

TAKOMA PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

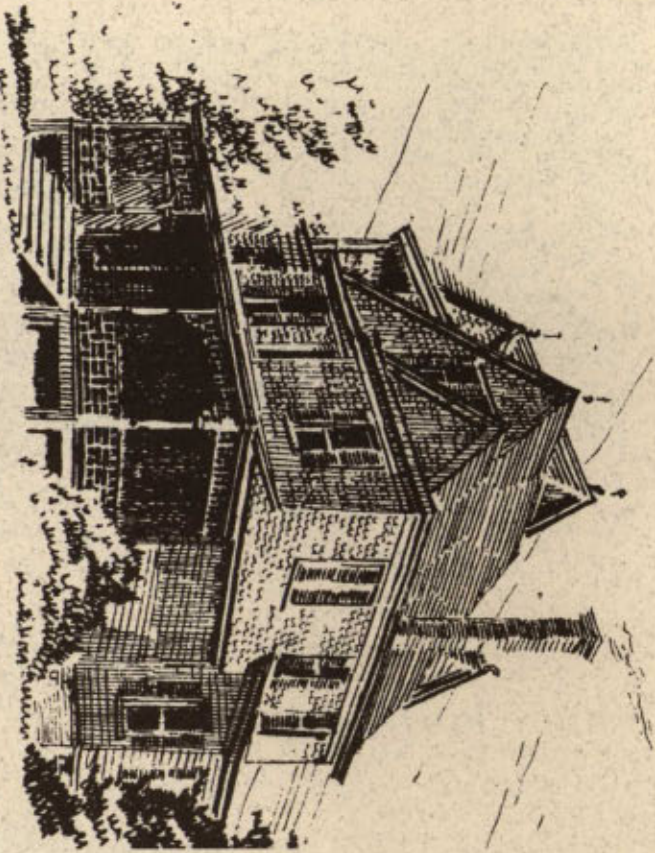


WASHINGTON, D.C.

D. C. Historic Preservation Office
801 North Capitol Street, N. E.
Suite 3000
Washington, D. C. 20002

Lucinda Cady House,
7064 Eastern Avenue,
N. W. (1887). Leon
Desssz, architect.

Drawing from the
1888 B. F. Gilbert real
estate brochure. The
Cady House, listed
individually in the
National Register of
Historic Places, is
noted for its fine
period interior detail.
Courtesy Historic Takoma,
Inc. Archives.



Mrs. LUCINDA CADY, Magnolia Avenue.

TACOMA PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Roughly bounded by Aspen Street on the south, Piney Branch Road and Seventh Street on the west, and Eastern Avenue on the northeast. It includes approximately 160 contributing buildings c. 1883-1940. DC designation 9/18/80 (effective 11/28/80); NR listing 6/30/83.

- Founded and developed by Benjamin F. Gilbert in 1883, Takoma Park was the first railway commuter suburb of Washington, part of a national trend in the 1880s typified by movement from urban areas to developments in green open spaces located along trolley or commuter railroad lines.
- Originally located on approximately 100 acres on both sides of the B & O Railroad tracks in the District of Columbia and Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland, it ignored jurisdictional lines.
- It was conceived and founded by one developer who sought to embody the ideal qualities of rural life while maintaining a proximity to the city, an American development trend which had its impetus in the late 19th century.
- It contains religious, educational, and commercial institutions which have been associated with the community throughout the late 19th and present 20th century.
- Notable for the fine quality of its architecture, Takoma Park was planned with large, detached houses set back from the building line and villas and cottages designed in the picturesque manner with verandas, large lawns and privacy.
- It contains examples of Stick and Shingle style houses which are significant representations of the development of the Shingle style house in the 1880s.
- It contains excellent examples of Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow architecture, all of which are infill but which maintain the rural suburban environment, and complement the original intent of the developer.

Restoring or renovating your Takoma Park property?
Call the D. C. Historic Preservation Office.
An historic preservation professional is
assigned to assist you with technical information.
202-442-8800

SUGGESTED READING:

Marsh, Ellen R. & O'Boyle, Mary Anne. *Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983*. Takoma Park, MD: Historic Takoma, Inc., 1984.

