

Documenting the Little-Known History of Rock Creek Park: *Addendum Of Sites*

December 16th 2022

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Introduction

This addendum is a component of the report: Documenting Little-Known History of Rock Creek Park. The addendum includes a photograph, address, coordinates, year of construction as well as a short and long description of sixteen different Rock Creek Park sites. Three significant individuals in Rock Creek Parks history are also described in this addendum. This was created due to the National Park Service who requested a database on named Rock Creek Park locations. The methods used to find this information, as well as the recommendations from our findings, are in the original report which can be found on [Digital WPI's](#) IQP section. This document is presented as a PDF but a DOCX editable version is available from [Kym Elder](#).

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Battery Kemble



[Both] Mendoza, Rebekah. (2022). *Battery Kemble* [Photograph]. Battery Kemble Park, Washington DC.

Address: 4640 Cathedral Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016

Coordinates: 38°55'49"N 77°05'39"W

Year Constructed: 1861

Short Description: On top of the elevation of what was then Ridge Road, now Nebraska Avenue, stood Battery Kemble. The battery was completed in the fall of 1861 for the purpose of helping the Union defend the northwest area of DC during the Civil War. To this day, there are still parapets and gun positions that are well preserved. The battery was named after Gouverneur Kemble of Cold Springs, New York, the former superintendent of West Point Foundry. Currently, the park is known for running, sledding, nature walks, and dog walks.

Battery Kemble

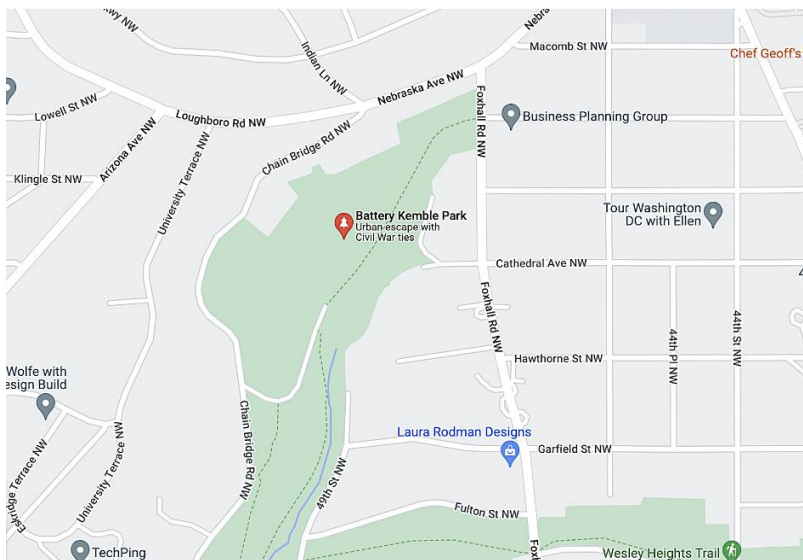
On top of the elevation of what was then Ridge Road, now Nebraska Avenue stood Battery Kemble. The battery was completed in the fall of 1861 for the purpose of defending the northwest area of DC during the Civil War. Two [100-pounder Parrot rifles](#) were placed to span the Chain Bridge, which went over the Potomac River and Virginia shoreline. To this day, there are still parapet and gun positions that are well preserved. The battery was named after [Gouverneur Kemble](#) of Cold Springs, New York, the former superintendent of [West Point Foundry](#). West Point Foundry was where most of the Army and Navy guns were made during the Civil War. The artillery had a range of 3 miles. Kemble was built to support [Fort Stevens](#) and [Fort Slocum](#).



Battery Kemble Civil War Plaque
NPS/S.Phan

n.d. n.d., Battery Kemble Civil War Plaque. Battery Kemble, <https://www.nps.gov/places/battery-kemble.htm>

Soldier quarters at Battery Kemble were unfinished and needed materials even in 1864. Residents neighboring the battery remarked on their pantries being raided by soldiers. Between the years 1916 and 1923, the land was acquired once more by the federal government. The park is known for running, sledding, nature walks, and dog walks.



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Wikimedia Foundation. (2022, August 21). *Battery Kemble Park*. Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battery_Kemble_Park

U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). *Battery Kemble (U.S. National Park Service)*. National Parks Service. <https://www.nps.gov/places/battery-kemble.htm>

Bryce Park



Granger. (2022). *Bryce Park, Washington DC* [Photograph]. Bryce Park, Washington DC.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bryce_Park,_Washington,_DC.jpg

Address: Off of Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington DC 20016

Coordinates: 38.92790966081422, -77.0727932332987

Year Constructed: 1965

Short Description: Bryce Park was constructed as a result of overcrowding in many sections of Washington DC, leading to the National Parks Commission to advocate for green space in these areas. The land in which Bryce Park stands is where gas and fuel pumps were located for the Penn Oil Company and the American Oil Company. The National Park Service acquired the land in 1958 and the park was completed by 1965. The park was dedicated to James Bryce, who was the British Ambassador to the United States and also lived in the neighborhood and had a strong passion for parks and green space.

Bryce Park

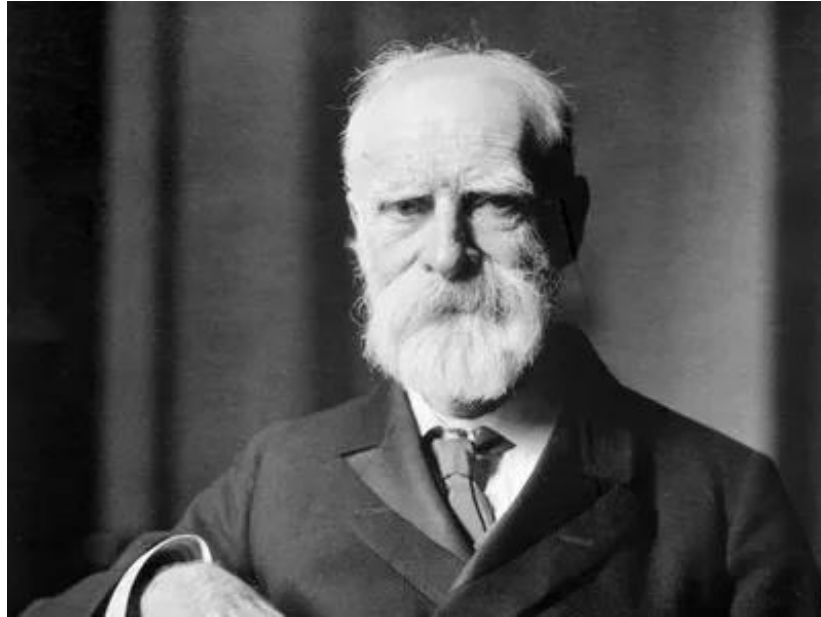
Between 1910 and 1921, a small shed, gas tank, and fuel pumps were constructed on the Bryce Park property as filling stations for the Penn Oil Company and the American Oil Company. These stations remained until 1958, when the National Park Service acquired the property to preserve the parkland of the developing [Cathedral Heights](#) neighborhood. The government initiative of the National Parks Commission was highly involved in this process. Most of the

property was still underdeveloped, making it an ideal location for a park. A survey was conducted in 1956, deeming this was a perfect site to build a park. In 1962, National Park Service landscape architect [William Belden](#) developed design and construction drawings for the site. Belden's designs adopted a Modernist material palette and aesthetic similar to the contemporary facilities being erected under the National Park Service's [Mission 66](#) program.



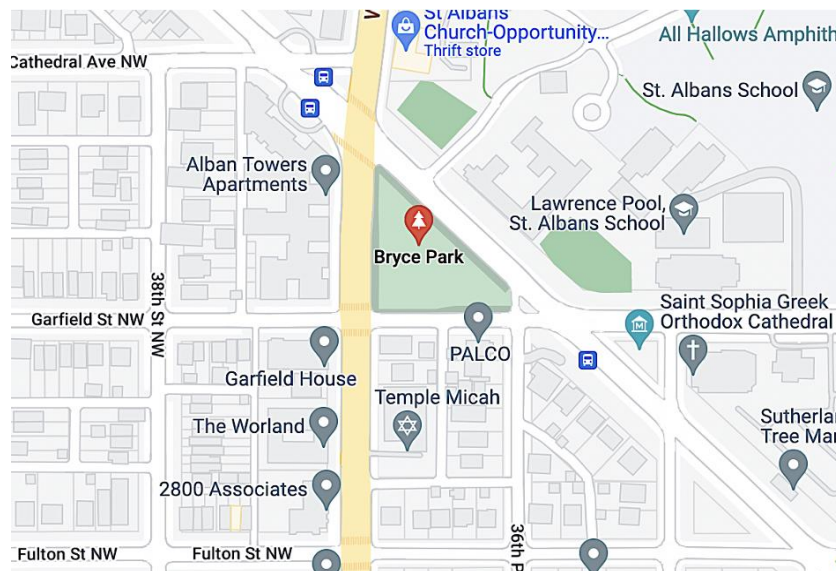
Granger. (2022). *Bryce Park, Washington DC* [Photograph]. Bryce Park, Washington DC.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bryce_Park,_Washington,_DC.jpg

In October 1965, before the park was completed, the National Park Service dedicated the park to James Bryce. [Sir James Bryce](#) was the British Ambassador to the United States from 1907-1913 and lived in the neighborhood during his time in the United States. Bryce was also a successful writer, earning high praise for his book [The American Commonwealth](#). During his time in the United States, Bryce became good friends with [President Theodore Roosevelt](#) and shared a strong advocacy for parks and green space in the United States. He admired the landscape of Rock Creek Park and, in 1913, wrote about “enhancing these beauties” of Washington, specifically mentioning the current location of Bryce Park.



[n.d.] *Bryce, James* [Photograph]. Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/James-Bryce-Viscount-Bryce#/media/1/82530/96718>

[Princess Margaret](#) and her husband [Antony Armstrong-Jones](#), the Earl of Snowden, attended the dedication ceremony for Bryce Park on November 17, 1965, and Margaret unveiled the dedication plaque, which is located today on the bluestone retaining wall. Well-known figures such as [First Lady Bird Johnson's](#) advocacy for Bryce Park and others led to improvements of parks all around Washington, DC.

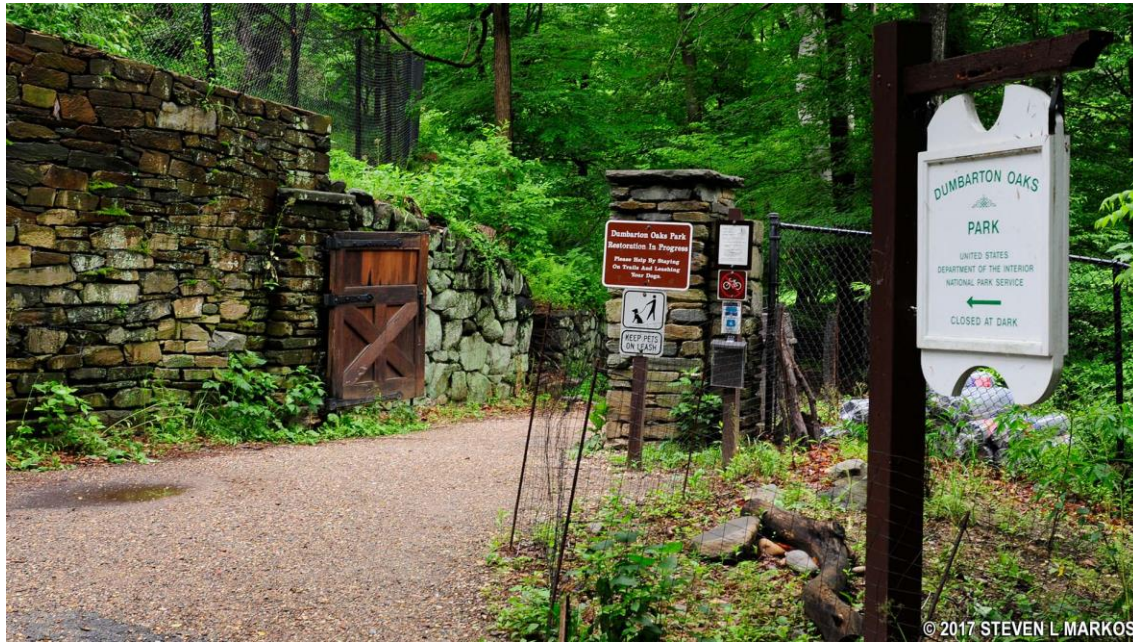


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Bryce Park. Cultural Landscapes. (n.d.). <https://www.cultural-landscapes.org/copy-of-pennsylvania-avenue-nw>

Lester M. 2019. Bryce Park: Cultural Landscape Inventory, Rock Creek Park, National Park Service. Cultural Landscapes Inventory Report. 600167. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. National Capital Area Office, Washington, DC / CRIS-CL Database

Dumbarton Oaks Park



Markos, S. (2017). *Entrance to Dumbarton Oaks Park* [Photograph]. Dumbarton Oaks Park, Washington DC. <https://tinyurl.com/56vxyp9f>

Address: Off of R St NW, Washington DC, 20007

Coordinates: 38.915775170726434, -77.06179160409843

Year Constructed: 1932

Short Description: Dumbarton Oaks Park, constructed by landscape architect Beatrix Farrand, creates an illusion of country life inside of a city for the Bliss family, the former owners of the land. In 1942, the National Park Service took over the duties of preserving the land, however a lack of funds caused issues for them as well as for those wanting to visit. With the help of the citizens of the area, the NPS was able to restore Dumbarton Oaks to reflect what it once was.

Dumbarton Oaks Park

Dumbarton Oaks Park is a park made by landscape architect [Beatrix Farrand](#). According to the National Park Service, Farrand is considered the “finest woman landscape architect of her generation.” The landowners wanted to create an illusion of country life inside of a city, and with the help of Farrand, that became a reality (1).

In 1921, Robert Woods and [Mildred Bliss](#) hired Beatrix Farrand to design gardens and grounds around their home and their owned land. Their idea was to create a country life within the city of Washington, and they asked Farrand to include [evergreens](#), as they grow in autumn and winter, and that is when the couple lived in Washington, DC. With this in mind, Farrand worked with the Blisses for thirty years, designing and maintaining the Dumbarton Oaks grounds (2).



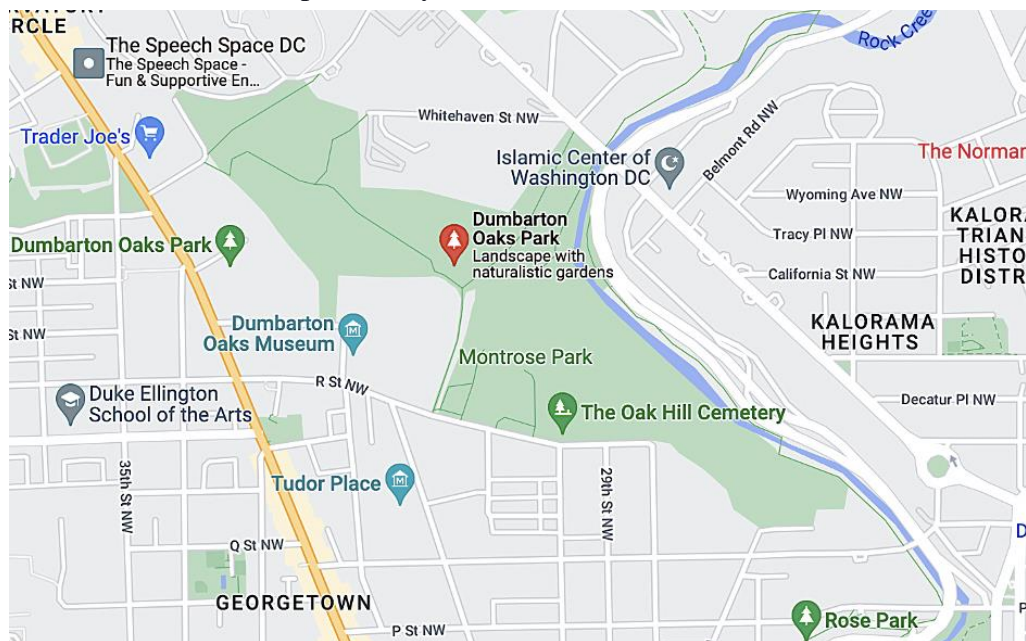
National Park Service. (1963). *Dumbarton Oaks Park* [Photograph]. Dumbarton Oaks Park, Washington DC. <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/DownloadFile/660056>

In November of 1940, the Blisses gave twenty-seven acres of land, which they named Dumbarton Oaks Park, to the National Park Service. They requested that Dumbarton Oaks Park be a public park for pedestrians only, with no streets or roads included. The Blisses also gave their library, a collection of [Byzantine](#) and Pre-Columbian art, (2) as well as their formal gardens to Harvard University (1). According to Zenzen, "they requested in their deed that Harvard establish a research institute for study in the humanities and fine arts, with special emphasis on the collections they had already established." Upon Mildred's death, she left her remaining estate to Harvard.

