</sup> Notes on Washington Grove Architectural Significance, 1937-69, courtesy Clare Lise Kelly, November 4, 2018.

<sup>338</sup> Notes on Washington Grove Architectural Significance, 1937-69, courtesy Clare Lise Kelly, November 4, 2018.

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of Center Street between Maple Avenue and Ridge Road. In 1949, a Dutch Colonial Revival-style house was constructed at 410 Center Street, and six new homes followed within the next half dozen years. 409 Center Street, built circa 1953-54, was a Cape Cod cottage with Colonial Revival detailing. 301 Maple Avenue, which faces south toward Center Street, was a one-story ranch house built in 1955. It had a low pitched, gable roof with a broad, brick center chimney. Later, Contemporary-style additions were added to the west and east facades. The houses built on the north side of Center Street, such as the Cape Cod cottage at 409 Center, were located within the historic "Laundry Reserve," which had been platted for residential development in the late nineteenth century but had, up until then, remained undeveloped. (Two early fire hydrants in the East Woods remain today as evidence of the residential growth once projected for the land.) During the postwar period, a number of ranch and Minimal Traditional-style houses were also built along the eastern extension of Ridge Road.

The deep, narrow lots that historically characterized the division of land in the Cottage Department were not planned for the low horizontal massing of modern domestic forms. In some cases, such as the pair of ranch houses at 201 and 203 Maple Road, the houses were oriented perpendicular to the roadway, rather than facing it. Other times, building lots were consolidated and subdivided into new configurations that could better accommodate modern forms. In 1955, for example, Lots 6 and 7 of Block 3 were replatted to create two lots that fronted Center Street.<sup>339</sup> The one-story, brick veneer, ranch houses built on the lots in 1958 were nearly mirror images of each other (11 and 13 Center Street). The incorporation of the garage in the main block of the house, with its opening on the front façade, as well as the placement of the driveway in the front yard, represents an important shift in residential planning and design at Washington Grove, where for decades automobiles were relegated to vehicular-only roads and garages stood at the back of buildings lots.

To support new residential development, the town carried out road improvements. Miller Drive was put in and the northern end of Hickory Road was graded and paved with gravel, among other projects.<sup>340</sup> By 1945, the Humpback Bridge crossing the B&O Railroad tracks had become dilapidated. In response to complaints from Washington Grove residents, the railroad replaced the nineteenth-century structure with a new bridge in the same location. The new bridge was a three span, timber bridge with a humpback shape.<sup>341</sup> In the early 1950s, the town began the process of widening its 25-foot-wide vehicular roads to make them safer and allow for on-street parking. When public land was involved, the process was straightforward, but other roads, such as Chestnut, proved more difficult due to preexisting structures and fence lines.

<sup>339</sup> Montgomery County, Circuit Court Land Records, Plat No. 4031, February 1955.

<sup>340</sup> Town Council Meeting Minutes, 1946, WGA, Box D-4, File DT.00D4.06.

<sup>341</sup> AD Marble & Company, Maryland Historical Trust Determination of Eligibility Form, "Washington Grove Humpback Bridge (M: 21-220)," 2009, and Town of Washington Grove Historic Preservation Commission, 2014 Montgomery County Historic Preservation Awards Nomination Form, "Washington Grove Hump Back Bridge," 2014.

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The town also turned its attention to its public buildings and facilities. In 1951, a gabled porch was added to the front façade of the assembly hall to shelter the entrance and create a place to hang the original bell used to summon participants to camp meeting services. (The bell originally hung from a tree, then was moved to the belfry of the tabernacle.) A few years later, in 1955, when Washington Grove United Methodist Church was completed, the assembly hall was repurposed as municipal offices. (The building was officially dedicated as the town hall in 1973.) New public facilities from this period include the town maintenance building, which was constructed in Woodward Park in 1955.

Due to a combination of factors, Maple Lake, the swimming pond in the West Woods, was not maintained during most of the 1930s and 1940s. By 1953, however, the town had chartered a Lake Committee to guide the restoration and revitalization of the site. The redesigned lake, inaugurated in 1955, featured an island and a dock. Later improvements included a bridge to the island (1962) and a perimeter fence (1973). During the winter months, the lake was used for ice skating.

