Preston's Drug Store in the early 1950s. (See related article Waverly Hills Neighborhood on page 13.)
Sanborn Map of Cherrydale, 1929, showing planned street layout in Waverly Hills. Glebe Road and Lee Highway did not change. Garrison Avenue subsequently became Washington Boulevard; Veitch Street became Utah; and Hinton Avenue became 19th Street.
Waverly Hills occupies the area bounded by Interstate 66, Lee Highway, Glebe Road, and Utah Street. Both Glebe Road and Lee Highway are old roads dating to the late colonial period. Like most of Arlington, this area remained rural and open countryside until the early 20th century. The lower part of the neighborhood, the area south of 19th Street, grew up in the period between World Wars I and II, while the area above 19th Street was developed in the years immediately after World War II. The entire area is largely a mixture of modest brick and frame colonials, Cape Cods, and one-story bungalows with several townhouse developments and garden apartments appearing over the last forty years. The outstanding feature of the neighborhood is the Glebe House, originally built in 1770 just prior to the Revolution but which burned and was rebuilt twice during the 19th century.

Like that of Arlington, the story of the neighborhood traces back to the beginnings of Virginia. In 1608 Captain John Smith sailed up the “Potawomeke” River as far as the Little Falls and became the first European, or certainly the first Englishman, to see what is today Arlington.

**Early Land Grants**

Throughout most of the 17th Century all of Northern Virginia remained Indian territory, outside the settled or even traveled area of Virginia. All the land was considered to belong to the King. Occasional and scattered grants were made. But the locations of these first grants are difficult to establish, and all were to speculators who did not live on their land.

One John Howson, a ship captain and speculator, received the first grant in what is Arlington in 1669. His grant of 6,000 acres lay along the Potomac from Roosevelt Island to the mouth of Hunting Creek.

Following the restoration of King Charles II in 1660, the King granted all the land between the Rappahannock and the Potomac Rivers to a proprietorship composed of a group of his loyal supporters. In a few years, Thomas, Lord Culpeper, became sole owner of the entire Northern Neck Proprietorship. Subsequently, Thomas, 5th Baron Fairfax, married Culpeper’s daughter and heiress. Their son, Thomas, 6th Lord Fairfax, inherited all the Culpeper land in Virginia, including the Northern Neck Proprietorship. Lord Fairfax came to Virginia in 1735 and remained until his death in 1781. Both Lord Fairfax and proprietorship agents before him made many grants in the Arlington area. These grants were small in comparison to the earlier, vast grants in
the lower tidewater made in the 17th century. But the grants in Northern Virginia were actually settled and now Arlington became a site for settlement.\(^2\)

The majority of Waverly Hills was included in a grant of 795 acres to one James Brechin in 1716. Brechin was a clergyman and rector of St. Peter's Parish in New Kent County. He never lived on his Arlington holding and died in 1721. Upon his death, Daniel Jennings, the surveyor of Fairfax County (in which Arlington was then included) purchased Brechin’s tract. A small portion in the northwest corner of the Waverly Hills area bounded by Glebe Road and Lee Highway was part of a 629-acre grant to James Robertson in 1731. Robertson was a large landholder and owned more than 3,000 acres in present-day Arlington.\(^3\)

### The Glebe

The Glebe House is the oldest and most significant building of Waverly Hills. The story of Glebe House begins in 1765. That year the Fairfax Parish was cut off from Truro Parish. The new parish comprised the area between Little Hunting Creek and the Potomac to the mountains and contained both Christ Church in Alexandria and the Falls Church and all of present-day Arlington. Virginia, with an established church, had a law requiring each parish to have a glebe, a farm or plantation, to provide the rector a living. In 1770, the new parish purchased 517 acres of the Brechin grant from Jennings for its glebe. The land was described as a “well wooded and rolling tract.” Moreover, it lay midway between Christ Church and the Falls Church. The location was convenient for the rector who served both churches and conducted services at each on alternate Sundays.\(^4\)

The vestry engaged Benjamin Ray to build a house on the glebe and set out extremely detailed specifications for the house and its kitchen. When completed the glebe had a “darey,” a “meet house [smoke house] with a pigeon roof,” a barn, a stable, a corn house, an office, and a toilet.

