

FENWICK PARK & VICINITY:

~

A HISTORICAL GLANCE

FENWICK PARK

• FALLS CHURCH, VA. •

LARGE 2 BEDROOM BRICK BUNGALOWS



ATTENTION VETERANS

\$12,150—\$750 DOWN FOR VETERANS

If You Have Waited for Value—This Is It!

- Without Publicity, 31 Sold
- Even the Workmen Building Them Say They Are the Best Homes They Have Seen—and Bought Several
- Pre-war Construction with New Ideas
- Construction FHA and GI Inspected and Approved
- City Sewer and Water
- Paved Streets, Curbs, Gutters and Concrete Sidewalks Throughout
- Individual Concrete Walk and Gravel Driveway to Each House
- Extra Large Lots with plenty of Room for Gardens and Flowers
- Have All Advantages of Fresh Air and Living in the Country—Yet in the Middle of the City
- Living room Over 18' with Colonial Mantel over fireplace

- Full Dining Room Tastefully Designed including Chair Rail
- Kitchen Appointed to Make Cooking Soom Like Play
- Porch 8x12 at Rear of House
- Two Beautiful Spacious Bedrooms
- Genuine Tiled Baths
- Ample Closet Space Including Linen Closet
- Abundance of Electrical Outlets
- Finished Stairway to a Large Floored Attic That Could Be Used for Expansion
- Large Full Basement Planned for Recreation Room or Work Shop, and extra Room for Laundry or Utilities—also outside Entrance and Oil Air-Conditioned Heat
- Attractive Papered Walls Over 3 Coats of Genuine Plaster

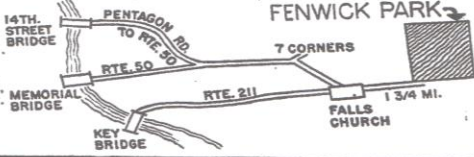
NOTE: Interior Decorations May Be Selected By Purchaser
 All in all, and after adding up the features and appointments in both columns, there is nothing left for comparison; and is the greatest award winner in housing. So—do not delay—drive out today or you will be too late.

OPEN TODAY UNTIL DARK
OPEN DAILY 4 P.M. UNTIL DARK

20 MINUTES FROM D. C. OVER EXPRESS HIGHWAY

TO REACH:

Out Lee Highway to traffic light in Falls Church, continue straight ahead about 1 1/4 miles to FENWICK PARK on left.



ARLINGTON REALTY CO.

EXCLUSIVE SALES AGENTS

2204 WILSON BOULEVARD GL. 1900—OX. 4123



The Frank L. Birch Farm, c. ~ 1923 (see pg. 14 below)

Up by the American Majestic service station, there is an old oak tree, "The Humble Oak," (right) that a dedication plaque claims is 150+ years old. It may just be the tree that is pictured above (red arrow), taken from a distance and angle approximately around Rogers Drive. It also may be the same old tree behind the house pictured on the front cover, which was likely a model home on Rogers Drive, because a new development would normally be cleared of trees. The subject of the photograph is the background hill, a rocky grove of trees that belonged to the famous Henderson family of Falls Church at the time -- now National Memorial Park Cemetery. The land under Fenwick Park's location is overgrown with weeds and wildflowers. Trees and heavy scrub brush are noticeably absent, leading one to speculate it was cleared at one time for cultivation. Just below the rocky hillside and past the tree is what was then known as the Falls Church and Fairfax Court House Road (Lee Highway). The popular road incorporated a Native American trail leading to a Potomac River fishing and meeting/trading point at the present location of the Key Bridge.



Preface

As centuries pass and generations of people come and go, sometimes the history they left is forgotten, especially if it's unspectacular in nature. But every grain of soil underneath our feet has a story to tell if one listens carefully: of Native Americans hunting, farmers tilling, soldiers foraging, and children playing. With this narrative, it is my hope that our residents will further appreciate and take pride in our modest neighborhood, for its existence is a result of, and represents, a significant period of our nation's history and culture, and a history of American residential architecture as well. And next time you till some soil to plant a flower or tree, perhaps you'll realize that you are continuing to add a tiny piece to that story.

This account is based on Falls Church City, Fairfax County, Arlington County, state and Library of Congress sources and archives, as well as personal contributions from current and former residents. Tons of maps, too. Unfortunately, some research has reached a dead end. Hopefully, new research and information may still unfold. For ease in reading, it is not composed as an academic research paper, in which reference footnotes are listed on each page; however, a bibliography is included at the end of the report. Any speculation on the part of the author is noted with brackets or wording. This account is a "living" document for further contributions, corrections and insights from anyone.

Several current and former residents and local government officials were generous in contributing research, historical documents and photographs. Many thanks to current and former residents Michael Kruelle, Harold Schultz, Ray Richards, and Peggy Pillar, an original family resident. Many thanks also to Sandra Rathbun, Katrina Krempasky, and other employees of the Fairfax County Archives room; Marta Lamas and other employees of the Mary Riley Styles Public Library (Falls Church City); all employees of the Virginia Room of the Fairfax City Regional Library and Arlington County Central Library; employees of the Fairfax County Land Records Department; and Edwin Henderson of Falls Church City, whose family legacy in Falls Church history, African-American and our nation's history is an extraordinary story of achievement, leadership and influence in our society. Special thanks also to David Prentiss Shreve of Lexington, VA, a former pastor at National Gardens Baptist Church, who authored a book on the history of the church.

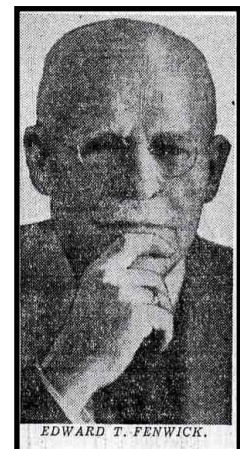
Over a span of more than five years, and mostly starts and stops, this narrative has finally come together. With apologies to those who have been waiting, it's due to a desire toward thoroughness and accuracy. Without question, it has been my pleasure to do this for all to enjoy and pass on.

Addressing a Housing Need

Fenwick Park has been established more than 77 years, and the people connected to our quaint community and the land beneath present quite an interesting story.

Fenwick Park officially encompasses all residential properties located on Stuart Drive, Rogers Drive, Lawrence Drive, Fenwick Road (legally recorded as a "Drive"), Elmwood Drive, Adams Lane, and includes homes on the portion of Strathmeade Street that intersects with Adams Lane (a.k.a. Jones' Addition, 1951) and 24 homes on Mendota Avenue and a small part of Oak Knoll Drive (a.k.a. Boger's Addition, 1954), for a current total of 239 homes.

The beginning of Fenwick Park as a subdivision dates back to February 25, 1947, when Elias Gelman (founder of the Gelman Company, 2120 L St NW # 800, Washington, DC 20037) and his wife, Vittle, subdivided the land for 202 home sites and named the pending development after the Fenwick family, who owned the land from 1925 - 1943. Gelman had purchased the property in 1943 from the heirs of the prominent D.C. patent attorney, Edward T. Fenwick, who drowned in a boating accident in the Chesapeake Bay (at Franklin Manor, MD) in the fall of 1942. In June 1942, Edward's wife, Clara, died after a long illness. Edward and his family did not live on the property; their home was located in east Falls Church (now Arlington) at 2220 N. Quantico St. So he likely bought our land for



speculative purposes, and perhaps had tenant farmers on the land. Unfortunately, there is no record of rent receipts in the family archives at Arlington Central Library.

It is interesting to note that several letters between Edward, his son Charles, and another attorney in the spring of 1942 (see Appendix 3) indicated that Edward was desperate to sell the farm because he needed the money -- perhaps to pay off medical debts from his wife's illness [?]. He attempted to sell it to another attorney, Waller Smith, via an installment agreement, but Smith defaulted on payments. Fenwick foreclosed on it and placed the property up for auction, but apparently there were no buyers and he regained possession until his death.

The Fenwick family was distinguished in Virginia, and the family lineage dated back to the 1600s from southern Maryland. One of Edward's sons, Charles **Rogers** Fenwick, became a Virginia state representative and senator, and he had a brother named **Lawrence**, who became an Episcopal minister, and hence the name for two of our streets. Charles was also the major state legislator behind the establishment of George Mason University, and the campus library was named in his honor. While we're on the subject of libraries, it's interesting to note that George Washington University's library was named after Melvin Gelman, as he was a graduate and major benefactor of the university. The source of the names of Adams, Stuart, Elmwood, Strathmeade and Mendota is unknown at this time.

Charles R. Fenwick ran for office after marrying Eleanor Russell Eastman, a prominent family from New Hampshire, and lived at the Eastman-Fenwick House at 6733 Lee Highway, across from the Exxon station, which still stands and is currently occupied (see photo). The Eastman family settled in Arlington in 1876 and became active in local civic affairs, business, and government, and had bought the home from Isaac Crossman. Isaac Crossman can be pegged as the patriarch of Falls Church, because he quickly became the biggest landowner and farmer in the area. It's also interesting to note that former state delegate Bob Hull grew up on Rogers Drive.



EASTMAN-FENWICK HOUSE (6733 Lee Highway)

Albert and Sarah Eastman built this house in 1876. Eastman, who was from New Hampshire, came to the Arlington area as a Union officer during the Civil War. Later, the Eastman's granddaughter, Eleanor, and her husband, State Senator Charles R. Fenwick, lived in the house for many years. The yellow-sided home still stands today, minus the glass façade on the front porch.

