WASHINGTON, D.C. AND THE GROWTH OF ITS EARLY SUBURBS:

1860 - 1920

by

Anneli Moucka Levy

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Maryland in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
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PLEASE NOTE:

THE FOLLOWING MAP ACCOMPANIES
THIS THESIS:

MAP OF WASHINGTON, D.C. AND
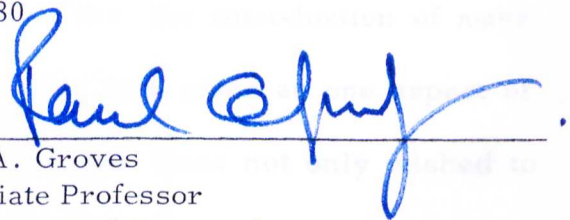VICINITY, 1917
(U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY)

THIS MAP IS LOCATED IN THE
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Name of Candidate: Anneli Moucka Levy
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Paul A. Groves
Associate Professor
Department of Geography

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ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Washington, D.C. and the Growth of Its
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Anneli Moucka Levy, Master of Arts, 1980

Thesis directed by: Paul A. Groves
                      Associate Professor
                      Department of Geography

During the nineteenth century, the North American city greatly

changed in size and internal structure. With the introduction of mass

transportation, large scale suburbanization took place as one aspect of

this change. Members of the evolving middle class not only wished to

escape the pollution and congestion of the urban core, but also

believed strongly in a 'rural ideal,' translated into a 'suburban ideal.'

Urban changes and suburban growth were especially pronounced in

industrial cities, and descriptions of conditions in these cities identify

the accepted model of the spatial configuration of the metropolis

existed in 1920.

Examination of the growth of Washington D.C. between the Civil

War and World War I indicates that the city shared few of the

characteristics of the accepted urban model. Nevertheless, it exhibited

distinct suburban movement connnected with three major transport modes,

including the steam railroad. The belief in the 'suburban ideal' was

broadly based in Washington and therefore much variation was found

among the city's suburban communities, even among those associated

with the same transportation mode. Furthermore, in contrast to the

suburban model, conditions in the suburban areas often did not compare favorably with those in the city. Even so, the suburbanization process accelerated from small beginnings, so that by 1920 the city displayed the local variant of the typical star-shaped pattern.

Every American community is different from every other;
yet each, as a unit in the American scene,
by itself makes up American history in miniature.

Constance McLaughlin Green

Every American community is dfferent from every other;
yet each, as a unit in the American scene,
by itself makes up American history in microcosm.

Constance McLaughlin Green

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the nineteenth century, the North American city greatly changed in both size and internal structure. From a small, compact walking city, with a general radius of about two miles, it became a sprawling metropolis stretching to ten miles or more from the center. Where earlier places of work and residence had been located close to each other in the urban core, now the tendency was for those who could do so to leave the city for purely residential suburbs on the periphery of the built-up area. By the beginning of the twentieth century, low density residential areas clustering around its fringes were an accepted part of the newly emerging, essentially modern North American city.

The growth of suburbs took place to some extent in most North American urban places, in small as well as large cities, albeit at somewhat different time periods. But it was so especially an accepted phenomenon in such established urban places of the east and midwestern United States as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Pittsburgh --cities of the manufacturing belt--that suburbanization of these cities is taken as the model of the urban--and suburban--development process in general.

A number of reasons were usually proffered for the suburban residential choice; among the most prominent were those leading to generally unpleasant conditions in the "downtown" areas of the city. Contributing to these conditions were the unprecedented growth of the urban population in general, and especially the urban poor, including the increasing influx of immigrants from abroad, causing immense population densities in the inner city; the development of a manufacturing system which led to a clustering of industries and large factories in the urban core with their associated noise, congestion, and pollution; and a general concentration of specialized economic functions in the inner city encroaching on nearby residences and hastening their deterioration.[1] At the same time, evolution of a convenient and inexpensive mass transportation system made outward mobility possible for an ever larger number of urban dwellers for the first time.[2]

Increasingly, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century, a specialization of land use became apparent in the growing industrial, metropolitan areas.[3] Within the urban core this was expressed

[1] Literature dealing with the various aspects of urbanization within North American Nineteenth Century cities is immense. See for example, Glaab and Brown; Jackson, 1972, 1973; Ward, 1966, 1968, 1971; Weber.

[2] See, for instance, Adams, 1970; Colby, 1933; Schaeffer and Sclar; Smerk; Tarr, 1973, 1978; Taylor, Parts I and II; Warner, 1962.

[3] It was the industrial, manufacturing city which grew to the rank of metropolis, i.e. with a population of 100,000 or more during the nineteenth century (Vance, 1977, p.346).

by the concentration of similar enterprises, such as banking and insurance or retail establishments in financial or shopping districts. Residences on the other hand were not only increasingly clustered into purely residential areas but residential growth was more and more prominent toward the outskirts of the built-up area of the city, away from the places of work downtown.

Such a separation of job and residence, however, was not inevitable but rather a North American phenomenon not generally found in Europe at that time and under the same conditions.[1] It is thought that the American attitude toward the city itself was influential in the wholehearted embrace of suburban living. American settlers had, from the beginning, adhered to a belief in the inherent goodness of the rural life and harbored suspicion toward the city. Now, many could indulge in this belief in the "rural ideal", translated into a "suburban ideal", while at the same time taking advantage of the opportunities afforded in the city. It seems that not only urban conditions per se, but this belief in the "rural ideal" were strong elements in the general movement toward residential suburbs taking place in most nineteenth century North American cities.[2]

Washington, D.C. provides one example of a city which had few of the negative urban conditions prevalent in then contemporary metropolitan

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1 Rugg, Vance, 1977; Ward, 1964; Weber.

2 Some of those dealing with the perception of the city and suburban living are: Glaab and Brown; Halden and Barton; Donaldson; Schmitt; Strauss; Tuam; White and White, and Zelinsky; Weber early makes a point of the American prediliction of suburban residences.

areas. While the city attained a population of 100,000 by 1870, it was until the twentieth century the only metropolis without an industrial base. Politically controlled by Congress, it was from the beginning a planned city which, by the end of the nineteenth century, was considered to be among the most handsome urban centers in the United States. Its large middle class, dependent on the Federal Government, either directly as civil servants or indirectly as catering to Federal and Congressional demands, was relatively immune to the fluctuations of the marketplace elsewhere.[1] Washington, unlike most northeastern cities, had a small immigrant population; therefore, its population was predominantly native-born.

Since Washington's urban conditions did not conform to those found in contemporary industrial cities nor to the generally accepted urban model, little suburban movement should be expected. Nevertheless, a study of Washington's geographic development quickly shows that here, as elsewhere, movement toward suburban residential areas did take place, starting at a time when the city itself barely deserved that title and often anticipating the evolution of a mass transportation system.

General Objectives. The purpose of the following study is to examine the process of suburbanization as it took place in Washington, D.C. during the second half of the nineteenth and into the beginning twentieth Century, and to identify the resulting suburbs within a

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1 In fact, it was during times of national stress that the civil service corps would grow, providing more job opportunities in the capital city.

general classification scheme based on available transportation modes. Such a study might also provide some evidence as to why movement toward suburban residential areas was popular in the national capital as much as in industrial cities during the chosen time period and whether in fact suburbanization should not be considered a universal phenomenon in U.S. cities, regardless of the conditions within their centers.

Results of such an examination should offer more than an isolated case study but make a meaningful addition to the general knowledge within the field of urban geography. Therefore, Washington's growth will be examined, as well, within the context of the general urban model based on existing literature, and a comparison will be attempted as to the degree to which Washington fits such a generalized model. Speci- fically, Washington's political and economic conditions as well as its population peculiarities will be compared to those of the contemporary American metropolis; the development of its transportation system will be included in this comparison.

The main emphasis of the thesis will be on the process of early suburbanization that took place in the nation's capital prior to World War I. The study proposes to focus on three interrelated themes: 1) the process of suburbanization and its spatial expression; 2) the development of various available transportation modes and their role in the development of residential suburbs; and especially 3), the variety of resulting suburbs.

In the literature, suburbanization is an established aspect of the evolution and growth of North American cities of the nineteenth and twentieth century. However, by far the most emphasis has been given to the development of streetcar suburbs,[1] to the neglect of the earlier walking suburbs as well as the negation of the importance that the suburban movement based on the steam railroad had on a number of nineteenth century cities, including Washington, D.C..[2] Focusing on Washington's transportation modes and their involvement in the evolution of its suburbs will make a comparison with the generalized model possible.

Furthermore, characteristics of suburban areas themselves have had relatively little scrutiny and are only sparsely represented in the literature.[3] It is therefore hoped that a descriptive overview of the various types of suburbs growing up on the outskirts of the capital city will be a useful addition to our understanding not only of the process of suburbanization but also its end result.

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1 Streetcar Suburbs, Sam Bass Warner's study of Boston's suburbanization between 1870 and 1900, has been instrumental in this emphasis; see, for instance, Glaab and Brown, p. 157; Yeates and Garner.pp.219-22.

2 In generalized schemes of the evolution of suburban spatial structure, such as offered by Adams and reiterated by Muller, movement by steam railroad is generally ignored. This will be discussed further in Chapter II, as well as in Chapter III when dealing with Washington, D.C.

3 Again, Warner's study of suburban Boston is the best known exception. However, it should be emphasized that the types of suburban homes which Warner describes and illustrates--such as triple deckers-- were widespread in Boston, but not necessarily typical for suburbs in cities in other parts of the country. Warner's study seemed to have lead to the formulation of a "streetcar suburb" stereotype in the literature which may not be justified. Urban geographers with a cultural or architectural bent might find here a field for further study.

Definitions. The study area chosen includes the District of Columbia and the adjacent counties of Montgomery and Prince George's in Maryland and Arlington in Virginia. This choice was made because the city's suburbanization process was not confined to a specific political entity--the District of Columbia--but spread early to the outlying counties, subject to the influence of local terrain and the evolution of public transportation modes.

The time period roughly between the Civil War and World War I was chosen. With the influences of the Civil War, Washington grew to an urban place that was--by 1870--for the first time equal in population to a number of large American cities. Furthermore, much of its suburbanization took place during these decades (1870-1920), although there was some beginning outward movement even before the Civil War. Finally, the proliferation and the daily use for commuting of the family-owned automobile did not have direct bearing on Washington's suburbanization process until after World War I.

Only the loosest possible definition was given to what constitutes a suburb for the purpose of this study.[1] Simply, in order to be included, a residential area must have been located outside the old boundary of the city, but excluding Georgetown. These suburbs have also been referred to as subdivisions, communities, settlements, neighborhoods, or suburban

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1 As there seem to be almost as many definitions of suburb as writers discussing them, I have not attempted to use any of the many more specific definitions that have been offered in the literature.

"villages" in this text--the labels are used interchangeably.[1] No attempt has been made to refine these definitions further. The suburbs and their evolution are described as belonging to three major categories based on different modes of transportation: walking-horsecar suburbs, steam railroad suburbs, and electric streetcar suburbs. This categorization is used throughout and is described further in the body of this thesis.

Limitations. Because of its unique role as the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. is perceived primarily as the seat of the Federal Government. Descriptions of the city dwell on "monumental Washington" (Reps, Goode), and neglect the city of neighborhoods and people that can be found behind those monuments and government edifices. Where vernacular architecture or housing are discussed, discussion is usually confined to historic houses or the homes of the famous (Cox, Jacobson, et.al.) with emphasis often given to Georgetown, Alexandria, or Capitol Hill. Descriptions of the city's geography center on L'Enfant's city, its historic beginnings, and the role of Congress in its urban planning.

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1 It is understood that some of these labels could refer technically to differing entities. A subdivision, for instance, may consist of only a small plot subdivided into lots by the owner--several of these subdivisions may constitute a suburban community. A community itself may refer to a suburb that sees itself as a unit with a "community" spirit. Developers of suburban areas often refer to them as "villages" in order to stress their rural roots, and so on. Where a specific meaning is attached, it can be easily conferred from the context.

The least importance has been given to suburban development which is usually only superficially examined.[1]

There is therefore a dearth of useful information on purely local geography and especially descriptive material on suburban areas. Information that exists is often confined to material by local citizens' associations or the efforts of local, usually amateur, historians. Sources that are available are scattered in a number of collections, such as the Library of Congress and its Map Division, the National Archives, the vertical files of the Washingtonian Division of the Martin Luther King Memorial Library of the District of Columbia and the Columbia Historical Society.

While including the Maryland and Virginia suburban areas was realistic and useful, this presented a further drawback to the gathering of material. Local material, especially on individual suburbs, is often collected in a haphazard way and at the discretion of individual reference librarians in neighborhood libraries. Historical societies are active to varying degrees in the three jurisdictions and pursue interests not always helpful to the geographer.[2] Much material which would be desirable or necessary for a thorough study of individual suburbs is therefore simply not available.

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1 Even in Green's thorough interpretive history of the city, little mention is made of suburban areas, even within the District of Columbia; Gutheim gives only a few short paragraphs to individual suburban neighborhoods.

2 Montgomery County has an active Society; Arlington County has a small local museum and periodically publishes a useful pamphlet on various aspects of the county's history; Prince George's County's Society has no offices and directs many of its efforts toward geneology.

The two appendices are integral parts of this thesis. In Appendix A, short profiles of eight suburbs represent and illustrate each of the three major suburban categories as well as point out the variations found even within the same category. Appendix B consists of a map of Washington's known suburbs, as they existed in 1917, with the name of each suburb and its category superimposed onto a 1917 topographic map of the area. This appended map should be consulted throughout the following discussion dealing with the Washington area.

One secondary aim and an incidental result of this study has been the collection of a comprehensive bibliography dealing with Washington and its suburbs. As Green pointed out some years ago ("Problems...", p.125) and as Nolen has reiterated (p.531), there is much need for a series of competent monographs on the development of specific activities within the city as well as a need for a chronological listing of "major events and landmarks in the city's history". Certainly, Washington's suburbs would warrant further study; perhaps the appended bibliography can be useful in future investigations.

Much specific information relating to socio-economic conditions, house types, lot size, street layouts, and the existence or absence of urban amenities was uncovered for some individual residential neighborhoods and was included in the study wherever relevant. It should be emphasized that it has been the primary intent of this research to provide a broadly based analysis of a suburbanization process which Washington shared with the majority of its contemporary cities during the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER II

SUBURBANIZATION AND THE LATE
NINETEENTH CENTURY NORTH AMERICAN CITY

Four mutually reinforcing developments resulted in the
physical spreading of the North American city and the
exodus of the middle and upper classes: (1) the growth
of the total urban population, especially the urban poor
population, on an unprecedented scale; (2) the creation
of larger, more impersonal, and more aesthetically
obnoxious manufacturing and work organizations, coupled
with an increase in urban nuisances; (3) the introduction
and expansion of mass transportation systems; and (4)
the articulation and popularization of a "suburban ideal".

Kenneth Jackson

Suburbs are as old as cities themselves, going back to villas of

the rich on the outskirts of Athens and Rome and Faubourgs and Vororte

clustered outside the fortifications of medieval towns. In the United

States small fringe settlements early became economically tied to such

colonial cities as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia (Lockridge,

Muller). But large scale suburbanization, the tendency toward rapid

growth on the periphery of urban places, often at a pace faster than

the growth of the urban core, is a newer phenomenon and one that has

been especially characteristic of the North American city since the

nineteenth century.

Especially during the second half of that century, a variety of

technological innovations took place which transformed the compact

walking city, whose buildings were seldom more than two or three stories high, into the widely spread, essentially modern, city of the early twentieth century. For this new metropolis, the large number of low density residential suburbs clustering around its fringes was as much an emblem as the high rise skyscrapers of the central business district.

Urban Population Growth and Changes in Source Areas. Many factors contributed to the process of suburban growth. In part, of course, "suburbanization was and is a function or urban growth itself" (Jackson, 1973, p.200). Urban growth was certainly a prominent phenomenon in the United States between 1860 and 1920 (Table 1).

Table 1.   Growth of Urban Population of the United States, 1860-1920

	Total Population (by 1000's)	Urban Population (by 1000's)	Per Cent Urban
1860	31,443	6,216	19.8
1870	39,818	9,902	25.7
1880	50,155	14,129	28.2
1890	62,947	22,106	35.1
1900	75,994	30,159	39.7
1910	91,972	41,998	45.7
1820	105,710	54,157	51.2

Source: Ward (1971), p.6.

The country's urban population increased much more rapidly than the total population, so that by 1920 over one half of all Americans lived in urban areas. During the same period, the size of prominent U.S. cities grew as well. While in 1860 only eight cities had a population of 100,000 or

more, by 1920 this number had increased to sixty-eight, and some of
these approached or even exceeded a population of one million (Vance,
1977, p.348). Truly metropolitan places were no longer confined to the
Eastern Seaboard and the Ohio river, but could be found in the Midwest
and West. By 1910, the greatest concentration of large U.S. cities
was to be found in the economic core region of the manufacturing belt
(Figure 1). It is the spatial development of the industrial, manufactur-
ing, and railroad centers of this core region which is considered typical
for nineteenth century urban growth and is therefore used in the
literature as the basis for the generalized descriptive model of such
growth.

Urban expansion was generated by a general movement of popula-
tion from farms to cities, not only in a process of internal migration,
but--much more prominently--by a large scale movement from abroad.
Between 1860 and 1910, almost 23 million immigrants arrived in the
United States of which the majority settled in cities. As a result, in
those places with a population of 100,000 or more, over half of all
residents were either foreign born or of foreign parentage by World War
I (Glaab, 1963; Glaab and Brown, Ward, 1971).

Also, from the 1880's on, the source area of these immigrants
changed from Northern and Western Europe to Southern and Eastern
Europe, a polyglot region with differing religions, cultures, and customs.
In the view of many, these penniless newcomers "were associated with
and were often regarded as the cause of intemperance, vice, urban

Map 1. U.S. Economic Core Region, 1910.
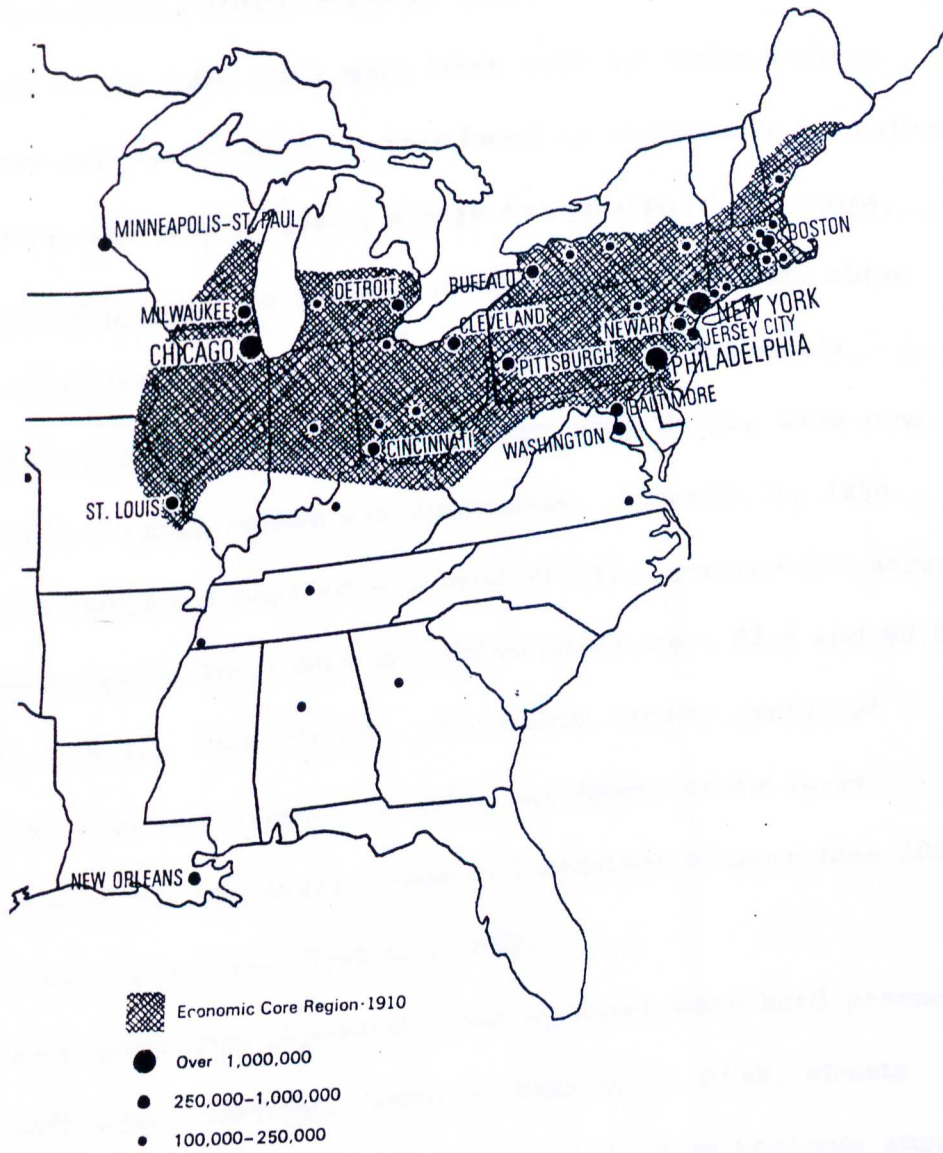
Source: Ward (1971), p.43.

bossism, crime, and radicalism of all kinds" (Jackson, 1972, p.454; see also Ward, 1971, p.53). It was these "new immigrants" who settled in large concentrations within crowded ghetto areas of industrial cities. Whole sectors of the inner core were taken over by various ethnic groups whose neighborhoods were abandoned as undesirable by native and "old immigrant" alike. Slums spread in numerous U.S. cities.

