

BOULEVARD MANOR AND SPY HILL SUBDIVISIONS

By

Anna Belle Lane*

Boulevard Manor Subdivision consists of land bounded by Fifth Road and Sixth Street, North, Upton Hill Regional Park, North Madison Street and Arlington Boulevard, and the ravine behind the houses on North Manchester Street and Bluemont Park. Spy Hill Subdivision is surrounded by Boulevard Manor.

Humans are known to have inhabited Arlington for 10,000 years. Indian villages have been found in the Four Mile Run valley but none in this area even though Indian artifacts such as axes and projectiles have been found. Powhatan Springs, adjacent to Boulevard Manor, is one of many springs in the area resulting from the rock formation which is the beginning of the Piedmont Region. However, according to Scott Silsby at the Gulf Branch Nature Center, who is an authority on Indians in Arlington, there is no evidence of an Indian village at this spring. It is known by word of mouth that water from the spring was bottled and sold before and after the Civil War.

Early History of Boulevard Manor

Boulevard Manor is part of two land grants, one being the Thomas Pearson grant of 1707 of 660 acres and the other the John Ball grant in 1742 of 166 acres. The Pearson tract was bounded on the east by a line drawn from the intersection of Arlington Boulevard and North Manchester Street to Four Mile Run, northwest to Patrick Henry Drive and Route I-66, and south through Upton Hill Regional Park to Arlington Boulevard. It included most of Munson's Hill in Fairfax County. Any land on the east side of the line between North Manchester Street and Four Mile Run lay in the John Ball grant which included Glencarlynn.

Thomas Pearson died before 1730 and left his grant to his son, Capt. Simon Pearson. Capt. Simon was married twice. His second wife was the sister of George Washington's mother, Mary Ball Washington. When Capt. Simon Pearson died in 1733, he willed the land to his son, Thomas Pearson. No one had lived on the land up to this time. Thomas Pearson leased in 1740 and 1741, 150 and 100 acres for three lives to Henry Collum and John Hurst respectively, for the purpose of getting the land seated, cleared and cultivated.

The next heir to the Pearson tract was Simon Pearson, great grandson of the original owner who inherited in 1786. Simon's marriage soon ended in divorce. A divorce at that time had to be obtained by a private act of the Assembly and it is not known that this was done. Simon was in the Fairfax

court a number of times for adultery. At the time of his death in 1797 he had been living with one woman for a number of years. In his will he conveyed his dwelling, his plantation and his furniture to "her son" to whom he gave his own name. The rest of his estate was willed to a brother, Thomas.

As for the John Ball grant, it is believed that Mr. Ball built a log cabin soon after he received his grant in 1742. This log house is part of the house located at 5620 Third Street, South known as the Ball-Sellers house which belongs to the Arlington Historical Society. He raised corn, wheat and tobacco. After Mr. Ball's death, William Carlin bought the 166 acre tract from Moses Ball, the executor of the John Ball estate.

William Carlin was a tailor who lived in Alexandria until this purchase. A William Carlin of Alexandria is mentioned in George Washington's diary on February 4, 1770: "At home all day. Carlin, the tailor, came here [Mount Vernon] and stayed all night." A tailor's goose, an heirloom of the Carlin family was given by the late William H.F. Carlin to the late Leland Plant who lived in the Ball-Sellers house as a boy. Mr. Plant in turn gave the goose to the Charles Lane family who lived in the Mary Carlin house. A note of interest is that when Mr. Lane's son, Munson Lane, Sr., went off to college, his mother packed this tailor's goose in his things for him to have to press his clothes. It weighs about five pounds. The tailor's goose now belongs to Mrs. Munson Lane, Sr., who is a resident of Boulevard Manor.

- William Carlin died at the age of eighty-eight in 1820. His widow, Elizabeth, died in 1835 before his estate could be settled. He had stipulated in his will that the land was to be divided into lots and sold, the proceeds to be divided between his wife and seven living children. It was difficult to find buyers for the small lots and it was twenty-eight years after William Carlin's death that his will was settled, September 26, 1848¹. John Bladen and his wife, Matilda, bought the last lot, part of which included the section of Boulevard Manor. On December 1, 1856² the Bladens sold to W.D. Walloch and his wife, Margaret, who in turn sold to Ira Lain on May 26, 1857³.