The Reverend Townshend Dale moved into the completed Glebe House in 1775 but did not stay long. He resigned as rector and left the Glebe in 1778 after he was accused of conduct unbecoming a minister.

Dale was succeeded by the Reverend Bryan Fairfax. Fairfax was a cousin of Lord Fairfax and would himself later inherit the Fairfax title as the 8th Lord. He was a friend of George Washington and a loyalist who attempted to convince Washington of the wrongfulness of the patriot cause. Despite political differences, the two men remained friends and Washington left Fairfax a Bible in his will.\(^5\)

Meantime, in 1776, the Virginia legislature, led by Governor Thomas Jefferson, passed the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, which ended the
established church in Virginia. The law permitted the Episcopal parishes to retain their glebes, but a further law in 1802 confiscated the glebes and allowed the overseers of the poor in each county to sell the glebes for the benefit of the poor.

The vestry of Christ Church challenged the 1802 law and a long lawsuit followed. In 1812, the Glebe lawsuit reached the Supreme Court which found for the vestry. The vestry was allowed to keep the glebe, but while the suit was underway, the Glebe House had burned in 1808.

Now, with clear title to the land, the Christ Church vestry sold the 516 acres of the glebe to Walter Jones and John Mason. (A subsequent survey would reveal the property actually included 560 acres.) Mason was a younger son of George Mason of Gunston Hall, a bank president and entrepreneur in Georgetown who owned extensive lands in Virginia along the Potomac from Little Falls to Analostan (Roosevelt) Island. Jones was an eminent Washington attorney. Mason took the half of the land that adjoined his property while Jones had the other half with the ruined Glebe House. He rebuilt the house about 1820 but later lost the property by default in 1829. It was purchased by Washington Mayor John Peter Van Ness. Mason sold his portion of the former Glebe property to Van Ness in 1836 and the glebe lands were reunited. Van Ness used the Glebe House as a summer retreat and hunting lodge and sold the property in 1846.

**Jurisdictional Changes**

In 1801, Virginia had ceded the present area of Arlington County and the town of Alexandria to be combined with land from Maryland to form the ten-mile square capital city of Washington. The Maryland portion was known as the County of Washington and the Virginia portion, which until that time had been part of Fairfax County, was designated Alexandria County.

With the building of the capital city, dissatisfaction began to grow both in the new city and the rural, former Virginia area. The former Virginians felt their area was not being used for the purposes of the capital, nor would it ever be, and wanted their area returned to Virginia. An act of Congress in 1846 provided for a referendum by the inhabitants. The vote, which took place in early September, was 766 to 222 for retrocession, and President Polk issued a proclamation of retrocession on 7 September 1846. The returned area was divided between Alexandria City and Alexandria County, the present Arlington County. Confusion between a city and county with the same name resulted in the name change to Arlington County in 1920.6
After Retrocession

The glebe had a succession of owners during the years following retrocession. John Brown owned it during the 1850s. He rebuilt the house after a fire and probably added the octagonal wing at that time. One story holds that Clark Mills, the sculptor who did the equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson in Lafayette Square, lived at the Glebe House during the 1850s and added the octagon for a studio. Mills’ son did marry Mr. Brown’s daughter, but no documentation supports the story about the Mills studio. Another story about the glebe tells that Federal troops used the house as a hospital during the Civil War. An Ohio regiment did occupy the area, but again no documentation confirms the hospital story.7

In 1870, General Caleb Cushing purchased the Glebe House and accompanying land, which had now dwindled to about 100 acres. Cushing had been a U.S. Congressman, fought in the Mexican War, and served as Attorney General under Franklin Pierce. While he owned the glebe, Cushing served as U.S. minister to Spain. The eagle atop the Glebe House cupola is thought to have been a gift to Cushing from the diplomatic corps in Madrid and was said to be hand-carved teak. A recent restoration, however, discovered the eagle to be heart pine. Cushing sold the glebe in 1879.8

Then in 1893, John P. Willett, the postmaster of Washington, bought the Glebe House with its 100 acres. Following Willett’s death in 1899, his widow Laura lived on at the property for almost twenty years.