Fenwick Park was among many post-WWII developments constructed to answer housing demand following the war. WWII caused the federal government to expand enormously, and after the war, many veterans found work at the Pentagon and other government agencies. Falls Church's population nearly doubled between 1940 and 1948, prompting officials to seek incorporated city status from the Virginia legislature. As Fenwick Park's lots were developed, 90% of the original owners were veterans. The all-brick Cape Cod bungalow and small "Arlington" colonials were the most popular housing styles in the country after the war. Washington Post articles noted that Fairfax County provided "cheap land" and "fast roads" to DC jobs that lured builders, too. Noted as one of the "faster" roads for travel, the old Falls Church and Fairfax Court House Road, i.e., now Lee Highway, began to be paved with concrete in 1924, and subsequently was admired as one of the best built roads in the area. When this paving began, Lee Highway was intended to be the southern sibling of the north's famous Lincoln Highway, extending to the west coast (See Appendix 1).

SECTION
V

REAL ESTATE
Household News

The Washington Post
WASHINGTON: SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 1947

Fast Road Net, Cheap Land, Lure Builders

Proposed Dwellings Set Record

By Conrad P. Harness

NEARBY Fairfax County has long boasted it is the "most historic county in Virginia." To this claim it can now add another. It is the site of one of the East's largest building booms.

Forgotten during the World War II boom which dotted other sections of the metropolitan Washington area with large housing developments, it is now attracting large-scale developers who see the section as an ideal location for homes and apartments, with modern highways speeding residents to District



Street scene at "Fenwick Park," 200-home, 60-acre project in Fairfax County.

The author suspects that the photo above shows Rogers, and the large tree in the background may be the "Humble Oak" on Stuart.

After Gelman subdivided the land, he partnered with James Abramson and found the A & G Construction Company to build the homes, and also partnered with Arlington Realty to market and sell the home sites. Demand was so great that 31 home sites sold before any advertising was begun. The base price of a home was \$12,150, and featured full, unfinished basements, unfinished attics, 12 x 8 rear porches, and one-car gravel driveways. One survey map shows the first streets to be paved were Stuart, Rogers, and Adams, in the upper half of the neighborhood (toward Lee Highway). All of Lawrence, Elmwood, and Fenwick were paved later as development progressed. Someone told the author that the model home was the first one on Lawrence, behind Nova Auto Care now, but if Lawrence wasn't paved until much later, that remains questionable. As

THE FAIRFAX STANDARD PAGE THREE

Greetings to Residents of

FENWICK PARK

Lee Highway's New, Attractive Subdivision

D & S Delicatessen
111 S. Washington St.
FA-3084
(Opposite Culture Center (near Post))

Open Evenings and Sundays
For Your Convenience

A.B.C. License

Beyer's Ice Cream - Tasty Groceries
All Kinds of Soft Drinks

Frozen Food Meats



Excavating & Grading
by
R. E. PARIS
LARGE OR SMALL JOBS
FA 4016

The Original Falls Church Cleaning Plant
REGULAR 1-DAY SERVICE
One-Day Special
Laundry Service
Pick-up and Delivery Service

Bring it in and pick it up . . .

SAVE 10 PER CENT
All Work Guaranteed
KING-KERLEY DRY CLEANERS
Shoe Repair

units are sold, and if the model home is sold, other homes can change to the model. So if there was a model on Lawrence, it likely came later after paving.

On April 30, 1947, A & G Construction recorded the original restrictive covenants for the community to ensure architectural harmony and continuity of each property's use and appearance as development continued. To enforce the covenants, three principals of the company (Abramson, Lewis Carl, and Anthony Gaddy) comprised a committee to review property plans. The committee was set to cease as of January 1, 1950, but the restrictive covenants were to continue until January 1, 1972, and renew automatically for ten-year periods unless a majority of the homeowners voted otherwise. Note: Our current civic association explored this issue with attorneys in 2005 and found that the covenants lacked legal authority due to its age and the lack of homeowner compliance through the decades.

According to the story below, it didn't take long for homeowners to desire adding additions to their bungalows, as seen in the picture. Likewise, it didn't take long for the initial 60+ homeowners to form their own citizens association. D.V. Potter, a founder and acting chairman, held a meeting at the National Memorial Baptist Church, later named National Gardens, in Tremont Gardens.

FENWICK PARK'S FIRST MAVERICK



Residents of sixty Fenwick Park homes now occupied found last week that their plans for individualistic additions had been anticipated by a carpenter employed on the project. The carpenter added a room to the house, at right above, which he expects to occupy. Then, according to Arlington Realty's Henry A. Florence, it was discovered that the house had been altered. The owner of the custom-built house agreed to trade homes with the carpenter.

60 Fenwick Park Homes Occupied

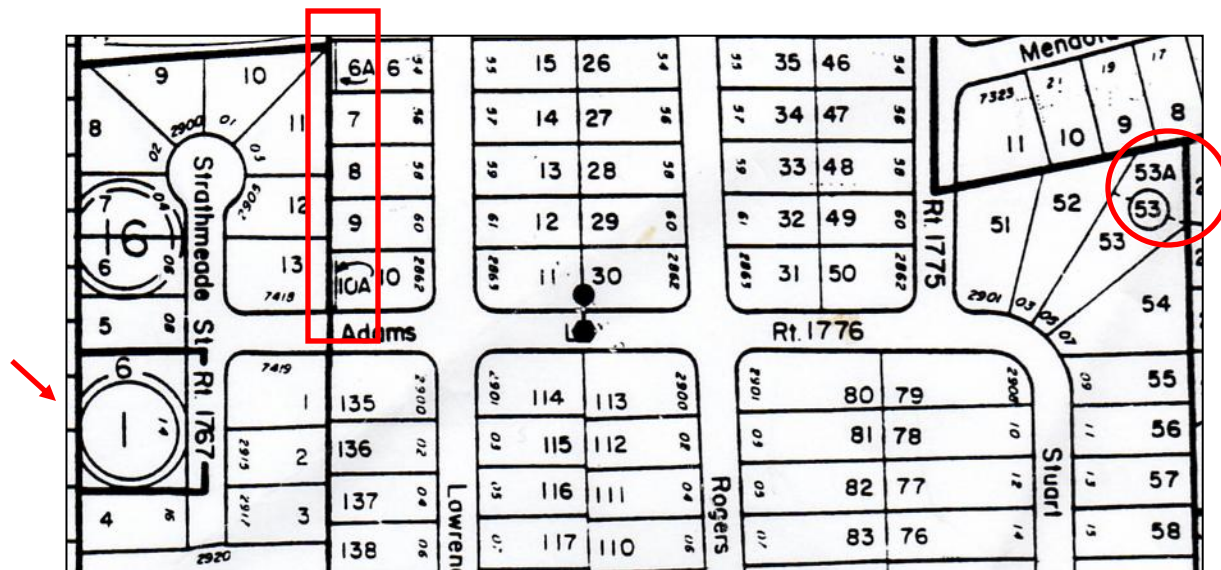
Sixty-one homes are now occupied at Fenwick Park, Lee Highway development between Tyler Park and Tremont Gardens, west of Falls Church. More than 130 of the conventional brick bungalows have been sold according to Henry A. Florence of Arlington Realty Co. When completed the project will have 202 homes between Lee Highway and Lee Boulevard.

Selling price of the homes is approximately \$12,600. Attics are unfinished but all homes have a full basement with outside entrance. (A picture of a completed home is on page three.)

Veterans, Mr. Florence said, occupy 90 per cent of the homes. Arlington Realty previously developed Westmore at Fairfax and is now developing Walnut Hills in Virginia Forest, Falls Church. Fenwick Park citizens have already formed an association, with D. V. Potter as acting chairman. The group meets at 8 p.m. next Monday at National Memorial Baptist Church, Tremont Gardens.

Due to our location just outside Falls Church City limits, one of the most significant first issues to arise was whether Falls Church City or Fairfax County was going to supply our water. In June of 1947, A & G Construction worked out an agreement with Falls Church City to hook up our water supply to city lines running down Lee Highway, despite the fact that Fenwick Park was located outside of the city limits. Fairfax County claimed they had a water line running down Lee Boulevard (Arlington Blvd.) to service the new community, but apparently these claims were questionable. (Falls Church Echo, June 13, 1947).

According to the Fairfax Water Authority, several wells were dug by Gelman to supply the first homes in Fenwick Park while a public source was being hashed out. Perhaps this water was pumped up to a water tank that was once located behind and between 2905 Stuart Drive and 2917 Mendota Avenue (see graphic - next page).



Plat map of Fenwick Park highlighting location of water tower on right (easement 53A), and possible remnants of the old farm access lane on the left (easements 6A & 10A). The white farmhouse (lot 6) is on left side (arrow).

After Falls Church's lines temporarily won the battle of supplying the subdivision, it wasn't a surprise when in 1949, a Falls Church City councilman, J. Harry McCarthy, proposed annexing a large area extending past Idylwood into Falls Church's city limits that included Fenwick Park. The measure failed. Later on, Fairfax County bought the Falls Church water lines running down Lee Highway.

Jones' Addition to Fenwick Park, 1951

In July 1951, Jones' Addition, named after a bank trustee involved with the transaction, was annexed to the Gelman tract. The deed added 4+ acres to Fenwick Park after property and street delineation. The entire tract was owned by Howard and Ida Stipe, who retained the 1/2 acre site of the still-standing white farm house for their residence (2914 Strathmeade St.) Howard and Ida were personally active in buying real estate for speculation and development. They built Southland Motor Court -- a dining hall and 15 tourist cabins on a 4.4+ acre tract -- where Churchill Apartments are located now. They also developed a trailer park down on Route 1 below Alexandria City. At the time, both highways were major travel arteries.