Urban Conditions. As a result of the population influx, older portions of nineteenth century American cities became immensely crowded. Formerly housing one family, many older homes were now subdivided into rooming houses and apartments. Already, by 1850, New York had reached a population density of 135.6 persons per acre; the comparable figures for Boston and Philadelphia were 82.7 and 80.0, respectively, (Taylor, 1966, Part I). Population density continued to increase in inner city areas. By 1890, one fourth of the inner wards in seven of the ten largest cities had densities of more than 100 persons per acre (Glaab and Brown, p.159).

With such population pressures, municipalities were hard pressed to keep up with urban services. Even in many large cities, streets remained unpaved.[1] More significant was the lack of an adequate supply

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[1] In 1880, Minneapolis, a city with 200 miles of streets, had no paving at all; less than one fifth of New Orleans' 500 street miles were paved; by 1890, only one third of Chicago's streets were paved, a situation little improved by 1900. By that time, Washington, Boston, Buffalo, and Manhattan "had excellent improved systems" (Glaab, 1963, p.178).

of pure water and an efficient sewerage system--a lack which represented a constant threat to public health. It is true that water supply systems in a number of cities improved rapidly between the late 1870's and the turn of the century, built by both public and private enterprise. In contrast, sewage systems usually lagged behind badly.[1]

Industrialization and Changes in the Job Market. By Mid-century, industries began to increase in size and to concentrate close to each other in the urban core, vying for space with residential areas as well as with the economic functions clustering in beginning central business districts. "Most of these larger organizations--refineries, machine tool industries, iron and steel mills, and chemical plants--created offensive odors or noises ...," (Jackson, 1973, p.201. See also Ward, 1971), thereby adding to the unpleasantness of the urban environment.

Such industrial concentration was the result of a general reorganization of the job market. Whereas earlier urban artisans and shopkeepers had been working in their own workrooms or shops or at most in small groups, now jobs were concentrated in factories requiring large numbers of unskilled laborers. At the same time, re-organization and specialization brought with them a demand for skilled supervisory, office, and sales personnel. It was the latter group which began to form an emerging

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[1] By 1900, Philadelphia had scarcely more than half as many miles of sewers as streets, and Baltimore still relied predominantly on open trenches. At the same time, Washington and Boston had established good systems.

middle class, while the immigrants, crowding as close as possible to their prospective jobs, provided the unskilled labor force for the growing factories (Muller and Groves).

Congestion, noise, dirt, and pollution not only were obnoxious to the poor, but also exerted a negative influence on nearby residences of the well-to-do. Discussing Pittsburgh--a manufacturing city that was described by contemporaries as "hell with the lid off"--Tarr comments that "the willingness of the city's more affluent classes to live in crowded conditions under a pall of smoke and soot created by the adjacent industries was explained primarily by the absence of a transportation system that gave them alternative living choices" (Tarr, 1978, p.3). In an environment where face to face communication and daily interaction were essential for worker and businessman alike, general residential movement toward outlying areas was precluded for any but the wealthiest urban dwellers.

Early Suburbanization. It has been speculated that without an adequate urban transportation system, congestion and population pressure eventually would have precluded further centralized growth. Larger cities would have, through necessity, broken up into a distinct number of smaller urban places. Now, with the evolution of a variety of transportation systems, both a further concentration of economic functions within the city center and peripheral growth became possible.

Peripheral growth early began to take place in the form of suburban residential growth. As early as 1823, Brooklyn, connected to the

city by regular ferry service, began to develop into a suburb of New York.
Railroad connections also made possible outward residential movement so
that communities on Long Island and in New Jersey became part of the
sprawling New York metropolis.[1] This was not confined to New York. By
the 1870's, Chicago had nearly one hundred suburbs, located along the
railroad lines, with a population of 50,000. This phenomenon was repeated
in Philadelphia and a number of other American cities to a greater or lesser
degree (Glaab and Brown; Muller, et.al.).[2]

Intra-Urban Transport and Suburbanization

The main reason for the compactness of the early nineteenth century
city was the lack of an effective intra-urban transportation system. The
changes which took place in the size and spatial relationship of urban
centers are generally tied to the history of transportation, and "transporta-
tion technology has been a significant force in shaping suburban spatial
structure" (Muller, 1976, p.5. Also Holt; Taylor, 1966; I and II; Tarr, 1973).
This close relationship is generally incorporated into the urban model of the

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[1] By 1880, the Census Bureau considered New York, Brooklyn,
Jersey City, Newark, and Hoboken as one metropolitan community.

[2] It should be observed that movement by steam railroad has been
generally neglected in the scheme of suburbanization. Importance of steam
railroad commuting during the last decades of the Nineteenth and the begin-
ning of the Twentieth Century is presented in the literature as relatively
negligible. But as Adna F. Weber shows in The Growth of Cities in the
Nineteenth Century, the number of commuters by steam railroad increased
with increasing size of urban place so that for cities of 100,000, the ratio of
commuters to all passengers in 1890 was 52.1% (pp.470-472). This seems to
indicate that especially in those cities on which the generalized urban model
is based, commuting by railroad played a larger role than usually acknow-
ledged. Certainly, commuting by steam railroad was an early fact of
suburban movement in Washington, D.C.

nineteenth century city. Adams, for instance, developed a four-stage scheme of transport innovations and their effect on the spatial structure of cities. Only the first two stages need concern us here (Adams, 1970; Muller; Ward, 1971; Mayer, 1969).[1]

Figure 1. <u>Urban Growth Patterns During Four Stages of Intra-urban Transportation Systems</u>
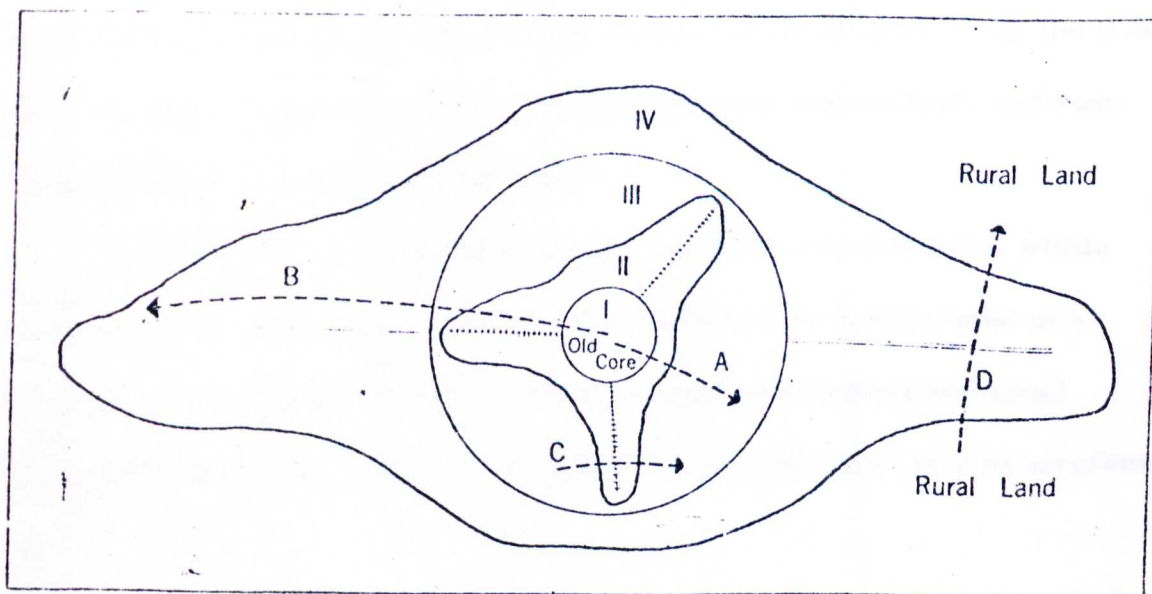
I   Walking-Horsecar Era (pre-1850--late 1880's)
II Electric-Streetcar Era (late 1880's--1920)
III Recreational Automobile Era (1920--1945)
IV Freeway Era (1945---).

Source: Adams, p.56.

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[1] Again it should be observed that the steam railroad as an instigator of suburban growth has been ignored in this scheme. Further study may be indicated.

History of Urban Transportation. As long as cities remained relatively small, lack of transport did not present an undue problem. But from the 1820's on, closely built-up sections of larger cities began to spread beyond the distance of a convenient walk. There was clearly a need for some public transport system.

Omnibus. Among the earliest intra-urban transportation innovations was a more or less regular stage coach service of "omnibuses."[1] In the U.S., the first such service was started in New York City around 1827, and soon Philadelphia and Boston followed suit.[2]

In some cities, omnibuses primarily provided transportation within the urban core. In others, however, the omnibus was instrumental in a beginning suburban movement. Formerly rural communities and small independent towns for the first time became tied to the large city by omnibus lines.[3]

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[1] From "voiture omnibus" or "vehicle for all", as it was referred to in Paris, where the first service along a fixed route by horsedrawn coaches began in 1818. Omnibus was shortened to "bus" and became a word in the English language after such service began in London ten years later.

[2] By the mid-1840's, other large cities, such as Baltimore and Pittsburgh, had regularly operating lines, and by the 1850's bus transport was part of such rapidly growing centers as Chicago and Toronto (Taylor, 1966, Part I; Goheen).

[3] In New York, of the eighty omnibuses which were licensed to operate as early as 1833, only sixteen went beyond the city proper to such suburban areas as Harlem, Manhattanville, and Yorkville" (Taylor, 1966 I, p. 44). In Boston and Philadelphia, on the other hand, the omnibus became an essential part of city transportation and also aided a suburban development. In the vicinity of Boston, a large number of omnibuses--nearly fifty percent of all of Boston's buses in 1848--travelled to Roxbury, as well as the towns of Cambridge and Charleston. These communities began to develop into early outlying suburbs of Boston.

For the well-to-do, the omnibus was a convenience, enabling them to do business in the core of the city and move outward from the center. For the average passenger, however, the bus was much too expensive to be used on a regular basis.

Steam Railroads. In only a few cities, the railroad network which emerged by the 1830's was allowed to extend into the urban center, terminating in most cases at the edge of the built-up area. Railroads remained predominantly part of an inter-urban network rather than an intra-urban system of public transportation to which they were not well suited.

Nevertheless, one of the results of railroads reaching out among neighboring urban centers was the rapid growth of exurbs.[1] Also, some suburban residential areas did spring up in a beadlike fashion along stops on such lines, usually at regular intervals of about one half mile or more.

Although mostly the well-to-do could avail themselves of this mode of transportation--it was not only expensive but also did not have a schedule flexible and regular enough for the average wage earner--it did become feasible for small merchants and professionals to live in nearby suburbs and attend to business in the city.

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[1] In the San Francisco area after 1864, railroad towns grew quickly with the coming of the railroad (Vance, 1964).

Horsecars. A more efficient and more economical mass trans-
portation system was needed. The first step in this direction was the
introduction of the horsecar, the use of which spread quickly in the
1850's.[1] Once established within a city, tracks were quickly laid
radiating outward from the center; they generally followed the main
roads, determined by the local terrain. For the first time decreased
cost, increased speed (at least twice that of the horse omnibus) and
established routes enabled not only the wealthy but members of middle-
income groups to make use of this new urban conveyance. "The running
of cars on rails through city streets was a major technological break-
through" (Tarr, 1978, p.4), and the horse-drawn streetcar was widely
and successfully used as a means of intracity transport.[2]

Horsecars also made possible residential suburbanization to a
greater extent than before. They "hastened the expansion of a city's
dense, built-up area and acted as a separating agent that allowed middle
and upper-class citizens to move to their own fashionable neighborhoods"
(Holt, p.328). Residential areas developed in sectors along the horsecar
routes. The merchant and the professional man was now "free from the
noise and confusion of the water front, the dirt, the stench, and intoler-
ably crowded conditions of the old central city" (Taylor, 1966, I, p.40).

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[1] Horsedrawn vehicles, put on rails, made possible not only a
smoother ride, but also the transportation of a greater number of
passengers at any one time than before.

[2] By 1863, Pittsburgh lines carried 3,960,000 passengers, or an
average of 40 rides per year per inhabitant (Tarr, 1978, p.4).

Many cities were now able to spread outward to three miles and more,
and with the construction of crosstown lines, large new areas were
opened up to residential suburban development.[1]

Nevertheless, despite the increasing numbers of commuters,
horsecars were still not "cheap transportation" for the great mass of
lower income groups who continued to remain in the city. Suburban
residences for members of lower middle income groups did not become
possible until a true "mass transit" system was developed.

Cable Cars. Before the electric streetcar came into general use,
the most successful replacement of the horsecar had been the cable car
which was adopted in a number of U.S. cities. A cable car again
reduced the time needed to reach one's destination and was considered
an asset to a city and popular with the public.

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[1] Ironically enough, at the same time horsecars were involved in
an outward movement of some residential areas, they also contributed to
further concentration of activities in the central city. In 1840, for
instance, an observer noted that "we have here in New York three
hundred and fifty of these locomotive conveyances i.e. horsecars
coming into the city from every avenue, and all concentrating in the
funnelspout of Broadway below the Park ..." (Holt, p.325). Crowding
and congestion, far from being relieved, were instead increasing, a
situation especially unhappy for those today called "blue-collar workers".

> The swiftly moving cars enable the tired worker to reach
> his home in one-half the time formerly consumed by the
> fastest horse-car. In the morning the business man finds
> it very convenient to be able to linger at the breakfast
> table from a quarter to half an hour longer than before,
> and still by means of the cable car reach his office
> on time... (Miller, p.51).

But the construction of cable lines was extremely expensive.[1]

Furthermore, although they were able to overcome the problem of

relative steepness of terrain, as for instance in San Francisco, cable

cars worked well only on relatively straight stretches of road, were

vulnerable to weather conditions, and presented a number of other

technical problems. These problems, together with the expense of

construction, precluded far-flung networks which would have been

necessary for large scale suburban growth.

Electric Streetcars. It was the electric streetcar more than any

other system which facilitated such growth and which was instrumental

in changing the character and spatial structure of the North American

city. Not until the automobile and the development of modern suburbs

after World War II was there such a widespread move toward the peri-

phery of cities as during the streetcar era.

A number of different systems had been tried and discarded

besides cable cars, such as compressed air, hot water, and steam

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[1] For instance, when the cable car lines were constructed in
Washington, D.C. in 1890, one mile of double tracked line cost $125,000.
When the price of cables, cars, and power stations were added, the
price per mile of construction rose to $183,500 (Holt, p.331).

as motive power. When electricity was first considered, battery-operated cars were introduced as well as electric motors in each car from which power was transmitted to the wheel. This was the system used in Montgomery, Alabama, which was among the first places in the world to have a citywide system of electric transportation. As a consequence, the city experienced a general business boom, with real estate increasing rapidly in value.

Eventually, a system of trolley lines was developed which proved to be most practical for extensive networks.[1] Trolley lines were cheap to build, they could be installed even on fairly narrow city streets, they were able to overcome relatively steep grades, and they could be operated economically even with moderate patronage (Vance, 1977). The power source could be provided easily with overhead wires, and existing horsecar tracks could be incorporated into a unified network for relatively low cost.

The first extensive trolley system was installed in Richmond, Virginia in 1888, built by Frank J. Sprague. Its use spread rapidly to a large number of North American cities. Over 100 systems were built or ordered within the following three years and by 1902, 97 percent of street railway mileage was electrically operated. Trolley

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[1] The trolley got its name--and its power--from a system of two overhead wires carrying an electric current and a little four wheeled carriage connected to the car by a flexible cable. This carriage was called a "troller", because it was pulled or trolled along the wires. By corruption, "trolley" became a general term for overhead electric streetcars (Miller).

transportation was economical, usually for a flat fee which included

transfer. The trolley became the first mass transportation used

for commuting on a regular basis (Smerk).

As a result, "streetcar suburbs" developed along the right-of-way

of the trolley lines, sometimes in close cooperation between the developer-

speculator and the transit companies. Utilities, such as water and sewage

pipes and, later, electricity and telephone wires quickly followed the

paths of the trolleys and in some cases even preceded their construction

(Warner, 1974; Schaeffer and Sclar). Residential growth followed the

car lines and new trolley extensions invariably increased land values

(Middleton).

With the beginning of the system in the late 1880's, it was the

streetcar which greatly affected the shape of urban centers as well as

influenced the social structure of the city. Considerable expansion of

the metropolis took place, with much peripheral residential growth.

The streetcar more than any previous intra-urban transport system made

such suburban growth possible and proved an agent for the beginning

of a sorting of population along class, ethnic, racial, and income lines.

The Urban Pattern, Beginning of Twentieth Century. From a

compact walking city with a radius of two miles, the city changed into a

metropolis now sprawling to a radius of ten miles or more from the

center. The "central business district assumed its modern extent and

complexity" (Ward, 1971, p.49). Industrialization had become synonymous

with large cities; Vance states that "cities to reach full metropolitan

status in 1880 were so dominantly industrial as to need no further explanation" (1977, p.347). As this industry crowded within the city center, an outward movement to residential areas was made possible now for the first time by improved transport facilities. The majority of buyers of suburban real estate was now no longer the wealthy but increasingly the emerging middle class. White collar employment tended to be stable and therefore made possible long range housing decisions. With the advent of the trolley service, it was no longer necessary for middle or even lower middle income urban dwellers to live close to their place of work.[1] Only the poor--and in some enclaves the rich--remained in residential areas of the inner cities.[2] Boston, for instance, often

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[1] Commuting by electric trolley was relatively inexpensive and service was convenient and swift. Distance when measured by travel time remained the same as it had been in earlier walking cities--i.e. about one half hour between urban center or place of work and suburban residence--a time considered the maximum people were willing to expend on commuting (see Vance, 1966).

[2] It has been suggested that over half of all urban dwellers and the great majority of immigrants were not able to move to suburban residential areas for economic reasons. "Poorer districts of many cities continued to show an increase in density of population even after the general introduction of street cars," with one ward of New York City, the "notorious Tenth Ward," with a population density of 747 per acre in 1898, "quite possibly the most crowded district in the world by the turn of the century" (Glaab and Brown, p.159).

used as the model of suburban development within the industrial metropolis, by 1900 was very much "a city divided ... in an inner city of work and low-income housing, and an outer city of middle- and upper-middle residences" (Warner, 1974, p.2.). It was a city, furthermore, in which the inner core was largely built up and where the overwhelming majority of new residential construction took place outside the old city limit. In Boston, between 1870 and 1900, "if a house was new, it was suburban" (Warner, 1974, p.47).