The passage of Home Rule in Maryland in 1954 gave counties and towns the power to modify their own charters – the basic laws that described their powers, procedures, and services. An amendment to Home Rule, passed in 1955, gave municipalities power over planning and zoning, and Washington Grove established a Planning Commission in 1957. The commission drafted ordinances prohibiting multi-family dwellings and prepared a zoning map that included two residential zones, a forest reserve, and a local commercial zone. The town adopted its first Code of Ordinances under home rule in 1964, which included sections on zoning, building, and land use. Through the 1950s and 1960s, the Planning Commission worked with the town council to identify and sell miscellaneous parcels of land owned by the town, condemn blighted properties, and guide new development. Throughout this period, the town leveraged its independent planning and zoning authority to carefully preserve and protect the architectural resources and natural features that characterized its early history while promoting responsible growth and compatible new design.

### *The Auditorium Controversy*

In the decades after Chautauqua activities ceased at Washington Grove, the auditorium was used to show movies and stage theatrical performances, as a meeting place for social clubs, for dances, and as a gymnasium for indoor sports, such as basketball and shuffleboard.<sup>342</sup>

In 1948, a group of Grove residents formed a theatrical troupe called the Banbury Players that staged three one-act plays in the auditorium over the course of the year. Eager to try a short professional season the following year, the group, then known as the Washington Grove Summer Theatre, proposed a four-week season to the town council. The council approved the proposal, on condition that “the organization shall be responsible for retaining

<sup>342</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 18.

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control over the use of the Auditorium.” Following further discussions with town council about how the group could comply with this condition, a spokesman for the troupe reported that “the group was anxious to carry out the established segregation policy of the town ...although no definitive plan for enforcing a policy of exclusion had been formed.” After several months of wrangling with the town council and wordsmithing the proviso in the theater permission, the Washington Grove Summer Theatre withdrew its proposal, stating that it “could not and would not attempt a policy of segregation by exclusion of negroes from attendance.” The matter was dropped.<sup>343</sup>

Another proposal to the town council for a theater in 1962 dealt the final blow to the auditorium. This time, the proposal came from a Washington theater producer who proposed to upgrade the auditorium, which had become a burden to maintain and was a target for vandalism, and use it for theater productions for twelve weeks over the summer. The town was evenly split over the issue. On one side, some residents desired the availability of theater and other artistic pursuits in Washington Grove and saw it as a way to save the auditorium. Others saw it as a commercial venture which would bring unwanted traffic into town and tie up the auditorium. The theater proposal was put to vote at the annual town meeting of 1962, where it lost by a single vote.<sup>344</sup> Although many Grove residents supported petitions to save the auditorium, without viable options for its use, the building was demolished in 1963. Soon after the building was razed, its site was redeveloped as part of a new Woodward Park “recreation center” with playground equipment and a multi-purpose, all-weather court. In addition, an all-weather tennis court was built north of the existing clay tennis courts.

### *Community Activism*

In the postwar period, Washington Grove became known as a community of activists skeptical of unchecked development, supportive of environmental causes, and protective of its historic resources and the way of life they represented.

The residents of Washington Grove encouraged strategic regional growth and emerged in the postwar period as strong opponents of rezoning and highway construction. In 1957, Washington Grove’s mayor, George A. Pughe, wrote a letter to U.S. Senator Alan Bible, Chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Metropolitan Area Planning, to encourage greater cooperation among regional planning agencies. He wrote, “We recognize that the transition of the adjacent areas must take place as the metropolitan area expands. We do not resist growth. But we do believe that as a community we should have an opportunity to participate in the planning and decisions regarding adjacent areas that will directly affect our own community.”<sup>345</sup> When the Montgomery County Planning Board proposed rezoning 11 acres of Oakmont Avenue from rural residential to light industrial, the town opposed

<sup>343</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 75-84. Such a policy would be prohibited with the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

<sup>344</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 175-78.

<sup>345</sup> Letter from Mayor George A. Pughe to Senator Alan Bible, November 19, 1957, WGA, Box H-2.