Improved Transportation

Although just across the river from the growing nation’s capital, Arlington remained rural countryside in 1900. Development was hindered by poor transportation and bad roads. There was not a single paved street at that time. A local resident described the roads as “a morass in winter” and “in summer . . . long lines of dust and rocks.” Arlington got its first hard-surfaced road in 1909 when a portion of what is now Wilson Boulevard near the courthouse was paved.9

The arrival of the electric railroads, or trolleys, proved a great boon. These railways spread through the county during the last years of the 19th century and the earliest years of the 20th. In the central part of Arlington, the Washington–Virginia Railroad, initially a horse–car line, extended slowly from Rosslyn by Fort Myer to Clarendon, then followed present–day Fairfax Drive to Ballston, and reached Falls Church in 1897. This line opened the center of the county and passed not too far from Waverly Hills. Another line, originally steam, came from Alexandria through south Arlington passing by the Glencarlyn area and eventually extending to Leesburg and Bluemont.

Another electric railroad followed closely in the first decade of the new
century. The Great Falls and Washington Railroad, later the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD), started in Rosslyn, reached Cherrydale in 1904, and finally ended at Great Falls. It passed north of Waverly Hills and today Old Dominion Drive follows the right of way west of Glebe Road. In 1912, the W&OD took over the Alexandria–Bluemont line, converted it to electricity, and built a connecting link between it and the Great Falls line. This connection ran from Thrifton Station, near the present intersection of Lee Highway and Spout Run Parkway, to Bluemont Junction beyond present-day George Mason Drive in Bon Air. It cut through the southern part of Waverly Hills and today Interstate 66 follows the right of way of that line.

With the railroads came early signs of development. Cluster villages grew up at Rosslyn, Clarendon, Cherrydale, and Ballston. Across Glebe Road from Waverly Hills were the older black communities of Hall’s Hill and Highview Park. But Waverly Hills remained countryside free of this nascent development. A Howell & Taylor map of Alexandria County in 1900 shows only open space for the area—the Willett holding of 100 acres with the Costelow farm (22 acres), Scherp land (13 acres), and Erasmus land (16 acres) lying between the Willett property and Lee Highway. South of the Willett land lay 78 acres of Lacy property that extended from about present-day 15th Street down to Ballston and the Washington and Virginia Railway. The northwest corner of Waverly Hills, the area at Lee Highway and Glebe Road, was Wunder property, part of the old Wunder farm, most of which was across Lee Highway.

The Glebe House remained the major landmark of the area. Another was Mt. Olivet Methodist Church situated at the intersection of Glebe Road and Brown’s Bend Road (present-day 16th Street). During the 1850s, two landowners, William Marcy and John Brown, who owned the glebe, had a dispute over a parcel of land at that corner. To resolve the matter, both abandoned their claims and donated the land for a church. The first Mt. Olivet Church was built there in the late 1850s. During the early years of the Civil War the building served as a Union hospital, and later soldiers demolished the frame structure for firewood. The present neo-colonial church is the fourth building on the site and dates from 1948. Through all the years, Mt. Olivet has been an important church for residents of Waverly Hills.