Wartime Washington: The Civil War Letters of Elizabeth Blair Lee. Edited by Virginia Jeans Laas. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

Takoma Park: 75 Years of Community Living, 1883-1958. Washington, DC: 75th Anniversary Founders' Day Committee, 1958.

On the cover: Baltimore & Ohio railroad station (1886), Baldwin & Pennington, architects. Drawing by Judith Leyshon. Courtesy Historic Takoma, Inc.

Opposite page: B. F. Gilbert real estate brochure, Gilbert's own home, 7204 Cedar Avenue (1885-burned ca. 1913), featured in inset. Courtesy Historic Takoma, Inc. Archives.



TAKOMA PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

The pretty depot presents a busy scene in the early evening, when the trains from the city arrive. The platform is thronged, and there is an overflow out in the streets. Waiting for some of the arrivals are carriages, for others horses, but the majority walk. The Evening Star, 15 June 1889.

NO MALARIA. NO MOSQUITOES. PURE AIR. DELIGHTFUL SHADE. A MOST ABUNDANT SUPPLY OF PURE WATER. A GOOD INVESTMENT FOR HOMES OR PROFIT. So developer Benjamin F. Gilbert advertised the villa lots of Takoma Park, the first railroad suburb of Washington City. In the late fall of 1883 he bought 93 acres of rural land where the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad crossed the District-Maryland boundary. Ida Summy, one of the first lot purchasers, suggested that the subdivision be called Takoma Park. 'Takoma' was derived from a Native American word meaning 'high up, near heaven' but spelled with a 'k' to differentiate it from Tacoma, Washington. 'Park' was in the elegant tradition of the picturesque villa and the garden suburb. Although this site was neglected farmland densely overgrown with "stunted pines and scrub oak, intermixed with no end of briars and scrub oak," Gilbert envisioned a delightful residential resort combining the advantages of country living with convenient commut-

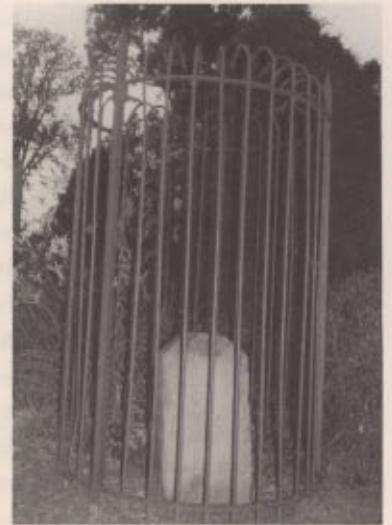
ing for businessmen, government workers, and other professionals. These advantages had previously been available only to the wealthy who, like the neighboring Blair, Lee, Beale, Riggs, and Carroll families, were able to afford both town and country residences.

Takoma Park expanded rapidly in all directions, flourishing even through years of national financial depression and war. Several of the early subdivisions, including Gilbert's original purchase, extended across the District line into Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, Maryland, reflecting the boundaries of early land patents and large rural parcels subdivided from them. In spite of multiple jurisdictions, Takoma Park developed as a single cohesive community. There was a pioneering spirit of adventure and pride of self-sufficiency fostered by the new town's isolation from the city. This isolation disappeared in the twentieth century as residential neighborhoods gradually replaced the farms and country estates of both the District and Maryland. Takoma Park became one of many such neighborhoods. Location of the world headquarters of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Takoma Park in 1903 brought new life to the community. This group, advocating clean air, clean water, vegetarian diet, exercise, and other health and social reforms, bridged the idealistic ambiance of the early community and that which developed after World War II. Today Takoma Park, with its institutions, parks, restored suburban villas, and cultural diversity retains much of its distinguished historic character.

EARLY HISTORY

Takoma Park is located on high rolling land just east of the northernmost corner of the District of Columbia. A broad ridge runs through it, descending steeply on the east through a varied landscape into the picturesque valley of Sligo Creek, a tributary of the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. To the west the land drains to nearby Rock Creek and the Potomac River at Georgetown. This land abounds with healthful springs, and is historically known for its pure water and clean air. Native American artifacts have been found near the springs and in the Sligo Creek valley, and an 'Indian field' is noted as a landmark in the 1687 survey of the 1776-acre Girles Portion, the earliest land grant here. Legend has it that Powhatan, returning wounded to Virginia from a battle in the north, paused here to convalesce at the springs. The terrain lends itself to the construction of cross-country roads. Andrew Ellicott's 1794 topographical map of the Territory of Columbia shows the Rock Creek Road from Georgetown at P Street to Rockville curving along the high ground east of Rock Creek. In 1818-20, the Seventh Street Turnpike