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the plan, fearing that it could lead to rezoning a larger portion of the area just outside its borders. A proposal in 1959 for the western quadrant of nearby Redland, a town south of Washington Grove, to be redeveloped with 25,000 new housing units similarly provoked opposition. The town also fought the rezoning and development of 388 acres along Snouffer's School Road, which lay to the town's north – a plan that included the construction of the Montgomery County Airpark and an adjacent light industrial park.<sup>346</sup> Although opposition to development and rezoning continued, the town lacked the clout to halt the plans. Such changes largely erased the pastoral settings that existed in the area well into the 1960s. As the result of a development-friendly county council in power from 1962 to 1966, thousands of acres of Montgomery County were rezoned for higher-density use.<sup>347</sup> When a high-rise complex was proposed west of the West Woods in 1965, the town staunchly opposed the plans. Although the full scope of the proposal was not implemented, some new apartment buildings were constructed.<sup>348</sup>

Washington Grove residents in the 1960s and 1970s were forceful advocates for the protection of the town's natural resources. As early as 1962, residents, including Mayor Don McCathran, suggested formally dedicating the town's West Woods as a wildlife preserve to protect it from future development.<sup>349</sup> The shift from thinking of the woods as a *reserve* to a *preserve* reflected the conclusion that their value would not be determined from timber sales.<sup>350</sup> The West Woods were officially designated a forest preserve in 1964. Despite this, in 1971, a state forester studied the East and West Woods and determined that mature tulip poplars in the West Woods could sell for \$2,000. The town's Forestry Committee agreed only to cut dead trees. When it was discovered that live trees had also been marked for cutting, a groundswell of opposition developed. Protests from angry residents at a town council meeting stopped the timber harvest and ultimately led to the resignation of Mayor Al Christie. The incident led to the establishment of a Forestry Policy Committee, which authored studies that led to a forestry policy section included in the town's Master Plan.<sup>351</sup> The town's forests were recognized not only for their aesthetic and recreational value, but as protection from noise and a buffer against nearby development.<sup>352</sup>

### Current Period (1970-present)

<sup>346</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 146-49.

<sup>347</sup> MacMaster and Hiebert, *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1776-1976*, 360.

<sup>348</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 200.

<sup>349</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 192.

<sup>350</sup> Wendy Harris, News Dispatches from Other Centuries, "Our Woods and Walkways: Are They Historic? (Part Two)."

<sup>351</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 221-22.

<sup>352</sup> "Report to the Washington Grove Town Council from the Forestry Committee," January 9, 1973, WGA, Box L-7.

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The idealistic traditions of camp meetings continue to motivate the town's residents to preserve Washington Grove's culture and setting through active participation in town and community planning issues.

### *Preservation Efforts*

In the late 1970s, Washington Grove's Planning Commission initiated two important efforts to protect the town's natural and cultural resources. First, in March 1977, the commission prepared a report to the mayor and town council recommending that the entire town be nominated for designation as an "area of critical state concern." Recent state legislation aimed at promoting balanced growth gave authorization to the Maryland Department of State Planning to work with local jurisdictions to identify areas that were of such significance that future use or development was of concern to the entire state.<sup>353</sup> The Planning Commission's report cited threats by adjacent development and the possibility of state or county condemnation for rights-of-way through the town's woods. While the commission's report did not result in designation by the state, a separate effort to nominate the town to the National Register of Historic Places succeeded. The commission identified several areas of significance to address in the nomination: town planning and design; cultural history, with emphasis on the camp meeting, Chautauqua, and recreational clubs; and architecture.<sup>354</sup> Fieldwork began in the spring of 1978, and the Town of Washington Grove was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district in 1980.

The 1980 National Register designation has been of great value to the town. When McCathran Hall was in disrepair and needed additional space for municipal government functions, Washington Grove's National Register status enabled it to obtain in 1991 a \$100,000 grant from the state conditioned upon a perpetual preservation easement on the building's exterior and surroundings. The Washington Grove Historic Preservation Commission, established in 2001, uses the National Register documentation to guide and inform decisions and policies, helping to protect the historic integrity of the district. The National Register designation has also been essential in the town's preservation battles over increased development pressure.