In the 1840s and 1850s northern farmers were moving south to buy farm land which had been depleted of fertility due to the raising of one main crop, tobacco. One such person was Timothy Bishop Munson who moved with his family from New York to Fairfax County in 1851. Munson started a nursery and raised sheep on the land which took his name, Munson's Hill. Many of the large trees in Washington came from this nursery. Munson's Hill extended into present day Arlington and included the greater portion of Boulevard Manor and most of Spy Hill. The line of the original Pearson grant bordered on the east, Fifth Road, North; on the north and on the west a line extending from the intersection of Fifth Road, North and North Mon-

tague to a little west of where the County line intersects Arlington Boulevard.

The Civil War Brings Changes

The War between the States began in April of 1861. The first three months found the southern forces in this area. An outpost was established by them on Upton's Hill where the regional park is now located. According to General Longstreet he supplied such outposts by collecting "a number of old wagon wheels and mounting on them stove-pipes of different caliber, till we had formidable looking batteries, some large enough of caliber to threaten Alexandria, and even the national capitol and the executive mansion." These were known as Quaker guns.

When the Confederate army withdrew its lines from this area the Federal army established Fort Upton on Upton's Hill as a part of the defense of Washington. One could see from this hill the Washington Monument and the Capitol in the east and as far as the mountains on a clear day in the west and observe the movements of the rebels. The Uptons' house was next to the fort and the lookout on top of this home was used as a signal station. The fort was renamed on November 16, 1861 to Fort Ramsey after General George Douglass Ramsey, a native Virginian, and chief ordnance officer of the army. There was scouting in the Boulevard Manor and Spy Hill areas for the duration of the war. One month before the war ended, James J. Williamson tells in his book, *Mosby's Rangers*, Mosby's guerrillas carried off a citizen and seven horses from the vicinity of Upton's Hill on March 12, 1865. Spy Hill received its name from these activities.

On his way home after the war a young Confederate soldier, William A. Torreyson from Unison Virginia, stopped off at Bailey's Cross Roads to visit his sister, Mrs. Virginia Payne, and her family. At the same time there was a young lady, Miss Mary Eliza Burrough from Charles County, Maryland, visiting her cousin, Mrs. Amanda Gordon (Mrs. Daniel Gordon) who was a neighbor of Mrs. Payne. The two young people met, fell in love, were married on December 11, 1865 at her home and returned to Virginia to establish their home. On February 9, 1866⁴ William A. Torreyson purchased from Ira Lain the tract of land which had been a part of the Carlin estate. He and his bride went to housekeeping in a log house which was located at about First and South Madison Streets. Here they established a dairy farm. On November 13, 1869⁵ Mr. Torreyson purchased from the heirs of Timothy B. Munson ninety-four acres which included that portion of Munson's Hill which extended into Alexandria County now known as Arlington County. Mr. and Mrs. Torreyson soon built a lovely home, Chestnut Grove, near what is now the intersection of First and North Manchester Streets.



Chestnut Grove
(1893)

Mr. and Mrs. Torreyson had three children, Duke, Lucy, and Ruth. Mr. Torreyson established his son in farming on a tract of land which is now the location of Swanson Intermediate School. Miss Lucy fell in love with George Reeves from southern Maryland, who left Maryland and established a farm in Benton, Missouri. In a letter to Mr. Torreyson written in November of 1893 asking permission for Miss Lucy's hand in marriage, Mr. Reeves spoke about returning to Virginia to farm. Again, in a letter to Mr. Torreyson in January 1894 he spoke of where they would live after their marriage as he felt Miss Lucy would miss the activities such as the Literary Society as there was nothing like that in Missouri. Then, in a letter in June 1894 to Miss Lucy nothing was said about them living in Virginia. He wrote about when the best time would be for him to get away from the farm long enough to come east to be married. They were married on October 25, 1894 at Dulin Chapel in Falls Church and returned to Missouri to live.

Mr. Torreyson's health began to fail him and he asked Mr. and Mrs. Reeves to return to Virginia to assist with the dairy farm. This they did in the fall of 1898. On August 19, 1902⁶ Mr. Torreyson deeded to his daughter, Lucy Torreyson Reeves seventy-seven and one-half acres on which Mr. Reeves established his own dairy farm. This tract included the Carlin tract

and the land north of Second Street, North to Wilson Boulevard.