The National Park Service faced budget problems when starting to take care of the park due to congressional appropriations that reduced the overall maintenance funding for National Capital

Parks. This caused Dumbarton Oak Parks to have many issues, including stormwater, mud, visitation soar, dead trees, stream degradation, pollution, erosion, structures getting destroyed through time, dead plants, overgrown invasive vines, etc. All these issues caused people to stop visiting the park because it looked degraded and caused a lot of safety issues (2).

The National Park realized they needed a restoration plan and funding to fix the park. If Rock Creek Park could not obtain funds, [Darwina Neal](#), National Capital Region landscape architect, suggested getting community support and funding from Georgetown citizen associations and commercial businesses. In 1992, Georgetown residents formed the [Friends of Montrose and Dumbarton Oaks Parks](#). They worked with the National Park Service to try to restore both parks. They removed invasive vines and weed trees and raised money by doing different activities. The group continues to work on the park today (2).



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- U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). *Dumbarton Oaks Park* (U.S. National Park Service). National Parks Service. <https://www.nps.gov/places/dumbarton-oaks-park.htm> (1)
- Zenzen JM. (2020). An Urban Oasis: Rock Creek Park's History and Management. Park Administrative Histories. National Park Service. <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/DownloadFile/660056> (2)

Elizabeth Proctor Thomas



Historical Society of Washington. (n.d.) *Elizabeth Thomas* [Photograph]. Brightwood, DC.
https://www.nps.gov/articles/featured_stories_thomas.htm

Address: 6001 13th St NW, Washington DC 20011 (Fort Stevens)

Coordinates: 38.96438500576521, -77.02919652433671

Year Constructed: Early 1800s (Her Home)

Short Description: Elizabeth Proctor Thomas was a woman who assisted the soldiers at Fort Stevens during the Civil War. Her land was taken to construct the fort, and after a promise from President Lincoln went unfulfilled due to his untimely death, she spent many years fighting for compensation.

Elizabeth Proctor Thomas

Elizabeth Proctor Thomas was born in Prince George's County, Maryland, in 1821. When she was young, she moved with her parents to Vinegar Hill, a northwest DC community of free blacks.

At the start of the Civil War, Thomas was working on her 88-acre family farm with her siblings. Vinegar Hill, now known as [Brookland](#), borders the 7th Street Turnpike (Georgia Ave). The

farm was in a particular location and at an elevation that fostered the perfect conditions for a fort. The US Army seized her and her family's land and constructed Fort Stevens over the demolished home, named after General [Isaac Stevens](#).

The Army removed the furniture from her home and barn to construct the fort and dismantled the buildings. Most of the soldiers were German immigrants who either had poor English or did not speak at all, making communication between them and Thomas extremely difficult during the move. She is quoted saying this after the removal, “I was sitting under that sycamore tree... with what furniture I had left around me. I was crying, as was my sixth-month-old child,... when a tall, slender man dressed in black came up and said to me, ‘It is hard, but you shall reap a great reward,’ the man was [Abraham Lincoln](#).”

During the war, Thomas did not flee or hide even in the face of the advancing Confederate Army. Instead, “Aunt Betty,” a nickname the soldiers gave her, cooked and did laundry for the troops. She also retrieved ammunition for the soldiers during battles and kept a shotgun by her side at all times. After the war ended, Thomas was prepared for the great reward promised to her by President Lincoln. Unfortunately, because of the assassination of Abe Lincoln, the government did not make much effort to compensate her. Thomas appealed to the government several times and finally, in 1916, a year before her death received \$500, a sum greatly reduced from the original offer. During that time of fighting for her compensation, Elizabeth Thomas became a community leader and activist in Vinegar Hill. She passed on October 13th, 1917, in [Brightwood](#).

References:

Elizabeth Proctor Thomas. Find a Grave. (n.d.). <https://tinyurl.com/4zrb42v8>

Elizabeth Proctor Thomas. American Battlefield Trust. (n.d.).

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/elizabeth-proctor-thomas>

Elizabeth Thomas, owner of Fort Stevens. Invalid Corps. (2016, February 21).

<https://tinyurl.com/2bcn7pyj>

Fort Bunker Hill



Maher. (n.d.) *Fort Bunker Hill Sign* [Photograph]. Fort Bunker Hill, Washington DC. <https://www.nps.gov/places/fort-bunker-hill.htm>

Address: Washington, DC 20017

Coordinates: 38.93539°N 76.98775°W

Year Constructed: - 1861

Short Description: Fort Bunker Hill was part of the ring of fortifications that were built around the White House to protect it. The fort was never attacked, and all of its parts were then later sold. The land was then turned into a park.

Fort Bunker Hill

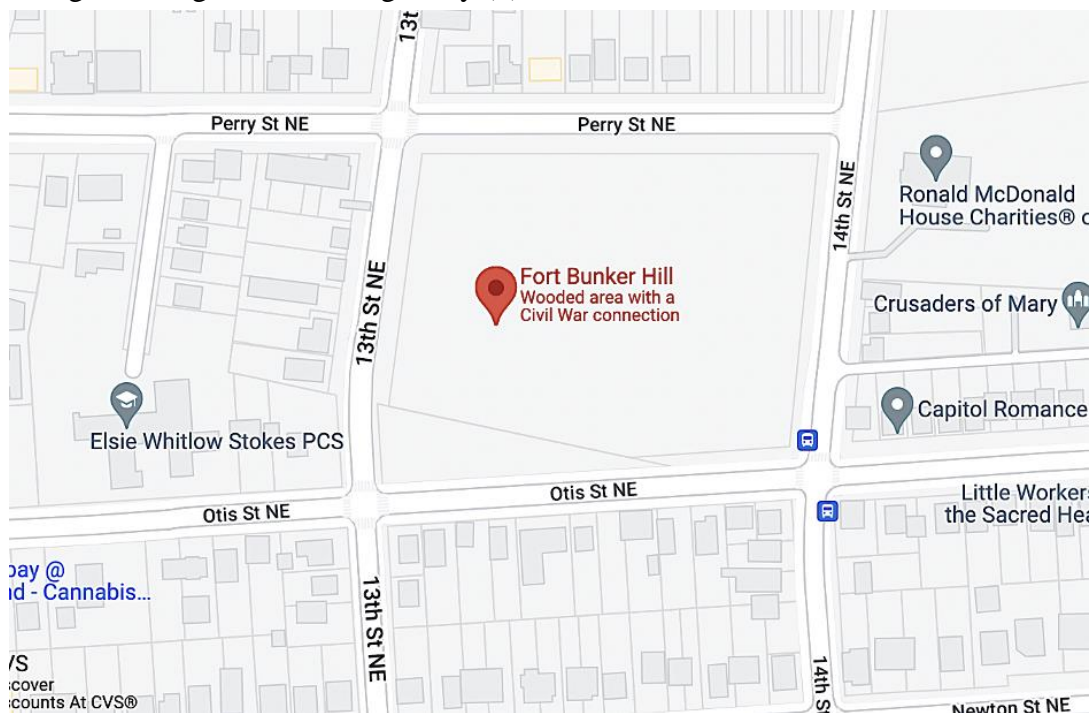
During the Civil War, Fort Bunker Hill was part of the ring of fortifications that were built around the US Capital to protect it. The fort was built in 1861 by [General Joseph Hooker's](#) Brigade with the help of the [First](#) and [Eleventh](#) Massachusetts Infantry (1), [Second New Hampshire](#), and [Twenty-Sixth Pennsylvania](#) volunteer regiment (2 page 16). The land that the fort was built on was the property of Jehiel Brooks. (3) It was named after the Revolutionary fortification at [Bunker Hill](#), Massachusetts. (1)

In December 1862, [Chief Engineer J. G. Barnard](#) built two additional batteries to support Fort Bunker Hill. One was flanking the fort on the low hill to the southeast, and the other was built on an advanced position on the northeastern slope of the hill on the fort. A third battery was built on a rise northwest of Fort Bunker Hill because the other two batteries were considered too weak. Despite the addition of these batteries, the fort was never attacked by confederate soldiers (3).

When the war ended, all of the structures of the fort were sold in an auction, and the land was returned to Brook's family (3).

According to the 1902 Cultural Landscapes Analysis, the publication of the [McMillan Plan](#) spurred efforts to preserve Fort Bunker Hill as part of a circle of green spaces around the city. This ring of parks would be established on the former sites of the Civil War Defenses of Washington. At this time, Fort Bunker Hill was surrounded by suburban development (3).

On April 30, 1926, The National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPPC) purchased the land of Fort Bunker Hill. Fort Bunker Hill Park was then constructed, with many trees and roads from its original design still standing today (3).



References:

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Lester M. 2017. Fort Bunker Hill: Cultural Landscape Inventory, National Capital Parks- East, National Park Service. Cultural Landscapes Inventory Report. 600141. NPS National Capital Region. National Capital Region/ CLI Database (2)

Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit. (n.d.). *Fort Bunker Hill*. Cultural Landscapes Projects. <https://www.cultural-landscapes.org/fortbunkerhill>

Fort Reno Park



TripAdvisor. (n.d.). [Photograph]. Fort Reno Park, Washington DC. <https://tinyurl.com/dwyxstr9>

Address: 4000 Chesapeake St NW, Washington DC, 20016

Coordinates: 38.951458105215224, -77.07725270409728

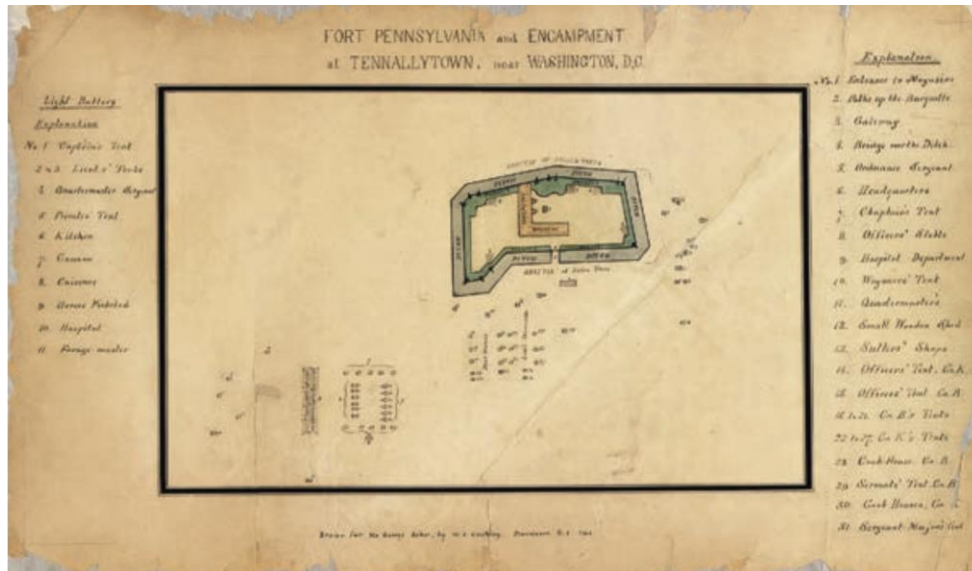
Year Constructed: 1861

Short Description: Fort Reno used to be one of the forts that protected the nation's capital during the Civil War. After the war, the fort was reconstructed into a primarily African American neighborhood. Unfortunately, the neighborhood was then destroyed by a white conspiracy group that wanted to “clean” the neighborhood of the African American community, against the community's wishes.

Fort Reno

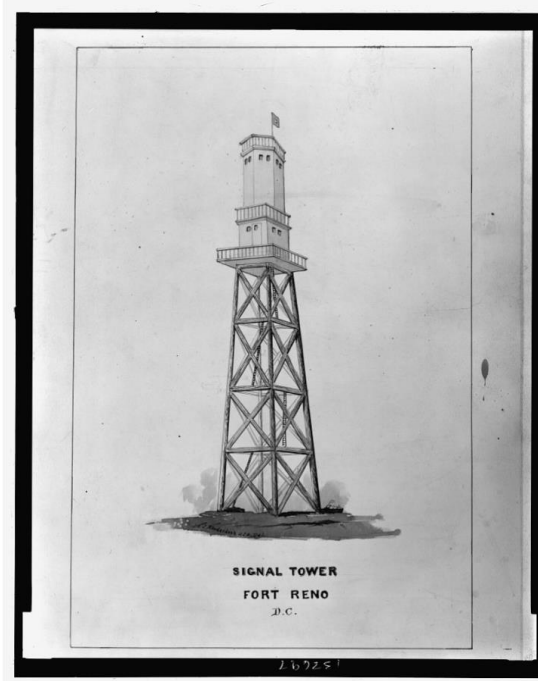
The Birth of Fort Reno or Fort Pennsylvania

Fort Reno was developed on 61 acres of land owned by a woman named Jane C. Dyer. In search of land to protect the federal district, the federal government seized her property and built the fort in 1861. The land provided an advantage to the Union because it was the highest point of the city (4)(14) at 429 ft above sea level and provided a view of the western and northern approaches to the city (1).



Cushing, W. E. & Baker, G. (1862) Fort Pennsylvania and encampment at Tennallytown near Washington, D.C. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/00552388/>.

Once completed, the fort was named Fort Pennsylvania to honor the 119th Pennsylvania Regiment (4), who were responsible for its construction (1). The name was changed to Fort Reno in 1863 to honor [Union General Jesse Lee Reno](#), who had been killed in September 1862 at the [Battle of South Montana](#) (1). Fort Reno was part of the ring of Civil War defenses (2)(3) and served as a forward outpost and signal tower for detecting enemy movement near the northern part of the city (4). The signal tower, according to Casey Tree, “was the first Union defense point to view the Confederate advance before the Battle of Fort Stevens in July 1864”(15).



According to the National Park Service, "Fort Reno was enlarged and strengthened with an advanced battery 300 yards north from the highest ridge, across from what is now Fessenden Street and along 39th Street. This battery had eight 12-pounder guns, a magazine, and a covered walkway connected it to the main fort to the south. A double line of rifle trenches was added to strengthen the position." This made Fort Reno the largest and strongest of the forts defending the capital. (4)

Fort Reno was the first of the civil war defenses of Washington to view [Confederate Lieutenant General Jubal Early's](#) advance in Rockville, Maryland. The lookouts in the signal tower had spotted clouds of dust and army wagons advancing (4). Early, impressed by Reno's strong defenses, he redirected his force's main efforts to Fort Stevens in July 1864 (1).

Fort Reno After the War

After the conclusion of the Civil War, Jane Dyer asked the federal government to purchase her land that they had used; however, they instead returned the property to her in January 1866. The fort's construction had destroyed any previous buildings they had owned, including homes and stables, along with many of their belongings. The family attempted to divide the land amongst themselves. However, these setbacks made it difficult, including Jane's husband Giles being declared invalid, which made it impossible to leave the property to his remaining family (1). The Dyers then decided to sell the property to the real estate firm "Onion & Butts," owned by real estate developers Newell Onion and Alexander Butts (3), to handle the sales. Onion & Butts called the new subdivision "Reno City." (1). They divided the land into "lots of 2,500 square feet each, and one half of these" (12) and sold them for \$12.50 with a \$5 down payment. (3)

Reno City

While Onion and Butts initially marketed these properties to presumably white government employees, African American families began buying these lots. Reno City attracted African Americans who needed work to support themselves and their families (2). By the 1890s, Reno City was characterized as an expanding, interracial community. African American settlers were joined by freedmen, women, and whites who bought small plots of land on which they built their homes (2). By 1901 residents knew that Fort Reno was the center of the African American population and referred to it as the "colored settlement of Reno..." (1).

