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Gary Ditto's Newsletter



OCTOBER 1992

What's in a Name? Orienteering in Kensington

The United States Postal Service knows just what it means to call a place "Kensington." The Kensington postal zone, 20895, is roughly bounded by Rockville Pike, Veirs Mill Road, Capitol View Avenue, Route 495, Rock Creek, and Saul Road west of Cedar Lane. A variety of nooks and crannies in this layout means that Garrett Park is its own postal zone (20896), while White Flint Mall, "way over" on Rockville Pike, is officially Kensington. Holy Redeemer Church is in Kensington, while Cedar Lane Unitarian Church is out in Bethesda.

Within the Kensington postal zone lie the neighborhoods of Rock Creek Hills, a part of Parkwood, Byeforde/Rock Creek Highlands, Chevy Chase View, Kensington Park, Kensington Estates, Kensington Heights, Ken-Gar, Rock Creek Palisades and the Town of Kensington -- to name a few!

Like Gaul, the Town of Kensington lies in three parts. The Town of Kensington was chartered in 1894. The Kensington Historic District was placed on the Montgomery County Master Plan in 1985 under the jurisdiction of the Historic Preservation Commission. And "Old Town Kensington" refers to the famous antique shops along Howard Avenue.

Well before Kensington came into being in the late 19th century, the land had gone through numerous owners and a few name changes. Yet for much of the time, land deeds continued to mark a parcel's relationship to the original "Joseph's Park," the land first owned by Colonel William Joseph in the late 17th century.

KIDS ! ! ! GET YOUR FREE PUMPKIN AT HAWKINS PRODUCE,
ASK FOR THE GARY DITTO BIN, WHILE SUPPLIES LAST.

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Joseph's Park

On the west, the border of Joseph's Park is about 4 winding miles of Rock Creek, going from Chevy Chase on the south up well past Parkwood. The northern border goes from Rock Creek east past what is now the intersection of Veirs Mill Road and Georgia Avenue. The Town of Kensington lies in the northwest corner of the old Joseph's Park, which was comprised of 4,220 acres -- more than 6 1/2 square miles.

The Railroad Comes

By the late 19th century, interest in country living as an escape from the heat and hustle of Washington, D.C. became quite popular. In 1873 the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad built the Metropolitan Branch, connecting Washington with Point of Rocks, Maryland. The railroad tracks crossed farm land owned by Daniel Brown, George Duvall, George Knowles, and Alfred Ray.

A station was built at the point where the railroad tracks crossed the old roadway -- now called at various points, Cedar Lane, Howard Avenue, St. Paul Street, and University Boulevard. That original roadway began at what is now called Rockville Pike, wove through Mitchell's Crossroads (the present-day Wheaton), and continued on to Bladensburg.

"Knowles Station," as the area became known, was subdivided and various parcels were sold after the deaths of George Knowles and his wife Luraner. The farmland began a rapid conversion to a small community. The lots were desirable due to their closeness to the railway and the improved public road. By 1880, Knowles Station had a population of 70.

After 1880, large lots from the original Knowles Farm were bought by many business people interested in developing the area. They included William H. Wheatley, Dr. R.B. Detrick, F.M. Fawcett, and William Mannakee (who was married to one of the Knowles daughters).

By 1890, the population of Knowles Station had blossomed to several hundred, including merchants, artisans, and professionals from Washington. During this last decade of the century, interest in idyllic country living was evident. Brookland, Takoma Park,

Hyattsville, Washington Grove and Chevy Chase were becoming popular retreats from city living.

The New Names

Noting the interest, Brainard H. Warner, a prominent Washington banker and real estate developer, began buying parts of the surrounding farmland and pieced together a parcel he named Kensington Park, after a suburb of London, England.

In the same year, the subdivision of North Kensington was recorded. This property was located north of the present Dupont Street and part of it is included within the present town of Kensington.

After the farm land was subdivided, the naming of the streets was left to the individual developers. Dr. Detrick named his streets after family and friends: Warner, Knowles, Freeman, Detrick, and Lincoln. Lincoln Street was "overrun" when Connecticut Avenue was rerouted over the railroad bridge. Warner named streets after counties in Maryland: Washington, Baltimore, Montgomery, Calvert, Carroll, Frederick and Kent, and Howard. Howard's original location was also subsumed by the Connecticut Avenue relocation. Prince Georges Street became Kensington Parkway; Prospect Street was the sole exception to Warner's naming system.