Over the years, town officials and residents have successfully capitalized on the Washington Grove's historic status to preserve and protect its historic resources, spaces, and viewshed corridors and protect against overreaching development. When development was proposed for the open land east of Ridge Road, which was part of the original tract purchased for the camp meeting and has been historically associated with Washington Grove's agricultural setting, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission required the developer to negotiate with the town to agree on a plan that would both preserve the town's historic context and meet their development goals. When the state proposed a design for the Intercounty Connector expressway within

<sup>353</sup> Memorandum, "Areas of Critical State Concern," 1977, WGA, Box L-7.

<sup>354</sup> Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, January 25, 1978, courtesy Wendy Harris, Washington Grove Historic Preservation Commission.



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sight of the town, the visual and acoustical impacts of the design alternatives on the historic district were required to be examined and mitigated. Though the construction of the expressway did go forward, berms and plantings were required to minimize the impacts. In 2013, Washington Grove was listed on Preservation Maryland's "Endangered Maryland" list of the state's most threatened historic resources. Proposed zoning changes and incompatible high-density development along the town's borders that threatened the historic district's integrity were cited as the justification.

The 2014 Humpback Bridge rehabilitation project is a successful example of a positive collaboration between the town and CSX Transportation to preserve the historic railroad structure. CSX Transportation's 2009 National Gateway project required that the historic bridge be modified to allow sufficient clearance for two stacked rail containers. Town activists' held discussions with CSX about options to obtain the extra 20 inches of clearance while preserving the historic features of the bridge. Initially, it appeared that there was no solution short of demolition. CSX, however, developed a successful engineering and preservation solution that used single spans of rolled steel beams with an arched shape that provided the required clearance while retaining the bridge's distinctive humpback shape.

### *Conflict over the Commercial Corner*

One of the defining events of Washington Grove's current past was its successful lawsuit against The Southland Corporation, an international conglomerate and parent company of the 7-Eleven chain of convenience stores. In 1971, Bobby Lee, then owner of the old general store and the Odd Fellows Hall comprising the town's commercial corner, requested a permit to redevelop the lots. His plan proposed demolishing the old general store and replacing it with a modern shopping center that would be anchored on the south by the Odd Fellows Hall and on the north by a 7-Eleven convenience store.<sup>355</sup> The plans were approved, and the project was completed in 1973.<sup>356</sup> To integrate the Odd Fellows Hall with the new construction, the front façade of molded concrete block building was faced with brick veneer and given a faux Mansard roof. The 7-Eleven was a one-story, brick veneer building with large, plate-glass windows fronting Washington Grove Lane. Its low-pitched, cross-gable roof was embellished with Colonial Revival elements, including a roof balustrade and weathervane.<sup>357</sup> Among the new tenants of the shopping center was the U.S. Post Office, which relocated from Oakmont Avenue (outside the district) to the Odd Fellows Hall.

<sup>355</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 256.

<sup>356</sup> "The Commercial Corner: Assessment and Recommendations," Report by the Planning Commission to the Mayor and Council of the Town of Washington Grove, March 14, 1983, WGA.

<sup>357</sup> The balustrade and weathervane were lost in a recent roof repair.