On July 22, 1910⁷, one month before his death, Mr. Torreyson deeded to his daughter, Mrs. Ruth Torreyson Hupman, the remaining eighty acres of the farm, all of which had come from the Munson's Hill tract. It included the home place, Chestnut Grove. Mrs. Hupman, the wife of a Methodist minister, rented the land. When her husband began having problems with his eyes, they came to the farm to live for several years and then returned to the ministry. At this time she rented the farm to Mr. Frank Hummer until she sold to Fred E. Wilson in 1927.⁸ He in turn sold it to Leroy Eakin in June of 1930.⁹

Subdivision and Development

Mr. Eakin plotted the area on the north side of Arlington Boulevard and named it Boulevard Manor. The streets were not named except for Montague Road which was a designated county road, and Montague Circle. A clause in the deeds of these lots stated that no dwelling costing less than \$5,000.00 would be erected on the property. Only three lots were sold and only one house was built during that era.

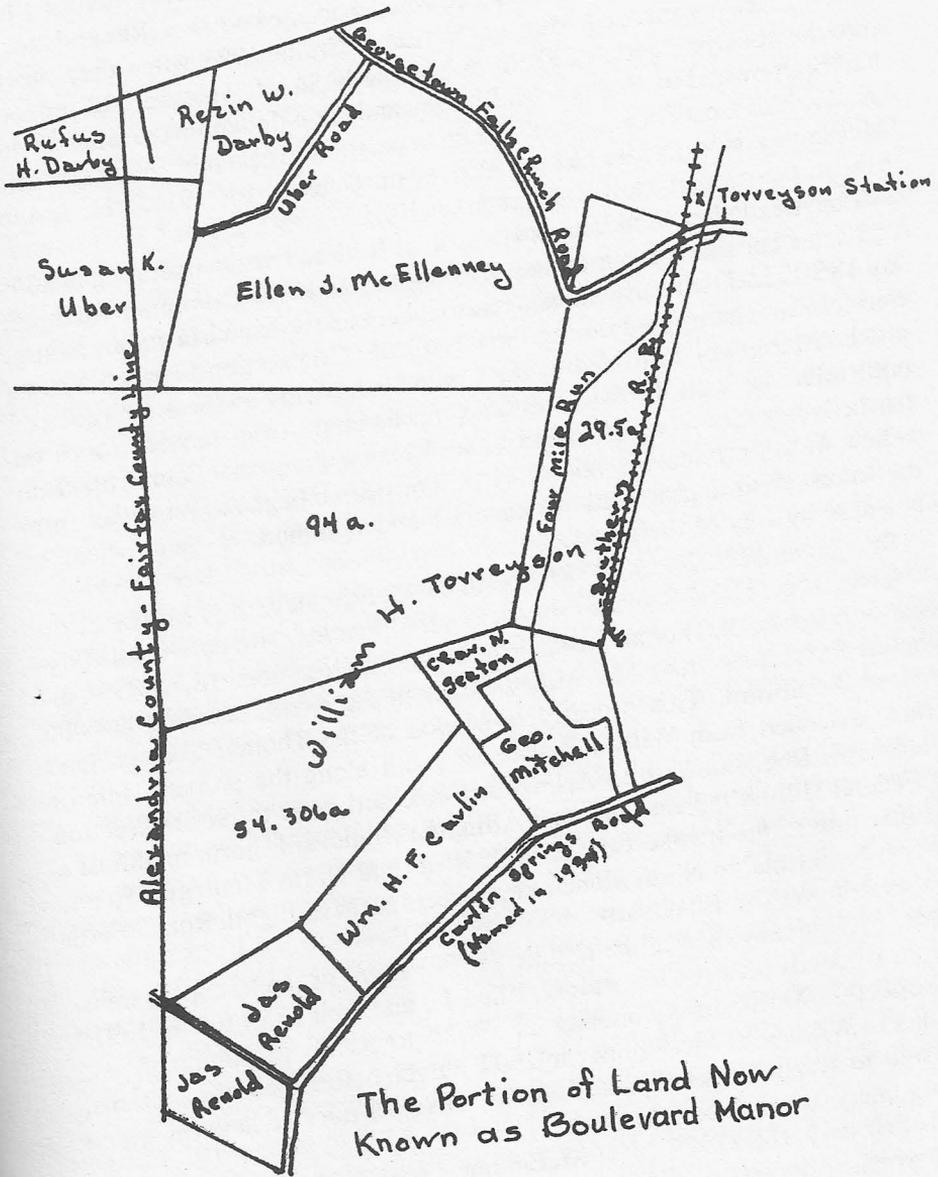
Lot 16 was purchased on March 14, 1932¹⁰ by Amie Henry who built the Spanish style house located at 110 North Montague Street. In 1935 she married Frank Mishou. When he retired in 1968¹¹ Mr. and Mrs. Mishou sold their home and moved to Maine. The front portion of the lot has been divided into three lots on which homes have been built.