Political Extension of Urban Areas. Such growth also found its expression in political terms. In "every American city of consequence" annexation of area or consolidation of adjacent communities took place,[1] usually incorporating physical growth within newly drawn city limits (Jackson, 1972). During an era when American urban boosters embraced the notion that "bigger is better", every large city added to its land area and population during the nineteenth century.

Often, newly consolidated towns and villages hoped to gain improved urban amenities, such as water and sewage lines, fire protec- tion, and schools.[2] Suburban growth itself, however, was based primarily on the individual decisions of home buyers, took place

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[1] Annexation is the addition of unincorporated land to the city; consolidation absorbs other municipal governments, usually adjacent to the city.

[2] Only as suburban areas became increasingly affluent, or rather inner cities increasingly poor, as they became in the twentieth century, was such expansion checked, mainly by the resistance of the suburban dwellers themselves.

with little or no public regulation or control,[1] without zoning laws,
and subject largely to the vagaries of the economics of the real estate
market and prevalent tastes (Warner, 1962, pp. 4,125,177ff; also Muller,
1976, p.6). Public institutions as well as individual home-owners
seemed to share "an enthusiasm for a two-part city--a city of work
separated from a city of homes" (Warner, 1974, p.4).[2]

The "Rural Ideal"

Up to now, suburban growth in the nineteenth century city
has been discussed in terms of the "push" created by environmental
conditions in the urban core, and much attention has been given to the
transportation technology which made such outward movement possible.
This accurately reflects geographic and urban literature in which
growth of transportation modes is almost synonymous with urban
growth. It is true that without inexpensive and convenient public
transportation, large scale movement to suburban residential neighbor-
hoods would not have been possible, despite the negative conditions
within the urban core. However, such conditions and such public
transport do not _have_ to lead to large scale suburbanization, as the
European example makes plain. Adna Weber emphasized that under

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[1] In this, suburbs were no different from the beginning of most
urban places in the U.S., the growth of which was dictated by need and
expediency rather than through careful planning.

[2] Warner's study of Boston is used in the literature, as it is here
and in subsequent examples, to illustrate the growth of nineteenth
century suburbs, mainly because this study has been accepted as the
prototype of such development (See Yeates and Garner, p.219; Glaab
and Brown, pp.157, 159).

the same conditions population was spread out over a much wider territory in American than in comparable European cities (pp. 468, 469; also Ward, 1964; Rugg,)[1] Weber continues:

> It has sometimes been urged that this is largely a result of the development of the electric street railway in America, but the causal connection is not apparent.... It should rather be said that the American penchant for dwelling in cottage homes instead of business blocks after the fashion of Europe is the cause, and the trolley car the effect (p.469).

In order to understand the movement toward the suburbs that took place in the U.S. to a much greater degree than in other parts of the world, the general American anti-urban attitude and a belief in the "rural ideal" should be considered in some detail.

Values Associated with Suburbanization. In the United States, suburbs were seen as more than just sites of more comfortable, less densely settled residential areas; they were the overt expression of the belief in the goodness and desirability of rural life and long standing animosity toward the city. Muller states that:

> Central to an understanding of suburban evolution is a set of values and beliefs deeply ingrained in American native culture; the so-called rural ideal. The roots of this ideal stem from the tenets of Jeffersonian democracy with its emphasis on the healthful farming life in the small agrarian community of equal participation and control over local government. Inherent in this rural ethic is a powerful popular image against living in cities, which are viewed as symbols of corruption with their class divisions, social inequities, and disorder (p.3).

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[1] Urban mass transportation innovations were also available in European cities in some cases earlier than in North America. However, these were mostly confined to service within the city centers, with little peripheral suburban movement.

Thomas Jefferson is only the most famous in a long line of Americans who believed in a ruralism which can be traced back to a "worship of extreme individualism" as part of the national character (Zelinsky, p.41. See also Donaldson; Glaab and Brown; Schmitt; White and White).[1]

As the importance of the farmer and agriculture in general began to decline with rapid urbanization, hostility toward the city was expressed by rural Americans through a variety of political movements, joining the voices of American literature and art, newly emancipated from European influences. At the same time there existed a certain ambivalence in the view of the city.[2] Large numbers of the rural population were drawn toward the opportunities the city seemed to offer. And while attitudes toward the growing metropolis were inconsistent and ambiguous,[3] the inevitability of urban growth had to

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[1] At the time Jefferson wrote, more than nine-tenths of all Americans lived in rural areas, so that he probably expressed only what was the popular idea of the time. Such individualism could be indulged in by people living in the small towns and villages of colonial and early federal times.

[2] Emerson himself, a spokesman of anti-urbanism in the intellectual community, found that there were certain attributes only the city could offer. "I wish to have rural strength and religion for my children, and I wish city facility and polish. I find with chagrin that I cannot have both" he wrote (Glaab and Brown, p.60).

[3] Such ambiguity might express itself in a sectional way, so that New York and other older Eastern cities might be perceived as the "locales of demoralization, discomfort, standardization, artificiality, vulgar materialism, dishonesty, and so on through a richly invidious lexicon" (Strauss, p.444). At the same time, a newer Western city might, by virtue of its youth or of its setting, be seen as agreeably free of such negative attributes. Even more inconsistent, some cities themselves were proclaimed to be "outright embodiment of rural values" --and if that was not possible, they were referred to as the "city of flowers", the "city of trees" and other images of the countryside.

be acknowledged during a time when each year hundreds of thousands of people poured into American urban places. In 1895, the President of the American Social Science Association expressed it in pragmatic terms:

> One would think after reading all...about the evils of cities from the time of Cain to the last New York election...that every sane man and woman should flee without stopping for the open country....Now, in spite of all this, precisely the reverse is true....Doubtless one of the most potent factors in the modern growth of cities has been the immense improvement in the facilities for travel, which has been such a marked characteristic of the last half-century. But, after all, what is this but saying that it has been made easier for people to go where they wished to be? Facilities for travel make it as easy to get from the city to country as from country to city; but the tide, except for temporary purposes, all sets one way (Kingsbury, in Cook et.al, pp.11-13).

The fact is that people wished to be both in the city and in the country, and the suburb made it possible to bridge the yearning for the rural ideal and the reality of urban life.

As the memory of a rural existence receded in the minds of an increasing number of urban dwellers, agrarianism found expression in the growing suburbs. By the turn of the century, "many praised their rural childhood, but few returned to farming..." (Schmitt, p.xvi). The "suburban ideal" replaced the "rural ideal". When contemporaries now spoke of the country, they meant the "countrified" part of the city. Promoters of suburban residential development were quick to use the imagery of the countryside to attract potential buyers, as well as

favorably comparing the suburban setting with that of the city which--while essential as economic base--continued to be viewed with suspicion and described in negative terms.

There were also many well-meaning people who saw the suburb as the instrument that would relieve the extreme congestion in the urban centers, even in slum areas. In 1900, Adna Weber surveyed suburban growth and pronounced it the "happiest of social movements".

> The 'rise of the suburbs' it is which furnishes the solid base of a hope that the evils of city life, as far as they result from overcrowding, may be in large part removed.... It will realize...a complete fusion of city and country and their different modes of life, and a combination of the advantages of both... (p.475).

The crowded and dirty city would become less so with a movement toward the periphery; land for pleasant residential areas would once more become available, even in the inner core, while fresh air and sunshine as well as the spiritual values of the country could be brought close to the "masses". Transit innovations were to provide the means for an escape from and amelioration of the urban ills of the metropolis.[1] Although such amelioration never materialized, a new suburban home constituted for many, including newcomers to this country,

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[1] Those who provided the transportation systems as well as the promoters of suburban development "appealed to the popular belief that the rapid suburbanization of modern industrial cities was perhaps the most important single contribution of the street railway" (Whitney, quoted in Warner, 1974, p.26). Transportation technology was seen to have a "moral influence" on the city in making this suburbanization possible (Tarr, 1978, p.202).

the promised land.[1] As immigrants assimilated they came to view the suburb as the setting which would proclaim their acceptance into the mainstream of American society. Therefore, while they might not have known or cared about the intellectual significance of the "rural ideal", they knew that the suburb was important in their determination to become American citizens.

For those who moved outside the city, life in the suburbs was a promise kept, the expression of a rural ideal important to American thought--or at least as close as they would ever come to it. By all indications, the majority of those living in the suburbs were satisfied with their chosen way of life.

The "Suburban Model"

As a result of the various interacting influences, both negative and positive, substantial residential areas began to grow up on the fringes of many North American cities, especially during the years roughly between the Civil War and World War I and was most pronounced in the industrial cities of the manufacturing belt.

Physically, the industrial metropolis by the beginning twentieth century had taken on a distinctly star-shaped pattern (Figure 1). Residential growth took place predominantly along transportation axes,

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[1] In a society without rigidly defined class lines, it is a man's possessions, and especially his home which are prominent in defining him socially (Wagner).

essentially streetcar lines. Residential areas formed a ring of inner city suburbs on the periphery of the former walking city, where crosstown services were available. Beyond these rings, arterial growth continued along the linear routes first of the horsecar and then the electric street railway. With the accepted use of the latter, linear growth became more pronounced, and empty interstices remained between the radiating lines, untouched by urban development.

Growth of crosstown trolley service did not keep pace with linear development. By 1900, the outer limits of crosstown lines rarely exceeded a distance of about 3½ miles from the center, while linear growth extended to about eight to ten miles from the urban core.[1]

Warner has suggested that inner suburban areas, where crosstown streetcar service was available, were occuped by lower-middle income families. The heads of households often had long or unpredictable working hours or changed job location frequently. Sometimes several family members held jobs to make a suburban home possible. The greater flexibility of crosstown service was therefore especially important to them. These inner suburbs also first attracted various ethnic groups

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[1] By 1900, this was the case in Boston. In Chicago also, where much of the transit system was electrified by the early 1890's, the trolley lines reached eight to ten miles from the loop; crosstown lines were generally limited to areas within 3½ miles from the center (Ward, 1971; pp.132-135.

when leaving the city in their efforts at assimilation into the mainstream of American society.[1]

The outer suburbs, served by linear routes beyond crosstown service, were occupied by upper middle and middle income families. Holding generally white collar occupations and with stable jobs and shorter working hours, heads of households were able to rely on the service of arterial streetcar lines. Usually, only one member of the family was employed, a fact sometimes taken as indicator of "middle class". Warner's map, reproduced here, indicates the bands of suburban growth and their close association with public transit service (Map 2).

Within the radial transportation corridors, ribbon development took place. This development was at first discontinuous, but with more frequent service it not only coalesced but extended on both sides of the tracks to a walking distance of about five minutes or more, depending on the terrain.

Within the suburban streetcar corridors, "local suburban development ... was typified by a continuous strip of largely commercial uses which lined both sides of the tracks. Behind them gridded residential streets

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[1] Since the majority of large cities in the U.S. had only small percentages of black population during that period, a "suburban model" does not address itself specifically to blacks. Blacks in any event were not considered as part of the suburbanization process.

Map 2. Approximate Class Building Zones of the Three Suburban Towns of Boston, Roxbury, West Roxbury, and Dorchester in 1900.
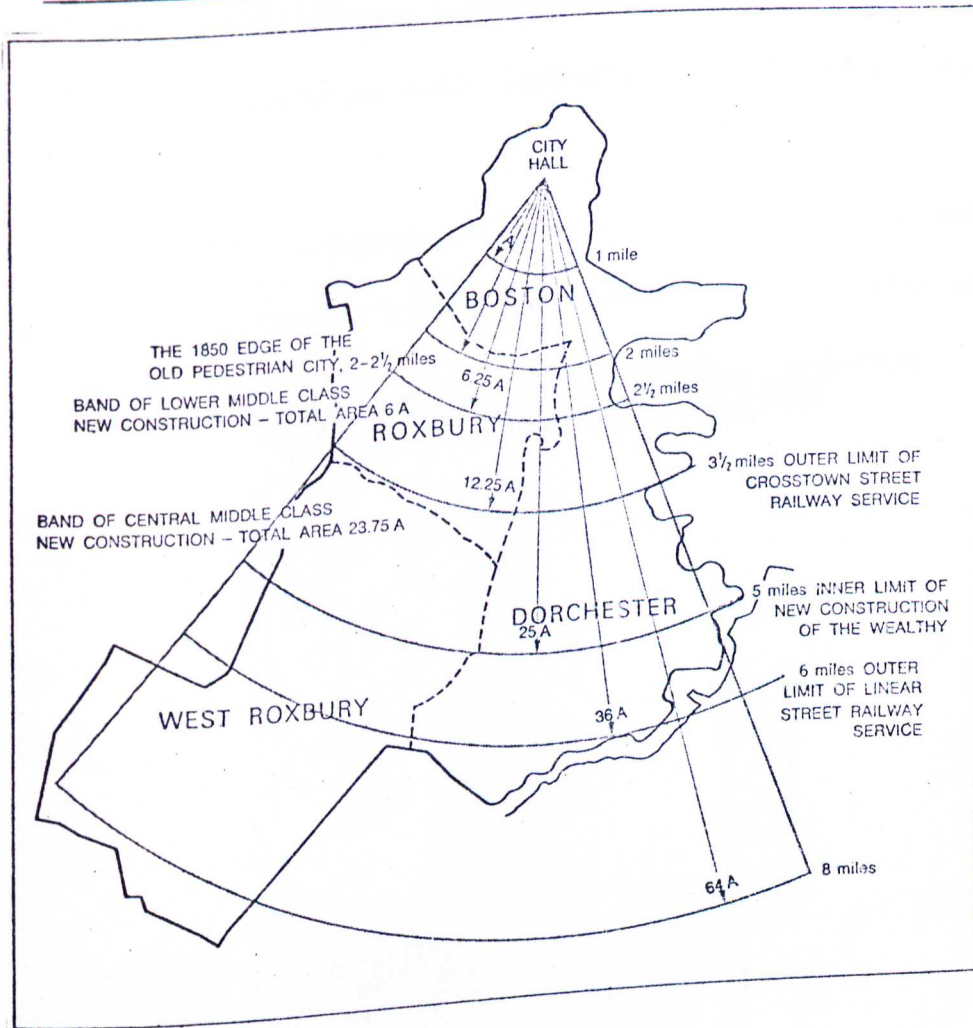
Source: Warner, 1974, Map 9.

paralleled the tracks to a depth of a few blocks on either side" (Muller, p.6).[1] Some formerly rural villages were drawn into the urban network

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[1] Muller's suburban portrait seems to be based largely on Warner's description of Boston's streetcar suburbs. This did not always seem to be the case in other suburban areas, however. In many residential suburbs, for instance, there was little or no commercial activity. It should be further noted that along identical streetcar systems, characteristically very different suburbs evolved, in some cases catering to a variety of prospective suburban dwellers according to differences in income and prestige. These characteristics were not always dependent on distance from the city center (Hoyt, 1930, especially Chapter V). There is as yet little descriptive material of suburban areas other than Boston of the period available, and further study may be indicated.

by electric streetcar lines while wealthy suburban communities, located
beyond the reach of urban services, continued to be served by the steam
railroads (Mayer).

As a result, the proportion of suburban population in representative
cities was substantial by the beginning Twentieth century (Table 2).

Table 2. Suburban Percentage of Total Metropolitan Population for Selected Large Cities, 1900–1920

Metropolis	1900	1910	1920
New York +	*32.2	32.4	33.8
Chicago	18.5	*19.1	20.4
Philadelphia	31.6	31.7	32.8
Detroit	*33.1	24.1	*23.9
Washington	26.4	25.7	23.5
Boston	57.5	58.1	*60.0
Pittsburgh	*58.3	63.7	*66.6
St. Louis	30.4	33.4	33.7
Baltimore	26.2	27.5	*18.7
Cleveland	17.2	*15.1	*18.0

+ Standard Consolidated Area data.
* First census following greater than ten percent territorial annexation by the central city.

Source: Muller, p.4.

The city now no longer consisted of one urban settlement, but
a system of settlements forming a metropolis and tied together by the
various transportation networks, pre-eminently the mass transit
system of the electric streetcar lines. By World War I, the spatial
transformation of the North American industrial city "from the stage of
simple urbanism to complex metropolitanism" was complete (Vance, 1964,
p.50).

CHAPTER III

WASHINGTON, D.C: LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

> Beautiful and attractive as it is at present, its beauty
> and attractions are likely to be greatly enhanced. No
> one is jealous of its growth and increasing prosperity
> --no one would stay its progress; for it is the Nation's
> City, and reflects the grandeur and importance of the
> American people.

Moore

Washington, D.C. shared few of the characteristics which shaped the Nineteenth Century North American metropolis. Planned as the seat of the Federal Government, Washington, unlike other American cities, did not grow helter-skelter from small beginnings, but was planned in advance by Pierre L'Enfant for a large population and laid out expansively with wide avenues, magnificent vistas, and a number of impressive public buildings. It is true that for the first seventy years or so of its existance, this made it more a "city of magnificent distances" or perhaps magnificent intentions rather than a beautiful city. It was not even an important urban center.[1]

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[1] French, in his study of Chevy Chase Village, maintains that the Federal City was "urban neither in scale nor in ethos before 1870", and only after that date "does deserve to be included in the study of urbanization in this country" (p.300). Although one could dispute his definition, in 1870 Washington was, for the first time, listed in the Census as among those cities which had reached a population of 100,000 or had attained "metropolitan" status (see Vance, 1977, pp.347, 348).

Map 3.   Study Area.

MONTGOMERY   COUNTY

DISTRICT
OF
COLUMBIA

PRINCE

ARLINGTON
COUNTY

GEORGES

COUNTY

GRAPHIC   NORTH SCALE   IN MILES
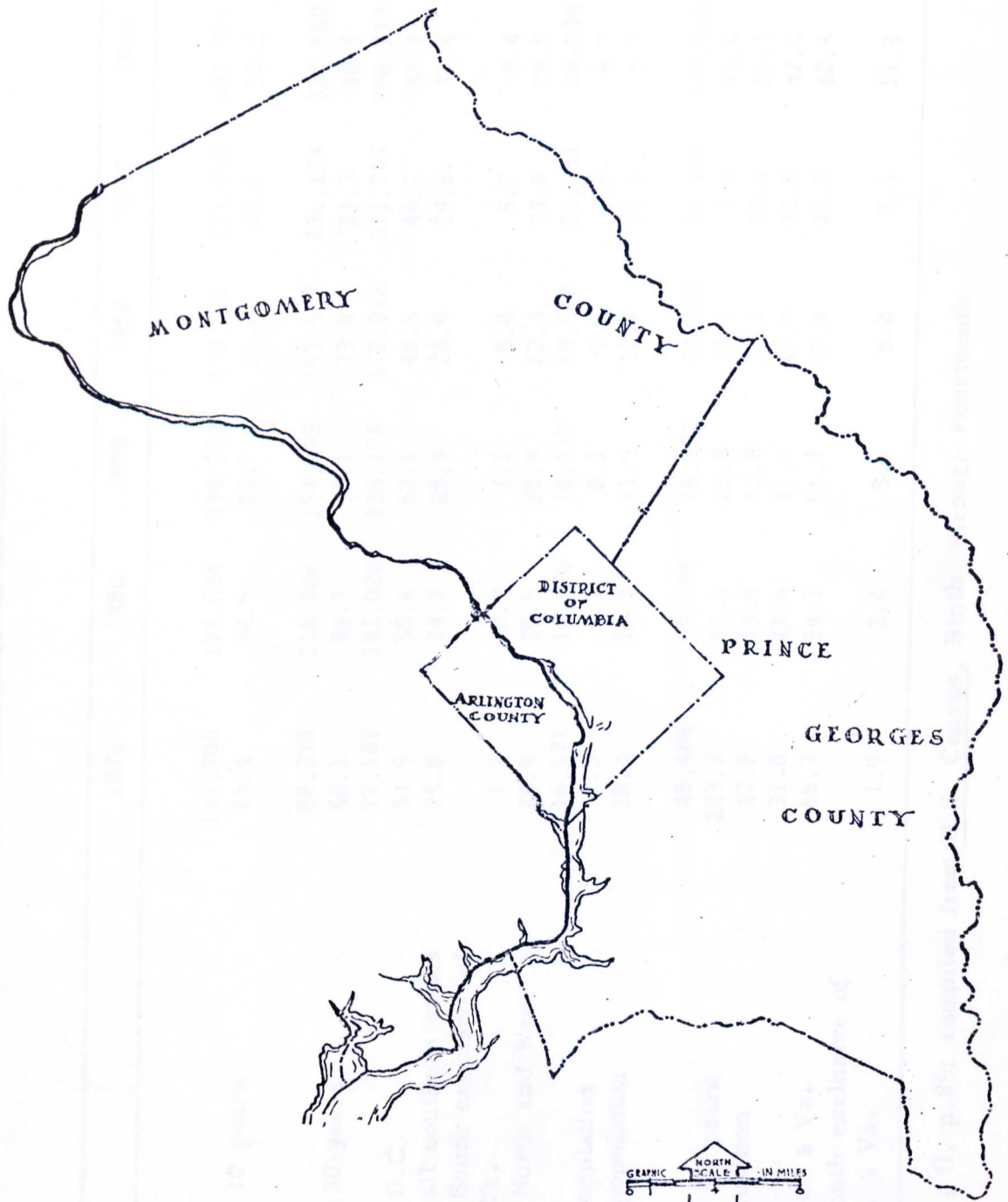
Table 3. Population of the District of Columbia, 1870-1920.