The Destruction of a Community

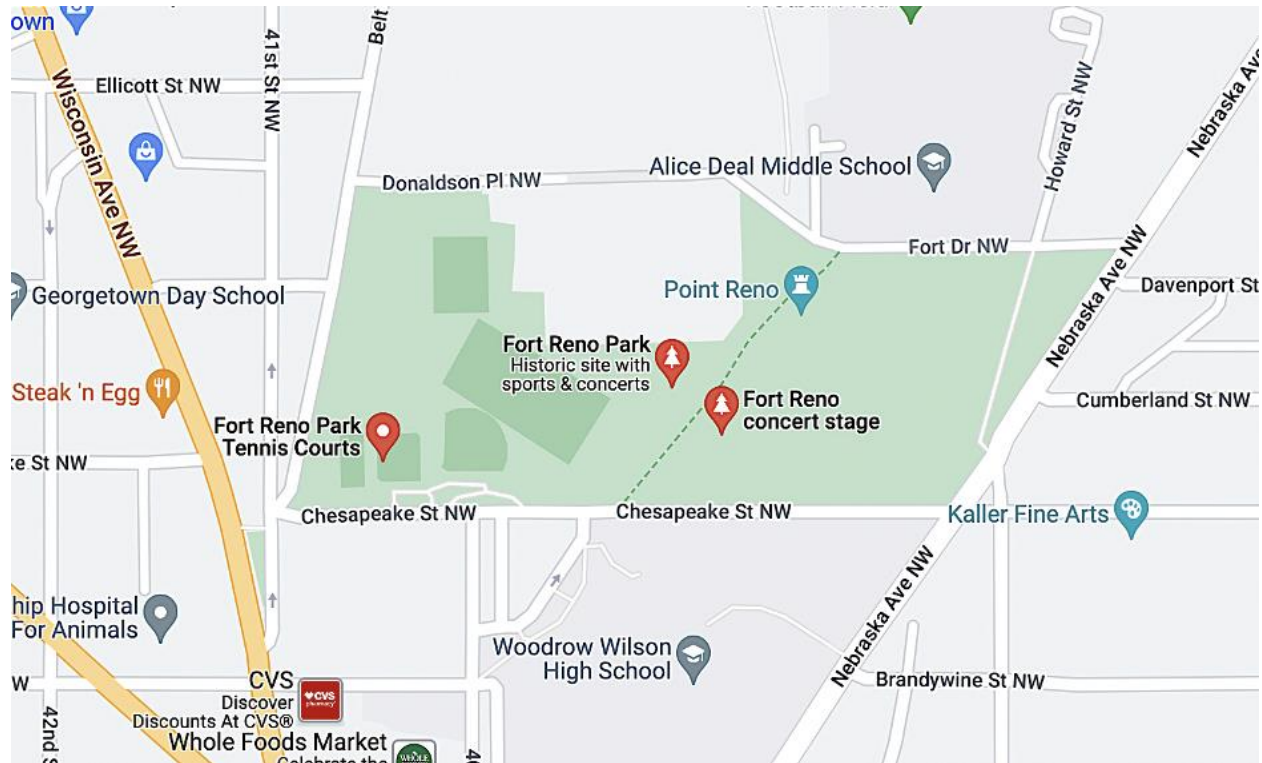
By the 1930s, the citizens of Fort Reno were being removed from the neighborhood, and their homes were being demolished (11). A group of Tenleytown property owners started the evictions called the Friendship Citizens Association (FCA). The FCA planned on clearing out the communities in Fort Reno and using the land for future development and feared that the current black neighborhoods in the area threatened the value of the real estate (16).

Citizens of the nearby Chevy Chase and Tenleytown white subdivisions (15) lobbied the federal government to destroy the Fort Reno community to develop a park and schools for their use (11). According to Neil Flanagan, "it was hard to persuade Congress to spend money on a huge network of parks for people who couldn't vote" (16). The American Planning and Civic Association (APCA) was able to convince Congress by pitching "Washington as a model of planning" (16). In November 1925, the board voted to remove the houses of Fort Reno and convert them into a park. Still, it did not fund it because they estimated the cost of removing the community to be too expensive, with the estimated cost being \$1 million (16).

Residents of Fort Reno protested the decision; however, they were unsuccessful in changing anything as the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPPC) began buying houses in 1929 and threatened those who refused to sell with condemnation (11). The compensation the NCPPC provided was not enough for any family to purchase a new home, and most residents moved west of Rock Creek Park to more predominantly black neighborhoods (11). African American families continued to be forced out of their homes, and by 1951, the last of Reno City's residents had moved, and the Jesse Lee Reno School was closed (15).

Cold War

In 1961, at the height of the Cold War, the White House Signal Agency built two towers in Fort Reno, code-named "Cartwheel." The towers were built to protect the Executive Branch members (15) in the threat of a nuclear attack (13). They were constructed to have a line of sight of their nearest neighbor for [microwave communications](#) (13). By the 1970s, the government viewed Cartwheel as obsolete and transferred it to the Federal Aviation Administration, where a civilian use would be determined (15). The towers are still standing today; however, it is not accessible to the public.



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[Taylor B. 2021. “On the Fort”: The Fort Reno Community of Washington, DC, 1861–1951. Historic Resource Study. National Park Service & Organization of American Historians. Washington, DC](#) (1)

[Www.culturaltourism.org](http://www.culturaltourism.org). Fort Reno Site, African American Heritage Trail - [www.culturaltourism.org](https://www.culturaltourismdc.org/portal/fort-reno-site-african-american-heritage-trail). (n.d.). <https://www.culturaltourismdc.org/portal/fort-reno-site-african-american-heritage-trail> (2)

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U.S. Department of the Interior. (2021, April 20). *Fort Reno* (U.S. National Park Service). National Parks Service. <https://www.nps.gov/places/fort-reno.htm> (4)

U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). *Fort Reno park- A brief history of reno city (u.s. national park service)*. National Parks Service. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/fort-reno-park-a-brief-history-of-reno-city.htm> (5)

Asch, C. M., & Musgrove, G. D. (2017). *Chocolate city: A history of race and democracy in the nation's capital*. The University of North Carolina Press. (6)

“Needs of Fort Reno—Discussed at November Meeting of the Citizens’ Association,” *Evening Star*, November 20, 1913. (7)

“Reno Association Meets—Resolutions Adopted Opposing Liquor Traffic,” *Evening Star*, February 14, 1915.(8)

“Protest Made Against ‘Birth of a Nation’ Film,” *Evening Star*, March 11, 1916 (9)

“Favors DC Suffrage—Reno Citizens’ Association Pledges Aid to Further the Cause,” *Evening Star*, March 14, 1919. (10)

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“Elegant Building Lots!!!” *Evening Star*, July 27, 1869 (12)

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Flanagan, N. (2020, August 29). *The battle of fort reno*. Washington City Paper. <https://washingtoncitypaper.com/article/188488/the-battle-of-fort-reno/> (16)

Francis Scott Key Memorial Park



Roger Foley (n.d). *Francis Scott Key Memorial 2* [Photograph]. Francis Scott Key Memorial Park, Washington DC
<https://www.ovsla.com/portfolio-items/francis-scott-key-memorial-park-dc/>

Address: 1198 34th and M St, Washington DC, 20007

Coordinates: 38.9047818110363, -77.0684045739522

Year Constructed: 1993

Short Description: Developed in the 19th century in Georgetown's historic district, the Francis Scott Key Memorial reflects the contribution of the writer of the National Anthem. The memorial was built by the Francis Scott Key Foundation, and resides on the land where Key's home once stood. The park was donated to the National Park Service in 1993 and continues to be preserved today.

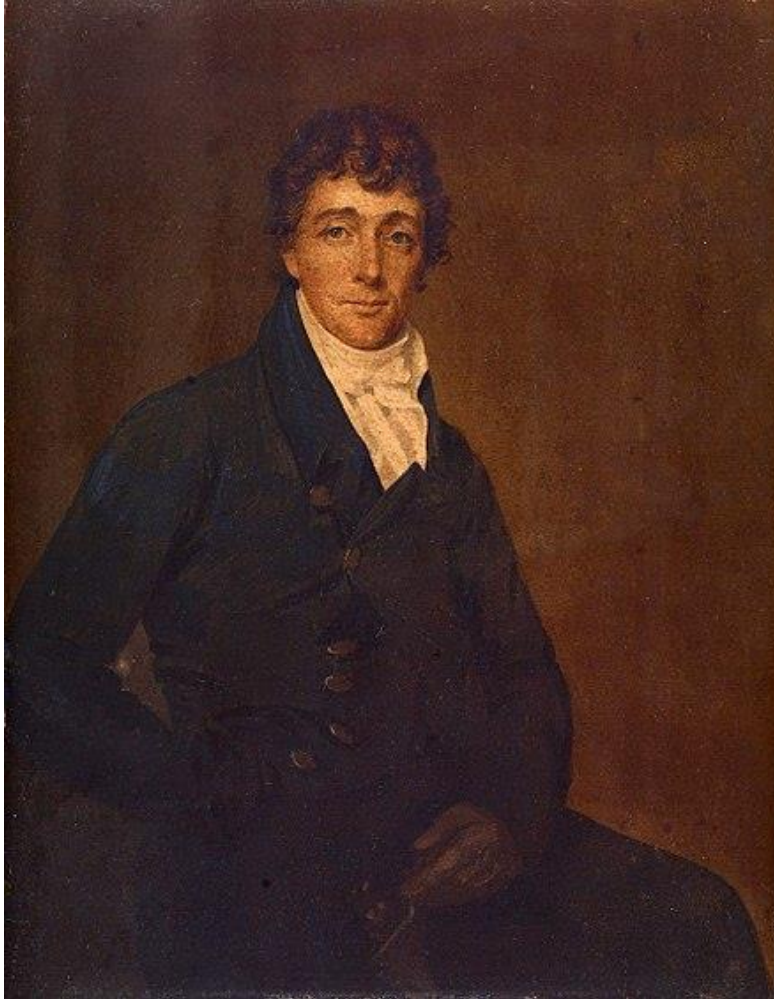
Francis Scott Key Memorial

Prior to 1620, Maryland County, where the Francis Scott Key Memorial stands today, was inhabited by the [Algonquin](#), [Nacotchtank](#), [Piscataway](#), and [Potawatomi](#) tribes. Over time the area developed into a section of modern Georgetown and was a staple port for the tobacco trade. The land was included in the founding of the nation's capital and included many "gentleman's homes" in the Court End area, one of which belongs to Francis Scott Key. Key's home was built in 1803,

and he lived there from 1805 until 1830. Over time more and more of these gentleman's homes were replaced by commercial businesses, and by the end of the 19th century, only a few remained. Other buildings were demolished to make room for new infrastructure, including the Francis Scott Key Bridge, completion in 1977. The Francis Scott Key Foundation then took over a smaller portion of the area, including where Key's house once stood, to establish a park in his honor. They began in 1989 by excavating remains of demolished homes to collect artifacts and study building foundations. After the conclusion of that study in 1992, they built the memorial and donated it to the National Park Service in 1993.

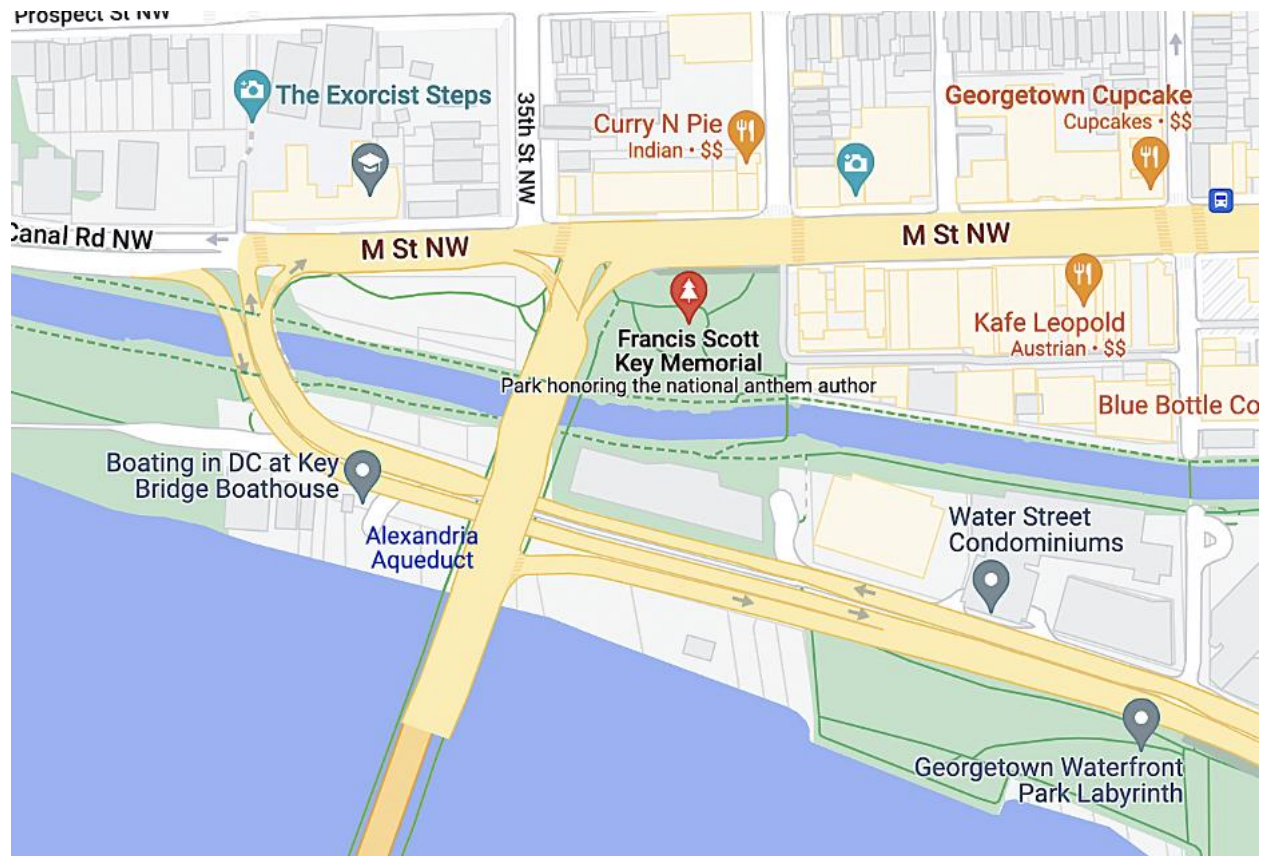
Francis Scott Key is best known for writing the United States National Anthem, the [*Star-Spangled Banner*](#). The memorial includes a flag with 15 stars and stripes, which correlates with the flag flown in 1814, the year he wrote the anthem. Key wrote the anthem while being held hostage by the British during the War of 1812, as he was inspired to see the flag still flying high in the wake of the [Battle of McHenry](#) in Baltimore.

The park includes terraces of meadow plantings on steep terrain. The centerpiece is an arbored brick and sandstone terrace surrounding a bronze bust of Key's likeness, sculpted by [Betty Mailhouse Dunston](#).



Joseph Wood (1825). Portrait of Francis Scott Key, [Painting] Walters Art Gallery <https://amhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/francis-scott-key.aspx>

While living in Georgetown, Francis Scott Key was a prominent and successful lawyer, appearing in front of the Supreme Court for several cases, most notably the [Burr Conspiracy Trial](#). He was nominated for [District Attorney](#) for the District of Columbia by [President Andrew Jackson](#), where he served from 1833 to 1841. Francis did own slaves that worked on his farm, and he would represent enslaved people seeking freedom and slave owners to have their slaves returned to them in court. Francis was a founding member of the [American Colonization Society](#), which wanted to bring free slaves to Africa.



