

Olde Old Town Kensington

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By the early 1900s, Kensington, when Kensington, Maryland, was a farming village with a population of 100, the other Kensington had a population boom and now was home to 200,000. Most of the architecture of Kensington reflects the Victorian era. The future Queen was raised very strictly under what was called the "Kensington system."

Royals and celebrities have lived in Kensington. Sir Winston Churchill made his home there. The poet Ezra Pound lived there for thirteen years. He wrote this modern haiku about the Kensington Metro station:

The apparition of these faces in the crowds:

Petals on a wet, black bough.

The development and modernization of the city over time has sometimes been painful for Kensington residents. In the 1930s, John Braine wrote, "Kensington High Street seemed deserted; I wondered gloomily where everyone went at night. When I was younger there always seemed to be a lot of young people about; now there were only cars..."

In World War II, Kensington's prestige attracted Hitler's bombs. One bomb destroyed a famous department store called Barker's. Today's modern buildings are clues to where the bombs fell.

Nothing of Kensington's history is submerged by time. The streets are still dotted with flower shops and nurseries that have survived five centuries. A department store like Harrods is as sturdy an institution as Big Ben.

The stories and poems about Kensington Gardens are as uncountable as the grass stems, and continue to spring up. Bells from that 12th century church still mark the time in Kensington to this day.

This Kensington history is a cousin of our Kensington history and reminds us that our movements now create history for Kensington residents six centuries hence.