	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920
Total	131,700	177,624	230,392	278,718	331,069	437,571
% increase in 10 years	75.4	34.9	29.7	21.0	18.8	32.2
Whites	88,278	118,006	154,695	191,532	236,128	326,860
% increase in 10 years	40.1	33.7	31.1	23.8	23.3	38.4
Native	72,107	101,026	136,178	172,012	211,777	298,312
% native to D.C.	53.9	55.4	52.1	48.5	46.7	38.0
% native to all southern states	25.0	24.2	25.9	28.9	29.6	31.4
% native to South exclusive of Md. & Va.	1.7	2.9	4.1	5.4	5.7	9.4
% native to North and West	20.9	20.5	20.9	22.3	23.0	29.5
Foreign-born	16,171	16,980	18,517	19,520	24,351	28,548
% of total population	12.3	9.7	8.1	7.2	7.5	6.7
% of white population	18.3	14.3	11.9	10.2	10.3	8.7
Blacks	43,404	59,596	75,572	86,702	94,446	109,966
% increase in 10 years	203.2	37.3	26.8	14.7	8.9	16.4
% of total population	32.9	33.6	32.8	31.1	28.5	25.1
% native to D.C.	31.0	41.6	41.9	41.9	42.8	42.4
% native to Md. & Va.	65.7	54.1	51.9	50.8	46.3	42.3
% native to South exclusive of of Md. & Va.	1.9	2.4	3.4	5.2	7.3	11.3

Source: Green, II, p.89; compiled from U.S. Census, Ninth through Fourteenth.

<u>Washington's Population</u>. Expansive planning did mean that for many decades there was much room for urban growth within the city's boundaries. The city could therefore accommodate a population that was increasing rapidly beginning with the 1860's. During the Civil War, a population of 61,000 (in 1860) swelled to 140,000 (by 1864). Many of the newcomers were transients in the national capital, brought there because of war related activities.[1] But the permanent population also increased steadily for the whole of the District of Columbia, with the most rapid increase between 1860 and 1880 (Table 3). By 1880, the District of Columbia as a whole contained 177,000 people, of which 147,000 lived in the City of Washington, 12,500 in Georgetown, and the remainder, 17,000 or 9.6 percent, in the Washington County, i.e. the remainder of the District.[2]

The City of Washington was for many decades only a small part of the District of Columbia. The District was an area of originally 100 square miles which was deeded to the Federal Government by the States of Maryland and Virginia when the site of the national capital was

[1] At one time, the city quartered up to 162,000 troops, and at times 50,000 wounded and ill lay in military hospitals within sight of the Capitol (Thomas, 1976; Green, Part I, p.261).

[2] This was already an increase in proportion from 6.7 percent in 1860. The comparable figures are: District of Columbia 75,000, Washington City 61,000, Georgetown 8,700, and Washington County 5,000.

decided upon in 1800. The area contained the towns of Alexandria and George-town, both of which preceded the Federal City by many years. Eventually the Virginia portion of the District, including Alexandria, was returned to that state and the District of Columbia remained with approximately 69 square miles within which Washington City and Georgetown were two distinct entities. Only with the 1890 Census, Georgetown as well as Washington City were listed as synonymous with the District.[1]

Alone among metropolitan centers, Washington had no commercial or industrial foundation, no large scale enterprises. It was, in fact, the only metropolis in the United States that was not also a major manufacturing center. Washington had only one industry: the federal government. Early attempts to lure commercial enterprises to the area had not been successful and by 1880, "citizens of the District of Columbia had resigned themselves to having no industry and only such other business as would cater for the comfort of government officials" (Green, 1957, p.233).

There was manufacturing activity in the city, of course, but most was concerned with non-basic goods to be consumed by the growing, thriving late-nineteenth century city. Among the chief items were bakery products, the building of carriages and wagons, clothing,

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[1] The Virginia portion was returned in 1846; since Washington's growth was slow it was thought that the territory would not be needed. Alexandria preferred to be part of the state rather than the District for economic as well as political reasons.

engraving, printing and publishing, and those activities connected with the construction trades such as painting and wallpapering and plumbing and gas fitting (Nolen). While the value of manufacture added to the increasing wealth of the city,[1] these activities did not generate the disagreeable environment of large industrial plants such as could be found in Baltimore and Pittsburgh, for example. The city was spared the squalid conditions, pollution, and much of the general ugliness so vividly evoked by contemporary descriptions of the rapidly growing industrial centers to its north and west (Census of Manufactures, 1880-1900).

Because of this lack of industry, Washington never attracted the large number of foreign immigrants these other centers did. The city's proportion of those foreign born or of foreign parentage remained very low throughout the period in question. Among twenty-eight "great cities" listed in the Census of 1890, only four had a higher percentage of natives born of native parents than Washington, and of these, three were located beyond the area of the manufacturing belt (Table 4).

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[1] Value of manufactures of the District of Columbia doubled in the decade preceding the Civil War, to nearly $5,500,000; this value increased sevenfold by 1890, to nearly $40,000,000 (Nolen, 1976, p.529). Little of the product of manufactures left the city.

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Table 4. Components of Population, Selected Large U.S. Cities, 1890.

Native of Native Parents /////   Foreign ·······
Native of Foreign Parents |||||||| Nonwhite ▓▓▓▓▓

PERCENT   0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80   90   100

Milwaukee
New York
Chicago
Detroit
San Francisco
Buffalo
St. Paul
Cleveland
Jersey City
St. Louis
Cincinnati
Brooklyn
Pittsburgh
Boston
Rochester
New Orleans
Newark
Minneapolis
Allegheny
Providence
Louisville
Philadelphia
Baltimore
Washington
Omaha
Denver
Indianapolis
Kansas City

*U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eleventh Census: 1890* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1895), I, pt. 1: plate B, p. xcii.

Source: Eleventh Census, 1890.

Since the influx of foreign immigrants during the latter part of the nineteenth century passed the capital city by, Washington escaped many of the social ills that accompanied that influx and the often painful assimilation of these newcomers in most other large American cities. No large ghetto areas evolved comparable to those on the lower East Side in Manhattan nor did the city have ethnic neighborhoods or those associated with a religious adherence as in Baltimore. The small number of immigrants within the city shared neighborhoods amicably.[1]

Furthermore, Washington's population was surprisingly homogeneous. Of its white population, the proportion of those native to the District did not fall below fifty percent until 1900 and remained close to that by 1920. Another quarter originated from the neighboring states of Maryland and Virginia. Among the city's black population also, the proportion of those native to the District was large, more than forty percent after 1870, and of the rest, the overwhelming majority came from the two neighboring states (See Table 3). Washington, then, in contrast to the general "urban model", "remained thus a community of native Americans...." (Green, I, p.331).

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[1] Wm. H. Press describes Swampoodle, the old Washington neighborhood of his young days, as a "charming conglomerate. My parents came over from Denmark. Some families were German or Irish, and many of them, particularly those working on the streetcars, came from Culpepper or Vienna, Virginia, or Frederick County, Maryland. There were twenty five or thirty families of Italians...." (p.625); his descriptions of early Washington are charming in themselves.

The Black Community. Washington's population was unusual in one other respect--it contained a large proportion of blacks. Blacks consistently represented about one third of the city's population between 1870 and 1900 and never fell below one quarter during the following several decades (Table 3). Washington, in this respect, was in a unique position among large cities of the United States. Only New Orleans among the twenty-eight cities listed in the Census of 1890 even approached this percentage, and none of the metropolitan areas of the northeast and midwest came even close (See Table 4).[1]

During the Civil War, a large number of the in-migrants were blacks from the rural counties surrounding the city as well as from the South, among them thousands of runaway slaves or "contraband".[2] This influx of blacks not only added to the strain on the physical and social conditions in the city during the 1860's and 1870's, but also dismayed the black established community. The social structure of this community continued to be separated into a small group of old Washington families and well-to-do newcomers and a much larger group

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[1] Discussing Philadelphia's "substantial" black population, Muller states, for example that "while the black population in other major northern cities never exceeded 2 percent during the 1870-1920 period, Philadelphia was more than five percent black" (Muller et al, P.229), a small percentage indeed in comparison with Washington.

[2] During the four Civil War years (1861-1865) the influx of the total number of "contrabands"--legally slaves which were not returned to their "rebel" owners--alone was estimated at 40,000 (Green,I,p.277).

of the black masses. While Washington's black population "included more upper-class blacks than any other one place in the country" (Green, II, p.6),[1] the great majority of blacks was poor. Many of these lived in alleys at the rear of large lots. In 1897, the total alley population of Washington was 17,244 or 11 percent of the city's total population. Ninety-three percent of the alley dwellers were black, most of them unskilled and service workers (Borchert, 1976, p.245).[2] These notorious alley dwellings could well be compared to slum housing in many northern cities, but because they were hidden from view by the "agreeable facades" of the buildings in front of them, inhabited by whites, they could easily be ignored by the white majority.[3] Negligence of black plight and concentration of blacks within distinct areas of the city were an expression of a climate of increasing segregation; by the

[1] As all researchers working with "class" definitions in the U.S. are eager to point out, such a definition is difficult for American society as a whole. It is even more so for the black community. It is true that in Washington there was a number of rich black individuals, professionals, and white collar workers. Income, however, within the black community was only a limited indicator of status (French, pp. 307-308, ff.). Within the context of suburbanization, as we shall see, the proportion of blacks was limited; in any event suburbanization of black Washington would warrant a complete and separate treatment, more than can be given here.

[2] Alley housing existed on a limited scale before the Civil War. Most residents then were white (1851: 65 percent). By 1871, only 19 percent remained white.

[3] They were in fact ignored to such an extent that contemporary writers declared that there were no slums at all in Washington.

1890s, "even well-to-do black families could scarcely buy at all in a conveniently located, orderly neighborhood" (Green, II, p.107).[1]

The White Community. The white community could be more sanguine about its condition. Washington's increasing permanent population was joined by a growing number of diplomats and their families and staff as well as members of Congress who began to settle in Washington for longer sessions. For many members of the new American elite also, with wealth based on industrial fortunes only recently accumulated, the city began to represent a base of political power by the 1880s and 1890s, with the necessity of establishing a residence in the national capital. Such a pied a terre in Washington became attractive as well to long established members of society as a place "in which to entertain internationally known figures in agreeable surroundings" (Green, II, p.13). A number of these affluent new-comers built lavish residences within the old city limits.

With the lack of manufacturing and industry, the federal government became the most important employer. A permanent civil service corps began to emerge as the economic backbone of the city.

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[1] The majority of blacks in 1880 was scattered throughout the city, with several concentrations containing less than 25 percent of all blacks. By the turn of the century, large numbers of blacks had begun to coalesce in distinct sections of the city, such as south and west of Howard University and in the old Southwest; almost fifty percent of the people living in the latter district were black by 1897, over sixteen percent of the total black population of Washington (Groves). This was a clear beginning of ghettoization which continued and intensified in the Twentieth Century.

After the passage of the Civil Service Act of 1883, growth of the number
of federal employees in Washington was swift.

Table 5.   Paid Civil Employees of the Federal Government:
           Washington, D.C.. 1861-1910

Year	Number of Civil Servants
1861	2,100
1871	6,200
1881	13,000
1890	23,000
1910	39,000

Source: McArdle, p.582

These civil servants, together with their families, represented
more than 80,000 of the population of the city by 1890. They provided
a white collar middle income group of much larger proportion than
in other American cities at that time; and while they were not
wealthy by any means, they were the economic basis for the social
well-being of Washington (Billings, 1969, p.178).[1]

The majority of civil servants was white, although the Federal
Government provided steady employment for blacks as well. In 1891,
out of 23,144 federal employees in Washington, nearly 2,400 were
black, and there was "scrupulous fairness" in grading the competitive
civil service examinations (Green, II, p.109). But black civil
servants tended to occupy minor clerkships, and rising into the middle

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[1] The approximately 23,000 government employees in 1890 received
about $23 million in annual salaries or about $1,000 per employee, with
some earning as much as $2,000 (Billings, 1969, p.177), a respectable
salary when the average annual wage for the U.S. even in 1900 was $438.

class through federal employment was harder for members of the black community than for whites, with illiteracy among blacks making the civil service examinations often impossible to attempt.[1] However, it should not be forgotten that federal employment even in low level positions provided a stable income and was more desirable than being employed only intermittantly in the private sector as was the case for many blacks.[2] In any event, federal employment attracted competent black as well as white office seekers and made Washington a "city of clerks".

Residential Construction. Hand in hand with the population growth the city experienced economic growth. Washington's wealth increased rapidly during the last part of the Nineteenth Century and the value of real and personal property of the individual citizen increased from a per capita income of $271 in 1850 to $547 in 1860 to $1,500 in 1890, the latter amount well above the U.S. per capita figure of $1,036 for 1890 (Nolen, p.529).

Personal affluence was reflected in demand for real estate which rose for both residential and business enterprises. Real estate became

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[1] Green gives the following comparable census figures for adults unable to write (II, p.115).

	1880	1890	1900
Black	59.3	39.4	30.47
White	5.4	2.67	1.86

[2] The Federal Government gave more consideration to blacks than the District Commissioners. Outside the segregated black school system, in 1891 only 25 District positions above the rank of messenger and day laborer were held by blacks (Green, II, p.109).

one of the city's major enterprises by the 1880's, and real estate

speculation became the pre-occupation of anyone who could afford it

and of many who could not.[1]

Construction by both the federal government and the private

sector went on apace after the 1870's and 1880's. Not only develop-

ment of business properties but also much of residential real estate

speculation took place within the old city core. This was in striking

contrast to many other American cities at that time, where much of the

inner core was built up by the last decades of the nineteenth century

and where the majority of residential construction took place outside

the old city limits, both by necessity and by choice.[2] This was never

the case in Washington; residential construction continued within the

urban core as well as in outlying areas. In 1890, for instance, more

than 200 subdivisions were recorded of which 7 were in Georgetown,

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[1]"In 1865 Washington brokers never dealt exclusively in real
estate but handled it along with claims insurance and stocks; fifteen
years later the realtor had come into being....By 1885, there were a
hundred-odd real estate firms" (Green, II, pp.13, 14).

[2] As mentioned earlier, Warner states that in Boston, for example,
between 1870 and 1900, "if a house was new, it was suburban"
(Warner, 1974, p.47).

63 in the territory outside the city, and 156 were within the old city limits (French, p.317).[1]

Map 4.   Simplified Map of Pierre L'Enfant's Plan of Washington.
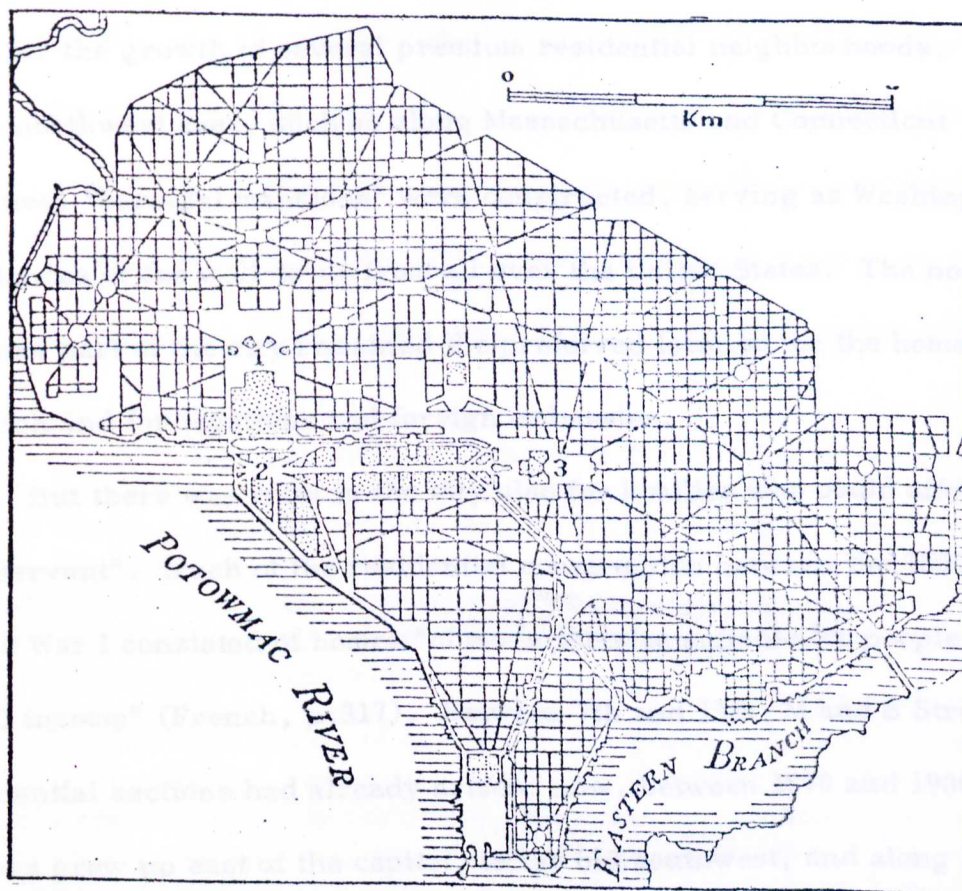
Source: Harper, p.32

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[1] As will be discussed in more detail later, the city of Washington --which was only a part of the District of Columbia--was confined for many years within an area originally planned by Pierre L'Enfant. Although no political boundary separated this "old city" from the surrounding District (the 1871 Territorial Government Act had placed all territory within D.C. under a single government), the remaining District was referred to as "suburban" by the District Commissioners and called the Washington County until, with the Twentieth Century, the city began to coincide with the District. Georgetown, outside the old city limits, was not part of the "county" but a separate entity (Map 4).

Within the area of the city, there was plenty of room for expansion--

again in contrast to other urban places of the time. It will be remembered

that the original city had been laid out for a large population to begin with.[1]

In the "millionnaire colony" about Dupont and Sheridan Circles remained

room for the growth of several premium residential neighborhoods. In

other northwest area, such as along Massachusetts and Connecticut

Avenues, "baronial mansions" were constructed, serving as Washington

residences of the well-to-do from all over the United States. The north-

western part of the city remained the preferred location for the homes of

the rich and for legations and foreign embassies.