References:

Francis Scott Key Memorial Park, DC - OVS: Landscape Architecture. OvS. (2022, November 8). <https://www.ovsla.com/portfolio-items/francis-scott-key-memorial-park-dc/>

Francis Scott Key Memorial Park - Washington, DC, DC. Yelp. (n.d.). <https://www.yelp.com/biz/francis-scott-key-memorial-park-washington>

Francis Scott Key Monument in mt. Olivet cemetery: Frederick, MD 21701. Frederick, Maryland. (n.d.). <https://tinyurl.com/3jveyymm>

Georgetown Waterfront Park



National Park Service. (n.d.). *Georgetown Waterfront Park* [Photograph]. Georgetown Waterfront Park. <https://www.nps.gov/places/georgetown-waterfront-park.htm>

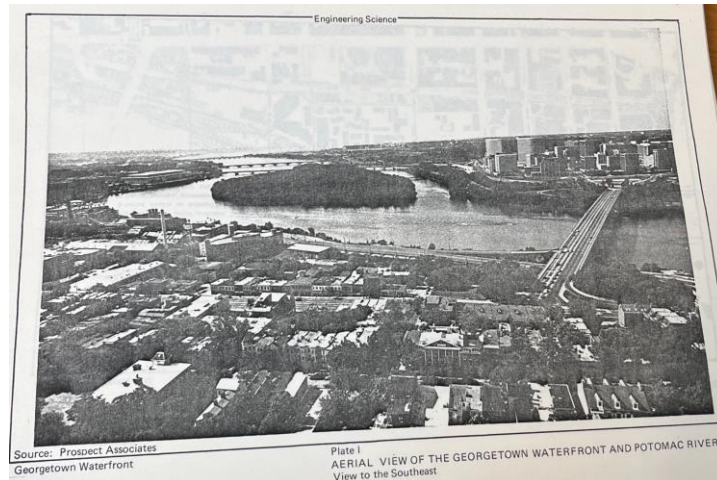
Address: 3000 K St NW, Washington, DC 20007

Coordinates: 38°54'08"N 77°03'43"W

Year Constructed: 2011

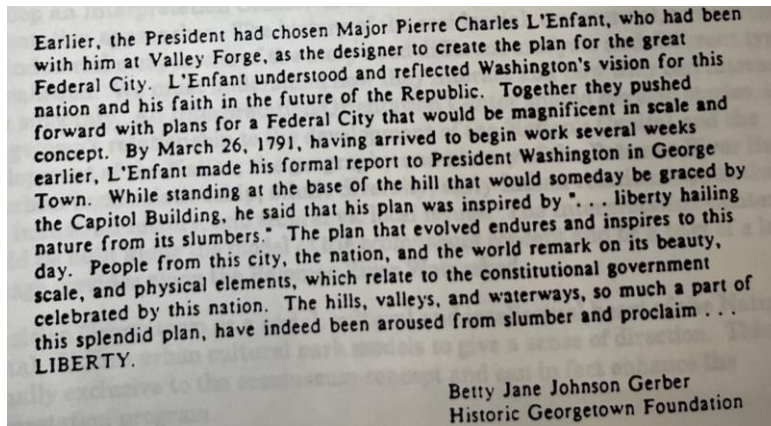
Short Description: Georgetown Waterfront Park is a 10-acre park that follows alongside the natural curve of the Potomac River. Early in the 1980s, 10 acres were set aside for the purpose of creating a national park, and in 1985, the exchange of land was completed but the National Park Service did not have the funds at the time and as a result, the park spent a lot of its time as a parking lot. In 1991 the Georgetown Waterfront Park Commission held events in the park to create larger support, and only in 2005 did groups fundraise the needed amount for the park. The park opened up in 2011.

Georgetown Waterfront Park



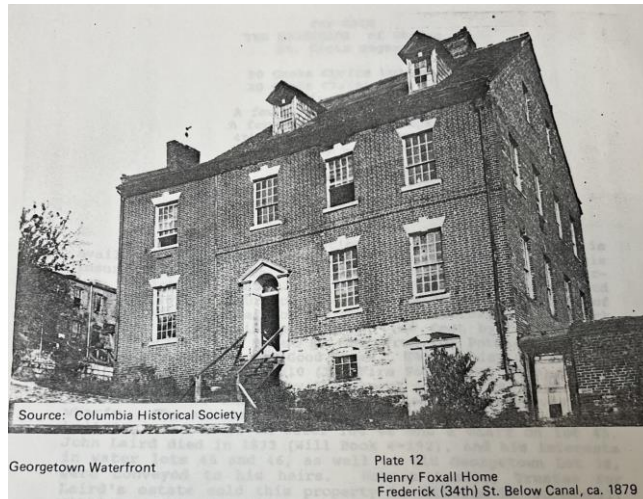
Artemel. J.G., Crowell. E.A., Mackie. N.V., screenshot from Georgetown Waterfront Park Archaeological Overview and Assessment

The history of Georgetown Waterfront Park is tied to the history of Georgetown itself. Before Georgetown became the bustling port town it is, it had been the home of the [Nacotchtank](#) Indians, who had been pushed out of the area by European settlers in the late 17th century. After more and more settlers arrived in the area, the area known as Georgetown was founded in 1751 and named after King George II. In 1791 George Washington wanted to make Georgetown the heart of the new Capitol and Gateway to the emerging nation west of the [Allegheny Mountains](#).



Artemel. J.G., Crowell. E.A., Mackie. N.V., screenshot from Georgetown Waterfront Park Archaeological Overview and Assessment

Georgetown, over time, became the ideal port between Europe for trade and the selling of tobacco and enslaved people because of its location. The port's success paved the way for the development of textile mills, paper factories, flour mills, and restaurants.



Artemel. J.G., Crowell. E.A., Mackie. N.V., screenshot from Georgetown Waterfront Park Archaeological Overview and Assessment

Enslaved people in Georgetown served in the homes of wealthy tobacco salesmen, generally cooking and performing other duties. In place as recently as 1975, laws were created to limit African American community development by making it illegal for groups of 7 or more to gather at once. In the 1800 US census, the 5,120 population of Georgetown included 1,449 slaves and 277 "free blacks." The underground railroad housed a hiding place for the escaped slaves in the burial crypt of a church started by a group of free black men. Additionally, the 1848 Black Code; [Ordinances of the Corporation of Georgetown](#) made it hard for African Americans living in Georgetown. Examples include: blacks swimming in the Potomac or Rock Creek at night "shall be publicly whipped," and flying a kite can result by whipping. In 1848, 77 slaves tried to escape on a ship called The Pearl to flee the Georgetown oppression but were recaptured 140 miles downriver by a steamer called The Salem.

As late as November 1861, slaves were still being sold in Georgetown, and in 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed a local law that freed slaves eight months before the [Emancipation Proclamation](#) did. Slave owners were upset, and an "expert examiner of slaves" came in and valued all the slaves in Georgetown at \$300,000. Upon hearing about the local law, Blacks from the south traveled to Georgetown, nearly doubling the black population from 1,935 to 3,271. Most of the east side of Georgetown was a "thriving black community" that contained churches still there today (Mt. Zion United Methodist, First Baptist, Jerusalem Baptist, and Epiphany Catholic Church).

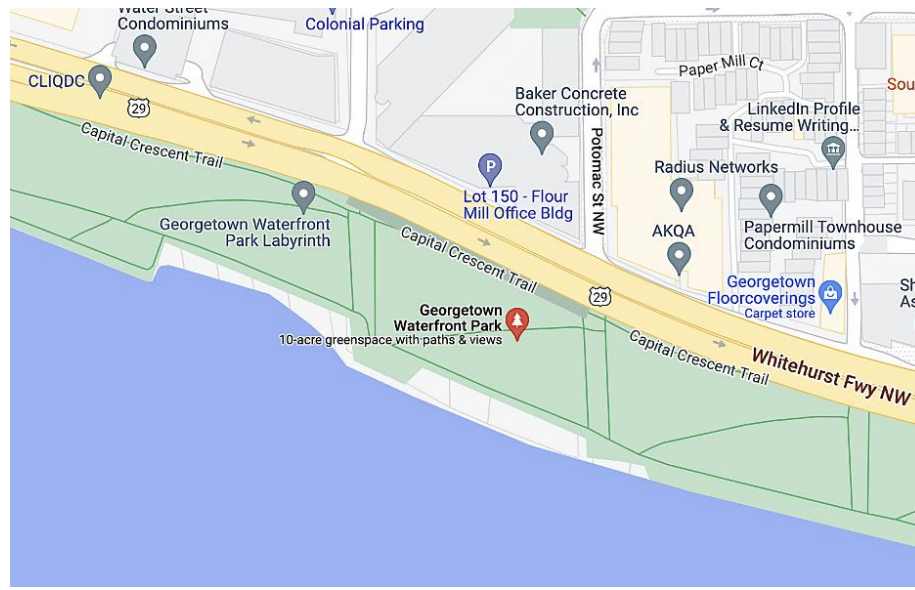
A nursery in the Palisades area was cultivated by six young African Americans whom the owner, whose name is unknown, educated and rewarded with an annual sum of \$64. The owner taught them how to read and write and instructed them on proper "moral duties."

Alfred Pope was one of the most influential black Georgetowners of the mid-to-late 19th century. Pope owned several coal and lumber yards, along with being a real estate magnate, politician, and philanthropist. Other prominent figures who resided in Georgetown post-slavery were Robert Holmes, John Ferguson, [Moses Z. Booth](#), and Elizabeth O. Booth.

Numerous laws and regulations prevented true economic and social emancipation for freed blacks. For example, laws put in place that barred African Americans from riding on Georgetown's electric streetcars made it extremely difficult to commute to work.

"Sen. John F. Kennedy voluntarily signed a deed containing a "restrictive covenant" when he bought his house on N Street NW in 1957, agreeing that the home should not "ever be used or occupied or sold, conveyed, leased, rented, or given to Negroes or any person or persons of the Negro race or blood." (Stephen 2006)

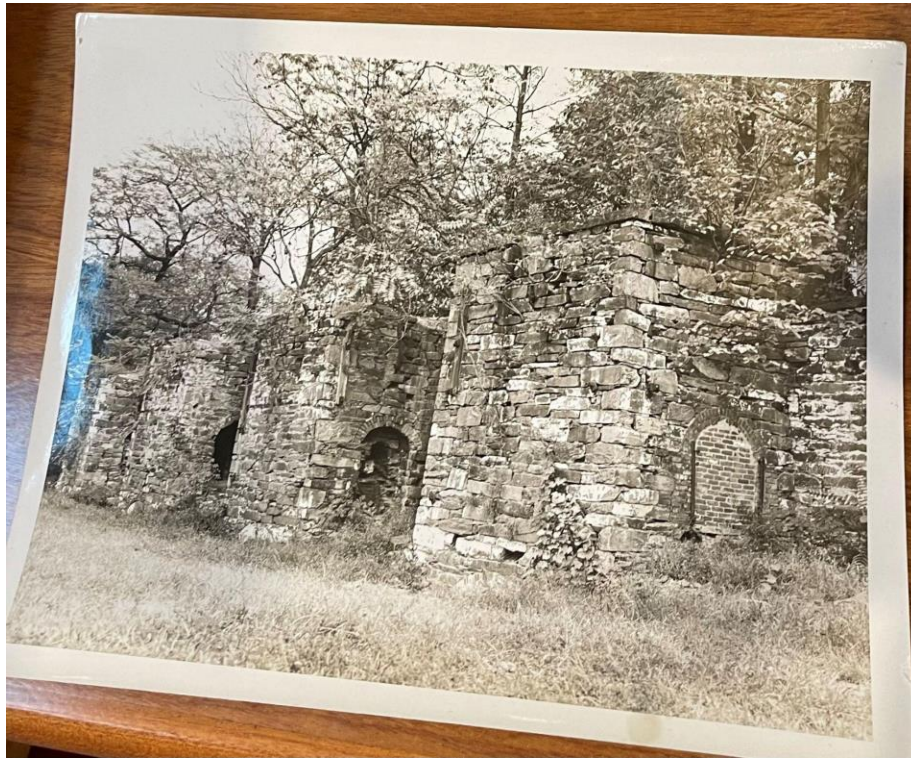
Of note: Instead of having recreational fields, the park would offer passive opportunities to enjoy the waterfront and connect with the site's history.



References:

- Stephen, A. (2006, July 16). *Georgetown's hidden history first, it was a slave port. later, it was a thriving center of black life. Today, it's a virtually all-white enclave. why?* The Washington Post. <https://tinyurl.com/2n8tva96>
- Zenzen, J. M. (2020, October). *An Urban Oasis: Rock Creek Park's History and Management*. National Parks Service. <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/DownloadFile/660056>
- Devaney, R. (2022, February 5). *Our black history ... in Georgetown*. The Georgetownner. <https://georgetownner.com/articles/2019/02/20/black-history-georgetown-2/>

Godey Lime Kilns



n.d.. (n.d.) *Godey Lime Kilns* [Photograph]. DC History Center. Washington DC.

Address: Washington DC, 20037

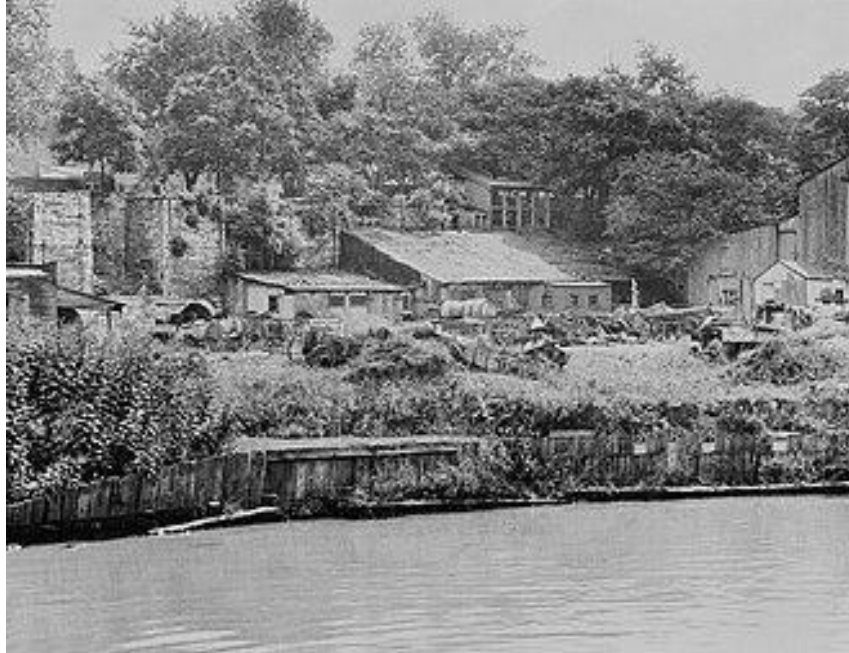
Coordinates: 38.903536879497395, -77.05618540640457

Year Constructed: 1864

Short Description: William Godey, a successful Georgetown merchant, opened the Godey Lime Kilns in 1864. The kilns used heat to melt limestone into lime and plaster to be used for construction. Over time the kiln became obsolete, and its structures were later removed, with a highway being constructed many years after.

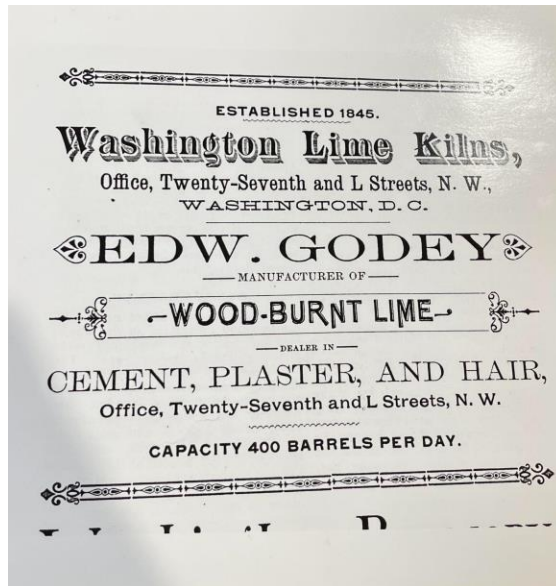
William Godey & the Godey Lime Kilns

William Godey was a Georgetown merchant in the 19th century who specialized in the manufacturing and sale of lime. He first opened his lime business at an unknown location in 1858 and continued to operate there until 1864, where he purchased the present known lime kilns. The facility was located along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal's edge and was operational until 1908.