Munson H. Lane, Sr. bought lot 23¹² and sold part to Courembis Construction Company to be included in the development of Boulevard Manor as plotted in the 1950s, and part to Mr. Lebowitz to be included in the development of Spy Hill.

It was not until January 15, 1946 that Mr. Eakin sold the third lot, lot 15,¹³ to John Van Strien. Mr. Van Strien sold to Mr. and Mrs. P.R. Rupert on June 2, 1948¹⁴ who in turn resubdivided the lot into three lots.¹⁵ These lots were sold and resubdivided several times. In the 1950s six houses were built on what was lot 15 but not by Courembis Construction Company.

It is not known when the Reeves' home, 400 North Manchester Street, was built but it was referred to as the tenant house when Mr. and Mrs. Reeves moved into it in 1898. It originally had wood shingles on the roof and has had two additions since that date.

Mr. and Mrs. Reeves had three children, Torreyson, Ruth and Nelson. Torreyson and Ruth were born in Missouri, Ruth being two months old when her parents returned to Virginia. Nelson was born in Alexandria County, now Arlington County. He went into the dairy business with his father.



The Portion of Land Now Known as Boulevard Manor

1900

The house at 506 North Montana Street was built in 1923 when Torreyson was married. He and his wife lived there for a year or so. Nelson and his wife, Louise, lived in this house until Mr. and Mrs. Reeves died in 1948. They then moved into the home place which became known as Reevesland.

Ruth Reeves married Munson H. Lane, Sr. in 1923 when they moved into the house located at 400 North Lombardy Street. This piece of property had been owned by William McElhinny and his wife who were artists living in Washington. They used this home only on weekends. Mr. and Mrs. McElhinny sold to Mr. George Reeves on October 10, 1919.¹⁶ He in turn deeded the property to his daughter in 1924.¹⁷

The Alexandria, Loudoun & Hampshire Railroad began operating in 1860 and later became known as the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad. By 1861 it had two daily trains operating between Alexandria and Leesburg. Service was interrupted during the Civil War. The section between Vienna and Leesburg was destroyed by the Confederate Army and was not replaced until after the war. In the meantime the Federal Army moved troops on flat-bed cars between Alexandria and Vienna along the Four Mile Run valley. When service was restored in 1866, people began to move out from the cities (Washington and Alexandria) and commute to their places of business by way of the railroad.

On September 22, 1885¹⁸ Mr. John J. McElhinney, a professor at the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, and his wife purchased forty-four acres from J. Thomas Miller and again on December 18, 1885¹⁹ purchased forty acres from Mr. Miller. Their house is still standing at 6006 Wilson Boulevard. This property, a section of the Thomas Pearson land grant, extended from Wilson Boulevard south along the property line of Upton Hill Regional Park to Arlington Boulevard, east to the intersection of Federal Hill on the east side and Arlington Boulevard, north in almost a straight line to the intersection of Fifth Road and North Montague Street, east on Fifth Road to North Manchester Street, north to Eighth Road, North and west to Wilson Boulevard.

Mr. McElhinney died in the middle 1890s. There began to appear transactions of deeds between his widow, Ellen J., and their sons, one in 1897²⁰ to Rogers J. McElhinney, another in 1901²¹ to R. A. McElhinney, and another to William E. McElhinney in 1902.²² Even before these transactions, she sold to Rozin W. Darby on June 26, 1896²³ a tract of land on which Montgomery Ward is now located.

On February 18, 1897²⁴ Mrs. McElhinney sold land to Mrs. Susan K. Uber which included land north from the Darby tract to Sixth Street, North. The Ubers built a very nice home near the intersection of North Madison and North Longfellow Streets. They sold to George Offutt.²⁵ The house burned and was replaced by a smaller one. This was rental property and

was torn down in the 1940s. Mr. Offutt gave this land to his son, Olin.²⁶ A county road passed through this area from Wilson Boulevard to Leesburg Pike and was known as Uber Road later to be known as North Ohio Street. A section of North Livingston Street which runs along the Upton Hill Regional Park is all that remains of the road.