Road, now Georgia Avenue, was built following this high ground into the District. It was the main market road of the District, linking the rich Maryland farmland with the Northern Liberties, O Street, and Central Markets along 7th Street, N. W. The Girles Portion road, now Piney Branch Road, connected what is now the Takoma Park area to the 7th Street Road. Before the Civil War, the general area which would become Takoma Park was increasingly developed as small farms and country estates.



N. E. 2 boundary stone of the District of Columbia, Maple Avenue. When the District of Columbia was laid out in 1791-92, these Aquia Creek stones were placed at one-mile intervals with the northernmost stone located just west of the present 16th Street, approximately on axis with the White House and Washington Monument. A protective iron fence was placed around the stone by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1910 and replaced in 1916. Photo courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

LOCATION! LOCATION! LOCATION!

The garden suburb flourished after the Civil War, as urban populations boomed and a concern for healthful living, the natural environment, and the picturesque landscape aesthetic was popularized. Then, as now, efficient transportation linking suburb and city was essential to the viability of these new communities. In Washington the development of suburban housing—Uniontown (1854), Mount Pleasant (1865), Le Droit Park (1873)—was at first confined to locations close to the city along existing market roads and downtown streetcar lines. The Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was chartered in 1865 and completed through Silver Spring into the District in 1873. The B&O promoted its new line by offering concessions to encourage development of commuting towns to allow Montgomery County residents easy access to jobs in Washington. Takoma Park was the first such community developed in the District of Columbia.

Real estate developer Benjamin Franklin Gilbert came to Washington from New York during the Civil War and worked with Alexander Robey Shepherd as the city was rebuilt in the 1870s. His projects included a row of houses on the north side of K Street between 9th and 10th Streets, N.W. and Grant Place between G, H, 9th and 10th Streets, N. W. Losing heavily in the Panic of 1873, he retreated to



Benjamin F. Gilbert (1841-1907), developer and first mayor of Takoma Park. Photo by Prince and Cudlip Artistic Portraits, courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

New Jersey to rebuild his fortunes. When he returned in 1883 he found a rapidly expanding federal work force. But the development of badly needed new residential sites was frustrated by incomplete plans to extend the city streets and services beyond Florida Avenue. Gilbert finessed this problem by purchasing, for \$6,500, lots 2 and 3 of the G. C. Grammer Estate with access to commuter rail transportation. The District of Columbia boundary ran

diagonally through it with the N.E. 2 stone approximately in the center of the property. The land included Spring No. 1, or Little Spring, located near the railroad tracks between Spring Place and Bull Place.

Gilbert began cautiously by subdividing the parcel into 15 blocks with 266 lots with a 50' frontage and depth of 200' to 300.' Streets were 40' to 50' wide with 12' on either side for parking and sidewalks. Houses were to be set back 40' from the sidewalk. With plat in hand he approached friends and acquaintances, selling these 10,000 to 25,000 sq. ft. lots at 1 1/4 to 5 cents per foot with flexible terms. A marketing brochure claimed that the subdivision was 350' above the elevation of the Capitol and extolled the healthful qualities of the site—clean air, pure water, no mosquitoes. “The water of Takoma Park is of the very finest quality. It makes its appearance from springs that are crystal-like in their clearness, and goes flowing down the valleys in sparkling rivulets.” Gilbert recruited builders to live in the community and erect houses. Several houses were under construction in 1884. The home of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac I. Thomas at 201 Tulip Avenue was the first to be completed. Mr. Thomas also opened a store on Oak (now Cedar) Street near the railroad tracks in 1884. These early buildings were predominantly expansive frame Stick,

Penney House, Highland Street, NW, razed mid-1970s. Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.



Shingle, and Queen Anne-style residences with wrap-around porches, open galleries, towers, complex roof-lines, and much fine gingerbread and shingle detail.