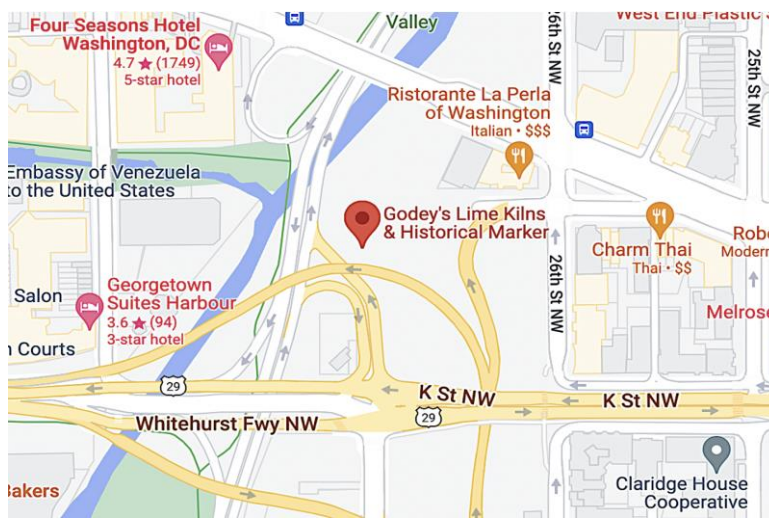
Historic American Buildings Survey, C. (1933) Godey Lime Kilns Ruins, Junction of Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway, Washington, District of Columbia, DC. Washington D.C. Washington, 1933. Documentation Compiled After. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/dc0327/>.

The kilns, in its peak years, included four ovens along with an assortment of wooden sheds and other structures built around them. The ovens used heat to break down limestone into lime and plaster, which would be used for construction. After its first year of operation, Godey partnered with a man named John Rheim, although they parted ways after only a year. Godey continued to own the lime kilns until his death in 1873, after which his family took over production. In 1897 the business turned over to another owner, John Dodson, who operated the kilns until their eventual closing in 1907.



Godey, W. (n.d.). *Godey Lime Kilns Advertisement* [Photograph]. DC History Center. Washington DC.

By the early 20th century, the invention of [Portland cement](#) had made the kiln obsolete, and poor business as a result of that led to the closing. All of the wooden structures were removed in 1908, leaving the four remaining kilns on the property. Eventually, two of the four kilns were removed to make room for the construction of highway ramps from the Potomac Parkway to the Whitehurst freeway. The remaining two lime kilns still stand adjacent today to the ramp; however, they are in a poor state of repair, and it is hazardous to visit them as crossing the parkway is required.



References:

U.S. Department of the Interior. (2021, February 7). *Godey Lime Kilns (U.S. National Park Service)*. National Parks Service. <https://www.nps.gov/places/000/godey-lime-kilns.htm>

Myer, D. B. (1965, August 30). dc0327data. Washington DC; National Park Service. <https://memory.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/dc/dc0300/dc0327/data/dc0327data.pdf>

DC Preservation League. (n.d.). *Godey Lime Kilns (washington lime kilns) - the godey lime kilns, built in 1864, are the remains of a manufacturing business established by William H. Godey*. DC Historic Sites. <https://historicsites.dcpreservation.org/items/show/253>

Hattie Sewell



Washington Times (1920) advertisement ran in the Washington Times [Picture] National Parks Service <https://www.nps.gov/people/hattie-l-sewell.htm>

Address: Not Available To Public

Coordinates: Not Available To Public

Year Constructed: Not Available to Public

Short Description: Hattie Sewell was an African American woman who operated the Peirce Mill teahouse at its peak. Her struggles with influential people in the area forced her out of

ownership, making her one of the lesser known but most important figures in Rock Creek Park's history.

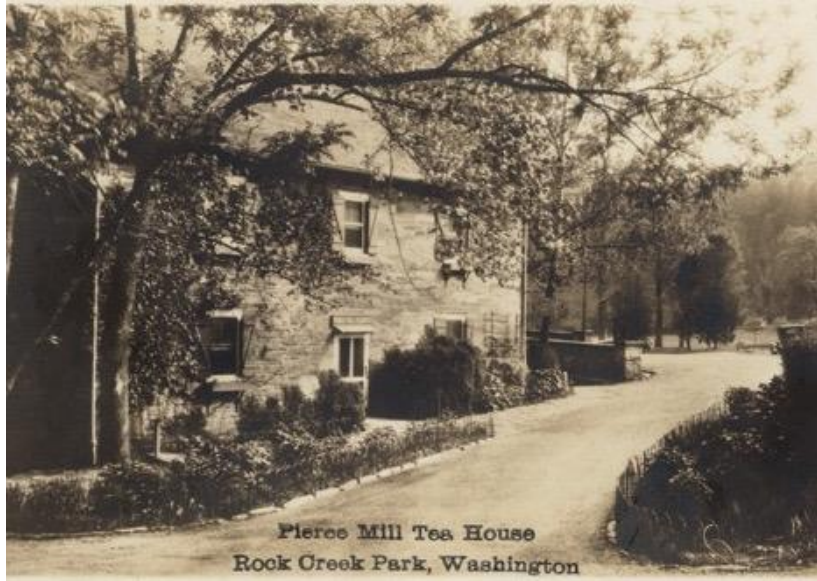
Hattie Sewell

Hattie Sewell, originally Hattie Ridley, was born and raised in Dallas, Texas, where she and her mother worked in the home of T.K. Ferguson. Hattie served as a nurse on the property and primarily watched over Ferguson's children. After some time, Hattie and her mother moved to Phoenix, Arizona, and were a part of some of the first groups in the great migration from the south to other opportunities.

Hattie soon married John Bolton and had a son, Chancey, in 1893. They purchased a home in the center of Phoenix, and her husband owned a barber shop in the city. After many years of being a barber, Bolton passed away after suffering a lung ailment in December 1902 at the age of 35. Hattie continued to live in the city and enrolled her son at the Arizona School of Music to improve his piano skills, in which he excelled.

Hattie moved to Tuscon in 1915, where she met Samuel Sewell, an officer stationed at [Fort Huachuca](#), and the two eventually married in December 1915. In 1917, Officer Sewell was selected to go to [Fort De Moines](#) to train for World War I, where he earned the rank of captain. Later that year, the family moved to Camp Meade in Maryland, where Samuel performed menial tasks with other African American captains. Captain Sewell was later discharged in April of 1918 due to a "disability."

The Sewells purchased a home in a black-friendly neighborhood between 13th St and Riggs in May of 1918. Later in July 1920, Hattie purchased the [Peirce Mill](#) teahouse for a mere \$45 a month rent, overseen by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. Hattie began by advertising her teahouse in newspapers, and her business was very successful, increasing revenue by 200% compared to the previous owner.



N.d., (n.d.) *Pierce Mill Tea House* [Photograph]. Rock Creek Park. Washington DC <https://tinyurl.com/9avwnn86>

E.S. Newman, a prominent trustee of the Peirce Estate, complained that the mill was becoming a “rendezvous for colored people soon developing into a nuisance.” Newman’s pressure on OPBG director and Rock Creek Park Manager [Colonel Clarence Sherrill](#) was overbearing enough to make him terminate Sewell’s contract after only one year of business. The tea house water was later sold to the Girl Scouts in 1921, and the contract written up by the Army Corps of Engineers stated that Sewell gave up the teahouse. Hattie later opened a new cafe at the Balfour on the corner of 16th and U Street, which also was very successful.

References:

RockCreekConservancy. (2021, May 27). *The Life and Times of Hattie Sewell*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uljNQNr2MMY&t=1755s>

YouTube. (2021, November 9). *Hattie Sewell*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Os1dgrRzwcY>

U.S. Department of the Interior. (2022, January 7). *Hattie L. Sewell (U.S. National Park Service)*. National Parks Service. <https://www.nps.gov/people/hattie-l-sewell.htm>

Joaquin Miller's Cabin



Mendoza, Rebekah. (2022). *Joaquin Millers cabin* [Photograph]. Rock Creek Park, Washington DC.

Address: Beach Dr NW, Washington DC, 20008

Coordinates: 38.96402733874794, -77.04634298919065

Year Constructed: 1883

Short Description: Joaquin Miller's Cabin was first constructed on what is now known as Meridian Hill Park in 1883. After Joaquin Miller left Washington DC, The NPS began constructing Meridian Hill Park on the land, and the house was to be removed. With the help of advocates from the state of California, where Joaquin Miller originated from, the cabin was moved to Rock Creek Park. The cabin was then leased to Joaquin Miller's niece, where it was a snack shack and held art classes until the mid-1950s. It was used for the Miller's Cabin Poetry Series from 1973 until 2011.

Joaquin Millers Cabin

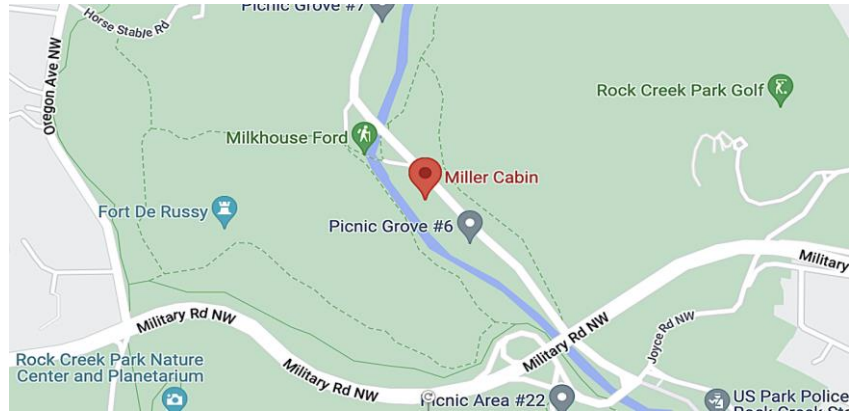
If you walked along Rock Creek, you would come across a log cabin on the floodplain nearby. It looks like it has been there for centuries; however, that is not the case. It was constructed in 1883 for a poet named Joaquin Miller, who had moved to Washington, DC, to pursue a career in politics. Miller had decided that the city was too expensive to live in, so he built the cabin on the land where Meridian Hill Park is today. Miller moved out of the cabin after ten years of living

there and several failed political campaigns. When Meridian Hill Park began its construction in 1910, park managers were prepared to demolish the cabin. However, the state of California, where Joaquin Miller was born, and the Columbia Historical Society wanted to preserve the cabin. With the help of California senators, the preservation was successful, and the cabin was completely taken apart and rebuilt in Rock Creek Park. Early 20th-century park managers did not want the cabin because they were obligated to preserve any landmarks on the property regardless of whether it was built on the park's property.



Dan Vera. (2007). *Joaquin Miller cabin* [Photograph]. Bryce Park, Washington DC. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joaquin_Miller_Cabin

After Millers' time living there, the cabin was dedicated on June 2, 1912, with members of California's congressional delegation and Senator Weldon Hayburn of Idaho present. The cabin was then used as a shelter and later a concession stands for visitors of the park until Joaquin Miller's niece Pherne Miller began renting it in 1931. She spent over twenty years there, running the concession stand and teaching art classes on the cabin grounds. From 1973 to 2011, the cabin hosted a reading series through the Miller Cabin Poetry series run by a nonprofit named Word Works. In 2011, it was moved to Rock Creek Parks nature center and renamed The Joaquin Miller Poetry series. Today, the cabin still stands; however, the inside is not accessible to the public.



References

Heringer. (2016, November 16). Joaquin Miller Cabin. <https://www.mark-heringer.com/2016/11/joaquin-miller-cabin.html>

HouseHistoryMan. (1970, January 1). *A log cabin in Meridian Hill Park? its true!* A log cabin in Meridian Hill Park? Its True! <http://househistoryman.blogspot.com/2012/02/log-cabin-in-meridian-hill-park-its.html>

Klinge Mansion



Mendoza, Rebekah. (2022). *Klinge Mansion* [Photograph]. Klinge Mansion. Washington DC.

Address: 3545 Williamsburg Ln NW, Washington DC, 20008

Coordinates: 38.93600226120419, -77.04998685991713

Year Constructed: 1823

Short Description: Klinge Mansion, also called the Klinge Estate or Linnean house, was constructed by Joshua Peirce and is a still standing structure in Rock Creek Park. The Peirce family was interested in horticulture, and the estate became a famous nursery in DC. Trees planted from the mansion still exist today at the White House, Capitol, and other government buildings and parks. Linnean Hill, where the estate sits, is a comfortable ground for shrubs and flowers. The hill additionally became a popular meeting place for several Washington historical members, such as Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun. Currently, it serves as the headquarters for Rock Creek Park

Klinge Mansion

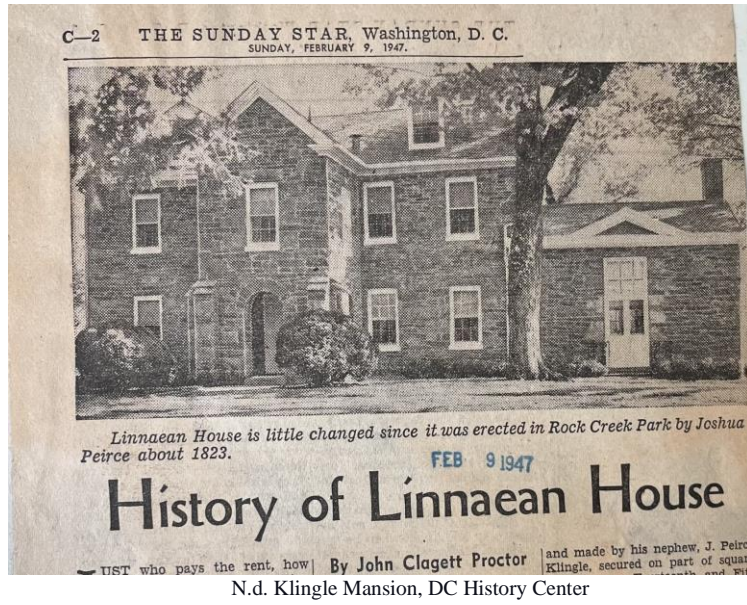
Klinge Mansion, also known as the Peirce-Klinge Estate, Klinge Estate, and Linnean House, is an estate built by Isaac Peirce's youngest son Joshua in 1823 upon Linnean Hill.

Linnean Hill is named after [Carl Linnaeus](#), a Swedish [botanist](#) known for formalized binomial nomenclature, the modern system of naming organisms. Linnean Hill was an ideal place for growing various shrubs and flowers. Peirce is responsible for introducing flower boxes to the White House, and to this day, trees grown on the property are still standing on the White House lawn, Capitol grounds, and other government buildings and parks. Joshua Peirce and his wife Susannah had no children; however, they adopted their nephew, [Joshua Klinge](#), when he was orphaned.



N.d. Klinge Mansion, DC History Center

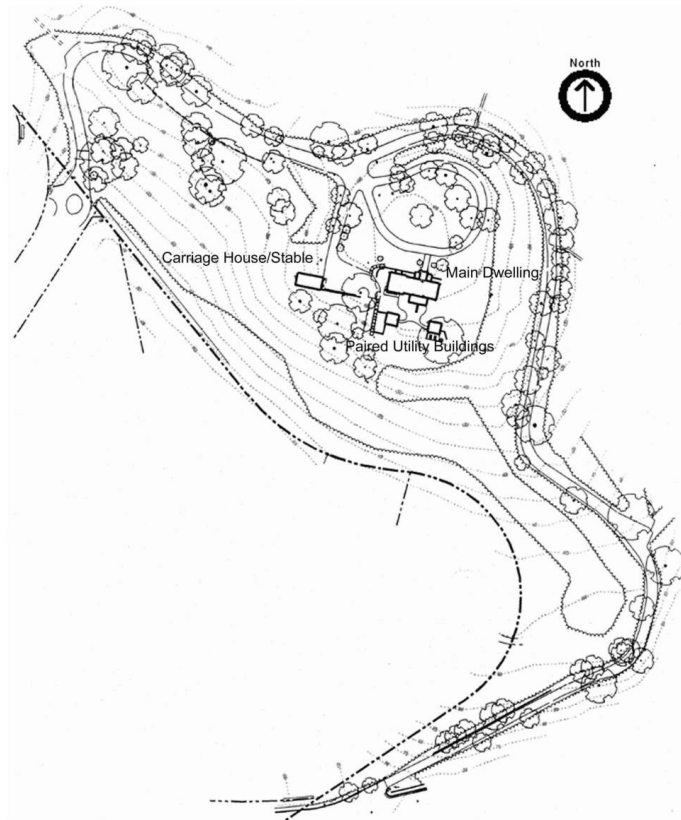
Klinge Mansion is a historic house listed on the DC District of Columbia Inventory of Historic sites since 1964 and on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) (NRHP) since 1973. Peirce lived with his family in the house until 1890, when the United States Government bought it for Rock Creek Park. The building is three stories tall and includes ten rooms, along with a two-story barn and carriage house on the property.