Mrs. McElhinney sold to George Reeves on March 18, 1904²⁷ land which is the section between North Montague Street and North Littleton Street.

Rogers McElhinney, who never married, was a truck farmer living at 501 North Lombardy Street in what was then a three room house. He sold off parts of his land, an acre or two at a time, whenever he was in need of money. Of the ten transactions he made between 1901 and 1910 one was to Augusta B. Porte. About nine deed transactions later this land was sold to Dominion Hills Recreation Association on January 21, 1955.²⁸ Previous to this time this property had been known as Powhatan Springs. This writer doesn't know when the present house was built. Mr. William Martin owned it from 1931 to 1938 and rented it. Miss Elizabeth Ford and Miss Raw Holley rented it and served meals to people. When the owner wanted to raise the rent from \$100.00 per month to \$150.00, they moved as they couldn't afford the increase in rent. The next tenant used it for a dance hall.

Rogers McElhinney also owned the property where the Ashlawn School is located. He divided this land into two sections and sold one section to George Reeves²⁹ and the other to Ed. E. Ardinger³⁸ in 1905. Mr. and Mrs. Ardinger's house stood on the corner of what is now Eighth Road and North Manchester Street. An oak tree which stood in front of their house remains today. These two lots were obtained by the county in 1955³⁰ for Ashlawn School.

Rogers McElhinney's last transaction was to sell his house and nine-tenths of an acre to Munson H. Lane, Sr. in 1932.³¹ Being elderly and in poor health he went to live in a nursing home. This property, 501 North Lombardy Street, is where my husband, Munson H. Lane, Jr., and I live and are still tilling part of his garden site. The house has been remodeled and the barn reduced in size, but it is still used for garden tools and a garden tractor instead of a horse.

George Offutt who had bought the Uber property bought the remaining McElhinney property. On November 15, 1939³² he sold to W. R. Kelly. Courembis Construction Company bought from the heirs of Mr. Kelly to build that section of Boulevard Manor.

Courembis Construction Company bought land from J. R. Eakin and the Lucy Torreyson Reeves estate on March 14, 1952³³ and began the construction of houses in Boulevard Manor as replotted at this time from the original plot of Boulevard Manor.

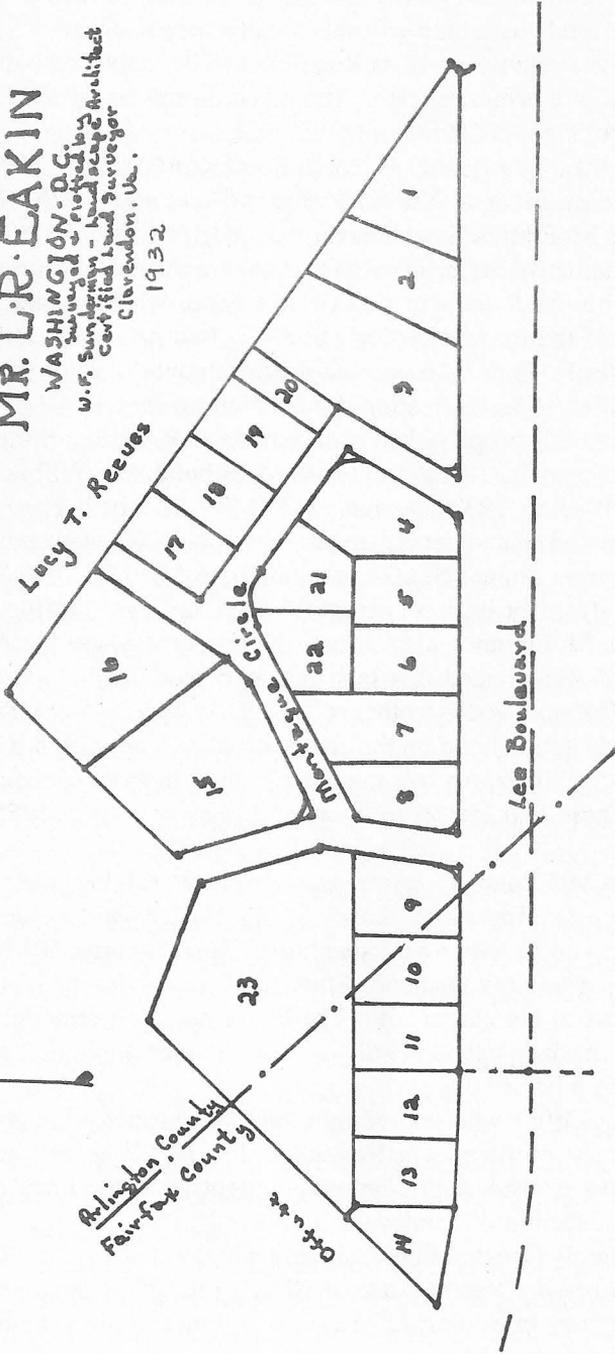
The Church of the Brethren held Easter sunrise services in April 1955