More research needs to be done on the Stipe properties and their relation to 64+ acres that were owned at one time by John M. Crossman and his wife, Annie. The entire tract appears to have abutted ours and was a part of a bigger 139 acre farm owned by his father, Isaac Crossman (see below). One 1906 newspaper notice of sale indicated that the John Crossman farm contained "a good eight or nine room dwelling, a large new barn (which could hold 20 cattle), a good granary, dairy and large henhouse...and an abundance of fruit." It is this author's belief that perhaps John and his wife farmed the entire 139 acre tract as "tenants" for his father, and when Frank Birch married John's sister, Flora, the land was subdivided into two tracts, with 68 acres deeded to Frank and Flora, and 64 left for John and Annie. The other 7 acres were deeded for government easements over time.

Boger's Addition to Fenwick Park, 1954

In September 1954, property owners David and Margaret Boger subdivided a 7 1/2 acre tract composed of 21 lots on Mendota Avenue and the first 3 lots of Oak Knoll Drive at the intersection with Mendota. In addition to this tract, the Boger's owned the land on which the West Falls Church Outlet Center now stands.

The entire tract was once owned by Dr. Neil F. Graham (Graham Road) beginning in the late 1800s. He owned two properties in the immediate vicinity off Lee Highway and West Street, and his Victorian mansion allegedly stood where the Texaco and Safeway now stands. Later it was the site of the Ancient Oaks Trailer Camp and Grocery store, which the Boger's owned. There's a rumor that country music legend Jimmy Dean's fiddler player lived in the trailer camp at one time. Jimmy Dean hailed from the Shenandoah Valley, and is now a famous pork sausage producer.

After Lee Highway became a significant route for tourists, Boger closed the trailer park and wanted to construct a drive-in theatre. When Boger applied for a rezoning permit in 1948, J.R. Hays, representing the Fenwick Park Citizens Association, registered objections and the proposal was soon defeated. Later on, Boger decided to subdivide and annex his land to Fenwick Park.

Pre-Colonial and Colonial Period

Native American tribes were noted to be dwelling throughout the northern Virginia area, and were very active in the area of Falls Church, especially with hunting and fishing expeditions and temporary encampments near streams. For example, when the former Dulin Farm (Fairview Park - Providence Recreational Center area) was being excavated by local archeologists, a Native American encampment was found on Holmes Run, off of Arlington Blvd. and Jaguar Trail, just across from Raytheon. Another encampment was found around today's Merrifield industrial parks, by Long Branch stream. With an abundance of streams nearby providing water for game animals, it's probable that our land was traversed by hunting parties.

After the Europeans' arrival in the area, they naturally used the same trails and paths that their predecessors cleared amongst the timber. As noted earlier, Lee Highway incorporated a Native American trail leading to the banks of the Potomac River at present-day Key Bridge. And Little Falls Street utilized another trail leading to the Potomac to where the Chain Bridge is located. There are numerous others (Leesburg Pike, Great Falls Rd., Wilson Blvd.). The famous Chief Powhatan is said to have had a favorite intra-tribal meeting place off of Wilson Blvd. at the springs of, naturally, present-day Powhatan Springs Park.



Dr. Graham's house, supposedly where Texaco and Safeway now stands. It may have stood across Lee Hwy, however, because he also owned a tract of farmland he named Limewood, which spanned today's National Memorial Park Cemetery to Rosemary Lane.



Before the early 1800s, the surrounding land on which Fenwick Park is a part of was once owned by Simon Pearson, of the prominent Alexandria, VA, family. One map indicates that his mansion was located near the present intersection of Fairview Park Drive and Lee Highway, most likely on high ground and close to Holmes Run for water. It is unknown whether the former Pearson Funeral Home on Washington Street was founded by a descendant.

This excavation, located off Lee Highway behind the Luzmary Bolivian Restaurant, may have been quarried for rare trondhjemite pink granite by Native Americans, as it's adjacent to Tripps Run. Later, the historic Tinner family did the same here.

The Civil War Period - Dulin's Farm & Binn's Hill (a.k.a. Horseshoe Hill)

In its beginning, Falls Church was settled by transplants from the northern states seeking cheap and productive farmland. So its personality and sensibilities tended to be "northern." And due to its location, the Falls Church area was a natural strategic and highly-valued geographic area in relation to protecting Washington, D.C. However, when the southern states moved to secede, Falls Church residents voted 2 to 1 to secede from the Union, with heavy-handed surrounding pressure from Richmond. So there was a lot of tension and lingering resentment among residents, and even between and within families during the entire conflict. It was not uncommon for neighbors to literally tattle on each other.

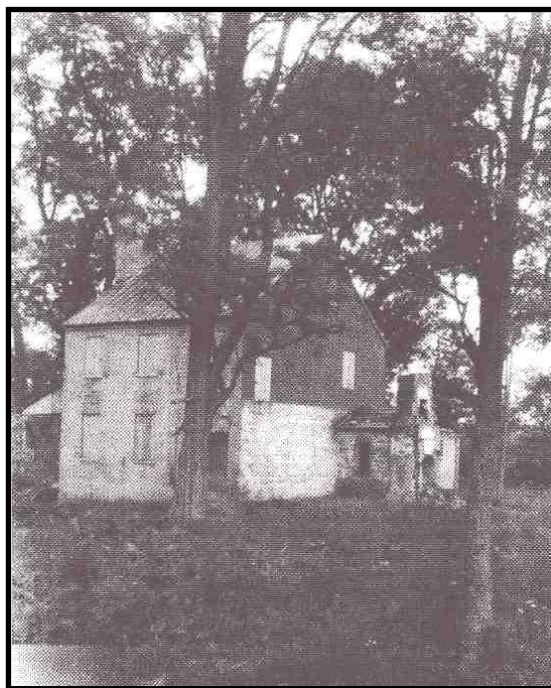
After the outbreak of the war in Spring of 1861, Union troops quickly occupied and set up many local forts, mostly around the northeast end of Falls Church (Seven Corners, for example) to guard approaches to Washington on today's Leesburg Pike, Wilson Blvd., and Lee Highway. Confederate troops were first based out of Fairfax City, and they set up artillery batteries along the Falls Church and Fairfax Court House Road in case Union troops decided to advance from Falls Church. One battery was set up in Merrifield a few hundred feet west of Gallows Road. Both sides sent out small patrols regularly to forage for food and scout enemy positions over present-day Lee Highway and Graham Road. Occasionally gunfire was exchanged. By July of 1861, however, the rebels controlled Fairfax County after their First Battle of Manassas victory, which saw the dejected Union lines fall back to the eastern half of Arlington (Alexandria at the time).

Affair at Dulin's Farm, 1861

One infamous skirmish occurred around William Dulin's Farm (a founder of Dulin Methodist Church), located at a current CSC site off Fairview Park Drive, where there is a historical marker among picnic tables. Union troops came through the area (off either Graham Road or Lee Highway) to forage for fruit, corn, oats, hay and 60 head of cattle. First they foraged through a neighbor/friend's farm owned by Truman Brush (the second time they did so), located upon the tracts of present-day Tremont Gardens and Pine Spring. After loading up their wagons, they continued on their way up to William Dulin's farm to take more crops and livestock, and onto his house to partake in dining on the stolen bounty. They were actually welcomed by Dulin himself, who posed publicly as a Union supporter, but in reality sided with the Confederates. The trap was set and soon a contingent of Confederates ambushed the unsuspecting Union troops and routed them, killing four, wounding several and taking thirty prisoners, along with the foraged food and supplies. After that, Dulin abandoned his farm to live with a brother in Baltimore, MD. This event brought a lot of embarrassing press in the North and to the Union commander for his foolishness. When the Union troops fled, they escaped through the woods around today's Providence Rec Center, which was a meadow at the time. Archeologists have unearthed artifacts around there from the period.

Battle of Binn's Hill, 1861

Another skirmish occurred beginning at what was known as Binn's Hill, which is located just behind present-day Timberlane Elementary School and Timberlane Condominiums. A New York Regiment, led by a renegade colonel named Newton Lord, had a small picket post on the site, and attempted to send his troops down (Lee Highway) to scout the enemy, knowing he was heading into heavily-guarded rebel territory. Accounts of the battle mention that the rebels were hiding in the heavy brush and woods lining the road, and chased Union troops down the road toward Truman Brush's farm. It's possible that part of the battle occurred on our tract, because a survey map shows the land was owned by Ralph Haskins at the time and was not cleared of trees. Lord was court-martialed as a result.



Dulin house remains, prior to dismantling for Fairview Office Park.

Camp Alger (1898)

According to maps found in the book, "City of Canvas; Camp Russell A. Alger and The Spanish American War," by Noel Garraux Harrison, Camp Alger was situated just to the west of our Strathmeade Street (see below).

This makes sense if you take a look at the following conspicuous concrete marker shown, which was once planted just outside the fence of the Trinity School at the intersection of Meadow View Road and Lee Highway (no longer there). This marker appeared to be, or resemble, an artillery shell encased in concrete and likely delineated the northeast corner of the camp boundary, corresponding with camp maps.



The first map on the following page appears to show that, in speculation, that the two houses, barn and access road circled and highlighted would be the farmhouse location at today's 2914 Strathmeade Street. The title for the current farmhouse indicates that it was built in 1925, which predates Camp Alger, but it's just as likely that the current farmhouse was built upon the foundations of an older farmhouse, or may have incorporated the old house into the newer structure. Another house is indicated to the right, in front of a barn.