**Development Begins**

It was Laura Willet who began the subdivision of the glebe property that would grow into the Waverly Hills neighborhood. In late 1906 she sold a small piece of her property. A year and a half later, in July 1908, that parcel was divided into lots for a subdivision called Glebe Highlands, the present area between Utah, Stafford, 18th, and 19th Streets and an area now outside
the Waverly Hills Civic Association. Next, in May 1915, Mrs. Willett sold 79 acres and the Glebe House. Within several years and after several other owners, part of the property was laid off in lots titled Willette Heights. This was done in March 1919 by the Willette Heights Corporation, headed by J.T. Blandy. The subdivision included the area bounded by Glebe Road, Utah Street, 15th Street, and the south side of 18th Street.¹³

Senator and Mrs. Frank Ball. The Balls purchased the Glebe House in 1926. Photo taken in 1956.
In 1926, Frank and Marie Ball purchased Lot 1 of Block 6, containing two acres and the Glebe House—the largest single unit in Willette Heights. Frank Ball was a former Arlington County Commonwealth’s Attorney and served in the Virginia Senate from 1924 to 1932. Senator and Mrs. Ball made the Glebe House renowned for gracious hospitality. They also had a keen interest in Arlington history and hosted the meeting at the Glebe House in 1956 which established the Arlington Historical Society. The Glebe House remained the Ball home until Mrs. Ball’s death in 1980.14

Willette Heights began a series of subdivisions in the lower part of Waverly Hills during the 1920s and 1930s. These included: Clarenford, bounded by Washington Boulevard, Glebe Road, and 15th and Utah Streets; Waverly Hills Section 2, between 15th and 18th Streets, Utah Street and the east side of Taylor Street (an area now also outside the Waverly Hills Civic Association); and Waverly Hills Section 3, between the north side of 18th Street and 19th Street and Glebe Road and Utah Street.15 Waverly Hills Section 3 was part of the 79 acres originally sold by Laura Willett and was subdivided by the Colonial Mortgage and Investment Corporation in 1931.16 The area north of present 19th Street to Lee Highway, the area of the old Costelow farm, the John Sherp land, and the Erasmus land, remained undeveloped. Developments similar to Waverly Hills were growing elsewhere in Arlington. Ashton Heights, Lyon Village, Lyon Park, Country Club Hills, and Waycroft–Woodlawn, just across Glebe Road from Waverly Hills, all date from the pre–World War II period.

Although a 1929 Sanborn Insurance map labels the area Waverly Hills, no indication has been found for the derivation of the name. Nor is there any association for it in Arlington. Perhaps it was the selection of one of the early developers and reflected a lingering popularity of Sir Walter Scott’s Waverly novels. Waverly names appear in the use of Kenilworth, Ivanhoe, and Woodstock as street names elsewhere in the county. Nor has any map been located to date to show if there was a Section 1 of Waverly Hills or where it was. Was Willette Heights originally called Waverly Hills?

The subdivisions of the late 1920s and 1930s were facilitated by a series of county actions. The construction of a county water system began in 1927. The first county sewage system dated from 1923 and by 1930 the entire county had been designated a single sanitary district.17

With the new subdivisions had come many new streets. Their names had no system or logic and confusion and duplication arose. By the early 1930s, there were eleven Washington streets or avenues, ten Arlington streets or avenues, and nine Virginia streets in Arlington with no one of these related to any other of the same name. Moreover, the Post Office Department refused to establish a central post office in Arlington until there was more coherence in street
names. Consequently, the County Board appointed a citizens’ committee to devise a uniform system. As a result, Arlington adopted a new system in August 1934. The County was divided into north and south designations by what would eventually become Arlington Boulevard. Numbered streets ran parallel to the dividing line. Named streets crossed the numbered streets at right angles with an alphabetical pattern beginning with one syllable, repeating with two syllables, and then three. Also included was provision for systematic house numbering.18

Waverly Hills had typified the confusion in street names. One of the ten Washington avenues was in Waverly Hills, and the street names had no pattern or relation to other names in Arlington. Under the new system in 1934, the names were changed to the ones that continue today:

Miller Avenue became 15th Street.
Willett Avenue became 16th Street.
Fugate Avenue became 17th Street.
Washington Avenue became 18th Street.
Hinton Avenue became 19th Street.
Royal Street became Wakefield Street.
Veitch Avenue became Utah Street.
Parker Avenue became Taylor Street.
Clements Avenue became Stafford Street.