But there was room in the city also for families who could afford "only

one servant". Much of the residential construction between the 1880's and

World War I consisted of homes "of moderate size suitable for people of

small income" (French, p.317). Between 7th and 13th, M and S Streets NW

residential sections had already arisen; now, between 1870 and 1900, row

houses grew up east of the capital, in the old southwest, and along Rhode

Island Avenue--here for people of very modest means.[2] A number of apart-

ment buildings also began to be built in the central area by the 1880's

(Thomas; Melder; Proctor, 1930, Vol.I).

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[1] John Clagett Proctor--a lifelong inhabitant of Washington and one
of its most prolific chroniclers, both as editor and co-author of a multi-
volume history of the city and as columnist of the Washington Star--estimated
that in 1883 one third of the original L'Enfant city was not yet built up;
even after World War I, many undeveloped blocks remained among residen-
tial neighborhoods close to the downtown area (W.H. Press, Green, II).

[2] The largest portion of housing in the old southwest went up between
1870 and 1900; the Capitol Hill district was largely built up by 1920.

Furthermore, there was no need for either annexation nor consolidation in the Federal City. Both the L'Enfant city and the District of Columbia were part of the federal enclave and under the political jurisdiction of Congress.[1] Washington was not only dependent on Congress economically but politically as well. During most of its existence, the city had little say in the running of its own business. Except for a few years of territorial government with a measure of independence under Alexander Sheperd (1871-1874), not until modern times would the city be given a say in its internal affairs, while Congress continued to hold its pursestrings.[2]

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[1] French suggests that the changes in the political set-up governing the District which took place in the 1870's could be compared to an annexation of the whole District outside the city limits. However, the limits of the city were less political but rather geographical, originating from the L'Enfant plan and the concentration of the population within the radius of a walking city. In any event, there was no barrier toward outward growth (French, p. 303).

[2] Under the Charter of Incorporation, granted by Congress in 1802, voters in the District were denied a vote for President and Vice-President or for a representative in Congress. This was done to make the federal enclave independent of and above local or national politics. Washington's citizens did have the right to elect a City Council, while the President of the United States appointed the Mayor. In 1871, the District was made a federal territory with a governor and members of an upper house appointed by the President and members of a lower house as well as a delegate to Congress elected by D.C. voters. Alexander Shepherd was on the City Council before 1871 as member of the Board of Public Works. In 1871, Shepherd became Governor of the District of Columbia. During his governorship much progress was made with street paving and lighting and other improvements, but the city became indebted to 22 million dollars. An "interim" commission government by committee took over in 1874 and "deposed" Shepherd. In 1878, this interim government became permanent when the so-called "Organic Act" was passed by which D.C. citizens lost all self-government. In return, Congress underwrote the District's public debt and pledged the United States" to share equally with local taxpayers the annual expense of running the capital". This was a pledge that Congress was most reluctant to make good when subsequently suburban areas within the former "county" began to be developed.

Beginning in the 1870's, three commissioners administered the city, one of which, by law, was an officer of the Army Corps of Engineers.[1] It was he who was responsible for the building and maintenance of roads and bridges and of providing water and sewer lines and other urban amenities and improvements. The original L'Enfant plan had from the beginning guided the growth of the city; from the 1870's on, congressional guidance was continued over conditions not only within the city, but also extending into suburban areas within the District. Congressional intervention, rather than private enterprise or economic impulse alone, was shaping the spatial and structural characteristics of the city. A Congressional limit on building height, for example, assured that there would be no skyscrapers in Washington's urban core; Congress also instructed the city to draw up plans for parks and open spaces as part of an orderly expansion of the metropolis. Washington's unique political situation had ramifications with direct bearing on suburban development. Platting of subdivisions in the "county" was required to conform to Washington's street plan as early as 1888; this provision was strengthened with the Highway Act of 1893, which insured conformity of the future suburban street system with that of the old urban system based on the original L'Enfant plan. In the same year, a congressional provision prohibited

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[1] The three Commissioners were appointed by the President of the United States and administered the city with the advice of a Congressional Committee and supported by annual congressional appropriations.

overhead wires of any kind within the old city limits. This prohibition

was to be instrumental in the construction of suburban transportation

services in advance of those in the city once the electric street railway

was adopted in Washington.[1]

Washington's Internal Transportation Network. The growth of

Washington's public transport network, as did its population and economic

growth, was intimately connected with its role as the national capital.[2]

Washington's early public transport lagged behind that of other American

centers, in keeping with its general slow growth. While regular horse-

drawn omnibuses began service in the 1830s, the lines were limited to a

few routes within the city center and never extended beyond the

built-up area. Omnibuses never facilitated urban growth, and they had

no influence on beginning suburbanization, as they did in such places as

Boston or Philadelphia during the "era of the omnibus" (Taylor, I, pp.40-48).

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[1] The prohibition against overhead wires extended only to the area
of the old city and did not include the "county", that is, the rest of the
District. As will be seen, suburban lines were built quickly after electri-
fication became possible (King).--The Highway Act and the creation of the
Park Commission in 1901 "constituted the first conscious attempt to
guide the suburban growth of an American community along lines
that would ensure harmony between new development and the parent
city" (Green, II, p.48), a guidance lacking in the urban and suburban
development of most other Nineteenth Century North American cities.

[2] Because of the function it performs in national politics, its growth
usually took place during times of crises, such as the various wars and the
Depression.

Horsecar Service. Horsecar service was also late in being initiated in Washington. The first horsecar lines did not appear in the Capital until 1862, when the Civil War made a public transport system essential to a city growing by leaps and bounds, its population swelling as a result of the war efforts. Still, by 1880, the area between the capitol and the "President's House" was well served by horse streetcars as were selected other populated areas, especially northward within the city (Map 5). But while downtown service was ample and Georgetown was connected to Washington by streetcar lines, the perimeter of the original city was hardly breached. Only two lines extended into the surrounding area; the 7th Street extension to the north and a second line crossing the Anacostia River into the southeastern part of the "county".[1]

Even within the city, the eastern and northeastern part of the built-up area was served only sparsely in 1880; these--at the time outlying--districts had to await the population growth of the last decade of the nineteenth century. Even then, the eastern part of the city increasingly contrasted with the more prestigious and more "fashionable" west end as well as with the affluent northwest sections. Despite the construction

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[1] By 1886, the 14th Street line had joined these extensions.--The 7th Street line ran beyond Boundary Street, the original limit of L'Enfant's city, to Howard University; the line was in the 1890's extended to what was later Rock Creek Church Road. The line crossing the Anacostia River was also eventually extended to the foot of "Asylum Hill", the present St. Elizabeth. This Anacostia and Potomac line was the first for many years to cross the barrier of a river. The company had obtained authorization in 1872 to build a route to Uniontown, an early suburb, using the Navy Yard (Anacostia) Bridge. It was not built until 1875, after the company won an appeal to the Judge Advocate General of the Army for permission to lay tracks on the bridge, which was under the jurisdiction of the Engineer of the Public Buildings and Grounds and who had refused such permission.

Map 5. Street Railway Lines, City of Washington, D.C., 1880.

Source: Commissioner's Report, 1880.

activity in other sectors, the city moved north and west.[1] (Green, II; Roberts, 1977, p.94; Statistics of Population, District of Columbia, 1910).

In the north and northwest, despite the city's growth toward that direction, the terrain often precluded extension of horsecar lines beyond the boundary. Areas such as Connecticut and Massachusetts Avenues extended had to await electrification of the system after the late 1880's before their connection to the urban transportation network became feasible. This was largely due to the topography of the capital city.

Topography of Washington's Metropolitan Area. Washington was originally a port city, the center of which was located near sea level along the Potomac River and which was surrounded by a series of terraces, bluffs, and heights. The extent of L'Enfant's original plan of the city reflects the confinement of the local topography (Map 6).[2]

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[1] The northwest received more than its share of improvements, while Capitol Hill and the Navy Yard section lagged behind. By the late 1880's, northwest and its suburbs beyond the boundary had twice as many miles of hard-surfaced streets as all the rest of the District (Green, II, p.47).-- In 1891, the city center of Washington was at Pennsylvania Avenue and 7th Street; by 1906, it had moved west to New York Avenue between 13th and 15th Streets.

[2] It must be firmly borne in mind that L'Enfant's plan for many years by no means represented the actual city of Washington. It was rather the "planned city", envisioned as future metropolis of several hundreds of thousands of inhabitants. Even into the 1870's and 1880's, the "real city" was much smaller. In 1874, for instance, Scott Circle was "virtually on the city's fringes at Massachusetts Avenue and 16th Street" (Green, II, p.381). When in 1875 William Morris Stewart, then Senator from Nevada, built his mansion on Dupont Circle, it was dubbed "Stewart's Folly" for being so far out of town. In 1876, the new Lincoln Park was at the "then extremity of East Capitol Street" (Green, II, 398). Such avenues as Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Virginia, although clearly part of L'Enfant's plan, were mainly unimproved dirt roads beyond the confines of the inner city, and until the 1880's tidal marshes stretched from 17th Street below the White House to the river.

Map 6. Topographic Map of the Site of Washington.
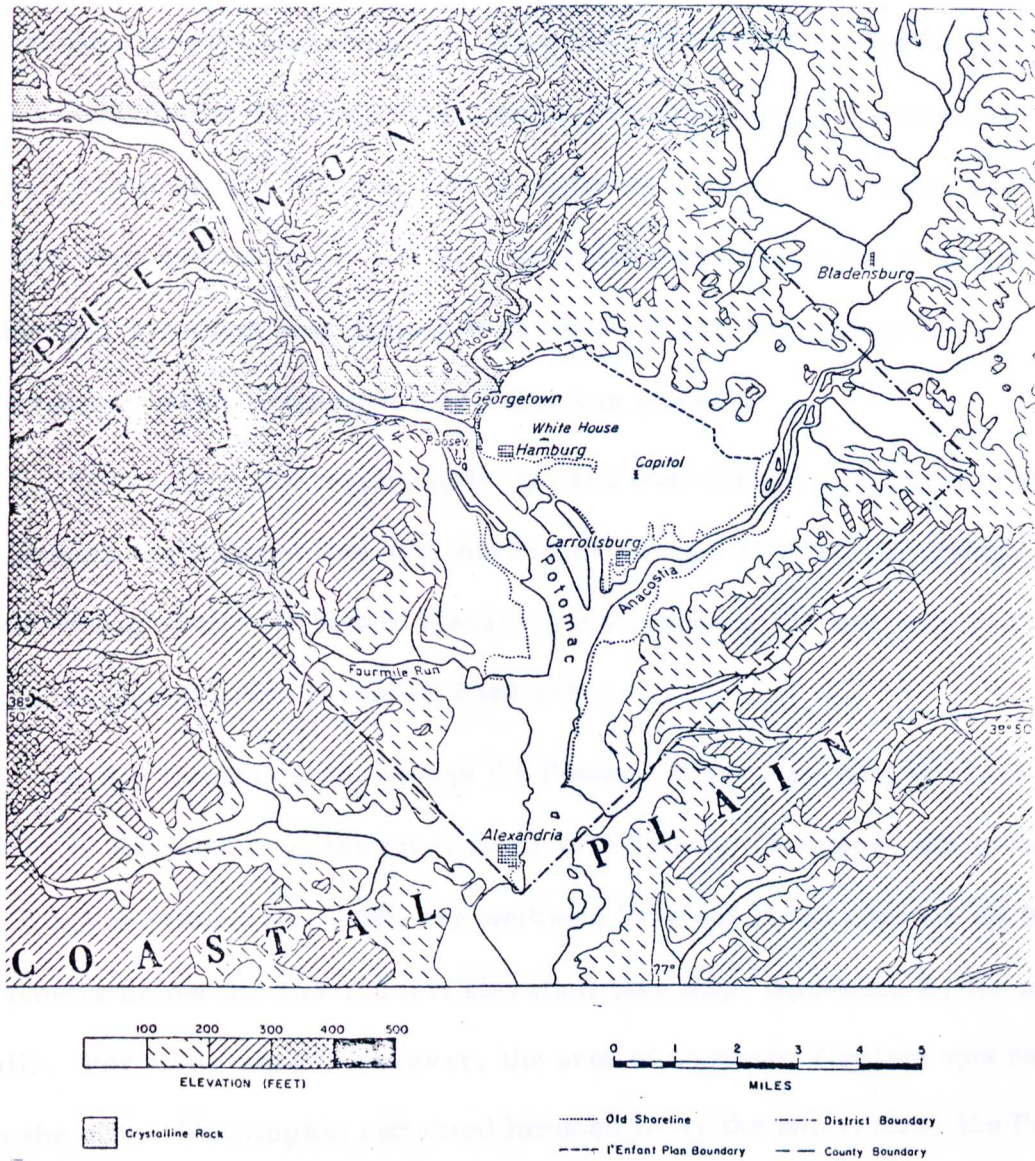
Source: Harper, p.31.

Washington's terrain rises gently from the river until about the present Florida Avenue, the old boundary of the city, which generally follows the 100-120 feet elevation line. From there, elevation increases sometimes abruptly and steeply to the north and west to about 300 feet and in some places 350 feet, about the highest elevation in the District ("Tenleytown Hill"). Farther into Montgomery County, Maryland, elevation reaches over 400 and up to 500 feet in the outer reaches of the area. To the northwest, the steep and rugged Rock Creek Valley long presented a physical barrier to transportation and urban growth.

The terrain rises more gently upward from the eastern edges of the city toward the District line and into Prince George's County, Maryland, rarely rising above 100 feet in elevation and reaching 150 feet only in the northeast (the present Greenbelt Park area).

On the Virginia side, across the Potomac River, the terrain rises rapidly in terraces from the river north of Arlington Cemetary, dissected by a number of streams, while the southern Virginia shore remains flatter and mostly below the 100-150 feet elevation (see Map, Appendix B, for more detail). For many years, however, the area of northern Virginia was remote from the city. Washington remained hemmed in by the two rivers, the Potomac to the southwest, and the Eastern Branch or Anacostia to the south and east. Despite the several bridges which had been built across the two

waterways by the 1880's and 1900's,[1] the Potomac and Anacostia remained
effective barriers to the physical expansion of the city, and especially
to large scale suburban growth. "Until street railway lines ran over the
Aqueduct Bridge into Virginia in the late Nineties, Washington's suburbs
included none of the area beyond the Potomac" (Green, II, 16); and despite
the relatively early extension of horsecar service beyond the Anacostia,
land there also remained sparsely settled.

There were, of course, the usual external connections via a number of
turnpikes. The approaches from the Virginia side were old roads, some of
which had provided connections with Georgetown before the District had
come into existence. On the near side of the river

> the great lines of communication between city and country
> had long since been established--Bennings road, Bladensburg
> road, Brentwood road, Seventh street road, Fourteenth street
> road, and from Georgetown the Tennallytown pike....
> (Comm. Rpts. 1887-1888, p.40)

Typical of the time, these tollroads and turnpikes which crisscrossed the
region around Washington were essentially dirt roads, and many remained

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[1] Three bridges crossed the Potomac until the Twentieth Century;
Chain Bridge, the oldest bridge of the District (1792), Aqueduct Bridge,
later replaced by the present Key Bridge, and the so-called "long bridge";
this bridge and its replacement carried the steam railroad across the river
into Virginia. The route provided the major railroad connection between
north and south on the Eastern Seaboard. A railroad bridge also crossed
the Anacostia; that river was further crossed by the 11th Street or Navy
Yard Bridge and the Benning Street Bridge, to which was added, in 1890,
the extension of Pennsylvania Avenue into "trans-Anacostia".

unpaved and at times impassable well into the automobile era. They were,

therefore, involved in early suburban movement only in a very limited way.[1]

Walking City. Until the 1880's, then, Washington remained essentially

a compact walking city, confined within the original area of L'Enfant's plan.[2]

Still, by the late 1870's and 1880's, increasing real estate speculation began

in suburban areas beyond the built-up part of the city. In real property

assessments for tax purposes for the whole District of Columbia, the percen-

tage of the "county" rose from 8.7 percent in 1871 to 12.3 percent in 1895,

and to 14.2 percent in 1900.[3] Despite the continuing real estate activity

within the old city, therefore, built-up blocks began to stretch for a mile

or more north of Boundary Street, interspersed with much vacant land; in

1890, in order to acknowledge new realities, Boundary Street was officially

renamed Florida Avenue.

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[1] Where these connections by road were not subsequently reinforced
by public transportation, such as in the southeastern part of Prince George's
County, or parts of Northern Virginia, there was no urban nor suburban
growth until the World War II era and beyond.

[2] It stretched from Georgetown, two miles west of the White House, to
Capitol Hill, two miles to the east. Boundary street, one and one half
miles north of the White House, represented the outer edge of the built-up
area which, in the northeast, ended where 15th Street and Benning Road
represented the farthest extension from the White House, or not quite three
miles.

[3] Since the actual value of real estate in the city must be presumed to
have been higher than that in the county, where real estate was residential
rather than commercial, this increase was quite significant, although the
same assessment report shows that real estate development within the city
continued to be healthy (Comm. Rpts. 1899-1900, Vol I, p.48; percentages
by AML).

Electric Street Railway in Washington. At about the same time, the era of the horsecar was drawing to a close in Washington. Electric street railway cars were inaugurated in the booming city only barely six months after their success in Richmond, and before Boston and New York started to build such systems. Once exposed to electric cars, "neither the government nor the citizens would long tolerate the horse car" (King, p.17). For a while augmenting the new system, by 1900 the last horse cars were retired and replaced by a completely electrified system.

The Eckington and Soldier's Home Railway Company of the District of Columbia was the first company chartered to construct a railway with central pole trolley. This innovative line which opened in October 1888 and ran for a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, from 7th Street and New York Avenue to Eckington Place, was the first of many to extend beyond Boundary Street. In fact, suburban lines, that is those outside the old city limits, were to be built more quickly at first than those within the urban center. Here again the congressional influence made itself felt with the prohibition of overhead wires already discussed. All electric lines within the city were therefore forced to use an expensive underground conduit system.[1] As a result, the electric street railway system proliferated beyond the boundary

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[1] This was a "sliding shoe" method, in which the shoe or plow was lowered from the bottom of the lead car through a slot between the rails into an underground electric conduit system--a very expensive system only adopted in Washington and New York. On the Boundary Street line, the shoe was removed and the overhead pole was raised for the continuation of the ride into the "county".

Map 7.   Cable Car Routes, Washington, D.C., 1890-1899.

CABLE CAR ROUTES
IN
WASHINGTON, D.C.
1890-1899

Park Road, N.W.

Boundary St., N.W. (Florida Ave.)

14th St., N.W.

7th St., N.W.

15th St., N.E.

36th St., N.W.

Wisconsin Ave.

26th St., N.W.

M St., N.W.

Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.

N.Y. Ave., N.W.

Mass. Ave.

H St., N.E.

Original Terminal

GEORGETOWN

White House

Penn. Ave., N.W.

C St., N.W.   Old B&O Depot

Capitol Bldg.

15th St., N.W.

Washington Monument

7th St., S.W.

2nd. St., N.W.

B St., S.W.

Penn. Ave., S.E.

8th. St., S.E.

Maine Ave., S.W.

Navy Yard

KEY

CAR HOUSES

POWER STATION & CAR HOUSE

66

in the "county" to which the prohibition against overhead lines was not extended. It was easier, cheaper, and faster to erect poles with electric wires rather than having to bury the source of power underground.

Within the city, various experiments were undertaken to overcome Congress' prohibition against overhead wires, among them a costly system of cable. This system, which in any event operated less than ten years in Washington (1890-1897), had only one "suburban" extension, along 14th Street to Park Road NW (Map 7). The Eckington line which had "invaded" the Boundary limits, was made to retreat with its overhead wires behind that line of tolerance, and eventually the dual system of underground conduit within the old city limits and a switch to trolleys at the former boundary was adopted.