BOULEVARD MANOR

A SUBDIVISION
PROPERTY OF

MR. L. R. EAKIN

WASHINGTON, D.C.
Surveyed & plotted by
W.F. Swanton - Landscape Architect
Certified Land Surveyor
Cleveland, U.S.
1932



Taken from Arlington County Deed Book 531 page 527.

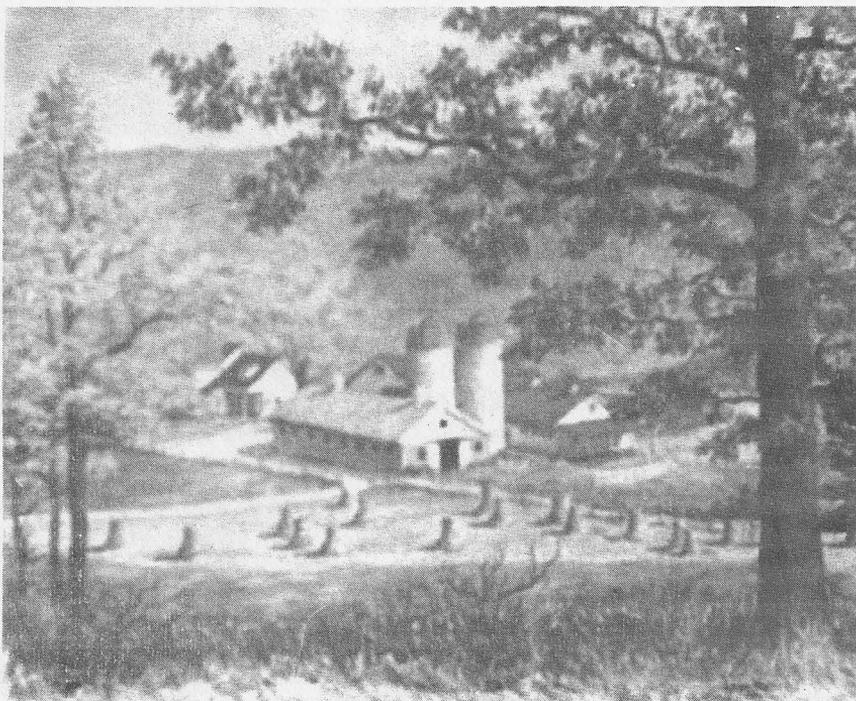
after acquiring the land from the Lucy Torreyson Reeves estate. The church broke ground on January 20, 1957 and held its first service in the new church on December 22, 1957.

Nelson Reeves stopped shipping milk in July 1955 and the last cow left in December 1955. The next spring "they broke the barn down" as a little boy told his mother. Hurricane Hazel in October 1954 with winds up to 95 miles an hour took down one of the silos.

To settle the estate of Torreyson Reeves, the land which was owned jointly by him and his brother and sister was sold in March 1975 as part of the development of Spy Hill.

Roads and Railroads

This area has always had access to good roads according to the time. As early as 1725 there was a road just about where Wilson Boulevard is now. It was first known as Awbrey's Road as it went from Falls Church to Awbrey's Ferry in Rosslyn. The ferry went to Georgetown. Later, this road



Reevesland
(1952)

became known as the Georgetown-Falls Church Road. The Falls Church part was dropped and it was known as the Georgetown Road. When President Wilson began playing golf at the Washington Golf and Country Club and traveled this road the name was changed to Wilson Boulevard in his honor.

Arlington Boulevard was planned in the 1920s. Its design was unique for the time as it included a 200-foot right of way. It was completed in two sections, the first being from Falls Church to Fillmore Street in the early thirties and the second being the completion to the District of Columbia via Memorial Bridge in 1937. It was first known as Lee Boulevard but renamed Arlington Boulevard in 1952 to eliminate confusion with Lee Highway.