History that is not often discussed or easily accessible about the Peirce family is that they enslaved people that worked in the mansion and the nursery that ran out of it. To help run this nursery, Peirce and his wife used slave labor. In 1830 six enslaved people and two freemen lived at Linnean Hill; five were males aged 24-36 years old. One was a younger girl with no recorded age. By 1850, the census accounted for 13 enslaved people and one freeman. In 1860 it was his nephew, Joshua Peirce Klinge, and two African-American farmhands, George Jones, and George Rusty.

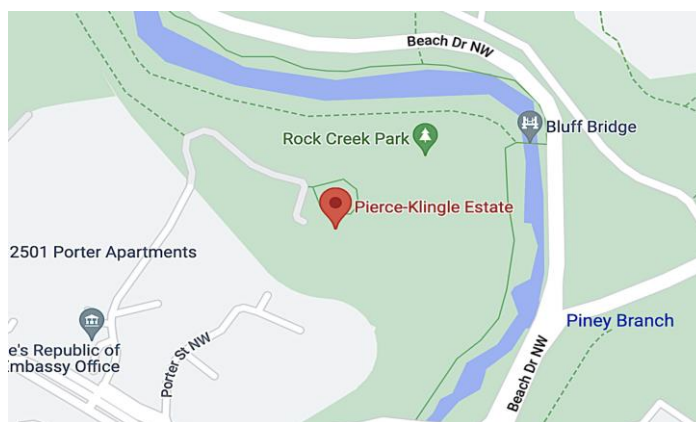
Two topographical maps, one from Boschke in 1861 and the other from Michler in 1867, show the estate's layout. Although the accuracy of the maps is questioned, they both show a general layout of the residence, outbuildings, roads, and vegetation.

When Joshua Peirce died, he was a wealthy man, and in his will from August 22nd, 1867, he specified in a note that it was to be dispersed to relatives and one annuity to previous enslaved people/workers as well as a trust for a property on Square 206 in the city. There were thirteen lots at Square 207 to be held in his trust for the construction of a hospital for foundlings.



Site plan of Peirce-Klinge Estate at Linnaean Hill, 1998

Brown N., Hanna J., Wheelock P., 1998, Site Plan of Peirce-Klinge Estate at Linnaean Hill, <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/DownloadFile/450589>



Resources:

Wikipedia "[Peirce-Klinge Mansion](#)"

DC Historic Sites "[Linnaean Hill \(Joshua Pierce House; Pierce-Klinge Mansion\)](#)"

NPS Data Store “[National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory Linnaean Hill Rock Creek Park 2003 Linnean Hill Rock Creek Park](#)”

Wikimedia Foundation. *Pierce-Klinge Mansion*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierce-Klinge_Mansion

Linnaean Hill (Joshua Pierce House; Pierce-Klinge Mansion). DC Historic Sites. (n.d.). <https://historicsites.dcpreservation.org/items/show/336>

U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). *National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory Linnaean Hill Rock Creek Park 2003 Linnean Hill Rock Creek Park*. National Parks Service. <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/>

Meridian Hill Park



Anthony De Young. (n.d). Visitors by the fountains at Meridian Hill Park. [Photograph]. Meridian Hill Park, Washington DC. <https://www.nps.gov/places/meridian-hill-park.htm>

Address: 16th St NW &, W St NW, Washington, DC 20009

Coordinates: 38.9206527221195, -77.0357005437646

Year Constructed: 1910

Short Description: Meridian Hill Park was built as a result of the Senate Parks Commission’s McMillian Plan. Many African Americans called this are home prior to its construction and were forced to leave once construction of the park began. Architect George Burnap was responsible

for designing the layout and structures of the park, and worked with master craftsman John Joseph Early to construct it. The upper portion was opened in 1923 and the full park in 1936.

Meridian Hill Park

When DC was founded, present-day Meridian Hill Park was owned by [Robert Peter](#), a wealthy Georgetown merchant, and was known as Peter's Hill. In 1804, President [Thomas Jefferson](#) had a [meridian](#) placed on the hill that African American Surveyor [Benjamin Banneker](#) surveyed. Centered precisely north of the White House, this meridian helped to establish a longitudinal marker for the city and the nation. It is called Meridian Hill due to being off of old Meridian Avenue. In 1816, [Commodore David Porter](#) purchased the Meridian Hill Estate, which laid on the outskirts of Washington, along with other rural farms. He and his family resided there for some time, and other prominent figures lived there after them as well, including [President John Quincy Adams](#) and [Colonel Gilbert Thompson](#). The land was taken during the civil war and transformed into an outpost for the union army named Camp Cameron. After the civil war, newly freed African American slaves found refuge at the camp and developed a community on the land. In 1867, Meridian Hill was divided into two subdivisions, Hall and Elvans. The African American community that resided there prior to the subdivision was included in the plans. [Wayland Seminary](#) was also located in Meridian Hill, where African Americans could be trained to become teachers and preachers.

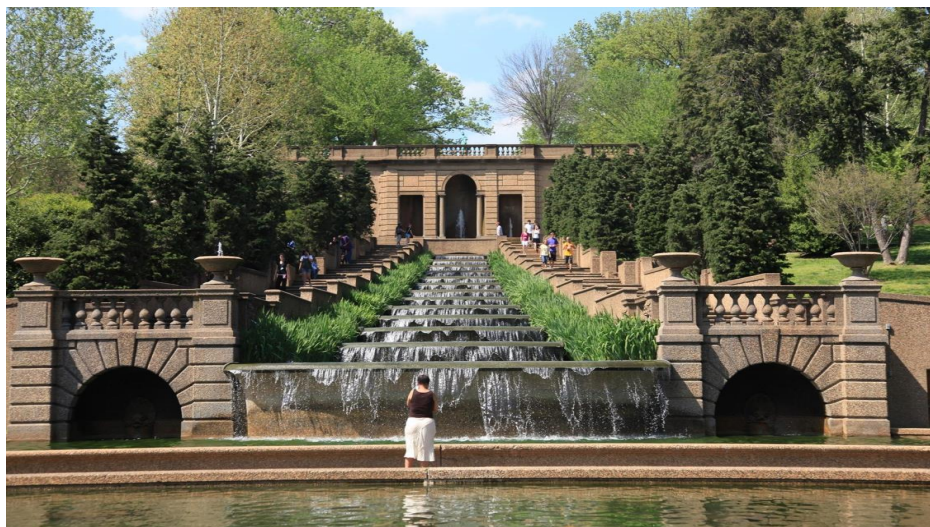
[Mary Foote Henderson](#) and her husband, John Brooks Henderson, purchased many lots in the neighborhood and built their home in Henderson Castle. Mary wanted to develop the Meridian Hill area with two proposals: the new presidential mansion and the Lincoln Memorial, but both proposals were denied. She did, however, develop 13 elaborate private residences intended to be used as embassies along 15th and 16th street with the help of architect [George Oakley Totten Jr.](#) In 1901, the Senate Parks Commission [McMillian Plan](#), which suggested a change to Washington's appearance and Mary advocated for creating a park on Meridian Hill. Mary was prominent in lobbying for funding and the completion of the park.



Henderson Castle

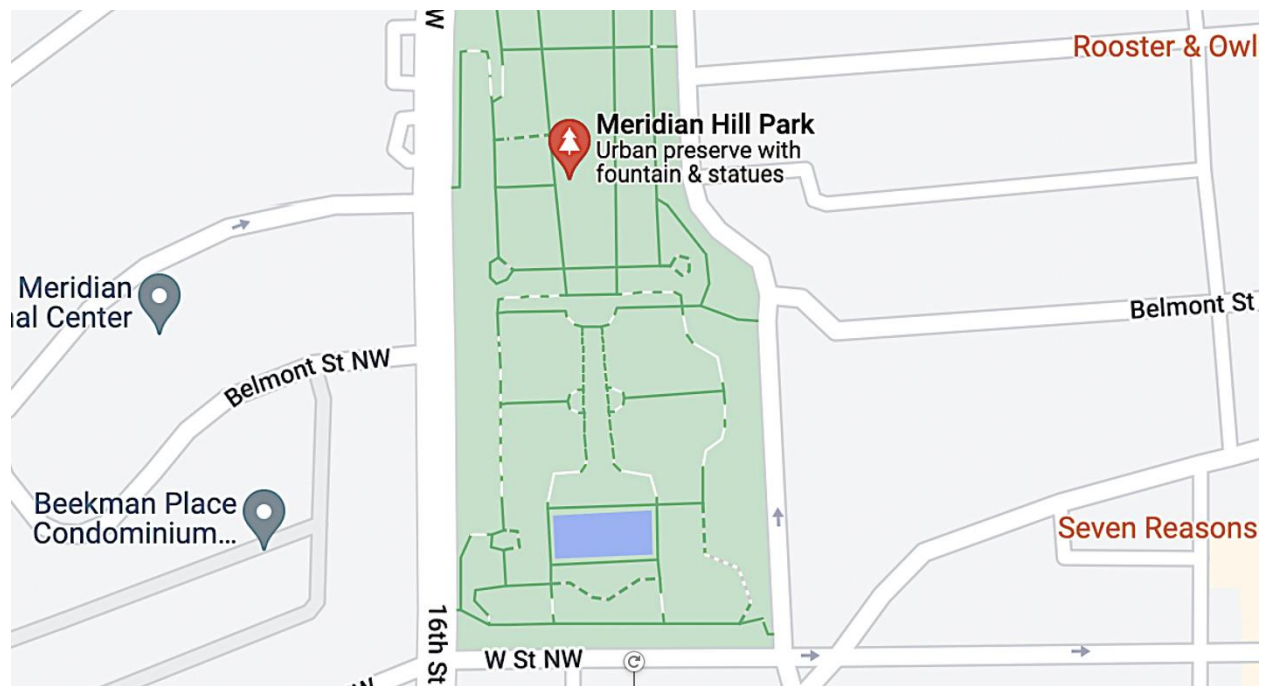
N.d (1931) Henderson Castle on 16th Street [Photograph]. Henderson Castle, Washington DC
<https://www.facebook.com/StreetsofWashington/photos/a.111667195599803/825351494231366/>

However, African Americans did not fit her vision of Meridian Hill. On June 25th, 1910, Meridian Hill park was approved and established with plans of construction starting in 1912. Only two of the nine African American homeowners accepted their appraisals on their homes. The other owners and renters paid their rent to the chief of the Engineer's office until eviction. These families likely moved to 17th street or the modern-day Reed-Coke neighborhood. Their homes were scheduled to be demolished by 1912, including the homes of 35 African American families. The landscape architect [George Burnaps's](#) plans inspired by European capitals were approved in 1914 and edited by [Horace Peaslee](#) soon after. [John Joseph Earley](#) was the master craftsman for the park, which took two decades to complete. The upper portion was opened in 1923 and fully opened in 1936.



Anthony De Young. (n.d). Visitors by the fountains at Meridian Hill Park. [Photograph]. Meridian Hill Park, Washington DC.
<https://www.nps.gov/places/meridian-hill-park.htm>

The park was used for all ethnic groups once the National Park Service took control. The park's neighborhood in the 1960s was one of the country's highest in crime and had many riots, and efforts were brought to bring life back to the park and area. After the Malcolm X assassination, drumming circles and others gathered around the park to protest. Black nationalist groups like the Black Panthers used the space for rallies. In 1970, [Angela Davis](#) made an appearance at a rally and proposed renaming the park, Malcolm X Park. The park was not able to be renamed due to the James Buchanan Statue present there. Since 2005, the Park Service has been working on a general restoration, repairing and replacing the unique concrete structures as needed. The Friends of Meridian Hill, whose goal is to revitalize the park beginning in 1990, was led by three African Americans: Rev. Morris Samuel, Howard Coleman, and Josephine Butler.



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HouseHistoryMan. (1970, January 1). *A log cabin in Meridian Hill Park? its true!* A log cabin in Meridian Hill Park? Its True! <http://househistoryman.blogspot.com/2012/02/log-cabin-in-meridian-hill-park-its.html>

Neighborhood Reclaims Meridian Hill Park in Washington, DC. RSS. (n.d.). <https://www.pps.org/article/successwashington-3>

RockCreekConservancy. (2022, October 20). *Race, history, and Rock Creek: Civil Rights in Meridian Hill / Malcolm X Park*. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjojPmF9Sa8&t=2426s>

RockCreekConservancy. (2022, January 12). *Race, history, and Rock Creek: History of meridian hill/Malcolm X Park*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLqZy8pkU-o>

Milkhouse Ford



Lepore, A. (2022). *Milkhouse Ford* [Photograph]. Milkhouse Ford. Washington DC

Address: Off Beach Dr NW, Washington DC, 20008

Coordinates: 38.964827589646035, -77.04764660207636

Year Constructed: 1904

Short Description: Milkhouse Ford is a [ford](#), a shallow part of a river made for crossing. It was constructed in 1904 to make it easier for people on horseback and later automobiles to cross the

river. The origins of the name “Milkhouse” are unknown, but it can be assumed that a dairy farm was located close to it on the bank of Rock Creek, hence the naming.

Milkhouse Ford

A [ford](#) is a low point in a river constructed to make it easier to cross by horseback or automobile. Milkhouse Ford is one of these fords, located right near Miller Cabin. The paveway was constructed in 1904; however, it is believed that it was used even before then.

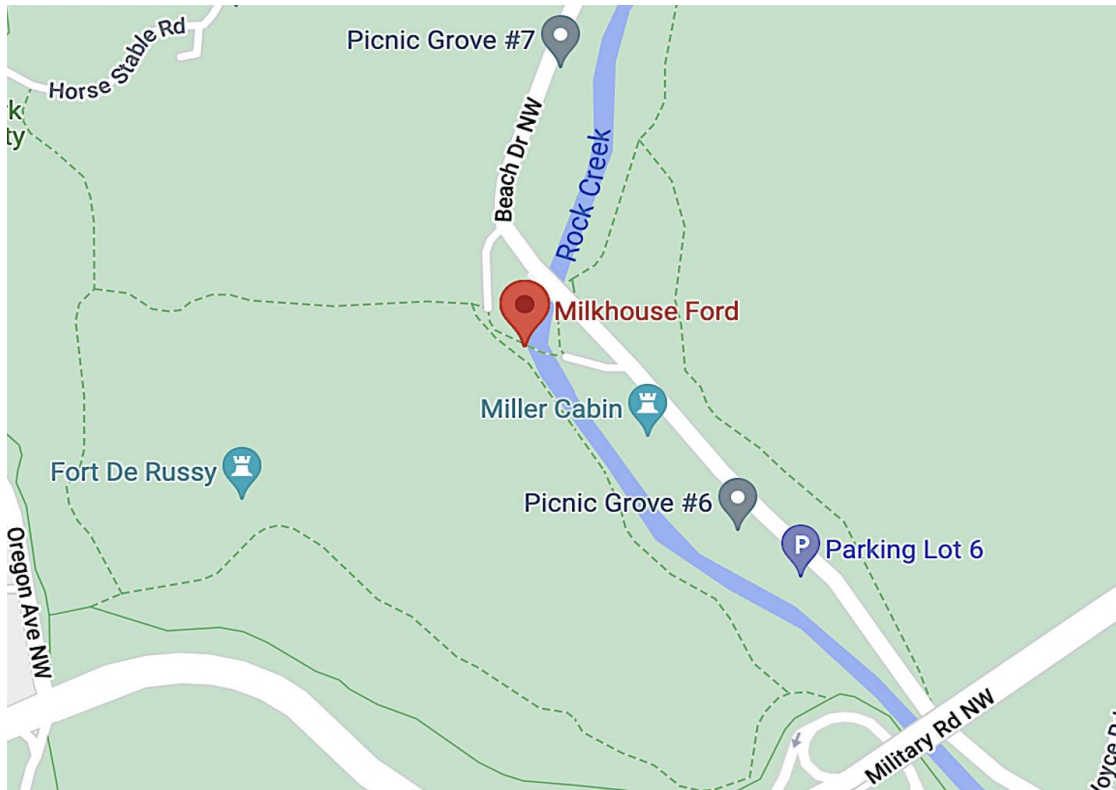


Lepore, A. (2022). *Ford Original Pathway* [Photograph]. Milkhouse Ford. Washington DC

Although the age of the natural ford is unknown, it is believed to be one of the oldest roads in Washington and possibly could have originated as a Native American trail. The paveway and the seats constructed on the riverbank use the style of [rustic architecture](#), where the stones used come right from the surrounding area. The same can be said for the many fireplaces scattered around Rock Creek, and one can be seen across the river at Miller Cabin.