On September 29, 1885, William Wentworth Dudley, son of one of the builders Gilbert had recruited, was the first child born in Takoma Park. In that same year Margaret McKeldin opened a kindergarten in her house there. In 1886 the Takoma Park railroad station was built. It was designed by Baldwin and Pennington, architects for all the stations along the Metropolitan Branch. The first school was held in the J. J. Snodgrass home on Maple Avenue and the Takoma Park Post Office was established in Isaac Thomas' store, with Thomas as postmaster. Gilbert purchased the New Takoma tract from the Carroll family. Running east of the original tract along the District line in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, it included Big Spring or Spring No. 2 at Elm and Poplar Avenues.

Gilbert's 1886 brochure advertised water from the Takoma Park springs “on draught at the Drug Store of Harry Standiford, southwest corner of 9th and F Streets.” He claimed 150 residents, with more waiting to move in when



Dudley House, 204 Carroll Street, NW (ca. 1884, razed late 1960s). Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

their houses were completed. He extolled the gardening skills of the new residents, recommending: “For the banker, the lawyer, the merchant and the clerk, no better, cheaper or more wholesome relief from the daily cares, toils and vexations of business can be found than that afforded by becoming a resident of TAKOMA PARK. The benefits and profits derived from the morning and evening hours of fixing up about the new home” were stressed. A quarry was opened on the site where foundation stone and sand were available for the cost of hauling. Terms could be arranged so that a government clerk could afford a site for

less than his current rent.



Big Spring, Elm & Poplar Avenues. Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

In 1888 the first public school was built on Tulip Avenue between Maple and Willow Avenues. There were now two general stores, a drug store, a carriage



B. F. Gilbert's log cabin (1888—burned 1915) and tower (1889—1890). Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

factory, coal and wood yards, and a blacksmith shop. The Takoma Park Citizens Association was organized, and, with its successor organizations was the first in the District and nearby Maryland to admit women to membership. During the presidential campaign that year Gilbert, a staunch Republican, erected a log cabin, symbol of the victorious 1840 campaign of William Henry Harrison. Political meetings were held here by members

of both parties. Music by the Marine Band and fireworks entertained the crowds between speeches. The following year a 60' tower was erected on the site, providing panoramic views of the countryside and a platform for speeches and music. The tower was soon demolished as unsafe, but the cabin—used as a town meeting place, chapel, firehouse, jail and tool shed—survived until it was burned down on Halloween night of 1915. In 1888, Gilbert also donated land at Maple and Tulip Avenues for the first church in Takoma Park, the interdenominational Union Chapel. On June 15, 1889, *The Evening Star* reported that Takoma Park had expanded to include over 1000 acres with “fifteen miles of streets and avenues, gravel-laid and smooth, shaded by trees and brightened by nature's prettiest flowers.” There was electricity in the houses and streets and a hotel and extension of the

Brightwood Street Railroad were contemplated. A sanatorium or health resort was planned by Dr. R. C. Flower of Boston on the northern edge of the park above the Sligo. Nineteen trains stopped at the new station on weekdays.



Union Chapel, Maple and Tulip Avenues (ca. 1888-1949). Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

GROWING PAINS

In 1890 Takoma Park was incorporated as a town by the Maryland General Assembly with an elected mayor and council. Although Takoma Park was divided by the District line and governed by different laws, it was unified in its community identity. Gilbert, who was elected the first



Watkins Hotel, 4th & Cedar Streets, NW (1892, burned 1893). Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

mayor, had considered multiple jurisdiction as an advantage, securing all possible legislative advantages for the new town. In 1892 William Watkins opened the 30-room Watkins Hotel at 4th and Cedar Streets, N. W., and Gilbert began construction of the 160-room North Takoma Hotel on the site of the present Montgomery College. A sprawling four-story frame building with an entrance tower, varied gable ends and dormers, landscaped grounds, and an extensive wrap-around porch, it had its own railroad station. The Panic of 1893 found Gilbert over-extended in Takoma Park real estate, a financial calamity from which he never recovered. Dr. Flower also encountered financial difficulties and abandoned his sanatorium plans.