In North Kensington, the two north and south running streets were named Lexington and Concord. The patriotic pattern carried over to the east-west streets, which were named after the naval heroes Dupont, Farragut, Perry, and Decatur.

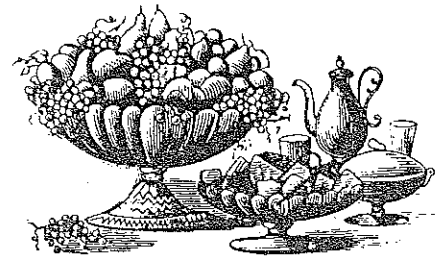
The final "naming" in the 19th century took place in some controversy when Brainard Warner persuaded the U.S. Post Office and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to rename Knowles Station "Kensington."

So, if your zip code is 20895, chances are you live in what was once Joseph's Park. And no matter where you call "home," there's probably a story to be told resting behind the street signs and land deeds of your neighborhood.



Tea for Two ... or three ... or more? ...

Enjoy the Strathmore Tea Musicales through November



Call 530-0540 to reserve your place at tea in the gracious surroundings of the Strathmore Hall Arts Center, 10701 Rockville Pike (just north of the Grosvenor Metro Station). The tea menu includes warm scones with strawberry jam and Devonshire cream, the "Strathmore Savory," assorted freshly baked tea breads, and "Strathmore Blend" tea.

The musical menu is presented by musicians on the piano, Celtic Harp, Vibra Harp, and violin on Tuesdays and Wednesdays through November 18. A non-refundable prepayment of \$9.50 per person is required.

RE-CYCLE RE-CYCLE RE-CYCLE

Hazard household wastes will be collected at the National Institutes of Health on Saturday, November 14, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The collection, at the Wisconsin Avenue parking lot one block south of Cedar Lane, is sponsored by the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection.

Hazardous household wastes include oil-based paints, paint thinners, motor oil, herbicides, pesticides, insecticides, car batteries, and lithium and alkaline batteries.

If you have questions about the disposal of ...

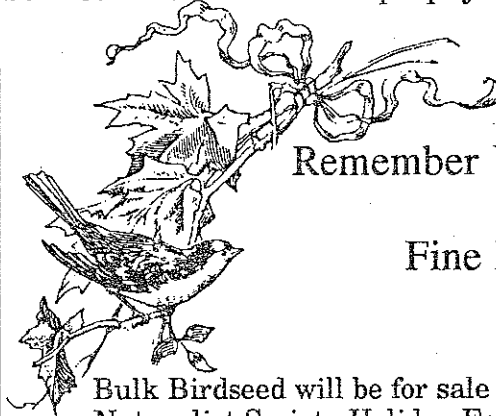
Call ...

- over 5 gallons of liquid waste 840-2370
- unknown materials 217-2410
- asbestos 217-2380
- radioactive materials 410-631-3300

Telephone Book recycling is available at the Montgomery County Transfer Station until December 20. The hours are

- Daily 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Saturdays 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sundays 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you have a question about recycling, call the Recycling Hotline at 590-0046 (Mondays through Fridays, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)



**Remember Your Friends --
Including the
Fine Feathered Ones**

Bulk Birdseed will be for sale at the Audubon Naturalist Society Holiday Fair on Saturday and Sunday, December 5 and 6.

Birdseed is always available at the Woodend Book Shop, 8490 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase. Store hours are Tuesday - Friday, 10 - 6 and Saturday, 9 - 5.

The Woodend Book Shop also offers a browser's delight of gift ideas, including nature books for all ages, calendars, field guides, binoculars, home accessories, earth-friendly products for home and office, bird houses and feeders.

The ANS Holiday Greenery Sale pre-order forms will be in the October Naturalist News. Non-members can call Susan at 652-9188, ext. 3002 to request a pre-order form. For December pick-up.

Beginners' Bird Walks, free at Woodend, 8 a.m. 9 a.m. Saturdays through winter. Meet at Book Shop entrance.

Attention all Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School Graduates and their Families ...



After 33 years as school secretary, Mrs. Betty Heflin will be retiring from Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School.

All Kensington-Parkwood graduates and their families are invited to a reception in Mrs. Heflin's honor on Sunday, November 8 from 12 to 3 p.m. at Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School, 4710 Saul Road, Kensington.

Please drop by and wish Mrs. Heflin a healthy and happy retirement.

Mary Lillo's newsletter is entered and registered by name. Show with original from which it was taken. Readers are welcome to contribute news items and ideas.