Even though the streets had new names, it did not mean they were city streets. A 1936 insurance map shows both Wakefield and Utah as unpaved.19

The names of some of the county’s major thoroughfares did not change under the new system. Both Glebe Road and Lee Highway retained their names. Glebe Road was a colonial road that ran from Alexandria to the Little Falls and eventually Chain Bridge. With the creation of the glebe, it had acquired its name over the course of the years. Lee Highway throughout its early years was known as the Georgetown–Fairfax road; after the Civil War, it was named to honor Robert E. Lee.20

The intersection of these roads was known throughout most of the 19th century as Wunder’s Crossroads after the family whose farm lay just to the northeast. By the early 1930s, both roads had been paved. Even though there was little traffic, the County installed a traffic light at the Glebe and Lee intersection in 1935. It was the only light on Lee Highway between Rosslyn and Falls Church. A Sanitary grocery opened on Glebe Road just above Lee Highway in 1936 and other stores soon followed. By 1940, all four corners had stores and shops. This little shopping area had two drug stores. Dr. Preston had a pharmacy on the northeast corner and Dr. Moskey on the southeast (in the Waverly Hills area). Preston’s had a soda fountain and booths and became
a hangout for neighborhood young people in the period before, during, and after World War II. Later, Dr. Preston took over the Moskey store and moved his business there (the present Signet Bank building). He owned his store until the early 1980s and, although the business has been sold twice, the Preston name still survives.21

Post–War Development

World War II interrupted the building in Waverly Hills as it did throughout Arlington. But the end of the war brought renewed development to meet the demand for housing in the growing Washington area. Mrs. Mary Ellen (May) Runyan and her husband Bryan sold a portion of the Costelow farm that she had inherited from her mother, Mary Costelow Ormsbee, and an uncle, James Costelow, to M.T. Broyhill & Sons in 1949.22 The Broyhill firm, which developed much of postwar Arlington, combined the Runyan parcel with another piece of the old Costelow farm and built Broyhill’s Addition to Waverly Hills, bounded by 19th Road, 20th Street, and Woodstock and Vermont Streets.23 Other developments nearby were already in progress or followed rapidly thereafter. These included: Hines Addition, bounded by Upton, Utah, and 20th Streets and 19th Road; Waverly Village East, bounded by Vermont, Upland, and 20th Streets and 19th Road; and Wundoria, bounded by Woodstock and Woodrow Streets and Glebe and 20th Roads.24

A 1952 Franklin Survey Company map of Arlington shows the development of Waverly Hills complete. All the new development lots had houses. The Parkland Gardens Apartments on Glebe Road opposite 21st Street were there, as well as the Lorcom Apartments on the west side of Woodstock at 20th Road, but not the apartments on the east side of Woodstock. The Marcey farm on the west side of Glebe opposite 18th and 19th Streets remained the only open space in the vicinity.25

Waverly Hills has changed relatively little since the 1950s. The 1950s and 1960s saw the Lee Highway boundary become largely commercial as businesses and small apartments replaced individual homes. In the early 1970s, the Marcey farm was sold to become the site of Glebe School, now the elementary school for Waverly Hills. Interstate Highway 66, though planned in the 1950s, was not actually constructed until the mid-1970s. Its completion in 1978 cut off the lower portion of Waverly Hills, which was then incorporated into the Ballston–Virginia Square Civic Association. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed construction of town houses along both the upper part of the Glebe boundary and Lee Highway. During the 1990s, a number of large lots have been divided and new houses infilled. Following Mrs. Ball’s death in 1980, the Ball family sold the Glebe House and its two acres to Arlington developer
Preston Caruthers. He swept away the gardens behind the house, built the Glebe House Mews townhouses, and donated the Glebe House to the National Genealogical Society for its headquarters. Neighborhood opposition to this sale and development sparked resurrection of the Waverly Hills Civic Association, which had been moribund for nearly thirty years. The revived association did not stop the Glebe House project, but it has continued an active force in the community ever since then.