Until 1860 transportation was either by horse, horse and wagon or your own two feet. The railroad service was discontinued during the Civil War and reinstated in 1866. Passenger service was discontinued in 1941 but reinstated in 1943 due to World War II and continued until 1946. Freight service was discontinued on August 28, 1968. There was a station at Bluemont Junction and one just north of Wilson Boulevard named Torreyson Station. In the deed of 1902 conveying land to Lucy Torreyson Reeves there was a clause reserving a right of way from the W. H. Torreyson property to Torreyson Station. The railroad right of way is now the W&OD Railroad Regional Park.

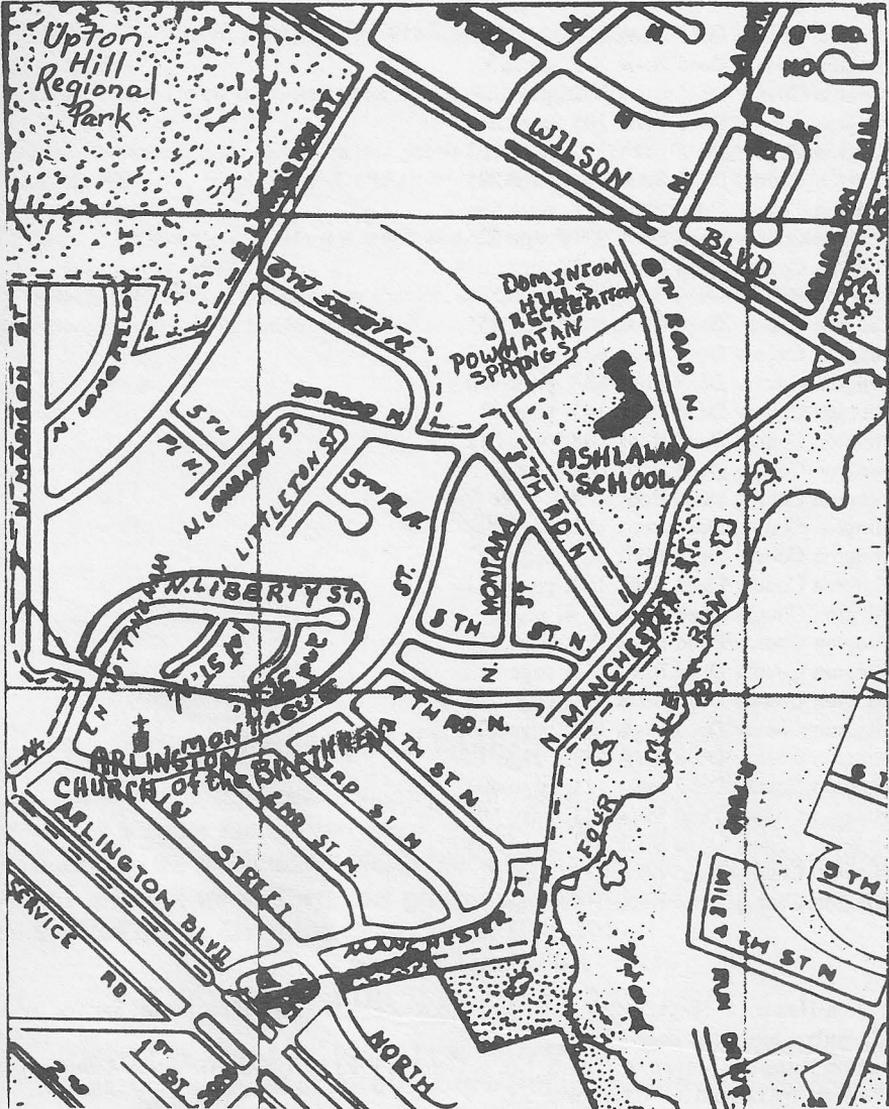
Arnold Bus lines began operating on Wilson Boulevard in the 1930s. This company was incorporated into the Metro System.

Public schools were first established in Alexandria County in 1871. For this area a school was located in the hall over Mortimore's shop which was in the Ballston area. It was replaced in 1877 with a new building on the corner of Wilson Boulevard and North Quincy Street named the Walker School. In 1893 the name was changed to Ballston School. Lucy Torreyson and her brother and sister attended this school. Her children attended the one room school in Glencarlyn; her grandchildren attended Stonewall Jackson School; and her great grandchildren attended Ashlawn School. There was no high school in Arlington until 1925 when Washington-Lee High School was built. Miss Torreyson attended a private girls' school in Loudoun County. Her children attended high school in the District of Columbia. Two of her grandchildren graduated from Wakefield High School and one grandchild and two great grandchildren graduated from Washington-Lee High School. All of these descendants lived in what is now the Boulevard Manor area.