Much of the suburban development subsequent to 1890 was made possible through the extension of the electric street railway network, one which would--on a large scale--overcome the natural barriers which had kept Washington so long within the confines of its original site. Long before the Eckington line began operation in 1888, however, the process of Washington's suburbanization had already begun, a process which is the topic of the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

WASHINGTON, D.C. BETWEEN THE CIVIL WAR AND WORLD WAR I

THE PROCESS OF SUBURBAN GROWTH

Wooden stretches have merged into farms, farms into
separate settlements and suburbs; and suburbs into
part and parcel of the city....

Emery

Both size and internal structure of the city changed dramatically during the decades after the Civil War. Then, Washington had not been much more than an overgrown village, even as it took its place among cities of the nation. But by 1893, Baedeker's Handbook for Travellers described the capital as "in many respects one of the most beautiful cities in the United States" (p.252). It had industry of only local import, none of it particularly noxious but adding to its increasing wealth; it had much room for expansion even within the old city limits; it had the distinction, in contrast to Baltimore, its rival to the north, of being a "sewered city", with 23,000 house connections to 255 miles of sewers by 1890; it also had an "abundant and good water supply" (Billings, 1890), Figure 2.

Figure 2. <u>Water Consumption, Population Increase, and Number of Meters Installed, Washington, D.C.</u>
<u>1870-1900.</u>
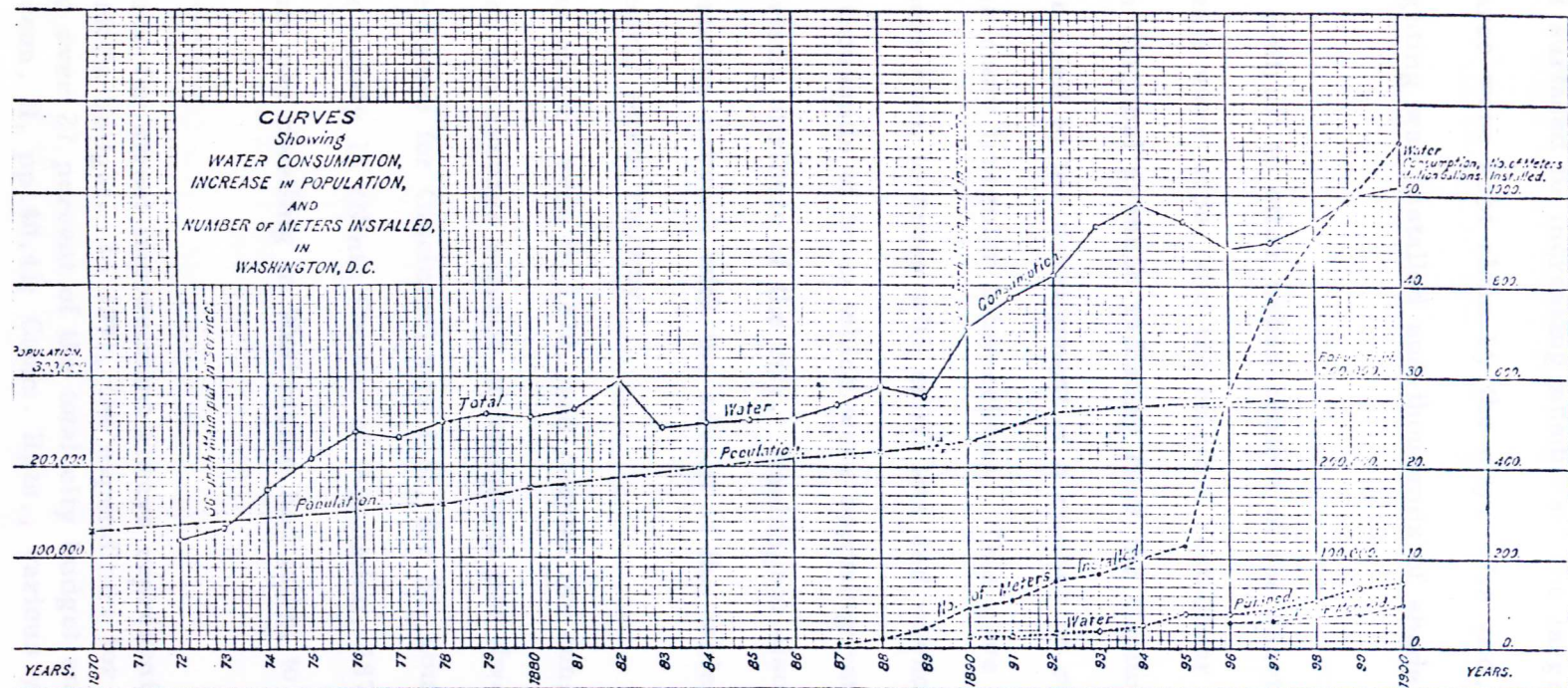
Source: Commissioner's Report, 1900.

Beginning with Alexander Shepherd's efforts in the 1870's, streets were graded and surfaced in increasing numbers;[1] the large number of paved thoroughfares were kept clean by the city. Gas and, later, electric street lighting was installed and thousands of shade trees planted.

In marked contrast to other urban centers of the Nineteenth Century, Washington's streets were wide, and the original rectilinear grid, interspersed with diagonal avenues radiating from the Capitol and the White House, lent itself to the development of a number of circles and small parks at the many irregular intersections. This gave an impression of spaciousness even to areas with small lots and rowhouses, enhanced by the thousands of trees which were becoming--and continued to be--a characteristic attribute of the city. Washington also acquired a sufficient transportation network with the advent of the cable car and especially the electric street railway.

Housing was ample, even in 1870, and despite the congestion of certain poor areas, the average number of occupants per dwelling was 6.16, whereas the figure for Cincinnati was 8.81, for St. Louis 7.4, and for New York nearly 15 (Ninth Census of Population, 1870). By 1890, the occupants per dwelling in Washington had fallen to 5.88.

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[1] Expenditures for street improvement always represented a goodly chunk of the District's budget. In 1891, the expenditure for such improvements amounted to over 27 percent of the total city budget and over one fourth in 1901 (Green, II, pp.40,41; Comm. Rpts., various years).

Population density in 1890 was close to 31 persons per acre, with even the most congested ward of the city just below 70 persons per acre (Billings, 1890). This compared favorably with the congested conditions of other large cities of the time.[1] It seems that Washington was much less crowded and, by inference, living conditions more pleasant here than in other large cities, once the city had recovered from the impact of the Civil War.

At first glance, therefore, there seemed to be little need for a suburban movement. There were few of the negative conditions to supply a "push" outward from the city, a city which did not conform to the generally accepted model of the late nineteenth century North American city. Nevertheless, Washington shared with its sister cities a distinct suburban trend. While its suburbanization process did not begin as early as in such urban centers as Boston, New York, or Philadelphia, nevertheless by the 1870's Washington's population began to spread out and spill over its boundaries, in a process which accelerated toward the end of the century. Despite the general attractiveness of Washington, its citizens evinced the same desire for suburban living as was typical for industrial and manufacturing cities of the U.S. and, as in other cities, a growing network of transportation systems made an outward movement possible.

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[1] See Chapter II, p.15.

In this chapter, the process of Washington's suburbanization is examined in some detail. Such an examination may provide some insight into the motivation of a large number of suburban dwellers whose decisions gave Washington by World War I the local variant of a star-shaped urban growth pattern typical of the nineteenth century urban model.

Washington's suburban development will be described as taking place in three general stages: walking-horsecar suburbs, steam railroad suburbs, and electric streetcar suburbs. This is in conformance with a scheme often used in the literature and which facilitates description of a process during which strict temporal sequences are difficult, if not impossible, to follow. In Washington, for instance, walking suburbs were laid out at the same time that early settlements appeared along steam railroad lines; later suburban subdivision along such lines took place while electric street railway lines already began to extend outward from the boundary of the city. Since transportation improvements overlapped during the latter part of the nineteenth century, some suburban development took place simultaneously, tied to a variety of transport modes. Nevertheless, the three stage scheme is useful and has been employed throughout the following study, including the two appendices.

Walking-Horsecar Suburbs

Washington had its first, albeit embryonic, movement toward suburban settlement when the city itself, small and unfinished, hardly deserved that title. The capital's first planned suburb was laid out across the Eastern Branch (Anacostia River) as early as 1854, at the southern end of the Navy Yard Bridge and within walking distance of the city proper. This subdivision--Uniontown--was a response to employment opportunities for members of the working class at the Navy Yard, the Federal Arsenal (at the site of the present Ft. McNair) and St. Elizabeth, the institution for the insane.

However, among Washington's suburbs, this early subdivision was unusual in several ways. Firstly, it anticipated suburban growth within walking distance of the built-up area by more than ten years. Secondly, it catered expressly to the "laboring classes", whereas generally suburban developers and promoters aimed their appeal to the white collar middle and lower middle class. Thirdly, its location was attractive because of nearby job opportunities; in general, Washington's suburbs were purely residential, with most of the heads of families who moved there closely tied to jobs downtown and commuting to the city center on a daily basis. Washington's spatial division between city center employment and suburban home was almost universally apparent from the beginning of suburban settlement. Finally, Uniontown's location was uncommon for suburban growth. Only few suburbs grew up on the far side of the Anacostia River, an area which remained undeveloped and sparsely populated into the late 1930's.

Early Suburban Growth. Predominant suburban growth during the
pedestrian-horsecar era, in fact, took place toward the north of the city,
into the "highlands" directly beyond the Boundary, the present Florida
Avenue. Elevation close to the built-up area rises sharply here (Figure
3), but the land is not as rugged as toward the Rock Creek gorge. This

Figure 3.   Profile of Land Surface Along 15th Street, N.W.
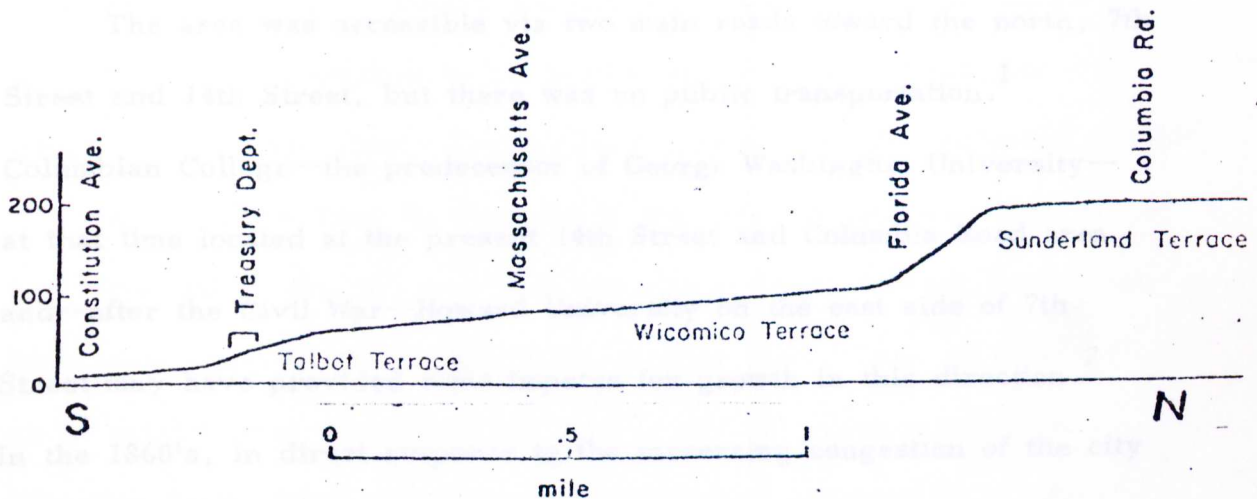
Source: Harper, p.32.

location therefore provided for suburban accessibility within walking
distance of the growing downtown, at the same time offering relief from
the hot and humid climate of the low-lying city.

Located at the confluence of two rivers, in a low, originally
marshy area, Washington's climate is naturally humid both in summer
and winter. Winters are generally mild; only rarely are there prolonged
cold spells. Summers, however, are generally of relatively high
temperature and oppressively humid. For years, malaria and yellow
fever were real health threats in the nation's capital. The summer climate

was therefore an inducement to leave the city for anyone who could afford to do so. The cooler temperatures and less humid air in the "heights" surrounding the city to the north and northwest made these desirable for summer and year round residences, and their healthful attributes were favorably compared to those of the city by real estate promoters.

The area was accessible via two main roads toward the north, 7th Street and 14th Street, but there was no public transportation.[1] Columbian College--the predecessor of George Washington University-- at that time located at the present 14th Street and Columbia Road area and--after the Civil War--Howard University on the east side of 7th Street may have provided some impetus for growth in this direction.[2] In the 1860's, in direct response to the increasing congestion of the city during and immediately after the Civil War, suburban property became attractive here for year round settlements.

Washington had become crowded and urban conditions unpleasant with the influx of a large number of newcomers in connection with war-

[1] 7th Street was an old, formerly private, toll road, an important connection with the city and the waterfront. On its upper reaches summer homes of old Maryland families such as the Blairs and the Lees were located. 14th Street for many years did not extend beyond what is now Columbia Road. Both were "improved" in the fashion of the era-- that is only in a rudimentary way--and at times impassable.

[2] Some cemeteries, race tracks, and the Soldiers' Home, opened in 1853 about two miles north of the city, had also been earlier reasons for "summer pleasure drives" into this part of the countryside.

related activities.[1]   There was a rapid increase of blacks as well, many

of them "contrabands", leading to increased hostility toward the black

population in general (Green, I, p.279), and there were outcries

against "rampant vice" when nearly 4,000 women, who had poured

into the city as camp followers of General Hooker's Army, now settled

in a triangle below Pennsylvania Avenue, close to the Treasury and the

incipient "downtown."   Before the urban improvements of the 1870's

and 1880's, this crowding added to physical conditions within the city

which "had become close to intolerable" (Green, I,p.312; McArdle, p.566).

At the same time, in response to the urban congestion, land values

had risen within the city and land speculators began looking toward the

farm areas north of the Boundary for cheaper land.   Land was opened

up in subdivisions of smaller lots than in prewar years and became

attractive to suburban settlers who were seeking alternatives to city

living.

Mt. Pleasant, along 14th Street beyond Boundary Street, had its

start in 1865; by 1876 Meridian Hill, Pleasant Plains, and LeDroit Park,

as well as some streets of an urban grid surrounding Howard University,

could be found on the map (Map 8).[2]   These subdivisions were well

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[1] It will be recalled that the 1860 population of 61,000 increased in
four war years to 140,000 (1864), in addition to the troops quartered
and the inmates of military hospitals (See Chapter II, p.23).   This
number fell again to 106,000 by 1867 (Special Census, 1867).

[2] The area straddling 14th Street was generally known as "Mount
Pleasant" and shown as such on some maps.   The actual original sub-
division of Mt. Pleasant was located farther north, just south of
Piney Branch.   Compare with Map 9; refer also to Appendix B.

Map 8. **Suburban Development North of Florida Avenue, Washington City,
1876.**
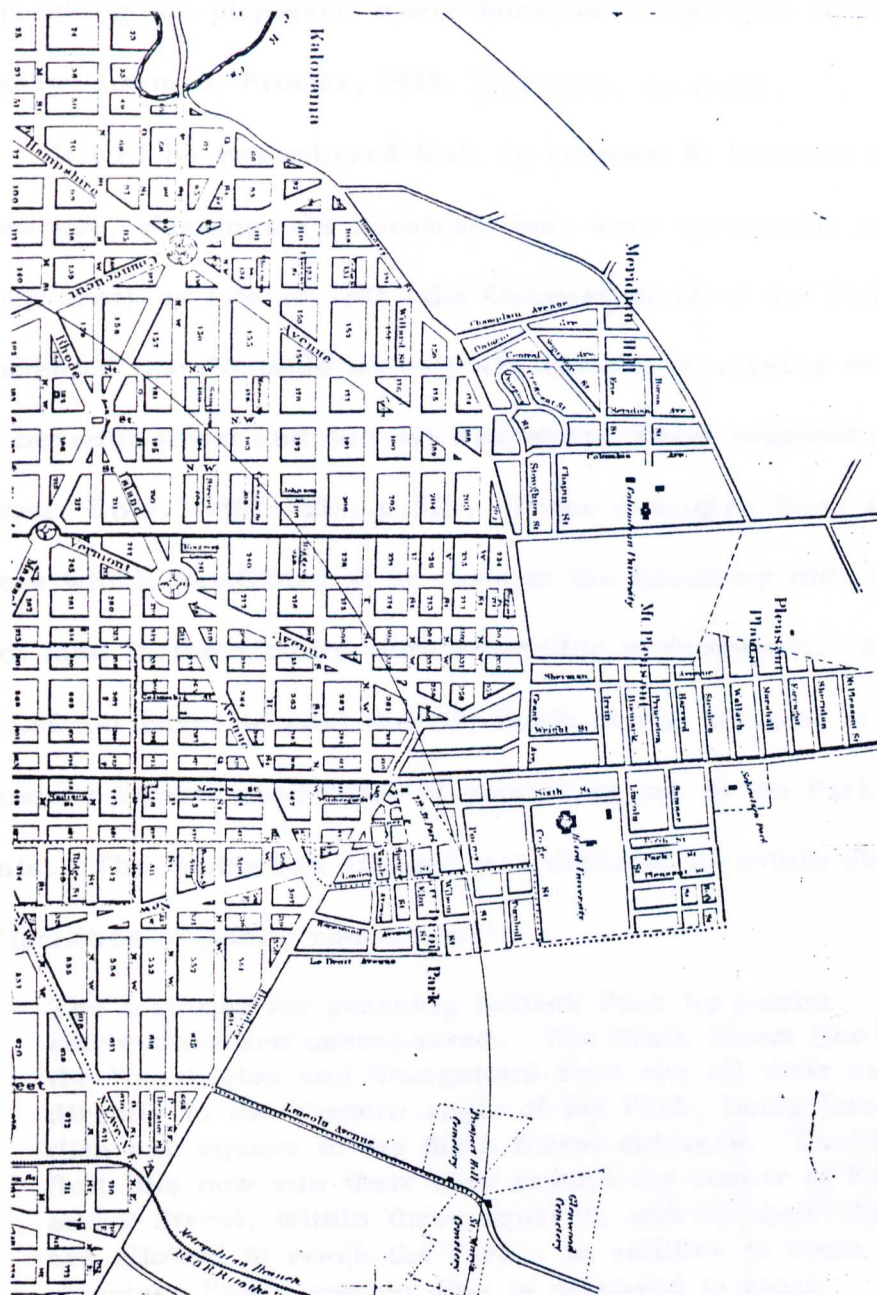
Source: Entwistle.

within walking distance of the city center, and the new settlers were
mostly commuters to downtown employment on a daily basis. Early
accounts seem to indicate that walking continued to be the accepted mode
of reaching the city even where horsecar connections became available
(Emery, Harmon, Proctor, 1930, I, Proctor, no date).

It will be remembered that, in contrast to horsecar networks
elsewhere, Washington's horsecar lines were essentially confined to the
urban area; as late as 1888, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia
commented that "outside the city the District is scantily served, a line
out Seventh street and one out Fourteenth street constituting the total"
(Comm. Rpts., 1887-1888, p.52). These extending lines as well as
others which terminated at or close to the Boundary did, nevertheless,
make land in the vicinity more accessible to downtown. Advertisements
for LeDroit Park, located directly north of and adjacent to the original
Boundary Street, used "ease of access" as one of the Park's selling
points. The "suburban village" was depicted as within close proximity
to "facilities of public conveyance".

> The facilities for reaching LeDroit Park by public
> conveyance are unsurpassed. The Ninth Street line of
> the Washington and Georgetown road run all their cars
> directly to the Western angle of the Park, being less
> than one square to the Sixth Street entrance. The new
> Belt line now run their cars around the corner of Fourth
> and P Street, within three squares, and by their charter
> are allowed to reach the Park. In addition to these
> streetcar lines, another line is proposed to reach
> from the center of the city through the middle of

> LeDroit Park, and out to the Soldiers' Home. Thus
> it readily appears that the Park is already better
> supplied with facilities of access than most portions
> of the city, and the future is bright with promise
> in this respect. ("LeDroit Park Illustrated", 1877)

Such optimism was premature, and most expected lines did not materialize

--at least not until much later. However, the subdivision was not only

close to the horsecar terminal at 7th and Boundary Streets, but also

well within walking distance from downtown.