Since we know that the former John M. Crossman farm, sold to John and Hattie Heyman by the time of Camp Alger, was bordering our tract on the left and contained a house and barn, and if you look at the second map below which overlays our neighborhood streets, it's quite possible that these structures are one and the same. And it's possible that the second house indicated may have been a farmhouse in which Frank and Flora Birch resided, approximately where the 2900 block of Lawrence Drive begins. The access road is approximately located where Lawrence Drive is today. In fact, on an old plat map of Fenwick Park, two lots on the 2800 block of Lawrence Drive show two narrow easement partitions in the backyards of two lots, and they may be the remains of the access road. Tax records indicate that both the Crossman and Birch farms had separate structures, but photos or descriptions of Birch's cannot be found to date.

Camp Alger, with possible location of the 2914 Strathmeade St. farmhouse (Crossman) and Birch farmhouse on the right.

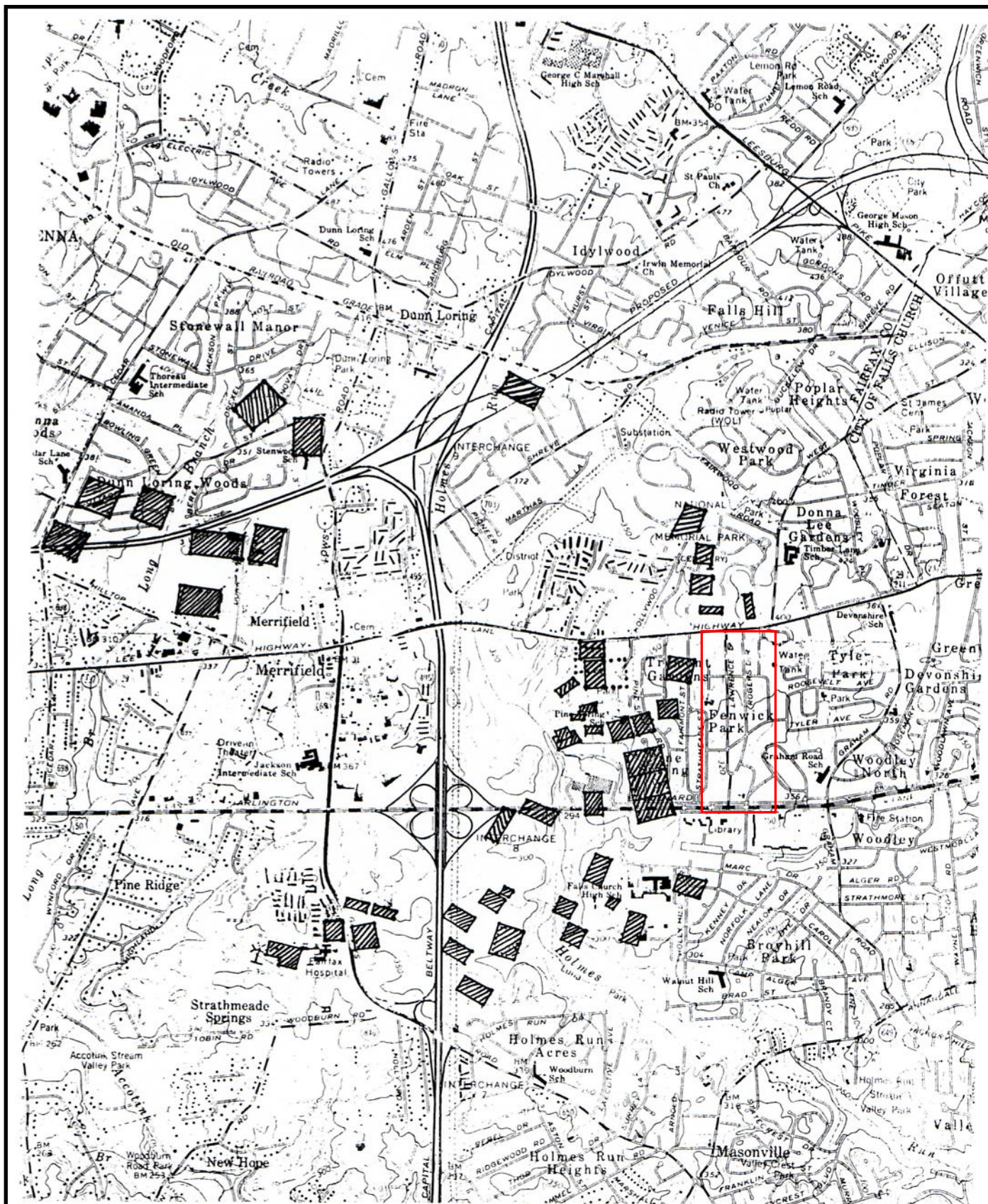


Figure 2. Approximate location of regimental tenting grounds and other facilities shown in Figure 1. Overlay of USGS Annandale and Falls Church Quadrangle, 75 Minute Series (Topographic).

Just a theory -- that this orange line is the approximate location of the farm access road to the right of Camp Alger's boundaries, placing the current white farm house (yellow circle) where it would be on the camp maps. If the second house was the Birch farm house, then its approximate location would have been at or in the backyard of 2900 Lawrence Drive (red circle). On a large plat of land, in which there are few structures, it is natural to place buildings on the high ground for drainage and sight lines. These locations are among the highest elevations in our neighborhood.



Isaac Crossman

Isaac Crossman was one of the founding fathers of Falls Church and its largest landowner at one point. He emigrated here from Indiana County, PA in 1864. His first wife, Mary, tragically died while packing for the move, but Isaac continued on down here.

At that time, farming land around here was inexpensive and plentiful, and renowned for its fertility and convenient proximity to Washington, DC. Crossman was highly regarded for his acumen, as his farms were noted for their quality products, neat appearance and sound management. Crossman also founded (Christ) Crossman United Methodist Church, and his farmhouse was located where Columbia Baptist Church now stands. Later, the Crossman home was moved to 345 Little Falls St., where it still stands, to make room for Columbia Baptist Church. The main Crossman dairy farm was located around Tuckahoe Park and the East Falls Church area, and he also grew corn and wheat.



Isaac Crossman, 1824-1900, farmer, civic leader, and a founder of the Crossman Methodist Episcopal Church.

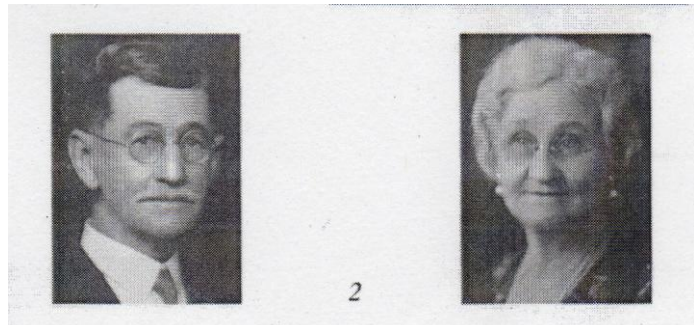
Among his landholdings, Isaac had purchased 139 acres in our immediate vicinity, and it was later partitioned for his son, John M. Crossman, and later on, son-in-law Frank L. Birch and Isaac's daughter, Flora. Originally John's farm was 64 acres, plus the Birch's 68 acres, but several additional acres had been deeded to the state and county for easements, so the total comes to 139 acres.

Isaac Crossman home, now
345 Little Falls St.



Frank & Flora Birch

Not much is written about Frank List Birch or his wife, Flora Belle Birch. They owned our tract from 1885 - 1925, after purchasing two tracts of 28 and 40 acres, combined into one deed, from Flora's father, Isaac Crossman. They were active leaders with Dulin Methodist Church. They had four children: Essie, Mary, Isiah, and Milton, all of whom remained in the area until their deaths. The 1900 Census also listed someone named Cora living with them -- perhaps a servant. The names and whereabouts of their offspring is unknown at this time, but may be pursued at a later date. Interviewing any one of them would answer a lot of questions about their grandfather's farm. All of the Birch surnames in this area are related to one of the original families to settle in the colony of Virginia, coming up from the Tidewater area.