**Neighborhood Reminiscences**

There are still neighborhood residents with recollections of the Waverly Hills area before it became completely developed. Mrs. May Runyan, a Costelow granddaughter, grew up on the Costelow farm. She has fond memories of the white frame farm house that stood at the top of the hill in the area between present-day 19th Road and 20th Street. The house had a tin roof and was surrounded by old-fashioned flowering shrubs. The farm included a large barn and other outbuildings, including a greenhouse, and an orchard with apple, pear, and cherry trees. There was a spring, now piped and covered over, at the bottom of the hill, approximately where 20th Street is today. Mrs. Runyan’s uncle, James Costelow, used the abundant spring water to raise celery, which he sold at the old Washington central market (where the National Archives building now stands). His celery was so good and in such demand that “Uncle Jim” became renowned locally as “the king of celery.”

Mrs. Runyan also remembers how Nellie, Uncle Jim’s horse, would walk up to Glebe Road every evening around five o’clock to await her master’s return home from Washington on the bus.

Mrs. Runyan’s daughter, Majorie Holt, as a young girl, also remembers the farm. Her memories include fresh rhubarb from the garden, the luscious pears and cherries from the orchard, and how neighborhood youngsters from the nearby new houses would come and get fruit. She also recalls that people would come and cut Christmas trees on the property.

As part of the transaction when Mrs. Runyan and her husband sold the portion of the Costelow farm she had inherited, the Broyhill Company built the Runyans the house at 4606 19th Road on a triple lot. The Runyans and their family lived there for nearly thirty years. Then Mrs. Runyan retired to Florida and her daughter Majorie and her husband, Ray Holt, took over the house. Recently, Mrs. Runyan returned to live with the Holts at the 19th Road house. Mrs. Runyan and Majorie Holt are a rare example of the third and fourth generations of an Arlington family still living on a remainder of their family property.

Howard and Pauline Annis moved to a new house on Hinton Avenue, now
19th Street, in early 1934. Theirs was only the third house on the street, which was still unpaved and not cut through to Utah Street. There were no houses behind the Annis house on 18th Street—only open space to the Glebe House. Howard Annis died in 1991 and Pauline now lives at the Hermitage in Alexandria, but their daughter, Priscilla, and her husband, Steve Hess, with their family still live in the Annis house at 4616 19th Street.28

Some 19th Street residents still remember Paul Siple, his wife, and daughters, who lived in the “Cotswold cottage” at 4609 19th Street. As a teenage Eagle scout with 56 merit badges, Siple accompanied Admiral Richard E. Byrd on his first expedition to the Antarctic in 1928–1929. Dr. Siple subsequently became a noted explorer and geographer in his own right. He and his family lived on 19th Street during the years 1944 to 1954.29

The De Lashmutt family had a surveying and contracting business in Arlington in the years between World Wars I and II. Charles M. De Lashmutt built the large Tudor house at the northeast corner of 19th and Wakefield Streets during the 1930s. The infill 1960s house now next door at 4535 19th Street occupies the site of the De Lashmutt swimming pool and pool house. Pam and Doug McCracken today live in the De Lashmutt house, which Pam’s parents, John and Maxine Morgan, purchased in 1962.30

Another member of the De Lashmutt family, Basil, lived in the large brick house just across Glebe Road at 19th Street (1918 Glebe Road). Basil De Lashmutt served on the County Board from 1940 through 1949 and as Chairman of the Board in 1943, 1947, and 1949.31

Notes and References
Willard J. Webb is a long-time Arlington resident. He served as a government historian for 34 years, culminating in his assignment as Chief of the Historical Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

6 Rose, Arlington County, pp. 63–64, 79–82, 176.
Ibid.