Settlers in the Mt. Pleasant area could reach the streetcar network

at 14th and Boundary Streets and--after its extension in the 1880's--

at Park Avenue (Map 9).[1] But much of the settlement's original growth

had taken place long before the streetcar line reached Mt. Pleasant proper,

some twenty-five years after the beginning of the suburban village. Even

then, walking may well have remained the preferred mode of commuting

for many. One of the daughters of an early Mt. Pleasant inhabitant,

for instance, remembers that

> for some years after they moved to Mt. Pleasant...their
> father always took a lantern along when he accompanied
> visitors from the house to the cars at 14th and Boundary
> Streets.... The 14th Street cars did not run to Mount
> Pleasant until somewhere around 1890, when a sort of
> bobtail affair a short horsecar with only a driver, no
> conductor was put on, for which a 3 cent charge was
> made.... But the question of car service never worried
> her father for he invariably walked to and from the
> Treasury Department[2] and was never known to have
> waited at the corner for street cars (Proctor, "Mt.
> Pleasant as it Used to Be").

---

[1] Shown on the 1882 Map as Park Street.

[2] The Treasury Department, located next to the White House on 15th
Street, was a transportation hub and close to other employment on
Pennsylvania Avenue and F Street.

Map 9.   Suburban Development North of Florida Avenue, Washington City, 1882.
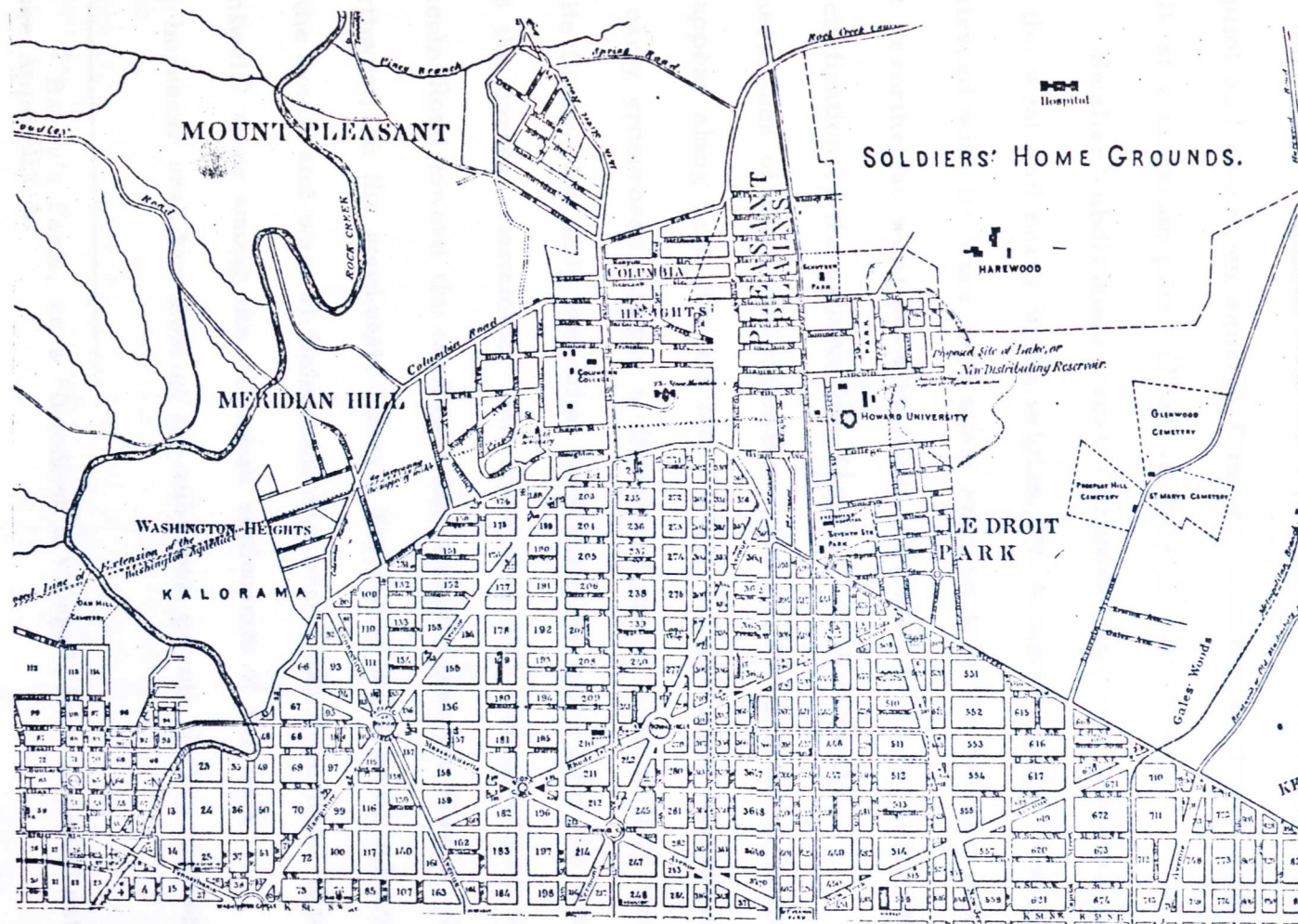
Source: Boyd, 1882.

The promoters of LeDroit Park also, despite their faith in public transportation, _first_ described the location of the "suburban property" as "only twelve squares from the Post Office, fifteen squares from the Capitol and seventeen squares from the Treasury--a twenty minute's walk at a moderate pace" ("LeDroit Park Illustrated").

Smaller subdivisions, such as Lanier Heights, Ingleside, and others on the west and north of the original Mt. Pleasant--which eventually coalesced with it--were even more removed from the horsecar system, but nevertheless were developed and continued to grow before the electrification of the system (See Chapter III). Despite the general lack of public transportation, suburban subdivisions began to appear along both 7th and 14th Streets, stretching to Brightwood, an early crossroads village, a distance of about 4½ miles from the White House, but only somewhat more than two miles from the boundary and the horsecar terminals. Suburban land was also developed along Lincoln Road toward the northeast and toward Columbia Road in the northwest; in the southeast, Barry's Farm[1] and some small subdivisions to the south and west of Uniontown and near Good Hope Road (Hutchinson, Cantwell) were among the suburban settlements of the walking-horsecar era[2] but most of the suburban growth during that era

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[1] Barry's Farm, as a "freedmen's village", is in a special category --see Appendix A.

[2] For the location of these subdivisions, refer to Appendix B. While this area was connected to the city by the Anacostia and Potomac horsecar line, the blue-collar workers of the area, especially the black laborers and domestics, most likely walked across the bridge rather than spend money for horsecar fare.

took place toward the north of the Boundary.

This northern area combined a number of geographic attributes which were important to its growth. It was close to the most populous part of the city, much of it within walking distance; access, either by walking or by the few horsecar lines, was relatively easy; topography made escape from the hot and humid summer climate of the basin city possible without being so rugged as to preclude development. These attributes made the area prime suburban land. Not until the development of the electric streetcar did suburban land toward the northwest of the city become more desirable.

Uneven Growth to the North and Northwest. Since a number of individual land owners and developers were involved in the suburbanization process, an irregular street system evolved north of the Boundary. Street alignments were discontinuous among neighboring subdivisions and not in conformance with the urban grid of the city (See Map 10).[1] As suburban development continued to spread, the alarming numbers of suburban streets that "go nowhere and connect with nothing" (Comm.

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[1] Even the LeDroit Park street grid which had a circle imitating those of the city system did not meet the streets directly across the Boundary; see also the street grids in the Kalorama area--between Woodley Park and the Boundary--and Mt. Pleasant's slanting streets.

Map 10.   Map of Suburban Areas North of Florida Avenue,
           Displaying Discontinuous Street Grid.
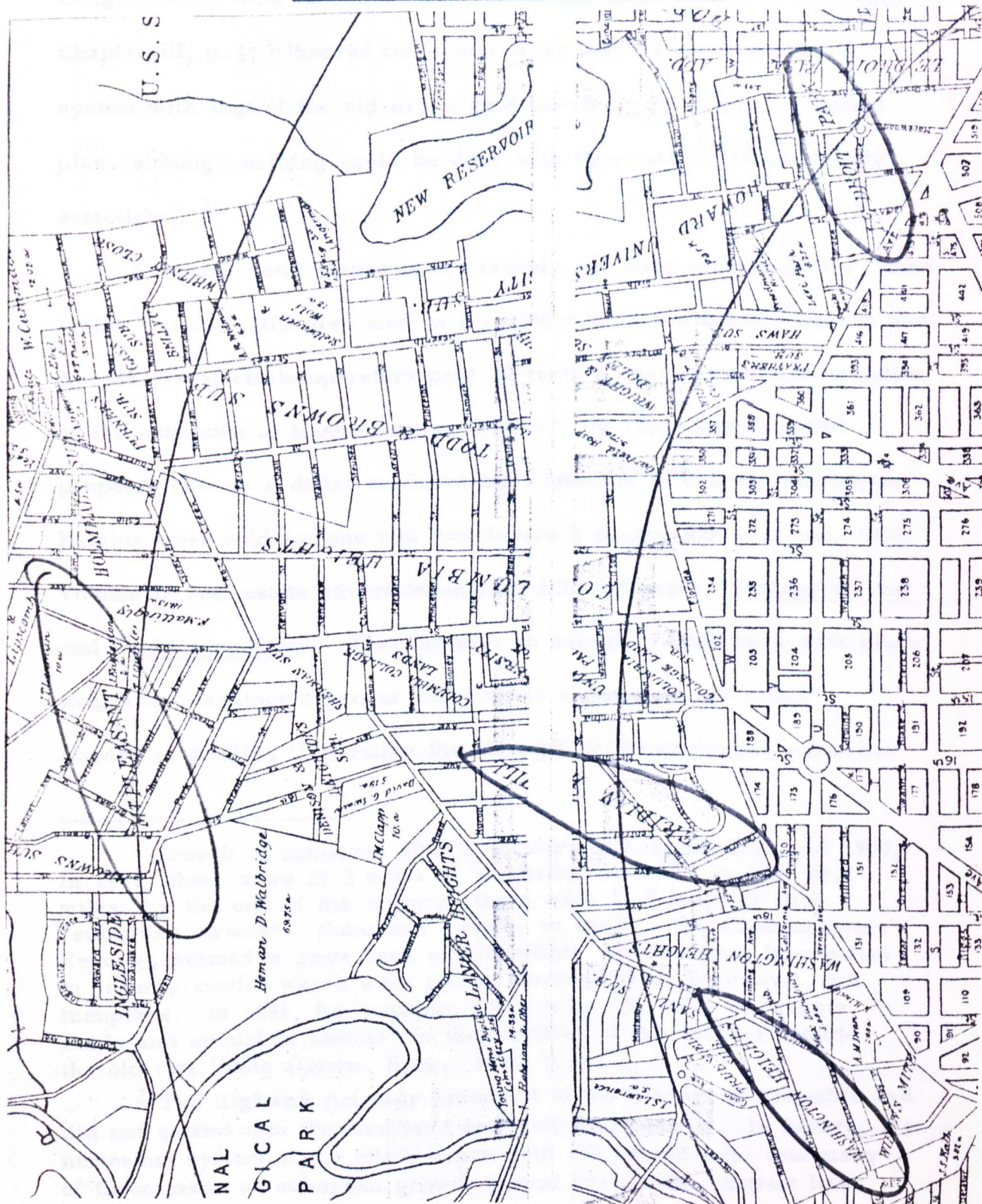
Source: Saunders, 1894.

Rpts, 1887) became the despair of the Corps of Engineers.[1] Eventually,

Congressional intervention in the form of the Highway Act of 1893 (See

Chapter III, p.57) insured conformity of the future suburban street

system with that of the old urban grid based on the original L'Enfant

plan, although nothing could be done with those subdivisions already

established.[2]

Suburban land values rose unevenly, in some areas rapidly. Land

in the Meridian Hill area sold in the 1860's for a few cents a square foot.

By 1883, real estate operators paid 50 cents a square foot in anticipation

of the extension of Massachusetts Avenue. By 1890, Meridian Hill

property rose to a dollar a square foot, and lots in nearby Washington

Heights were sold for one and two dollars a square foot (Proctor, 1930,

Volume I; real estate advertisements of different years, Washington Post

and Washington Star). This increase in suburban land value took place

long after Washington proper had become a "national showplace"

(McArdle, p.566), illustrating the strength of the continuing suburban

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[1] Growth of suburban streets accelerated between 1870 and 1900.
In 1877, there were 29.3 miles of "suburban streets", in 1887 39.3
miles; by the end of the century, there were 71.9 miles of such
"suburban streets". Suburban streets, as used in the Commissioners'
Reports, seemed to have been streets within subdivisions, in contrast
to "county roads" which were public thoroughfares, highways, and
turnpikes. In 1886, for example, there were 150 miles of "county
roads and suburban streets" in the territory of the District outside
the old city limits (Comm. Rpts., 1886, p.10).

[2] The Highway Act only pertained to the District of Columbia and
did not extend into the Maryland and Virginia suburbs. In reality, the
numerical system of the city's urban grid did extend later into many
of these areas as suburban growth spread beyond the District line
in the twentieth century.

trend. It also took place in the crescent close to Boundary Street

and largely within walking distance to the built-up area of the city.

By the late 1880's and especially by the 1890's, the walking-

horsecar era came to a close in Washington. Real estate values in

other parts of the District, farther removed from the urban core,

depended on accessibility by transportation systems. Former President

Cleveland sold his country estate, located in the present Cleveland

Heights area--which he had purchased in 1886 for $21,000--for $140,000

at the beginning of 1890, when electric trolleys were beginning to open

up the upper northwest. At the same time, lots in the northeast section

and farther outward into the District, beyond walking distance, and not

yet reached by dependable public transportation, sold for 4 to 7 cents a

square foot and in other parts of the "county", land went for 1½ to 5 cents

a square foot.

But as the following discussion of Washington's railroad suburbs

will show, even when reached by the same kind of transport system,

suburban properties could differ in value and characteristics in

different parts of the District and in the adjoining counties of Maryland

and Virginia.

Steam Railroad Suburbs

As was the case with other forms of transportation, steam railroads

appeared somewhat later in Washington than in other large North American

cities. Railroads did not play an important role in the Federal City's development into a metropolis. At the beginning of the railroad age, Washington--and Congress--were more favorably inclined toward the construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal as the major commercial connection with the West and were slow to consider the railroad as an alternative (Green, I, pp.127-130).[1] Even so, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had reached the outskirts of Washington by 1835. Only in 1852, however, was the company's Washington Branch permitted to enter the city.[2] The B&O's Metropolitan Branch was even later. Not until 1873, after twenty years of effort by Montgomery County to gain railroad access, was this branch brought to the capital city. Both branches, however, were directly instrumental in suburban development toward the northeast and northwest of the city.[3] In contrast, railroad

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[1] The canal never reached the Ohio, but stopped at Cumberland, Maryland. By then (October 1850), railroad connection was already established independent from Washington, rendering the Canal largely obsolete.

[2] The same year, it opened a station at New Jersey Avenue and C Street, NW.

[3] The Washington Branch of the B&O crossed Prince George's County, Maryland, on its route to Baltimore, roughly following the Washington and Baltimore Turnpike (the present U.S. 1). The Metropolitan Branch followed a northwest route from Washington and crossed Montgomery County, Maryland, on its way to Point of Rocks, providing a shortened route to the West. A subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Railroad --the Baltimore and Potomac--also entered the city, crossing the Anacostia from the northeast and with a termianl at 6th and "north B Street", at the foot of Capitol Hill (Map 11). Refer also to Appendix B throughout the following discussion.

Map 11.   Segment of the District of Columbia, Showing Steam Railroad
Lines, 1880.

J. A. Wineberger
Road Map of the District of Columbia
1880
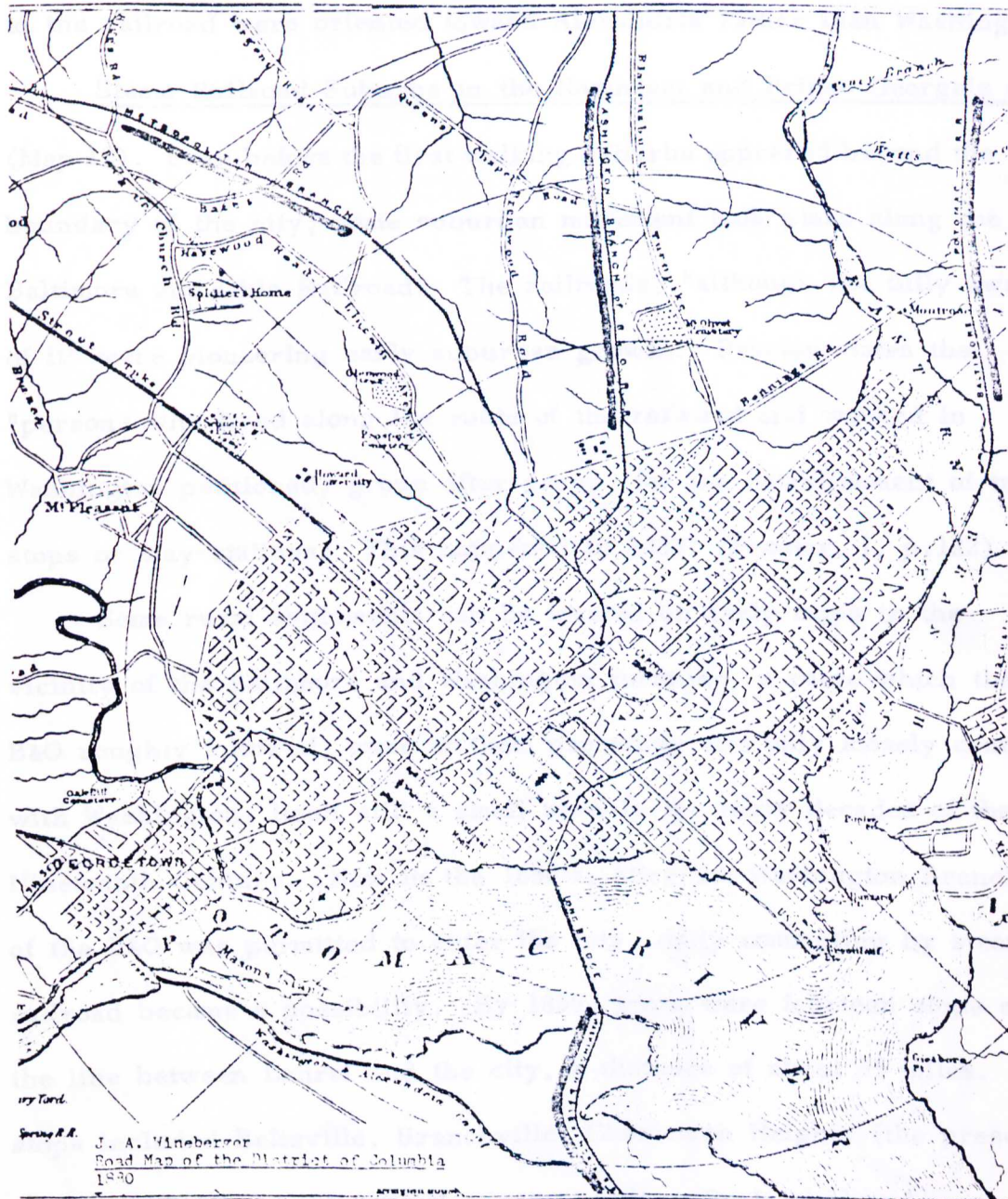
Source: Wineberger.

connections of the city with the South initiated little suburban growth in the Northern Virginia area; the settlements that did originate close to the railroad were oriented toward Alexandria rather than Washington.