Lepore, A. (2022). *Milkhouse Ford Natural Bench* [Photograph]. Milkhouse Ford. Washington DC



References:

U.S. Department of the Interior. (2022, March 24). *Milkhouse Ford* (U.S. National Park Service). National Parks Service. <https://www.nps.gov/places/milkhouse-ford.htm>

Peirce Mill



National Park Service (n.d.). *Peirce Mill* [Photograph]. Pierce Mill. Washington DC. <https://www.nps.gov/places/peirce-mill.htm>

Address: 2401 Tilden St NW, Washington DC, 20008

Coordinates: 38.94024193465567, -77.05189653091318

Year Constructed: 1829

Short Description: Isaac Peirce and his son Abner built Peirce Mill in 1829, where it processed grain into flour as well as sold other products like wheat, corn, and rye. Peirce owned 14 or so slaves whom all lived on the grounds of the mill and worked on it as well as its surrounding orchards, along with other farm-related tasks. The mill continued to run even after Isaac's death in 1841 until the main shaft broke in 1897, some time after it was purchased by the federal government. Today, it still stands as one of the only remaining mills in the entirety of Rock Creek Park, with tours available on the weekends from 10-4.

Peirce Mill

Isaac Peirce was born in 1756 in Pennsylvania and was raised by [Quaker](#) parents. In 1788, he and his wife Elizabeth purchased 150 acres of land along Rock Creek before it was a park. The 150 included 10 acres that already included a mill and a few other scattered structures. Over time, the estate grew to around 2,000 acres, which included a distillery, springhouse, cow barn, carriage barn, potato barn, and several other buildings.



Library of Congress. (n.d.). *Historic Photograph of Peirce Mill* [Photograph]. Peirce Mill. Washington DC
<https://www.nps.gov/rocr/learn/historyculture/peirce-mill-history.htm>

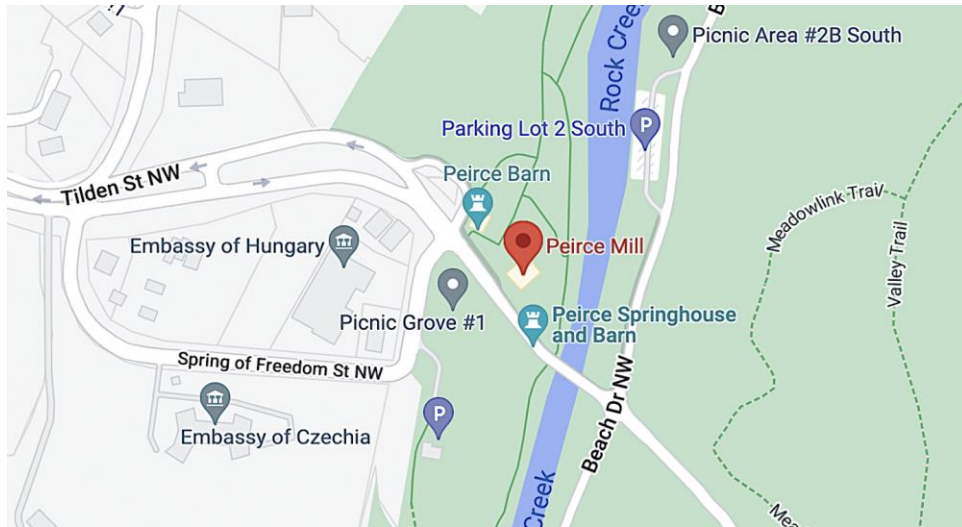
Peirce Mill was built in 1829, sometime after the land was purchased. The mill used the [Oliver Evans System](#), which made labor easier for those working it, the workers mostly being slaves. Peirce owned the mill but did not manage it. Instead, he leased it out to others who operated it for him. The reasoning behind this is most likely Peirce's lack of experience as a miller and would hire others to do the job for him and collect money from their success.

The federal government began purchasing land in the Rock Creek Valley to create the park starting in the 1890s. Peirce Mill, along with the carriage barn and springhouse, were purchased at that time but were allowed to continue to be run after that by the previous owners. The mill ran until 1897, when it was forced to shut down due to the main shaft breaking. In the years following, the mill was turned into a tea house to provide refreshments for parkgoers. The tea house had five managers from its conception in 1905 till its closing in 1934, most notably Ms. [Hattie Sewell](#). Sewell was African American and operated the teahouse successfully from 1920-21. However, her contract renewal was denied by UPBG director [Colonel Clarence Sherrill](#) because of several complaints from white residents of the influx of African Americans frequenting the area.



Lepore, A. (2022). *Peirce Mill Corn Bag* [Photograph]. DC History Center. Washington DC

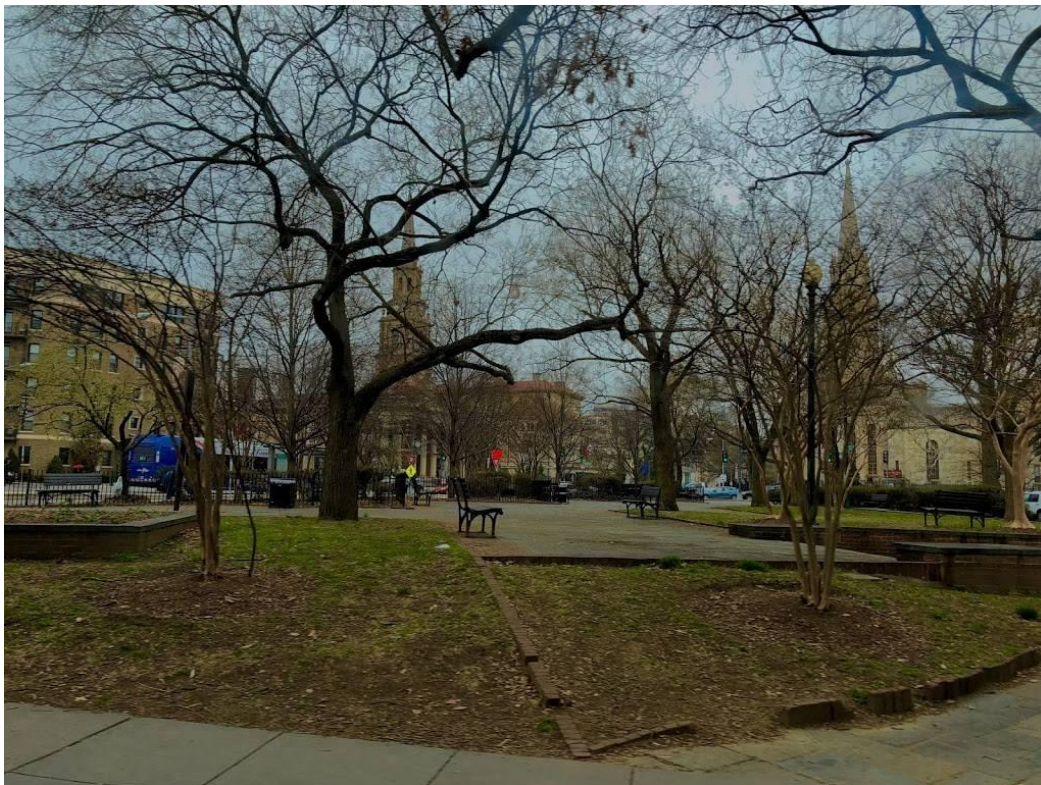
The shutdown of the teahouse in 1934 was prompted by the new superintendent of National Capital Parks, C. Marshall Finnan, who had proposed that Peirce Mill be restored to its original design with the mill machinery inhabiting it. Several restoration projects over the 20th century have restored it to what it once looked like back in the 1850s as a running mill, and since 2011 the mill has been operational, thanks to the help of [The Friends of Peirce Mill](#).



Resources:

Peirce Mill (National Park Service): <https://www.nps.gov/places/peirce-mill.htm>

Rabaut Park



Xander Rameriz (n.d) Rabaut Park [Picture]. Rabaut Park, Washington DC.
https://cdn.businessyab.com/assets/uploads/d6eba73316b74476dfa747386f0935db_-united-states-district-of-columbia-washington-lanier-heights-mount-pleasant-street-northwest-2900-rabaut-park-202-673-7647.jp

Address: 2900 Mt Pleasant St NW, Washington, DC 20009

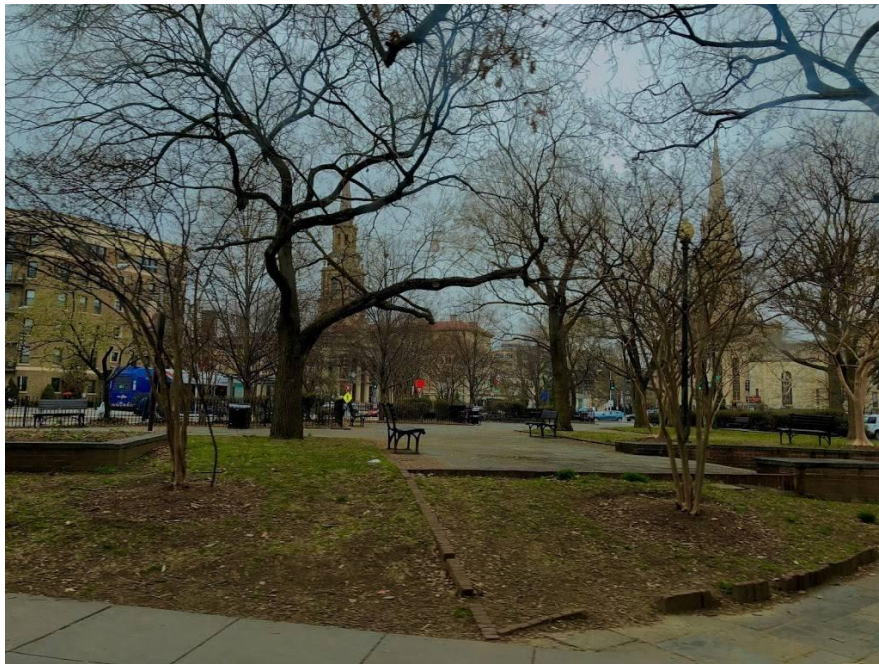
Coordinates: 38.92681706266098, -77.03700316957679

Year Constructed: 1910-1930

Short Description: Known in the community as Rat Park and Pigeon Park, Rabaut Park a small block park in Mt. Pleasant. It is named After Congressman Louis Rabaut. There is little information regarding the parks construction, several documented redevelopment plans have changed the way the park looks.

Rabaut Park

Commonly known in the local community as Rat Park and Pigeon Park, Rabaut Park is a small patch of parkland in Mt. Pleasant. The park was constructed between 1910-1930 and is named after [Louis Rabaut](#), a former Democratic Congressman from Michigan. Congressman Rabaut is responsible for crafting the federal resolution to insert the words “Under God” into the Pledge of Allegiance. Right across from the park is the statue of [Francis Asbury](#), an English immigrant who brought the gospel across the American Frontier.



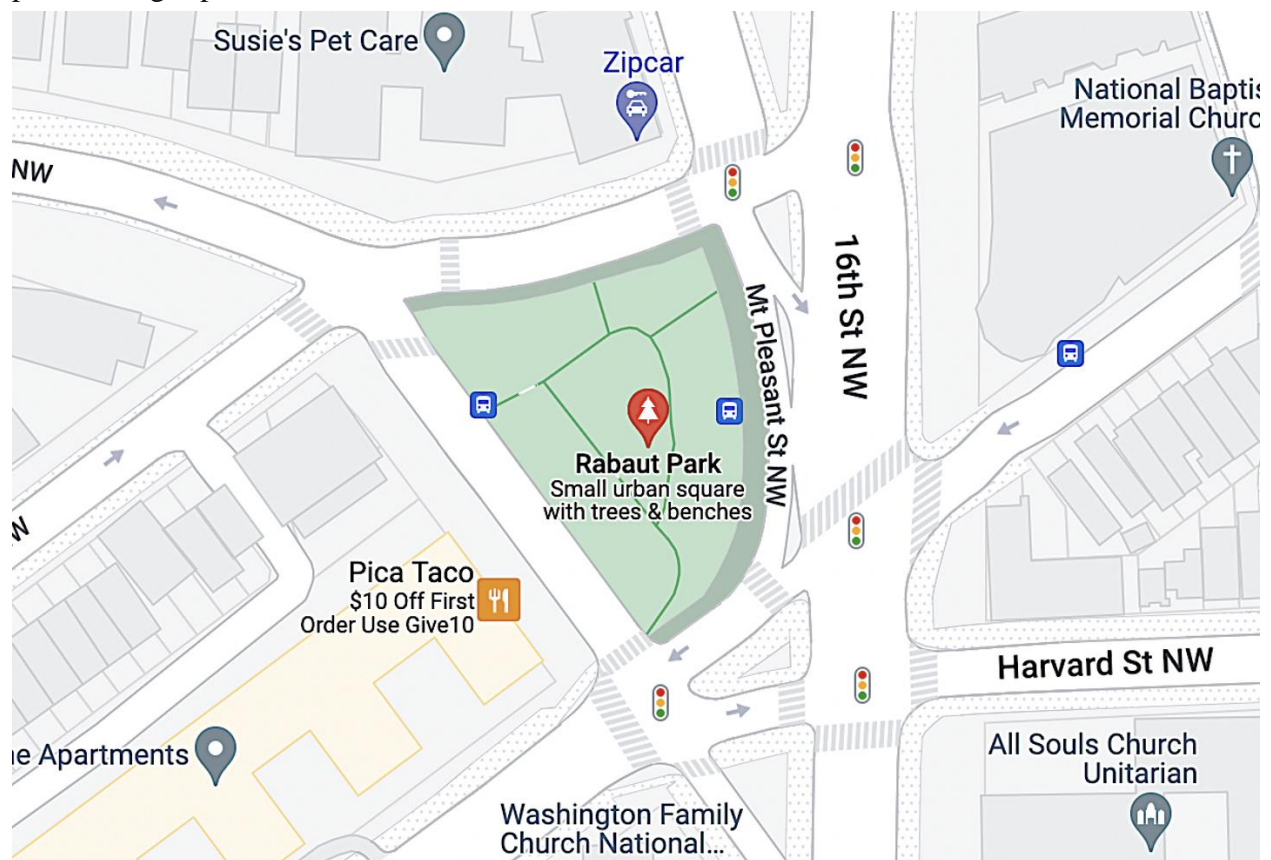
Rabaut Park

Xander Rameriz (n.d) Rabaut Park [Picture]. Rabaut Park, Washington DC.

https://cdn.businessyab.com/assets/uploads/d6eba73316b74476dfa747386f0935db_-united-states-district-of-columbia-washington-lanier-heights-mount-pleasant-street-northwest-2900-rabaut-park-202-673-7647.jpg

In 1910 the Mount Pleasant Citizens Association was founded and campaigned for the construction of parks as the surrounding neighborhood began to populate and overcrowd. There is no information regarding the park's development; however, photos from the late 1920s

indicate the site was an open grassy space. A tree line pattern and field drawings show that two paths bisected the site, with benches ringed on the perimeter forming a ring. In 1961 a redevelopment plan was presented that created the park in its present form with brick and concrete walkways. Later in 1963, the park's name was formally changed to Rabaut Park in honor of Congressman Louis Rabaut of Michigan. Again in 1987, renovations to the existing landscape. The community group, Friends of Pigeon Park, was formed in early 2003 with the goal of revitalizing the park, but it was challenging to make an addition to the park due to federal law. At the time, the only indication that the park was federal property was a graffiti-marked sign proclaiming it part of Rock Creek Park.