North Takoma Hotel, Takoma Avenue & Fenton Street (1892—burned 1908). 1906 photo courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

On December 29, 1893, fire in the commercial area near the train station destroyed the Watkins Hotel, Favorite's Store, and Birch's Store and Hall. The Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department was soon organized to serve both Maryland and District jurisdictions. A Howe Model 4-hand pumper was purchased, followed by a ladder truck in 1896. Takoma Hall was constructed on the site of the burned Watkins Hotel by Takoma Lodge No. 24, I.O.O.F. It served also at times as a town meeting hall, school, and church. The Takoma Club was organized in the adjacent brick building in 1899, providing recreational activities such as bowling and billiards and a library of 1200 volumes. Publication of the *Favorite* news sheet began in January, 1892, followed by the *Takoma Park Tidings* in 1896. Gilbert had sold Springs Number 1 and 2 in 1891 to the Takoma Park Springs Company with the stipulation that these properties remain in public use. In 1898, after a court fight to keep the springs open, the community began construction of an independent water and sewage system.



7329 Blair Road, NW (1888).

517 Cedar Street, NW (1893).

535 Cedar Street, NW (1895).

611 Butternut Street, NW (1923).



600 Cedar Street, NW (1905).



7413 Blair Road, NW (1920).



6906 Willow Street (1920).



300 Carroll Street, NW (1902).

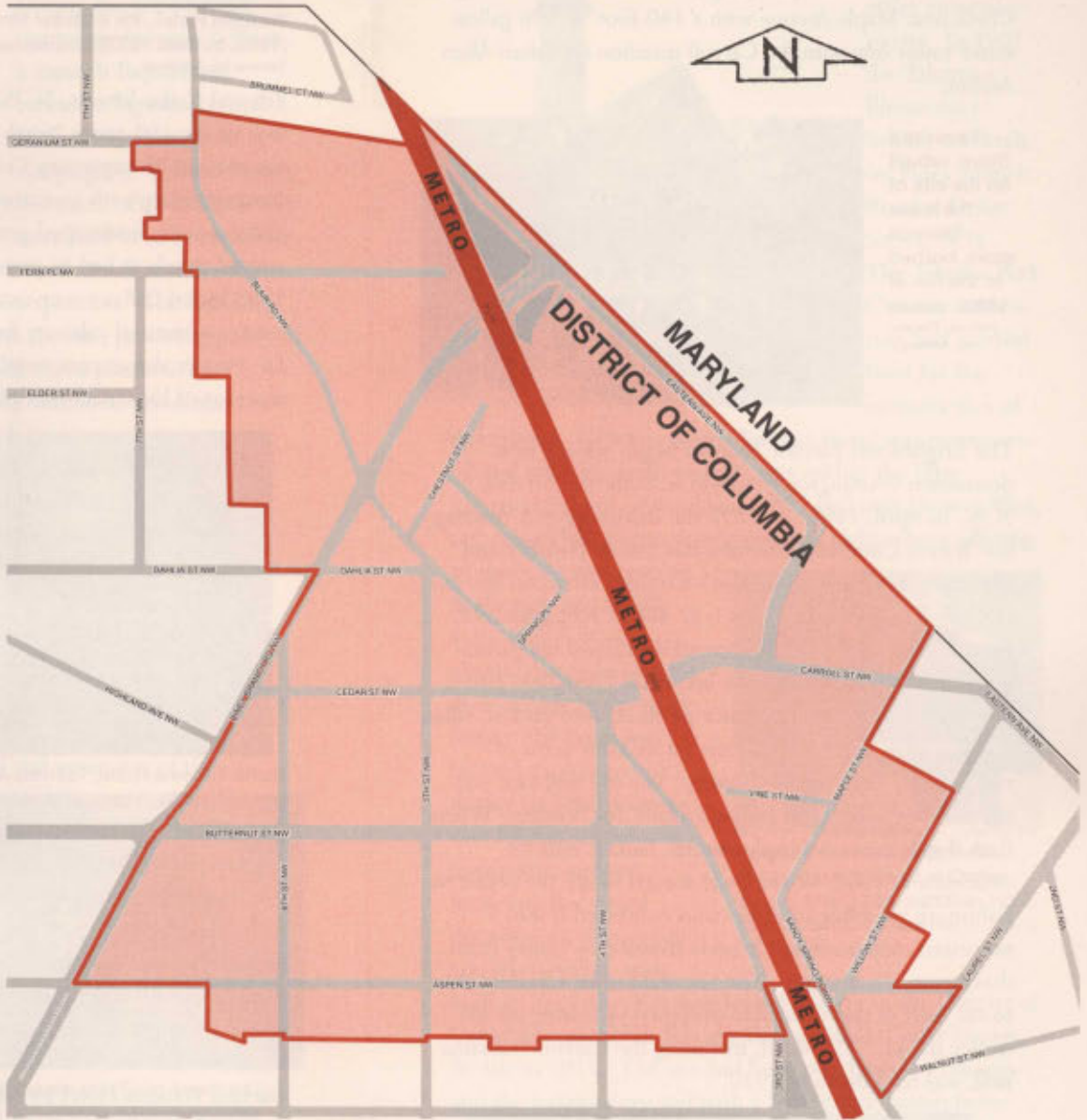


PHOTO CREDITS: 516 Cedar Street and 300 Carroll Street; courtesy Historic Takoma, Inc. Archives.
 202 Cedar Street; photo by Paul McKnight, courtesy Historic Takoma, Inc. Archives.
 All other photos by Tanya Edwards Beauchamp, 2003

516 Cedar Street, NW (1900).

222 Aspen Street, NW (1920)

521 Butternut Street, NW (1911).

202 Cedar Street, NW (1908).





Takoma Hall, Cedar Street, NW, (1894), before the railroad underpass was built. Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

A filtration plant and pumping station were built on Sligo Creek near Maple Avenue with a 140-foot 50,000 gallon water tower opposite the Carroll mansion on Ethan Allen Avenue.

Favorite's Store, rebuilt on the site of the Issac Thomas store, burned in the fire of 1893. Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.



The Brightwood Electric Railway began service into downtown Washington from 4th & Butternut Streets, N.W., in April, 1893. In 1898 the Baltimore and Washington Transit Company extended this line to Heather and Elm Avenues in Prince George's County. Here, on the site of Carroll and Williams' 1811-12 Sligo Creek grist mill, Boston promoter Alva M. Wiswell developed his picturesque Wildwood resort. The luxurious Glen Sligo Hotel, built in 1900, included a dance pavilion, roof garden, villas, bowling alley, and