The Carlin, Virginia post office was established in 1881 and was the mailing address for this area. This post office was discontinued in 1896 and a Glencarlyn, Virginia post office was established. Later the post office was changed to Falls Church and in 1936 it became Arlington.

The 1878 Hopkins Map of Alexandria County shows the school, the

stores, the blacksmith shop and various places of business located at Ball's Cross Roads where the people living in what would become Boulevard Manor went to trade. In a way things have not changed, just more modern and instead of Ball's Cross Roads it is now known as Ballston Common.



1987

The boundary of Boulevard Manor Subdivision is outlined with a broken line and the boundary of Spy Hill Subdivision is outlined with a solid line.

Notes and References

*Anna Belle Lane was born in Clarendon and has lived in Boulevard Manor for thirty-four years.

- ¹Arlington County Deed Book Liber L #3, page 183
- ²Arlington County Deed Book 3Q-T7, page 280
- ³Arlington County Deed Book Liber Z #3, folio 439
- ⁴Arlington County Deed Book X-Z, page 32
- ⁵Arlington County Deed Book X-Z, page 69
- ⁶Arlington County Deed Book 105, page 581
- ⁷Arlington County Deed Book 125, page 162
- ⁸Arlington County Deed Book 268, page 595
- ⁹Arlington County Deed Book 311, page 554
- ¹⁰Arlington County Deed Book 331, page 526
- ¹¹Arlington County Deed Book 1689, page 224
- ¹²Arlington County Deed Book 331, page 528
- ¹³Arlington County Deed Book 699, page 255
- ¹⁴Arlington County Deed Book 831, page 407
- ¹⁵Arlington County Deed Book 838, page 460
- ¹⁶Arlington County Deed Book 165, page 31
- ¹⁷Arlington County Deed Book 208, page 512
- ¹⁸Arlington County Deed Book G #4, page 109
- ¹⁹Arlington County Deed Book G #4, page 150
- ²⁰Arlington County Deed Book 107, page 149
- ²¹Arlington County Deed Book 105, page 213
- ²²Arlington County Deed Book 103, page 311
- ²³Arlington County Deed Book W 4, page 309
- ²⁴Arlington County Deed Book U 4, page 135
- ²⁵Arlington County Deed Book 111, page 373
- ²⁶Arlington County Deed Book 241, page 245
- ²⁷Arlington County Deed Book 108, page 526
- ²⁸Arlington County Deed Book 1185, page 14
- ²⁹Arlington County Deed Book 111, page 493
- ³⁰Arlington County Deed Book 111, page 598
- ³¹Arlington County Deed Book 331, page 144
- ³²Arlington County Deed Book 483, page 21
- ³³Arlington County Deed Book 1042, page 262

Additional Sources

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- Arlington Historical Magazine, Vol. 5, No. 1, October 1973 *Early Land Grants in Arlington, Virginia* by Donald A. Wise, page 23.
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- Arlington Historical Magazine, Vol. 5, No. 3, October 1975 *George Washington's Four Mile Run Tract* by Donald A. Wise, page 13.
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- Ames Williams, *Washington & Old Dominion Railroad* (Alexandria: Meridian Sun Press, 1984).
- James J. Williamson, *Mosby's Rangers* (New York: Ralph B. Kenyon, 1896; reprint Time-Life Books, 1982).
- Arlington Church of the Brethren records, courtesy of Mrs. Wilma Buckle, secretary.
- Family records of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Reeves, Mrs. Ruth Lane, and Munson H. Lane, Jr.



JOHN MILLS FAMILY CEMETERY

Arlington's showcase shopping mall, Ballston Common, was once the site of a small family graveyard. Members of the John Mills family were buried on the south side of North Glebe Road, opposite Carlin Springs Road, in a grove of trees. The burial ground was destroyed during construction of the Parkington Shopping Center about 1949-1951.

BILLY BIRCH FAMILY CEMETERY

Marked by three giant oak trees at the corner of 37th and North Abingdon Streets, the graveyard of the Billy Birch family included the following family members:

- Billy Birch — Died Oct. 18, 1870
- Mary Birch Langton, his daughter
- Thomas Langton, her husband
- Samuel Langton, son of Mary and Thomas