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As one of the only convenience stores in the area, the 7-Eleven offered lottery tickets, pinball machines, video games, and movie rentals, attracting heavy foot and automobile traffic from all directions, but primarily along Washington Grove Lane and through the town's adjacent streets and avenues. This brought complaints of litter, petty crime, and car break-ins. Young African Americans walking from nearby Emory Grove, which had been recently subjected to an urban renewal demolition project, bore the brunt of the accusations. By 1975, the store was operating twenty-four hours a day, and the commercial corner had become an epicenter for "noise, loitering, vandalism, and other illegal activities."<sup>358</sup> As the years passed, the issue became more acute and battles over town control escalated. The 7-Eleven was declared a public nuisance, and the issue was frequently and passionately discussed at town meetings, special meetings, and conferences between town officials, the police, and neighboring communities. Citizens committees were formed to document the frequency and severity of problems with litter, loitering, noise, and crime and to establish a legal defense fund to cover anticipated legal fees. Finally, the town took action in 1983 when it added an article to its ordinances that regulated commercial activity, required business licenses, limited business hours, and required deposits on beverage containers. This, in effect, declared certain previously valid uses of the commercial corner to be non-conforming, resulting in a two-year legal battle with Southland. This was a formidable task for the small municipality and its cadre of activists and was viewed by many as a "David vs. Goliath" confrontation. Washington Grove's annual budget was less than \$150,000, and Southland was an international corporation that had recorded \$1 billion in sales in 1971.<sup>359</sup> The town faced years of legal battles and potential ruin. The case was proceeding to trial, when, in 1985, a settlement was reached in the town's favor. Southland agreed to immediately reduce its hours of operation and to relocate within five years. In turn, the town agreed to issue a business license to Southland and agreed not to enforce its beverage container deposit requirement.<sup>360</sup> The settlement left the 1983 ordinance amendment intact, demonstrating the town's ability to respond effectively to conditions that threatened the community life, welfare, and safety of its residents.<sup>361</sup> A key player in the settlement was Grove resident Barbara Hawk, who joined the town council in 1979 and was elected the first female mayor in 1983. Hawk was a fearless advocate for Washington Grove during its long and bitter battle to protect the town's character and safety and was a key player in the successful settlement of the Southland dispute.

<sup>358</sup> Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977*, 301.

<sup>359</sup> Handbook of Texas Online, Rajni Madan, "Southland Corporation," accessed August 6, 2018, available at <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dhs02>.

<sup>360</sup> Press Release, July 8, 1985, WGA, Box Q-8.

<sup>361</sup> While the Odd Fellows Hall is identified as a contributing building of the historic district due to its age and architectural significance, the other buildings of the shopping center (109 Washington Grove Lane and 111-113 Washington Grove Lane), including the former 7-Eleven, are identified as noncontributing because they do not date to the period of significance and their historic significance relates to events that took place within the last fifty years. Consideration should be given to re-evaluating these resources when additional time has passed.

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### *Town Growth*

Over the past thirty years, more or less, the annexation of land into the town's corporate limits has been used as a tool to control and coordinate with Montgomery County and adjacent jurisdictions the physical development of areas near the town's boundaries. In 1987, the town annexed a 1-acre parcel of land along Washington Grove Lane known as "Stewart's Addition," which was laid out as Daylily Lane and subdivided into four residential lots. In 1994, the town acquired 2.88 acres of land east of Ridge Road, which was laid out as an extension of Brown Street and subdivided. Between 1992 and 2000, roughly 16.5 acres of land along Ridge Road were annexed by the town in order to "protect within the Washington Grove community the historic rustic rural nature of the road and the character of these properties."<sup>362</sup> In 2007, the town annexed a 2-acre parcel at 17050 Railroad Street adjacent to Aitchison Crossing. This is the location of a two-story, concrete-block house built in 1908 and contemporary to many cottages built in Washington Grove. The town's development plan for the parcel allows for the addition of three additional houses that would face a pedestrian extension of Maple Avenue and requires compatible porches and detached garages. The town also annexed individual houses along Ridge Road and Washington Grove Lane as they became interested. Most recently, the town acquired a 12-acre meadow along Ridge Road that historically comprised part of a farm that once was part of the original Washington Grove camp meeting site. The meadow's open space and small-scale features reinforce interpretation of the Washington Grove within the context of Montgomery County's agricultural heritage and preserve the rural, open vistas that historically formed its setting. For these reasons, in 2002, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission designated the meadow a Heritage Resource within its Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan.

Washington Grove's 2009 Master Plan highlights the need to preserve the town's historic character and focuses on threats to its borders "in the form of ever encroaching urbanization" and internal threats "in the form of diminished communal contribution and physical integrity."<sup>363</sup> An example of the latter threat involved the historic street signs. In 2017, it was proposed that the town replace its deteriorating historic wood street signs with modern metal ones for better visibility by emergency vehicles and for ease of maintenance. The town council considered testimony from residents about their appreciation for the unique sense of place the historic street signs represented and from the Historic Preservation Commission about the history, significance, and potential rehabilitated of the street signs. A town resident came forward and organized a group of volunteers to rehabilitate or replace in-kind the deteriorated signs, but using reflective paint for the lettering. The historic street sign rehabilitation project was a successful demonstration of the town's volunteer "communal contribution" heritage.<sup>364</sup>

<sup>362</sup> Washington Grove Planning Commission, "2009 Master Plan, Town of Washington Grove, Maryland," 2009, 10.