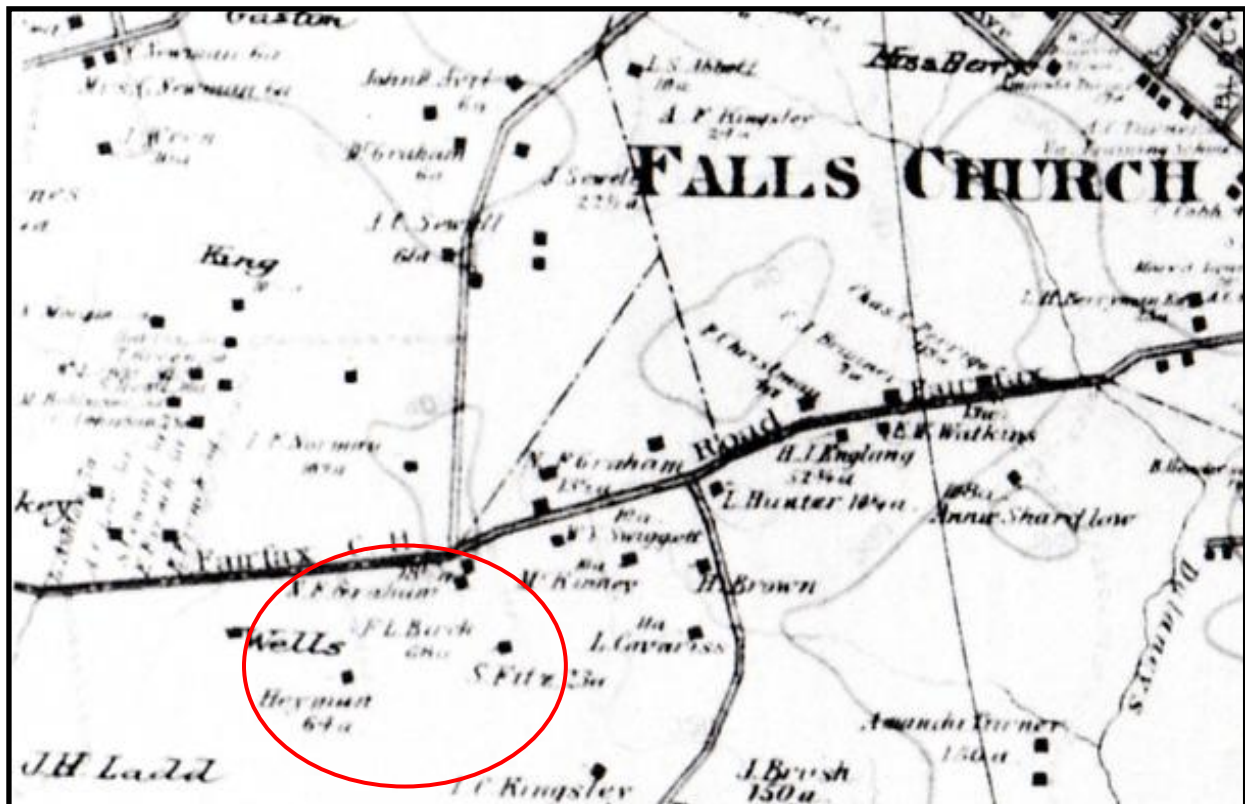


Frank and Flora Birch

It is unknown whether Frank and Flora actively farmed our tract or leased it to tenant farmers. The family was based out of Falls Church City, and records show that Frank and Flora lived at 7604 N. Underwood St., Arlington, VA, on what was once a part of Isaac Crossman's main farm -- at the very least after they sold the farm to Edward Fenwick.

Perhaps some clues to his possible farming activity is shown in his being appointed to a Fairfax County Farm Bureau in 1919, judging corn crops, and his advertising a cow for sale in 1920. In 1897, Birch was listed as a principal farmer and milk "shipper" in a Virginia business directory. Farms in the area typically were dairy, corn, and fruit orchards -- like the Hollywood Farm off of Hollywood Road. It's possible that Birch, among other local farmers, sold his farm produce to the U.S. Army at Camp Alger.

Among other notable activities, Frank later became a Falls Church City councilman and the superintendent of Oakwood Cemetery (Roosevelt St. & East Broad St.), where his family line and the Crossman families are buried. He also sat on the board of (and contributed to) the Lee Highway Association (see below), which sought to pave the Falls Church and Fairfax Courthouse Road and continue its route through the southern states and onward to the west coast, as a rival to the north's Lincoln Highway. Of course, since his farm bordered on the highway, he stood to benefit.



A 1904 Map with our area circled. Although it's blurred, the Birch farm of 68 acres is indicated to the left of Dr. Graham's residence (Safeway now), and the Heyman (formerly John Crossman's) farm of 64 acres (Strathmeade/Tremont now) borders Birch on the left. It appears that no structure is indicated on the Birch farm, but tax records and a fire insurance map index indicate structures existed.

Appendix 1: Fenwick Letters Concerning the Birch Farm

ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF FIRM
CHARLES MASON (1861-1882)
FORMERLY COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS
ROBERT W. FENWICK (1861-1886)
DEWITT C. LAWRENCE (1861-1891)

EDWARD T. FENWICK
E. G. FENWICK
C. R. FENWICK

W. E. LAMB
H. S. MORTON
J. HOWARD FLINT
EMORY C. NAYLOR

MASON, FENWICK & LAWRENCE
PATENT AND TRADE MARK LAWYERS
PRACTICE BEFORE FEDERAL COURTS
WOODWARD BUILDING
15TH & H STREETS N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

ESTABLISHED 1861
TELEPHONE NATIONAL 1578-1579
CABLE ADDRESS
"FENWICK-WASHINGTON"

February 19, 1942

Edmund D. Campbell, Esq.
Southern Building
Washington, D. C.

Birch Farm

Dear Ed:

I am in receipt of your letter of February 18, 1942, in re the above matter; and contents carefully noted.

The proposition contained in your letter of the 18th is not at all satisfactory to me, and my letter of February 17th to you appears wholly unsatisfactory to you. I suggest that we forget all propositions you have made me and counter-propositions I have made you in connection with this matter and begin entirely anew.

Waller Smith owes me as of August 1941 the first note for \$8000.00 plus; on February 23, 1942, he will owe me the interest on \$24,000.00 plus, or about \$730.00 or \$740.00 making a total of nearly \$9000.00. I haven't the exact figures before me. Of course, the only person I know in this transaction is Waller Smith. He is the one who made the obligation and is responsible for it. You say Waller owes you or your firm about \$8000.00, which you are anxious to recover, and that in order to do so, you have taken over the Waller Smith obligation as trustee. You suggested to me that some arrangement be entered into between us whereby you could sell the property at a price which would enable you to get back your \$8000.00 and pay me off in full, I to be paid in full before you received anything. I, of course, don't want to get into any partnership over this matter, nor do I intend to recognize any second trust you may hold against this property.

To help you out I am willing to accept \$2000.00 in cash on or before February 23, 1942 and to credit it on the first \$8000.00 note, and to receive the interest in full on \$24,000.00 plus due February 23, 1942, this amount to be paid in cash on or before said date.

In consideration of this payment, you would agree to pay the balance due on the \$8000.00 plus note on August 23, 1942, and the interest due to that date on the then outstanding principal of about \$22,000.00 plus. Between February 23, 1942 and August 23, 1942 you or I would be privileged to sell the Birch farm for any amount we could secure of not less than \$25,000.00. If you or I sold the property neither of us would receive any commission. Any amount for which you might sell the farm over the amount due me you could keep without my sharing in the same. Any sale you might make would have to meet my approval as to the purchaser and the terms and conditions of sale.

If this proposition is not accepted by you and carried out on or before February 23, 1942, it will be necessary for me to instruct the Trustee to immediately advertise the property at public sale under a foreclosure proceeding under my trust.

Now is the time to sell this property; if it is allowed to drag a year or two, I may not be able to resell it for an amount sufficient to protect my trust.

You say you acted as agent in selling the Hourse property of twenty acres to the government for \$950.00 an acre, reserving ten acres for the Hourse family. This property is on the Lee Highway close to the cemetery and is not located, like the Birch farm is both on the Lee Highway and Lee Boulevard, and the farm should bring as much or even more than the Hourse property for this reason.

With kind personal regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

Edward T. Penwick

ETP:HNM

See postscript as page 3 hereof.

Mr. Campbell --
Postscript to letter of February 19, 1942

To make the proposition very simple:

You are very anxious there shall be no foreclosure at this time in order that you may have an opportunity to sell the property for a price which will enable you to recover \$8000.00 Waller Smith owes you.

I am willing to cooperate and agree there shall be no foreclosure before August 23, 1942 if Waller Smith on or before February 23, 1942 pays me \$2000.00 in cash on the \$8000.00 note and the interest in cash on \$24,000.00 on or before said date.

If he can't do that, the property will have to be foreclosed and at once.

E. T. P.

MEMBERS OF FIRM
MASON 1861-1882
COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS
F. FENWICK 1861-1896
LAWRENCE 1861-1891

T. FENWICK
FENWICK
FENWICK

A. M. B.
ORTON
C. NAYLOR
RD. FLINT

TELEPHONES NATIONAL 1578-1579

CABLE ADDRESS
FENWICK, WASHINGTON
ESTABLISHED 1861

MASON, FENWICK & LAWRENCE
PATENT AND TRADE MARK LAWYERS
PRACTICE BEFORE FEDERAL COURTS

WOODWARD BUILDING
15TH AND H STREETS, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

4-3-2
February 19, 1942

Dear Son Charles,

I herewith enclose original of a letter dated February 18, I received from Ed Campbell, together with my reply of today. Please return Ed's letter to me after carefully reading it and the reply.

Ed has no right whatsoever to embarrass me in this matter by trying to stick the \$8000.00 second trust on the property to protect himself, and he wants me to hold the property until he can get sufficient money to pay both himself and me.

I only know Waller Smith in the transaction, and he is six months behind in paying the \$8000.00 note, and on February 23, 1942 will owe \$700.00 interest on the note, ~~plus~~. *plus a sale of the prop*

If Ed can't raise \$3000.00, or get a client to put up that amount in order to try to get back his or his firm's \$8000.00, in which I am not at all interested, there is no use fooling with him. *plus*

I need some cash very badly, and right now, and should be in a position to realize some cash without being embarrassed by Ed Campbell trying to make \$8000.00 on the Waller Smith transaction to which he is in a sense a total stranger.

Yours devotedly,

father

Edward T. Fenwick

ETF:HRM

Enclosure

F.D.RICHARDSON
ATTORNEY AT LAW
FAIRFAX,VIRGINIA

March 4, 1942

Mr. Charles R. Fenwick
Richmond Hotel
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Charlie:

At the request of your father, I have prepared advertisement of Trustee's sale of the Birch property, which was sold to Waller B. Smith. If you will sign the same and return it to me, I will have it inserted in next weeks issue of the Fairfax Herald, so we can sell the property on Saturday, March 28, 1942, at 10 o'clock A. M., in front of the Court House, at Fairfax, Virginia.

With kindest regards, I am

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "F. D. Richardson".

F. D. Richardson

FDR/jrm

March 8, 1942.

Mr. F. D. Richardson,
Attorney at Law,
Fairfax, Virginia.