roller coaster set in many acres of romantically landscaped grounds. The old mill race was transformed into 'West Indian Islands' for boating. When flash floods carried this pleasurable fantasy into the Anacostia in 1902, Wiswell was forced to sell the resort to Baltimore gambling interests who converted it into a notorious casino whose clientele traveled by trolley from downtown Washington. The horrified town was only able to rid itself of this unwanted presence by tearing up the trolley tracks. The hotel, including the Carroll-Williams mill, was torn down in 1920.



Takoma Novelty Store, 4th & Cedar Streets, NW (ca. 1893), on the trolley line. Photo ca. 1897-1901. Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

CULTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

Churches played an important role in Takoma Park life from the beginning. In 1893 the Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church was completed, and the Union Chapel turned over to the newly organized Takoma Park Presbyterian Church. These churches were a center of social life in the new community, sponsoring plays, musicals,



Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church, Piney Branch Road and Dahlia Street, NW (1893). An unusual board-and-batten redwood structure. Courtesy General Conference Seventh Day Adventist Church Archives.

concerts, and other entertainments. In 1901 the Takoma Elementary School was built on Piney Branch Road at Cedar Street, N.W. The Takoma Park Citizens Association had worked hard for the construction of

this school. Gilbert's North Takoma Hotel was unsuccessful and after his death in 1907 was sold to the Bliss Electrical School. Founded in 1893 by Louis Denton Bliss, this school had begun downtown as a night school offering an intensive preparation in the new and rapidly expanding field of electrical engineering for men already in the work force. The hotel was burned to the ground during its 1908 renovation for the school. An impressive campus, including fire-proof dormitories, dining hall and laboratories, was built in its place. The first branch library in the District of Columbia opened in Takoma Park at 5th & Cedar Streets, N. W., in 1911. The site had been purchased by citizens and the building erected with a \$40,000 donation from Andrew Carnegie.



Takoma Elementary School, Piney Branch Road at Cedar Street, NW (1901, addition 1928, razed 1974). Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.



Takoma Park Library, 5th & Cedar Streets, NW (1911). Photo by Paul McKnight, courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS



Ellen White (1827-1915) co-founder of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, counseled the church to move their headquarters to Washington and Takoma Park. Courtesy Seventh Day Adventist General Conference Archives.