<sup>363</sup> Washington Grove Planning Commission, "Town of Washington Grove, Maryland, 2009 Master Plan," 2009, 5.

<sup>364</sup> Information provided by Gail Littlefield, Washington Grove Historic Preservation Commission, April 2019.

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### *Cultural Traditions*<sup>365</sup>

The tradition of community service has been a vital component of life in Washington Grove since its early days. The governance of the camp meeting association relied on the active participation of religious and lay leaders which evolved into a town meeting form of government wherein residents serve as elected officials and volunteers in the municipal government. The town government relies on committees whose success is dependent on the time, expertise, and dedication of its active citizenry. Many of these committees are based on the cultural traditions that have defined the community's sense of place since its inception.

Historically and today, Washington Grove is a place defined by the presence of trees. By the end of the 1880s, the camp meeting association had formed a Grounds Committee that advocated for planting new trees and preserving existing specimens. In 1913, a Forestry Committee was founded to promote the responsible management of the association's woodlands. In the 1960s, the Forestry Committee was instrumental in having the East Woods and West Woods designated as forest preserves, and a town nursery was established in southeast section of Woodward Park. In 2007, the nursery was redefined as an arboretum. These initiatives and actions demonstrate the continued tradition of preserving and protecting the tree canopy that has long defined the setting of Washington Grove.

The Recreation Committee maintains the tradition of hosting both active and passive forms of recreation within the town's open spaces and forests. Early residents and visitors participated in nature walks, and tennis was popular in Washington Grove by the 1890s. Starting in 1903, the camp meeting association hosted track and field events in Woodward Park every summer that were highly popular with residents and the public alike. Today, the Recreation Committee organizes athletic events every Labor Day weekend that culminate in an awards ceremony. Maple Lake continues to be a popular summer gathering place, offering recreational swimming and swimming lessons.

The town has a full calendar of cultural, educational, and social events that have roots in the Chautauqua tradition. Many take place in McCathran Hall, preserving the tradition of using the building for church services, Sunday school activities, and Chautauqua. Today, in addition to serving as the Town Hall, the building is the site of a film series, concerts, lectures, choir performances, a day camp for children, dance lessons, and other activities.

The Woman's Club of Washington Grove had its first meeting in 1926, and the organization has been an integral part of Washington Grove life for nearly 100 years. After their first clubhouse burned, the organization was given permission to build a new clubhouse in Howard Park, completed in 1940. The club continues to have active membership and hosts an annual potluck supper for all town residents.

<sup>365</sup> Adapted from text provided by Clare Lise Kelly, dated April 2, 2019.

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Music is integral to the Methodist denomination. During the camp meeting era, residents celebrated with hymns, and musical events were a key feature of Chautauqua. A community band was organized in 1902, and the first public dance was held in 1920. Today, the town organizes an annual Music Weekend with evening concerts and a potluck breakfast with live music at the bandstand. Music and dance events are held in McCathran Hall regularly.

The Washington Grove United Methodist Church was organized in 1910. The congregation originally met in McCathran Hall until a new church was built on Chestnut Avenue in 1955. The church carries on the tradition of religious community gathering in Washington Grove. While a small proportion of town residents are members of the church today, the congregation has continued to bring town residents, members and non-members, together. Church events are attended and supported by individuals and families who live in Washington Grove. Examples include the Christmas service with candle-lighting and hymn singing and the Easter sunrise service at the Ridge Road meadow.

Lastly, the tradition of rail travel continues to define life in Washington Grove. With its dedicated stop at Washington Grove, the B&O carried excursionists and residents as well as building materials and supplies to the camp meeting. The railroad was instrumental in the transition of Washington Grove from a seasonal resort to a thriving suburban enclave. Residents today continue to commute to jobs in Washington, D.C., taking the train to Union Station.