Dear Fred:

I have your letter of March 4, 1942,
enclosing advertisement of Trustee's Sale
which I have signed and am returning here-
with. I understand that it is proposed to
sell the Birch property on March 23, 1942,
at ten o'clock a. m. in front of the Court
House at Fairfax.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Charles R. Fenwick

CRF/pw

Enclosure : 1

CC: Mr. Edmund D. Campbell, Southern Building, Washington, D.

Appendix 2 -- The Lee Highway Association, c. 1922

Falls Church leaders were instrumental in establishing Lee Highway as it is known today. Because of their efforts, the deeply rutted plank and dirt road became one of the first paved interstate highways in the nation. Some old motel buildings still stand along Lee Highway from that time before today's modern interstate system. In 1930, Lee Highway was composed of: U.S. 29/211 to U.S. 72 (Alabama), to U.S. 70 (through Memphis) to U.S. 366 (Clovis, N.M.) to U.S. 80 (through El Paso, TX) to U.S. 180 (AZ) to U.S. 80, ending in San Diego, CA.

GREAT LEE HIGHWAY

By Dr. S. M. JOHNSON,
General Director of the Lee Highway
Association.

NEXT Thursday will mark the anniversary of the birth of General Robert E. Lee. On that day an important step will be taken for a great memorial to Lee in the form of a transcontinental highway extending from New York to San Francisco by way of Washington, Memphis and San Diego. In a way the Lee Highway will parallel the Lincoln Highway, and as one road now runs through the land of Lincoln, the other will run through the land of Lee. Together they will practically encircle the national domain, binding together North, South, East and West.

On the anniversary of General Lee's birth the Lee Highway Association, the organization behind the building of this great pavement from one coast to the other, will hold a celebration in Richmond as part of the meeting of the Virginia Good Roads Convention. Although only twenty months old the work of the Lee Highway Association has already progressed so steadily that completion of the transcontinental route is anticipated within three years. The response from the various communities through which the road will pass has been splendid, and we feel repaid for the labor we have expended on the project.

The Eastern section of the highway will lead from New York to Memphis, passing out of Washington over the great bridge to be erected from the Lincoln Memorial to General Lee's former house at Arlington, and thence by historic Falls Church, Va.; Fairfax Court House, through Manassas Battlefield, Warrenton, the heart of the fox-hunting country; over the crest of the Blue Ridge by way of Massanutten Mountain and Luray Cave and on into the famous Shenandoah Valley of Virginia at Newmarket.

By Wilson's Birthplace.

Thence the road turns southwest to Staunton, the former home of ex-President Wilson, and proceeds to Lexington and on to the majestic Natural Bridge. From this celebrated spot the highway progresses through Roanoke, Va., to Bristol, just on the line between Virginia and Tennessee. From Bristol, superb mountain country is traversed all the way to Chattanooga, as the road trails through the Southern Appalachians. The distance from Washington to Chattanooga is 640 miles. Two routes are under consideration from Chattanooga to Memphis. One which goes by way of the now famous Muscle Shoals is 385 miles long, the other by way of Nashville is 390 miles.

The next step is to fix the route from Chattanooga to San Diego and on to San Francisco. On Nov. 12, accompanied by M. O. Eldridge of Washington, representing the American Automobile Association, and several Government officials, I went by automobile to the Pacific Coast, reaching San Diego Nov. 30. The route inspected was through Little Rock, Hot Springs and De Queen, Ark.; Durant, Lawton and Altus, Okla.; Childress and Plainview, Texas; Clovis, Roswell and

Alamogordo, N. M.; El Paso, Texas; Las Cruces, Deming and Lordsburg, N. M.; Duncan, Safford, Globe, Roosevelt Dam, Phoenix, Gila Bend and Yuma, Ariz.; thence to San Diego, Cal. Returning by train I held conferences at Amarillo, Texas; Oklahoma City, Okla., and Little Rock, Ark.

The itinerary of this trip was made out in advance in Washington, and the present condition of the road may be inferred from the fact that the schedule was maintained throughout, but there were no roadside delays except twice, when a nail picked up on a city street necessitated a change of tires; that not a serious hill was found between the Mississippi and the Pacific, and that the average running time was twenty miles an hour.

Each State has offered us a line to be designated as Lee Highway and will co-operate with us and the Federal Government in its construction as an interstate highway. It is the expectation that within three years or less all unfinished sections will be completed and our road will be a reality from Washington to San Diego, usable 365 days in the year and shorter by many hundreds of miles than any other road likely to be built within the next several years. Over the routes surveyed the distance from the Zero milestone in Washington to San Francisco is 3,453 miles, from Washington to Los Angeles 2,990 miles.

The principal business before the Chattanooga convention is the formation of a working plan for the completion of the Southern transcontinental highway. The pavement is continuous from New York City to Washington, 238 miles, and from San Diego to San Francisco, 590 miles. Between Washington and San Diego lie eight States and eighty-odd counties. From each county seat in the series the pavement has been growing in either direction toward the next county seat, and in many instances pavement reaches all the way across counties, sometimes for hundreds of miles. There are, however, many gaps to fill in; and the association has secured the aid of the Federal and all the Lee Highway State Road Boards for a construction program whereby contracts will be let this Spring for the construction of all remaining unfinished sections.

The association proposes to infuse into the national life the inspiration to noble things that cannot fail to result from a knowledge of the life, character and services of Lee. At the annual meeting in Richmond on his birthday next Thursday, C. H. Huston, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, will preside as President of the association.

On Jan. 23 to 25 the second annual convention of the association will be held at Chattanooga, Tenn.

The significance of such an enterprise as the Lee Highway is easily grasped. It means the co-operation of the Federal Government, a dozen or more States and over a hundred counties and two hundred towns and cities; and all these with the Lee Highway Association, the American Automobile Association and other national road bodies, for the accomplishment of a worthy work of patriotism in honoring a great American.

The New York Times

Published: January 15, 1922
Copyright © The New York Times



Lee Highway between Falls Church and Fairfax Court House, circa 1923. The dirt road, despised by many as a seasonal mud wallow, was selected to carry the designation Lee Highway, a newly-established route crossing the country from coast to coast. It was very difficult to drive anywhere, and unified routes such as this one bearing but one name proved so popular they were later numbered. Courtesy Mary Riley Styles Public Library.



Lee Highway between Falls Church and Fairfax Court House, circa 1926. Falls Church businessman Merton E. Church, with foot on the automobile's running board, shows off the newly improved road, now eighteen feet wide and paved with concrete. The main trunk telephone line between Falls Church and Fairfax Court House, also built by Church, is seen at right. Courtesy Mary Riley Styles Public Library.

Where's Waldo?

The first portion of Lee Highway to be paved was from Broad St. to Gallows Rd., 1924. Now this photo was taken in 1926. Merton Church, the leader behind the Lee Highway portion in this area, was a real estate broker out of Falls Church City. How far would he have ventured for the photo? Is the first photo and the second a before and after from approximately the same spot? What is the approximate time of day and direction?

Look at their shadows. The telephone poles' orientation is on our side of the road -- as it is today. So this photo may likely have been taken just beyond Falls Church City in a wooded, rural section, with the photographer either facing E-NE or facing W-SW, as Lee Highway generally travels. Between Merrifield and the city, there are two areas where this *may* have been taken. The general typography in the foreground is sloping downward to the right, also generic to our side. In the background to the right is a cleared hill, corresponding to the left bend. And the subjects of the photo are on a straight portion, and then it curves upward and left around a bend. It may be a fun thing to try to determine the location of the photo using these clues.

After experimenting with object shadows during the day, and driving the distance between Fairfax City and through Arlington, you can make a pretty solid guess on the time of day, direction of the photo, and location. The author is nearly certain that the spot was looking north from the current intersection of Fairmont St. and Lee Highway.

Appendix 3: Miscellaneous

- The site of Raytheon on Arlington Blvd., built in 1952, was one of the first campus-style office buildings in the nation.
- U.S. Geological Survey maps from the late 1800s show that there were two structures on our tract: one directly on present Lee Highway and one about 1/3 of the way in around present-day Lawrence Drive. Since USGS maps were focused on typography, the accuracy of building placement is suspect.
- In a nod to those who have always been suspicious -- USGS maps also indicate that there were two springs and branches of Holmes Run in the lower half of Fenwick Park's tract (Roger's Drive?) and the western half of Tyler Park's tract.
- At one time, the Paul Baker Potato Chip company advertised in a phone directory, and was located at 113 Lawrence Drive, which would have placed it in a home in the first block of Lawrence and Lee Hwy. It was not located where Nova Auto Care is now.
- Around the period that the trailer camp was operating, the owner of the Strathmeade St. tract, Howard & Ida Stipe (Jones' Addition to Fenwick Park, 1951), applied for rezoning and built Southland Motor Court, fronting Lee Highway. It was composed of 15 tourist cabins and a dining hall. The site of the Trinity School may or may not have been Howard Stipe's Southland Motor Court. Those buildings have a peculiar appearance, especially the building behind the Cape Cod-style front building.
- As mentioned earlier, a water tower was once located on a site behind the corner lot property at 2905 Stuart Drive, and probably served the trailer camp and others.
- According to county water officials, when Fenwick Park was first developed, its water supply came from several big wells dug by the developers and pumped to homes, two of which were located off of Fenwick Road (which actually is recorded with the county as a "Drive"). It is unknown how "Road" became part of its name.
- National Gardens Baptist Church, as a congregation, began to be formed among several families who lived in the Umbrella Trailer Camp -- later known as Ancient Oaks Trailer Court -- located where the Safeway shopping center is now. In early 1943, they worshipped in a carriage house on the land. This carriage house may have dated back to N.F. Graham's farm. There was a farmhouse on the trailer court property that was occupied by David Boger. The history of the church can be found in David P. Shreve's book, "The Story of National Gardens Baptist Church," a copy of which is available from the Fairfax Regional Library. The Shreve family line goes back a long time in this area.

