

Into the Woods...and Woodend, the home of the Audubon Naturalist Society

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By Cherry Wunderlich

Some crisp fall afternoon, try a stroll through out area's own wildlife sanctuary. You'll find it just off Jones Mill Road across from Rock Creek Park in Chevy Chase. As you explore its woods, fields, and lawns or the brick mansion on the hilltop, you'll discover a blend of history, striking architecture, and wide-ranging activities and events that bring environmental awareness and education alive for people of all ages.

For the last 22 years, "Woodend" has been the headquarters of a longtime conservation organization, the Audubon Naturalist Society. But Woodend's recorded history goes back to the colonial times.

In 1632, England's King Charles granted the "Providence of Maryland" to Cecil Calvert, 2nd Lord Baltimore. As Edith Ray Saul of Kensington has recorded it, this "feudal fief," which was the hunting grounds of the Algonquin Indians, "remained the personal property of the Calvert family, who granted it, parcel by parcel, to favored individuals as the wave of settlement swept forth from the tidewater, passed the fall line, onto the Piedmont plateau."

One of these parcels of land came to be named Joseph's Park, the 4,220 acres where the Town of Kensington and other communities now lie. In earlier newsletters we presented Edith Ray Saul's story of Joseph's Park and its link to Kensington history.

Next to the south most part of Joseph's park lay some more woody hills. In 1699 these became a colonial grant to John Courts. Courts gave the 1,400 acres the name "Clean Drinking" to honor the spring near Rock Creek that brought a plentiful supply of water year-round. The wildlife sanctuary now known as Woodend, covers 40 acres of this land.

(We'll continue the story in future newsletter. Meanwhile, we'd like to thank Kathy Rushing of the Audubon Naturalist Society for permission to use the illustration and other materials. In this issue we also list a few of the coming events at this nearly century-old organization, to sign up for a class, join ANS, or find out more, call 652-9188.)