The evangelistic Seventh Day Adventist Church had its origins in New England and New York in the 1840s, preaching the Second Coming of Christ by William Miller. Here a parallel new humanitarianism advocated the abolition of slavery, public education, health reform, temperance, humane treatment of debtors and the insane, and other reforms.

Guided by the prophetic visions of former

Millerite Ellen White, the Seventh Day Adventists adopted many of these reforms, especially those relating to individual responsibility for health. Vegetarianism—with abstinence from meat, rich foods, tea, coffee, and alcohol—was recommended. Natural cures by fresh air and water were advocated over such traditional cures as bleeding and drugs. Wearing of hoop skirts was discouraged as unnatural. By 1855, the Seventh Day Adventists, following the expanding Western frontier, had established their headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan. In 1866 they opened the Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek. John Harvey Kellogg, educated at the University of Michigan and New York State Bellevue Medical School, was appointed medical director in 1876.

Under Kellogg's leadership the Western Health Reform Institute was renamed Battle Creek Sanitarium. He expanded the sanitarium and hospital, founded a school of nursing, and, in 1895, was instrumental in creating the American Medical Missionary College for the education of Adventist physicians. He edited the journal *The Health Reformer* (later *Good Health*) and created shredded wheat, multigrain granola, and peanut butter as part of his "biologic living" regimen in the early 1890s. In 1894 he patented cornflakes, originally known as Granose flakes. He developed the first meat substitute (Nuttose), the first cereal coffee substitute, and the first artificial milk from soybeans. C. W. Post, the cereal magnate, adapted many of Kellogg's ideas after being a patient at the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

During this period the Seventh Day Adventist Church continued its westward expansion in the United States and throughout the world, evangelizing and establishing



Seventh Day Adventist General Conference and Review & Herald Publishing Association Buildings, Eastern Avenue between Willow and Laurel Streets, NW (1906). Courtesy Seventh Day Adventist General Conference Archives.

colleges, hospitals, and sanitariums in many locations. Battle Creek remained the center of their organization. By 1899 the Review and Herald Publishing Association was the largest and most complete printing plant in Michigan. On February 18, 1902, the main building of the sanitarium and the hospital burned to the ground. Then, on December 30, 1902, the printing plant of the Review and Herald also burned. The Seventh Day Adventists, mindful of their new world-wide interests, determined in April 1903 to seek a new location for their headquarters with access to an Atlantic port.

Their search brought them to Takoma Park, to the site which Dr. Flower had bought for his rural sanitarium. From the old Carroll mansion, they planned an organizational campus which included the Washington Training College and Sanitarium on Dr. Flower's site in Montgomery County and a headquarters building and publishing plant on Eastern Avenue in the District of Columbia. Like Gilbert, they appreciated the political advantages of dual jurisdiction, combining the bucolic splendors of the Sligo stream valley with an official address in the nation's capital. The Washington Training College evolved into the Washington Missionary College and the present Columbia Union College; the Washington Sanitarium, into the present Washington Adventist Hospital.



Washington Sanitarium (1907-razed 1982) Courtesy Seventh Day Adventist General Conference Archives.

CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY

In the first quarter of the 20th century Takoma Park continued to grow on both sides of the District line as the last of the country estate properties were subdivided and developed. The early picturesque villas with wrap-around porches, towers, and richly carved interior woodwork were followed by Arts and Crafts, Bungalow, and then Classical and Colonial Revival-style residences. The 'white city' conceptualized in the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 was adapted wholeheartedly to suburban use. Porches and balconies gradually assumed a classical appearance with columns and balustrades. Pebble-dash stucco, white-painted clapboard, and brick replaced earth-toned shingles, patterned siding, and colored glass. Symmetry and proportion, hipped and flat roofs made their appearance. Simple chestnut and oak mouldings replaced intricately-carved mahogany and walnut in the interiors. Although newly subdivided lots were smaller, the characteristic interest in landscape and gardens remained. The new style was followed in the institutional and commercial buildings built in the 20th century.