Falls Church Air Park (1945-1961)

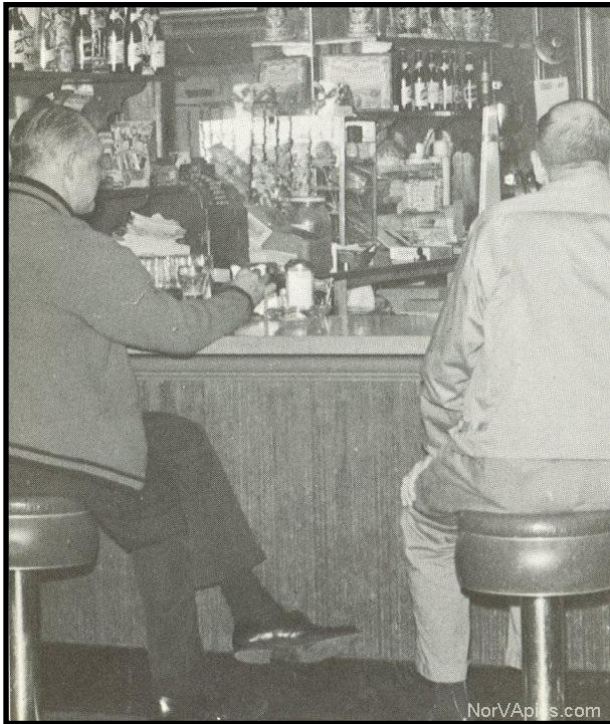
- The site of Loehmann's Plaza was part of a farm that was owned by the Milton Eisenhower family. Later the land was turned into the Falls Church Air Park, which operated from 1946 - 1961. It had one or two unpaved runways for mostly single-engine planes. A famed acrobatic plane, "Little Butch," was based there and is now in the Smithsonian. Famed author and TV/radio personality, Author Godfrey, used the airport, too. This link offers more information: http://www.airfields-freeman.com/VA/Airfields_VA_Fairfax_W.htm



Falls Church Air Park -- the farmhouse on the right was the main building. Below - notice Kingsley Commons townhomes in the background.



Photo from the Tremont (Inn) Restaurant, 1965, courtesy of www.norvapis.com. It was located at 2730 Lee Highway at the time, which would have placed it around where Fallfax Drive intersects with Lee Highway (past Hollywood Rd. toward Merrifield, right side). There was a Tremont Hardware store at 2714 Lee, which later became Fallfax Hardware.



Knox Presbyterian Church under construction.

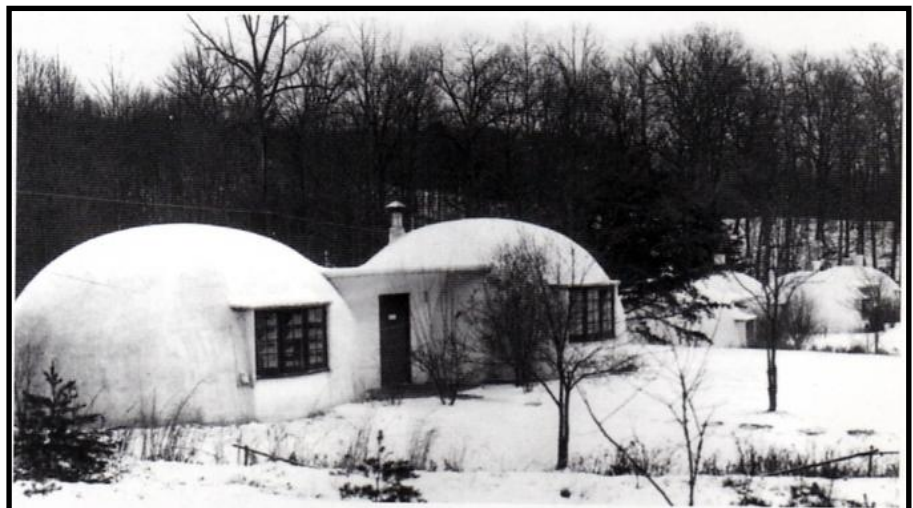
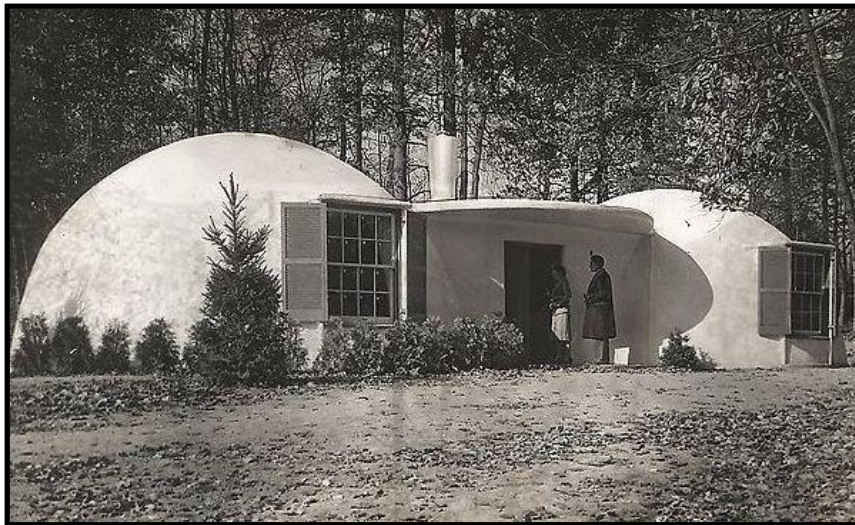
Architect Wallace Neff's Bubble Houses

(paraphrased from the Washington Post, 3/11/07, "John Kelly's Washington" column)

The bubble house. The shell house. The igloo. These were all nicknames for a type of distinctive, experimental dwelling Wallace Neff designed to shelter people during the World War II housing crunch. Another nickname reveals the clever way the homes were built: the balloon house. Picture, if you will, a giant, flaccid balloon made of Goodyear rubber. It is lashed down to a concrete pad and then inflated. Once it has achieved its hemispheric shape, concrete is sprayed over it. Some insulation is laid down, followed by another layer of concrete. When the concrete has hardened, the balloon is deflated, removed and used again. Neff called them "airform" houses. They were cheap and easy to build quickly, and the walls were said to be impermeable to shrapnel. [*Why that was a concern at the time is unknown*]

In 1941, a dozen airform houses were built in Falls Church, of two different designs: single, huge domes and smaller double domes joined by a hallway. The houses were on Horseshoe Hill, near what is now Lee Highway and West Street. As late as 1960 you could rent one for \$40 to \$70 a month. They were demolished in 1960 to make way for the Timberlane Park Apartments, which are now condos at 7316 and 7318 Lee Hwy.

"We called the double houses bra houses, because they looked like a bra," said Carolyn Fix, 84, who lived nearby.



Fountain of Faith by internationally famous sculptor, Carl Milles -- National Memorial Park Cemetery



The Fountain of Faith in National Memorial Park on Lee Highway at South West Street. Sculptor Carl Milles worked for some twelve years, 1940-1952, on the grouping of 38 free standing bronze figures in the Fountain. Milles was born in 1875, the year the town of Falls Church was chartered, and died soon after his work here was dedicated. The Fountain of Faith was the last of his great works whose installation he personally supervised, and the last dedication in which he participated personally, noting that "I hope it will be my masterpiece forever." (Wm. Edmund Barrett, 1972)

This fountain is an artistic masterpiece in our midst, and unfortunately has fallen somewhat into disrepair. If you get a chance, go see it -- it's just beyond the main gate of the National Memorial Park Cemetery.

[From one of our original residents]

*Our Roots: From the desk of
Peggy Pillar*

March 19, 2004

Fenwick Park is the name of the subdivision in Northern Virginia where I grew up. Its boundaries are Lee Highway on the north and Arlington Boulevard on the south and it is located a mile west of Falls Church city limits. Falls Church is seven miles west of Washington, DC.

When this subdivision was new, it represented the end of the bus line on Lee Highway coming out of Washington. There was literally nothing west of it until you got to the City of Fairfax.

Fenwick Park is basically three parallel streets off of Lee Highway that merge into one street, Fenwick Drive, which joins Arlington Blvd. In 1947, the developer first started building the “100” blocks of Lawrence, Rogers, and Stuart Drives—the section closest to Lee Highway. In November of that year, my parents bought and moved into 117 Rogers Drive* with my brother, Pete, age two years, seven months, and my father’s aunt, Pauline Frus, who was to help out when the new baby came. I was to come in January, but didn’t make it. Instead, I was an early Christmas present and arrived on December 20th. My father just barely got my mother to the old Alexandria Hospital in time. I was born in the left elevator—but that’s another story. Rogers Drive had yet to be paved and was a sea of mud.

By the summer of 1949, the houses at the “bottom” of the subdivision had been built and were beginning to sell. Helen Rand, who at that time lived next door at 115 Rogers Drive, was a contributing reporter for one of the local newspapers, either the Northern Virginia Sun or maybe The Evening Star. Both were afternoon papers and are no longer published.

Helen’s daughter, Nancy Rand Downing of Heathsville, VA, was cleaning house recently and sent me the following clippings from the paper. They are yellow and crumbling, hence a few missing words and text.

You’ll notice that things in 1949 were very different from today. Rarely was a married woman referred to by her Christian name. She was Mrs. Arnold Skrivseth or Mrs. A. Skrivseth. While adults could call other adults by their first names, we kids always called neighbors Mr. or Mrs. Such-in-such. For myself, I was not given permission to address the ladies of the neighborhood by their first name until after I was married myself.