References

- Tim. (n.d.). *Louis Rabaut "rat" park*. The 42. Retrieved December 5, 2022, from <https://the42bus.blogspot.com/2010/11/louis-rabaut-rat-park.html>
- 309 C Rabaut Annotated Chronology[49]. (n.d.).

Sarah Whitby



Artist's Reconstruction of the Sarah Whitby House . ND <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=FG9Rno5fSr0C&pg=GBS.PP2&hl=en>

Address: 5200 Glover Rd NW, Washington, DC 20015

Coordinates: 38.95998030732165, -77.05169360207653

Year Constructed: 1800s

Short Description: The remains of a house owned by an African American were found recently in 2005, and excavations of the house found many pieces of African American lost history. The owner of the house was a woman named Sarah Whitby, who lived in the land now known as Rock Creek Park between 1870 and 1900

Sarah Whitby

The buried remains of the home of an African American woman were recently discovered in 2005, and excavations of the remains revealed the once-lost history of her and her family's lives (1). Sarah Whitby, the owner of the home, was a widowed laundress from North Carolina. She lived in the house with her nine children and taught them how to read even though she was illiterate (2 page 2).

Whitby Household		
Name	Age	Employment
Albert	28	day laborer
Hannah	22	washing and ironing
Corah	21	servant
Sarah	20	servant
Elijah	18	day laborer

Source: U.S. Census 1900

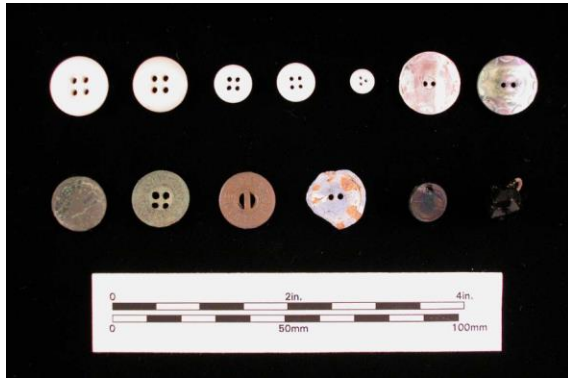
Whitby began renting the house in 1895 on a small parcel of land belonging to Isaac Shoemaker. The home cost a mere \$3.00 (~\$106.43 today) a month and included two rooms and a stable (2 page 77). Archaeological research concluded that the home was built in the early 1800s and was occupied by several previous African American tenants for decades prior (2 page 77).

Table 7: Parcels, Tenants, Improvements, Rent, 1895

Parcel No.	Tenant	Improvements	Rent (\$)
9	Mrs. Eli Pinkney	Frame house, 1 room, poor	Free
21		Frame house, 4 rooms, poor	3.00
23	<i>Torn down</i>	Frame house, 4 rooms and out house, poor	
26	<i>Torn down</i>	Frame house, 3 rooms, stable, fair	5.00
27	Marion Osborn	Frame house, 6 rooms and stable, good	Free
29	William McCrone	Frame house, 6 rooms and stable, good	8.00
33	Policeman Hess	Frame house, 10 rooms and barn, good	Free
	L.D. Jones	Frame house, 4 rooms and small barn, good	5.00
	<i>Torn down</i>	Frame house, 4 rooms and outhouse, poor	5.00
34	J.T. Morgan MP in charge of Park	Frame house, 10 rooms, barn, cow-shed & outbuildings, fair	Free
38	<i>Torn down</i>	Frame house, 2 rooms and out house	4.00
39	Robert Cross	Frame house, 1 room and out house, poor, 3 acres of ground	3.75
	Hugh McMahon	Frame house, 4 rooms, fair, dilapidated barn	10.00
	Hannah Williams	Small house on Blagden Mill Road, bad condition	Free
	Thomas Riggs	Frame house, 3 rooms, fair	4.00
	Thomas Smith	Frame house, 3 rooms, fair	4.00
		Frame house, 3 rooms, fair	4.00
	<i>Torn down</i>	Frame house, 2 rooms, fair	4.00
40	D.C. Duley	Frame house, 4 rooms, stable and out-house, good	5.00
63	Samuel Dominess	Frame house, 3 rooms, stable, poor	4.00
65	Charles Dixon	Frame house, 1 room, stable, poor	3.00
66	Jane Dixon	Frame house, 4 rooms, out house, fair	6.00
69	Sarah Whitby	Frame house, 2 rooms, stable, poor	3.00
75		Stone mill, building good, race poor	10.00
76		Stone barn, fair	2.00
79	Lizzie D. Larkin	Stone house, 7 rooms and stable, fair	20.00
84	Floyd Harleston	Frame house, 14 rooms, stable and carriage house, fair	14.00

Source: National Archives, Records of the Rock Creek Park Commission

Researchers discovered more than 500 artifacts in the buried cellar, 50 of those being buttons, which they used to conclude her occupation as a laundress.



Buttons from the Sarah Whitby Site

Artifacts from the Sarah Whitby Site

Source: NPS photo 2005

Resources:

Google. (n.d.). *The Sarah Whitby site and African-American history, Rock Creek Park, district of columbia - google play*. Google Play Books., from <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=FG9Rno5fSr0C&pg=GBS.PP1&hl=en> (1)

Louis Berger Group, Inc, John Bedell, Stuart Fiedel, Charles LeeDecker. 2008. *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque: An Archeological Identification and Evaluation Study of Rock Creek Park, Volume I. Volume I* (2)

Sherrill Drive



Address: Sherrill Drive NW, Washington DC 20012

Coordinates: 38.97252164400137, -77.03798823107981

Year Constructed: 1925

Short Description: Sherrill Drive was constructed in 1925 to create a quicker path between the Takoma section of Washington DC with Beach Drive, a long road that cuts through Rock Creek Park. The road was named after Colonel Clarence Osborne Sherrill, who served as the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds director from 1921-1925. He is most famously known for overseeing the completion of the Lincoln Memorial and his altercations with President Woodrow Wilson and Hattie Sewell, a local African American shopkeeper.

Sherrill Drive & Colonel Clarence Sherrill

Sherrill Drive was constructed in 1925 to create a quicker path between the Takoma section of Washington DC and Beach Drive, a long road that cuts through Rock Creek Park. It was named after Colonel Clarence Osborne Sherrill, who had served as the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds director from 1921-1925.



The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography

Clarence Sherrill

Photo of Colonel Clarence Osborne Sherrill Source: <http://www.jesherrill.com/ptouco.htm>

Colonel Sherrill graduated from the West Point in 1901 with a degree in civil engineering. Before his time as director of the OPBC, he had taught at several service schools. He wrote a textbook on [topography](#) for the army, *Military Topography for the Mobile Forces, Including Map Reading, Surveying, and Sketching*. Colonel Sherrill served in France during World War I and, for his services, was awarded the [Distinguished Service Medal](#).

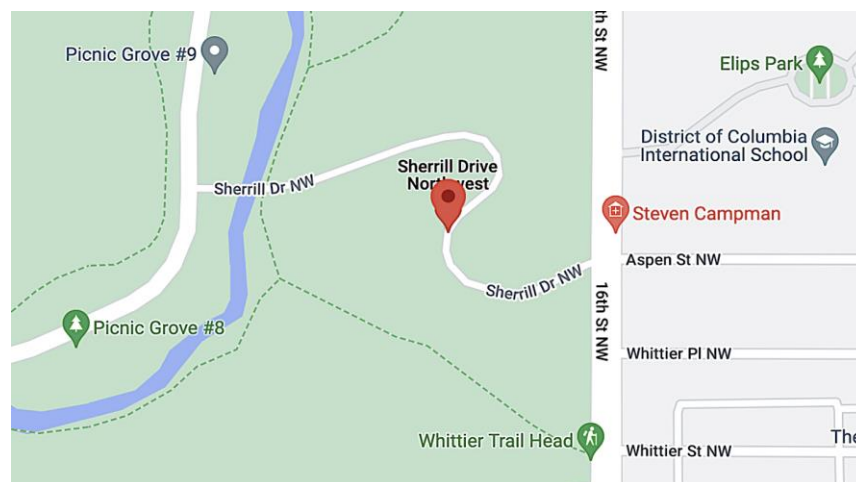
During Colonel Sherrill's time as director of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, he was heavily involved in both the completion of the Lincoln Memorial as well as managing the vast amount of land inhabiting Rock Creek Park. However, his time overseeing Rock Creek Park is considered to be around a different standard of developing one of the United States' most famous monuments. One of Colonel Sherrill's first acts as acting director of the UPBC was the establishment of segregation in the park's picnic areas. The policy did not last long; however racial groups still socially segregated themselves and typically did so in these areas along with other park activities.

Although Sherrill is responsible for the completion of a famous monument, he is most well known for his treatment of an African American woman, Ms. Hattie Sewell, and the teahouse that she ran on the grounds of Rock Creek Park. Ms. Sewell purchased the teahouse for a merely \$45 (~\$667 today) monthly rent in 1920. Under Sewell's management, the tea house was extremely successful, and business had increased significantly compared to the previous owner. However, the success of the house was overshadowed by complaints from prominent white residents upset about the influx of African Americans in their neighborhood. E.S. Newman, a park neighbor and trustee of the Pierce-Shoemaker estate, used his influence on the park to "force" Colonel Sherrill to deny Ms. Sewell's contract renewal in October of 1921.

Colonel Sherrill's position as park manager resulted in many interactions with famous figures, most notably President Woodrow Wilson. President Wilson had enjoyed walks and drives through Rock Creek Park during his presidency and maintained an interest in the park even after he left office in March 1921. When Wilson had heard word of the construction of a golf course on RCP lands, he wrote to Colonel Sherrill:

Is it possible that it is true that a golf course is to be laid out in Rock Creek Park? I am loath to believe that such an unforgivable piece of vandalism is even in contemplation, and therefore beg leave to enter my earnest and emphatic protest. That park is the most beautiful thing in the United States, and to mar its natural beauty for the sake of a sport would be to do an irretrievable thing which subsequent criticism and regret would never repair.

The course was subsequently built despite Wilson's wishes.



References:

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. (n.d.). *Clarence O. Sherrill*. U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, <https://www.cfa.gov/about-cfa/who-we-are/clarence-o-sherrill>

National Park Service. (n.d.). *Peirce Mill*, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/places/peirce-mill.htm>

Mackintosh, B. (1985). *ROCK CREEK PARK An Administrative History*. National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/rocr/learn/historyculture/adhi.htm>

Soapstone Valley Park



DC - Soapstone Valley Park and Trail, parkrxamerica, <https://parkrxamerica.org/m/3132/soapstone-valley-park-and-trail>

Address: Washington DC, 20008

Coordinates: 38.9457116192308, -77.05807331288128

Year Constructed: Unknown

Short Description: Around 2000 BC, people extracted stone from beds of river cobblestone that are exposed along some of the bluffs around Rock Creek. Natives would use these stones to make weapons and tools. Dig sites were formed by archaeologists to excavate these artifacts, and today Soapstone Valley Park stands over these sites.

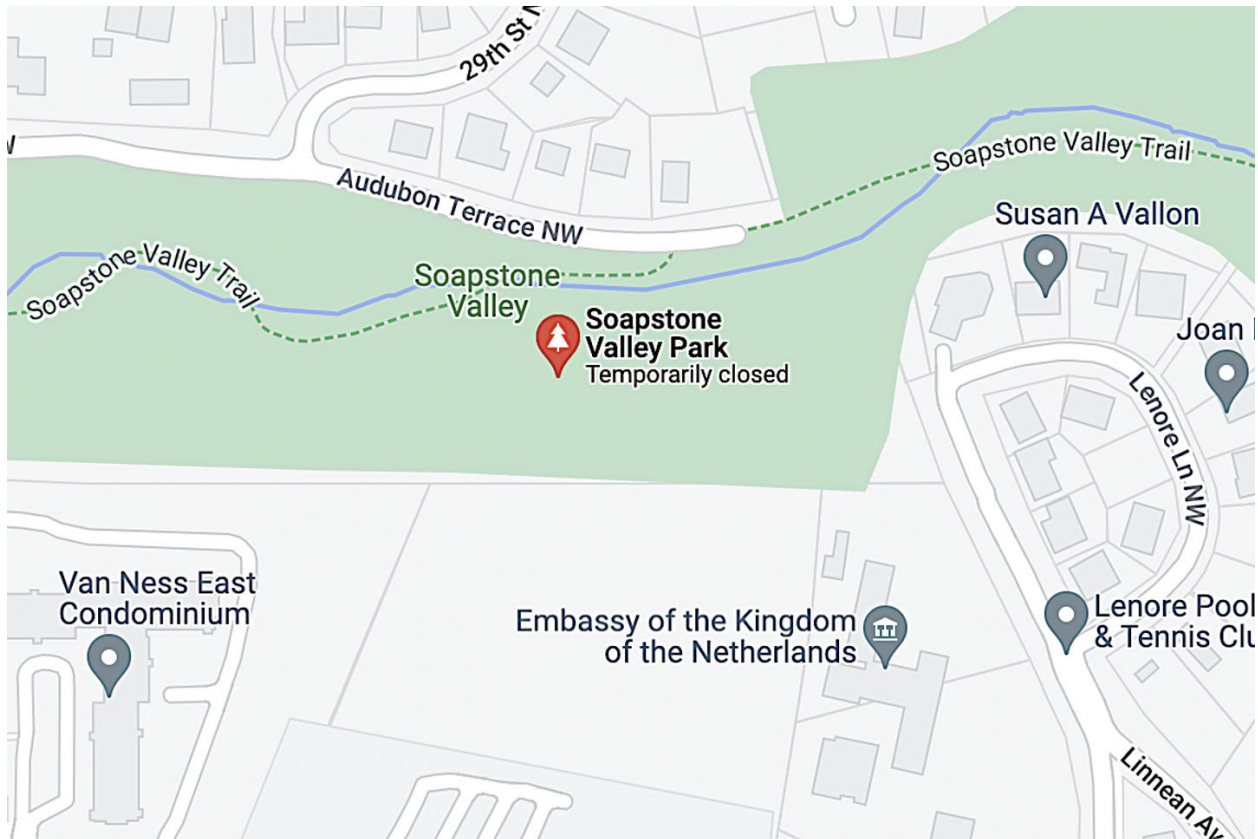
Soapstone Valley

Soapstone Valley Park, which includes the park and surrounding area, was historically used by Native Americans as a place to farm resources. One of the earliest known instances of Native American activity can be traced back to ~2000 BC, where tribes mined [quartzite](#) from exposed cobblestone on the shoreline of Rock Creek. The mineral was mainly used to make weapons, specifically axes; however, some Archaic residents of Virginia and Maryland used the quartzite to make spear points for the [Savannah River broad spear](#). However, the indigenous peoples used a rock called [soapstone](#) to make tools. These weapons and tools were excavated in a dig site overseen by archaeologist William Henry Holmes. The dig lasted five years, starting in 1889. Holmes concluded from his research that despite the artifacts they had found, Soapstone Valley was not used as a settlement by indigenous peoples, "The remoteness of the site and the conformation of the hills upon which the quarries are located rendered it improbable that the locality was used for dwelling or for any other purpose than that of quarrying the potstone and roughing out the vessels." (4) There have been some future diggings since the initial findings of Holmes; however, they have since been halted, and the park's landscape is under preservation.



Three Rough Stone "Bifaces" Quarried from the Banks of Rock Creek around 2200 BC NPS.

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/images/QUARRYBIFACES.PNG>



Resources:

<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=111605>

Louis Berger Group, Inc, John Bedell, Stuart Fiedel, Charles LeeDecker. 2008. Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque: An Archeological Identification and Evaluation Study of Rock Creek Park, Volume I. Volume I (2)

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<https://www.daltile.com/countertops-product-category/natural-quartzite#:~:text=Quartzite%20is%20a%20hard%2C%20metamorphic,flaws%20like%20scratches%20and%20etching.> (3)

Fhc, says, M. C., says, M. R., & says, D. H. (2020, January 6). *Lost Forest Hills: The Rose Hill Quarry: Forest Hills connection || News and life in our DC neighborhood.* Forest Hills Connection || News and Life in Our DC Neighborhood | Covering Forest Hills, Van Ness, North Cleveland Park and Wakefield. from <https://www.foresthillsconnection.com/news/lost-forest-hills-the-rose-hill-quarry/> (4)