The sense of a united community continued through shared institutions, services, and organizations even as the town's bucolic isolation disappeared. The Takoma Park Historical Society was founded in 1912, followed in 1913 by the Takoma Park Civic Study Club, renamed in 1928 the Takoma Park Women's Club. In 1916 the Takoma Horticultural Club was organized to promote community beautification. Its membership included many U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists who lived in Takoma Park. Meeting in the library, the group offered lectures on horticultural subjects, held flower shows, promoted the cooperative purchase of plants and seeds, and planted trees and shrubs throughout the community. The Takoma Park Bank was organized in



Ora Ostrander in her Takoma Park rose garden.

Courtesy Tanya Edwards Beauchamp.

1917, and the Takoma Theatre Corporation in 1923. The Takoma Theatre and community auditorium opened at 4th & Butternut Streets, N. W. in 1923.

Jurisdictional differences gradually became more pronounced during the twentieth century. The Community League of Takoma Park, Maryland, was organized in 1922 and the Philadelphia Avenue Elementary School constructed in 1923. In 1924 the Citizens Association of Takoma Park, D. C. was organized. As this change in focus progressed, however, the community retained its historical identity, both jurisdictions celebrating their 50th anniversary together in 1933, their 75th anniversary in 1958, and their 100th anniversary in 1983. In 1964 the entire community began a fight to prevent extension of the ten-lane North Central Freeway project through Takoma Park. Their unwavering no-compromise opposition was finally successful in 1970. The Takoma Metrorail station opened in 1978 with limited parking during off-peak hours, bringing Takoma Park full circle to its origins as a rail commuting town.



1964 cartoon by Sammie Abbott opposing construction of the North Central Freeway through Takoma Park. Courtesy Takoma Park, MD Library.

In the 1940s many of the old homes were subdivided into apartments to accommodate World War II-related population growth. The 1960s saw establishment of group homes, and aggressive construction of apartment buildings. The adventurous spirit of the early residents was carried on through an influx of artistically-inclined 'hippies,' establishment of a nuclear-free zone, and continued concern for issues affecting the environment and healthful living. Although the headquarters of the Seventh-Day Adventist church is no longer located here, its influence remains through vegetarian restaurants and the cooperative farmers' market held on Sunday rather than Saturday. Attracted by the unique community ambiance, young families of economically, racially, and ethnically diverse backgrounds have made Takoma Park their home. With an interest in historic preservation, these newcomers have renovated and restored the gracious old residences, reclaiming many that had earlier been divided into



Takoma Theatre, 4th & Butternut Streets, NW (1923). John J. Zinc, architect. Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.

Watkins Apartments, 406 Cedar Street, NW (1908), A. S. Baird, architect. Takoma Park's first apartment building with six spacious apartments intended for the builder's daughters.

Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc Archives.



apartments. Although many of the earliest frame Victorian buildings have been destroyed by fire and development, many still remain. These are complemented by Arts and Crafts and Colonial Revival style residences which, set in large gardens on quiet tree-lined streets, preserve a sense of the rural ambience and historical continuity of Takoma Park. Adjacent Takoma Park Historic Districts were created and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in both Washington (1980) and Maryland (1973).



< Artist Bill Edwards in his Takoma Park Studio, ca. 1935. Courtesy Tanya Edwards Beauchamp.

(below) Lee Jordan, founder in 1937 of the Takoma Park Boys and Girls Club. Photo: Joe Heilberger, 1979, courtesy *The Washington Post*.



(below) Joseph Colea's Progress Market, 320 Cedar Street, NW, ca. 1920. Courtesy Frank Colea.



(above) The first Takoma Park Boy Scout Troup, ca. 1912. Courtesy Elizabeth Findley Degan.



Members of the Review and Herald Band. Courtesy Historic Takoma Inc. Archives.



Takoma Park Independence Day Parades have been held annually since 1889. Here, on Cedar Street in 1925 looking toward the railroad tracks. Cedar Street was lowered in 1912 over strong citizen protest to provide an underpass for the tracks. Courtesy Historic Takoma, Inc. Archives.

THE TAKOMA PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

by

TANYA EDWARDS BEAUCHAMP

Sponsored by

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

With Special Thanks To
HISTORIC TAKOMA, INC.

Community Organizations concerned with the preservation and revitalization of Historic Takoma Park:

HISTORIC TAKOMA, INC., representing Takoma Park, MD and Takoma DC, founded 1978

PLANNED TAKOMA, a DC neighborhood group organized in 1973 and incorporated 11/21/1979

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