* In the late 1960s, house numbers in Northern Virginia were re-number—starting from the Potomac River and fanning out—giving them a rhyme and reason to assist fire and rescue and police departments in locating addresses. Our house number became 2855 Rogers Drive.



Peggy Pillar -- center.

Local Newspaper Clippings -- courtesy of
Helen Rand [clippings edited for brevity]

The Bridge Club of Stuart Drive met May 5 at the home of Mrs. Alfred Stickley, 206 Stuart Drive. Other players included Mrs. Ralph Cummings, Mrs. Paul Bastress, Mrs. James Duffy, Mrs. Rudolph Olson, Mrs. Thomas Garvey, Mrs. F. D. Miller, Mrs. G. C. MacDonald, and a guest, Mrs. Chester Tyne, from Riverside, Md. The next meeting will be held at Mrs. Miller's, May 19.

Harry K. Mead, II, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Mead, 205 Rogers Drive, was born May 3 at Garfield Hospital. He weighed eight pounds.

H. E. ZIERDT ELECTED HEAD OF ASSOCIATION -- FENWICK PARK (May 20, 1949)

Herbert E. Zierdt, 1804 Adams Lane, was elected president of the Fenwick Park Citizens' Association at the May meeting. He replaces Lt. Henry Kibsgaard, who will be absent during the fall and winter months.

Bill Hermann, 227 Rogers Drive, won second prize in the Washington Board of Trade's old document contest. The contest was part of the Board of Trade's clean-up campaign, which ended May 8. The prize was an automatic toaster, and Mr. Hermann's document, dated 1707, dealt with the sale of Long Island property for "15 pounds ten shillings sterling silver money." Mr. Hermann found the document in a friend's barn. Now it is part of his stamp collection.

At the regular bridge club meeting May 13 a surprise stork shower was given by Mrs. Dorothy Hull, 124 Rogers Drive, for Mrs. E. S. McCuskey. A table was decorated with storks and pink snapdragons. The refreshments included stork ice cream molds and a cake with stork decorations on top.

Others present were Mrs. G. C. MacDonald, Mrs. John Doering, Mrs. Max Oboler, Mrs. Raymond Loughton, Mrs. R. L. Joyce, and Mrs. Alfred Stickley. The next meeting will be held at Mrs. Stickley's home, May 27.

Mrs. Ray (*Ethel*) Pillar, 117 Rogers Drive, gave a bridge party May 14. Most of the 12 guests were ladies of the Mt. Vernon Home Makers' Association. Refreshments included strawberry ice cream pie and coffee. Each person received a tiny pitcher of pansies.

Knitting Club Meets

The Knitting club met May 10 at Mrs. Herbert Zierdt's home, 1804 Adams Lane. Guest included Mrs. James Boyd, Mrs. Leslie Butler, Mrs. E. F. Howard, Mrs. Theodore Hughes and Mrs. Henry Kibsgaard. The next meeting will be held at Mrs. Butler's home, 215 Lawrence Drive, May 24.

Mr. and Mrs. William (*Katherine*) Cody, 113 Rogers Drive, had members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church at their home May 10 for Bible study and prayer. Twenty-four people attended.

The Reading Club will meet Monday May 23 at the home of Mrs. Harry Cook, 226 Rogers Drive. Everyone interested is urged to attend.

Capt. and Mrs. Henry Bates have just returned to their home at 110 Rogers Drive. Capt. Bates was stationed at Ft. Churchill on Hudson Bay. He is now at Ft. Myer.

Mrs. S. B. McCreery, 118 Lawrence Drive, arrived May 6 in Tripoli, N. Africa, with her two children. Her husband will be stationed there for at least two years. They have rented their home to Maj. and Mrs. Thomas O. Mathews, from Arlington and Texas. He is stationed at the Pentagon Building. They have two children: Penni, 14 months, and Hal (Butch), four years old.

Capt. and Mrs. A. J. Voyles have moved into 402 Lawrence Drive from Quantico. Capt. Voyles is in the Bureau of Aeronautics in Washington. They have two children: Nancy, four years old and John Gregory, 18 months old.

Photos of the former Skrivseth house (2903 Rogers Drive) circa 1949-52. Courtesy of their neighbor, Jimmy and Chambliss Mitchell.



The address at the time was 203 Rogers Drive.

Notice the tricycles in this photo, which would now be antiques.



Rear view. Notice the original back porch construction. Although the new neighborhood was barren of old growth trees, the ones in the distant background belong to the farmhouse at 2914 Strathmeade St.

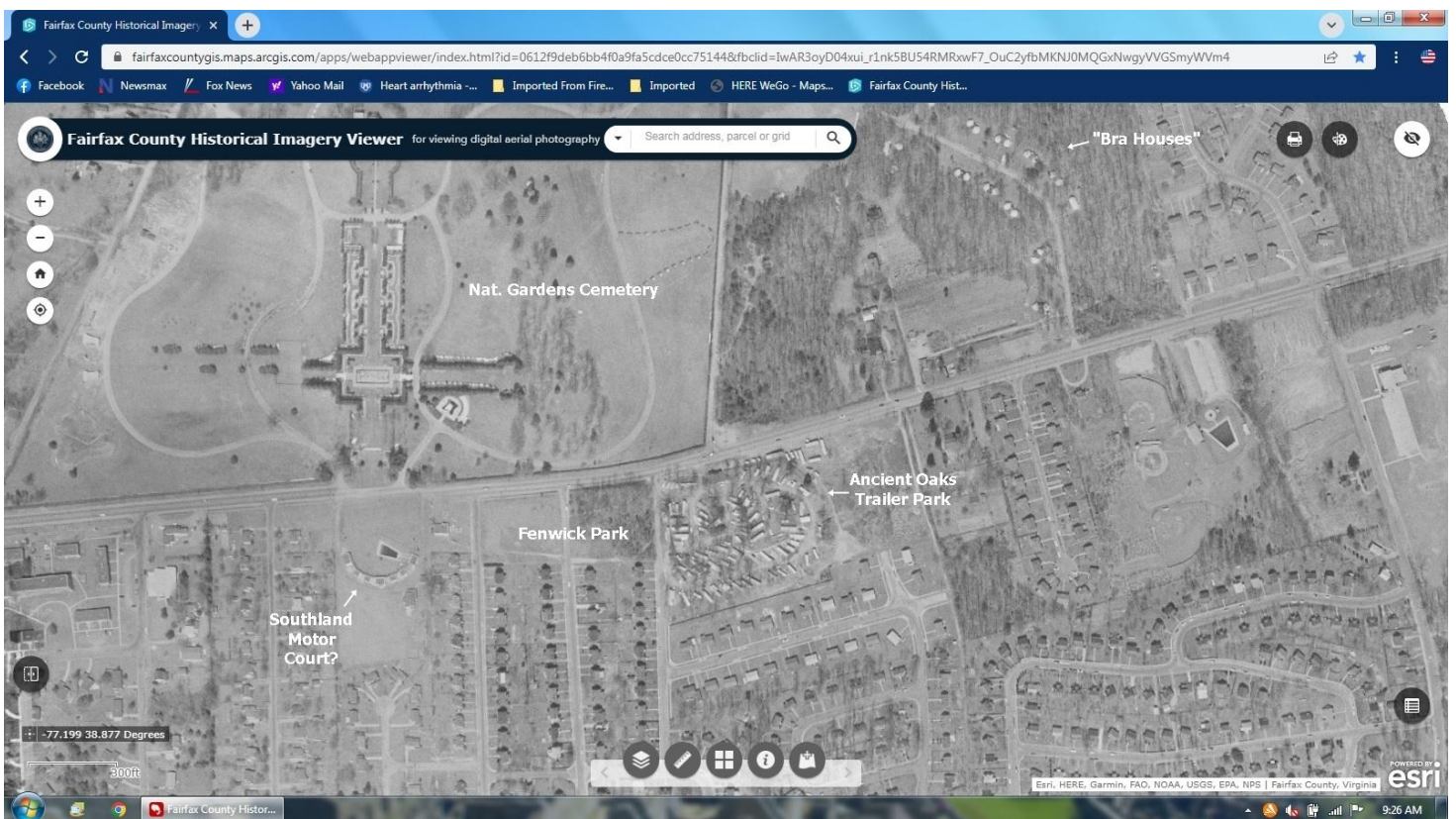
Note:

For those who wish to see how our area, and Fairfax County, have changed over the years, there is an online GEO map page on Fairfax County government website:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/maps/interactive-map-gallery>

Scroll through the maps until you see the icon for “Historical Imagery Viewer,” and click.

You can zoom in or out and locate our area. At the bottom of the page is another icon for map layers, and if you scroll through the choices, you'll find different years of flyover photographs. You can also choose to add or remove overlays of plat lines and so forth. The map ones for 1937 and 1953 show how our neighborhood developed and the location of other notable structures such as Ancient Oaks Trailer Park and the Bra Houses.



Fenwick Park and Vicinity: A Historical Glance

Research Sources:

Literally no stone was left unturned in researching the information compiled in this report, sans interviews with descendants of the families discussed. Most of the material came from various kinds of maps, title searches on land transactions, Fairfax County court records and archives, tax records, newspaper clippings (microfilm) covering the time span, special collections at the Fairfax Museum, the Virginia Room of the Fairfax County Regional Library in Fairfax City, the Virginia Room at the Arlington Regional Library in Ballston (Fenwick Collection), USGS maps and other info at the Library of Congress, and the local history room of the Mary Riley Stiles Public Library of Falls Church City. For brevity and specificity, many images and related information was left out of this report, but may be added later on.

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