Steam Railroad Suburbs in the Northeast and Prince George's County (Map 12). Even before the first walking suburbs appeared beyond the boundary of the city, some suburban movement took place along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The railroads, "although not fully aware of it" were pioneering early suburban growth. Proctor states that "persons who lived along the route of the railroad and worked in Washington petitioned, group after group, for the establishment of train stops or way-stations. This happened in 1853" (Proctor, I, p.122).

Some rural settlements can be located on early maps in the vicinity of the Baltimore and Washington turnpike, a route which the B&O roughly followed, some of them preceding and only loosely connected with Washington, itself still a small town in the early decades of the Nineteenth Century. Now in the 1850's, after the Washington Branch of the B&O was permitted to enter the city, daily commuting by steam railroad became a possibility. By 1859, there were fourteen stops along the line between Laurel and the city, a distance of about 15 miles. The stops included Beltsville, Branchville, Charleston Heights (the present Berwyn), College Station (in the present College Park area) and

Map 12. Outline Map of Prince George's County, Maryland, 1878.
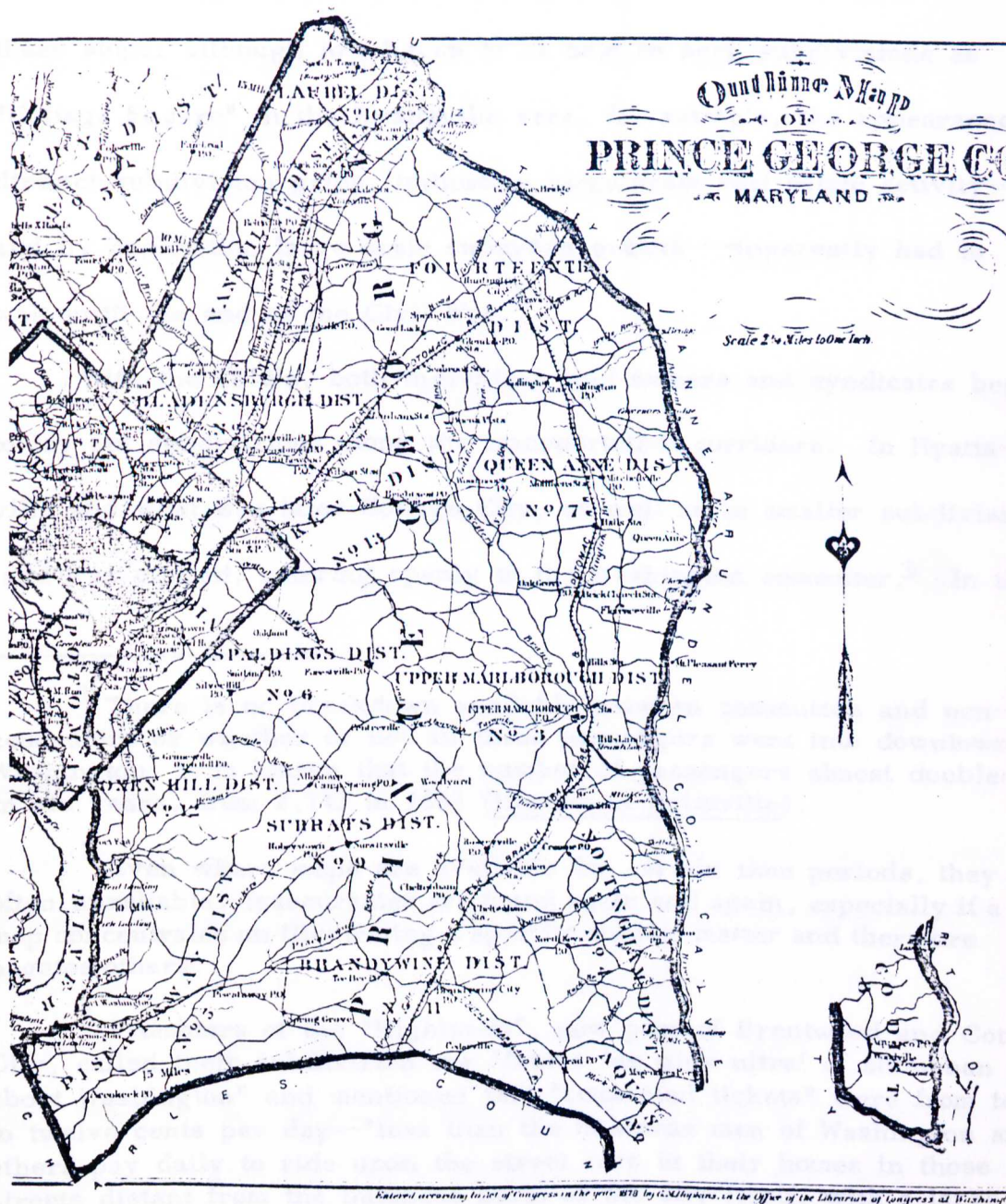
Source: G.M. Hopkins, 1878.

Hyattsville, as well as Winthrop Heights (the present Brentwood) and Langdon within the District. Passengers taken aboard at Beltsville that year numbered 4,480.[1]

The railroads did not build stations for a number of years at these stops; although lots began to be sold in such subdivisions as "Cottage Square" in the Hyattsville area, for example, the appearance of distinct subdivision grids, indicating large scale real estate activity—and by implication large scale suburban growth —apparently had to wait until the end of the Civil War.[2]

With the 1870's, both individual land owners and syndicates began to lay out subdivisions along the transportation corridors. In Hyattsville and what was later Cottage City, as well as in smaller subdivisions, land was offered, catering openly to the Washington commuter.[3] In the

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[1] There is no breakdown available between commuters and non-commuters or whether or not all these passengers went into downtown Washington; it is known that the number of passengers almost doubled in six years, from 2,742 in 1853 (History of Beltsville).

[2] Even where maps are available for certain time periods, they are often unreliable. Inaccuracies are found again and again, especially if a map concentrates on illustrating a specific subject matter and therefore negates others.

[3] Promoters of the "Highlands", now part of Brentwood and Cottage City, called their subdivision the "future 'ne plus ultra' of suburban places about Washington" and mentioned that "commuted tickets" were from ten to twelve cents per day—"less than the business men of Washington and others pay daily to ride upon the street cars to their homes in those streets distant from the business parts of the city itself, with a large saving of time (emphasis in the original)". Unfortunately this particular subdivision was not successful, but the promotion is typical of that of the time.

District, Montello and Ivy City had appeared by 1878. On the B&O Popes Creek Branch as well, Brandywine was laid out by that time in the typical subdivision grid, as was Huntington City around "Bowie" station on the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, later Pennsylvania Railroad (See Map 21).

The same conditions that made land beyond the boundary of the city attractive for early walking suburbs also prevailed here. "The preference of lot buyers for a more rural environment stemmed in part from congestion in the City of Washington that accelerated during the Civil War and difficulty encountered to find suitable residences at acceptable prices" (The Neighborhoods... p.73). It was necessary for householders of moderate means to seek accommodations outside the built-up area and beyond urban services.

Early communities in the railroad corridors did not attract the wealthy but rather provided homesites for families of moderate means (The Neighborhoods....). No such affluent communities as the towns of Westchester County around New York City or along the "main line" in Philadelphia appeared here. In this, the railroad communities of the Washington area, especially in the northeast corridor, differed much from the description of steam railroad suburbs in the literature, usually depicted as catering to the well-to-do. This was never the

case in Washington.[1]

Conditions were primitive in many of the subdivisions which were recorded in the last decades of the nineteenth century and often remained so into the Twentieth Century. The original land owners did not usually provide urban amenities and often did not own tracts large enough to plan a whole community. Even in those instances where the land was held by syndicates, these seemed to function only until the tract was subdivided and individual lots sold. Plots were often laid out in the typical urban grid system and individual lots were of 50 foot street width or smaller. Sometimes buyers pur-chased two or three adjacent lots in order to build a substantial family home (The Neighborhoods...; Skarda).

In some instances, small commercial enterprises clustered around the railroad stops. Hyattsville, Maryland a community which quickly grew in the 1880's and 1890's, had its own commercial center which also catered to small settlements in the area (I Believe....").[2]

_____

[1] Along the steam railroad, the cost of commuting was compatible with that of the horsecar within the city (see footnote, p. III, 15). Also the schedule of local commuter trains was apparently sufficient even in the early years to make suburbanization attractive and possible in an area otherwise far removed from the city center (By September 1881, 38 passenger trains ran daily through the Beltsville station, built in 1871, "although only the local trains stopped, except (and this was in answer to requests and known by the whole community) when the company permitted flagging of an express..." (History of Beltsville, p.54).

[2] Hyattsville grew from 334 people in 1880 to 1222 in 1900; there was so much subdivision and construction of homes that a town charter was secured. (See also "Hyattsville", Appendix A).

Map 13. Pattern of Suburban Development along Steam   Railroad Lines, Prince George's County, Maryland, 1892.

Source: D.C. Suburban Railway Route Map.

However, Hyattsville was the exception rather than the rule in this transportation corridor; most of Washington's first steam railroad suburbs remained small and the inhabitants had to rely on the commercial services of the city (History of Beltsville). By 1892, a distinct pattern of suburban settlements along the Washington Branch of the B&O Railroad had evolved (Map 13).

Not until the turn of the century, with the electrification of the streetcar system within the city and extension of trolley lines into the corridor, following the paths of the old turnpike and the steam railroad, did the small settlements along the corridor receive renewed impetus for growth. In many cases the trolley first augmented the steam railroad commuter service and later superseded the railroad as a passenger link with Washington. The trolley also provided convenient connection among the communities along the line and was to be instrumental in the development of new communities, such as Mt. Rainier, Brentwood, and North Brentwood. Once electric streetcar lines extended into Prince George's County and became reliable--something that was not necessarily coexistant with their appearance--commuters were glad to switch to this new transportation system, part of the third stage in Washington's suburbanization process.

Map 14. Pattern of Suburban Development along Steam Rail-
road Line, Montgomery County, 1894.

Source: G.M. Hopkins
The Vicinity of Washington, D.C., 1894.
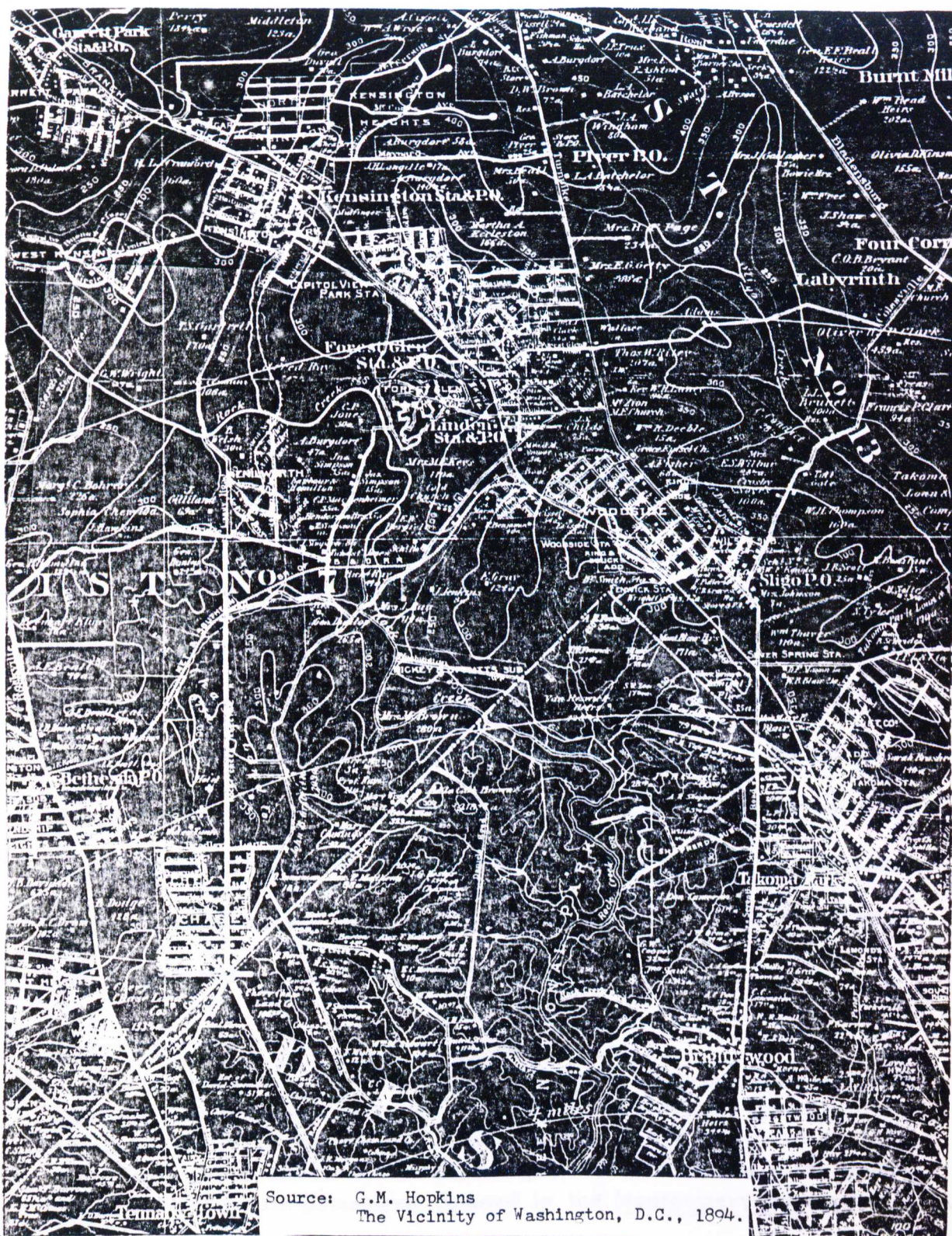
Source: Hopkins, 1894.

Steam Railroad Suburbs, Northwest and Montgomery County. (Map 14). Suburban development toward Montgomery County in the northwest took place several years later than toward the northeast and Prince George's County. Even after the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad finally opened in 1873, there was at first little suburban movement. The growth of the city itself was too slow in the 1870's to make land in Montgomery County attractive for year round living, but summer colonies along the track began to appear; there were also resort hotels, chautauquas and a religious summer camp at Washington Grove, beyond Rockville, for which the B&O established a station.

Nevertheless, the Metropolitan Branch had the potential of a commuter line and in the late 1880's--at about the time the electrification of the streetcar system became a possibility--year round subdivisions began to appear along the B&O Branch.[1] Silver Spring remained a sleepy crossroads settlement, but Takoma Park, Woodside, Forest Glen, Capitol View, Kensington, and Garrett Park were planned as pioneer suburban subdivisions along the line. Within the District, Brookland and Brightwood were becoming accessible.

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[1] The Baltimore Sun commented that "it is said that this movement from the city of Washington into Montgomery County was greatly promoted by the civil service law", that is, the Civil Service Act of 1883, contributing to a stable middle income population which was the prime target of real estate promoters (quoted in the Montgomery Sentinel, 5 June 1902.

Early suburbs had appeal primarily for low level government clerks and their families who could not afford expensive houses in the country. "Cheap land" was therefore one of the first drawing cards used by early developers who stressed the low cost of the lots and the ease of access to jobs downtown via the Metropolitan Branch line. In the mid-1880's an increase in the size of lots advertised, the addition of amenities, and an emphasis on the prestige of suburban living began to appeal to a somewhat more well-to-do clientele. "This shift in attitude, combined with the slow growth of communities along the Metropolitan line, determined much of the future development pattern of Montgomery County" (McMaster and Hiebert, pp.211,212).

Takoma Park and Woodside were the only two communities in Montgomery County along this line which were within a commuting distance of about one half hour from the center of the city. Beyond this distance, the increasing scale of commuter fare and longer commuter time began to limit the communities for families of "moderate means." Employees of the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, for example, purchased lots in Kensington, but did not build until the B&O scheduled a train that would get to Washington by 7 a.m.. The train schedule, lot sizes, and larger homes "closed the suburbs to the lower echelons of government employees" (McMaster and Hiebert, p.219). Real estate activity beyond Garrett Park and Kensington was largely speculative or oriented toward the town of Rockville, about 15 miles north of Washington city.

These railroad suburbs of a period later than those of Prince George's County presented a somewhat more affluent picture of suburban living. Such communities as Takoma Park and Garrett Park were planned and provided with certain amenities after an initial period of "pioneering." A pattern of wooded lots, laid out on treelined streets and growing outward from the traditional town center of the railroad station, can still be found represented in many of the former railroad subdivisions. On these, new inhabitants built detached, two story frame and wood houses, often large, with a number of bedrooms, and sitting on spacious lawns. Homes were built in the Victorian architecture of Queen Anne or "stick" style and presented a comfortable, prosperous appearance. In some subdivisions, there were also a number of smaller houses, less ornate and with fewer outside frills.

For about ten years, the railroad provided the only public transportation and the only convenient link to the city. Service was inexpensive and plentiful. By 1891, for example, 19 trains stopped daily at the Takoma Park railroad station; a trip on the train cost 5 cents and took one half hour. Access via the steam railroad transformed some formerly rural communities into suburbs of Washington. Brookland, in the beginning a small rural community rather than a suburban settlement, and influenced in part by the founding of the Catholic University in the area in 1884, changed into a suburb with the "characteristic pattern of single-family houses with deep lots, gardens,

and trees in what had previously been an isolated and poorly serviced area" (Gutheim, p.107).[1]

In the 1890's, trolley lines began to extend into the corridor which had until then depended exclusively on the steam railroad. Electric streetcar service was primitive in the beginning, and commuters continued to use the railroad. Still, the communities closer to the city shifted orientation away from the steam railroad and toward the streetcar; around the trolley terminals bungalows on often smaller lots, and in some instances rowhouses, began to replace the two-story Victorian homes. Brookland had its first rowhouses before the turn of the century, and small bungalows can still be found in Takoma Park close to the old streetcar terminal. Other railroad communities, such as Garrett Park and Capital View, farther removed from the urban trans-portation system, remained small pure railroad suburbs well into the Twentieth Century.

In general, the few electric streetcar lines that extended into lower Montgomery County, both in the former steam railroad corridor and in the area close to the northwestern part of the District line, did not encourage development of typical "streetcar suburbs", that is subdivisions lower priced than those that were already in existance (McMaster and Hiebert).

----

[1] In 1880, only thirty percent of Brookland's households were headed by individuals employed in professions requiring daily travel to the city, while sixty-six percent engaged in farming or unskilled occupations; by 1900, eight-one percent of household heads were employed as professionals, businessmen, or skilled workers (Prince, pp. 39-40).

While the steam railroad settlements in Prince George's County tended to attract people of moderate means, railroad commuters in the Montgomery County railroad suburbs were solidly middle class, not exactly wealthy, but certainly living in desirable communities and in an atmosphere of smalltown neighborhoods. These communities were perhaps somewhat more representative of "railroad suburbs" as presented in the literature. But despite a certain amount of hyperbole by real estate entrepreneurs--the investors in Garrett Park property promised that the suburb "will be to Washington what Tuxedo Park is to New York, Bryn Mawr to Philadelphia, and Hyde Park to Chicago"-- none such "posh" steam railroad suburban communities ever evolved, even though the railroad made suburban movement possible in advance of other public transportation systems.

Streetcar Suburbs

From the 1890's on, more and more suburban areas of Washington were opened up to commuters. In the north and northwest, the extension of 16th Street, the widening of Columbia Road, and the extension of Massachusetts Avenue to Rock Creek made more land accessible to suburban development. In 1890, the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge was opened over the Anacostia River, providing added connection with the eastern end of the District and Prince George's County.

An important impetus toward suburban growth was, of course, the development of electric streetcar lines. Since suburban lines were able to rely on overhead wires for their source of electricity--in contrast to the more expensive conduit system necessary in the city--these lines

Map 15. <u>Showing "Tenalytown" and Rock Creek Trolley Lines and
Indicating Locations of Chevy Chase Village and Tenallytown,
before 1900 [?]</u>
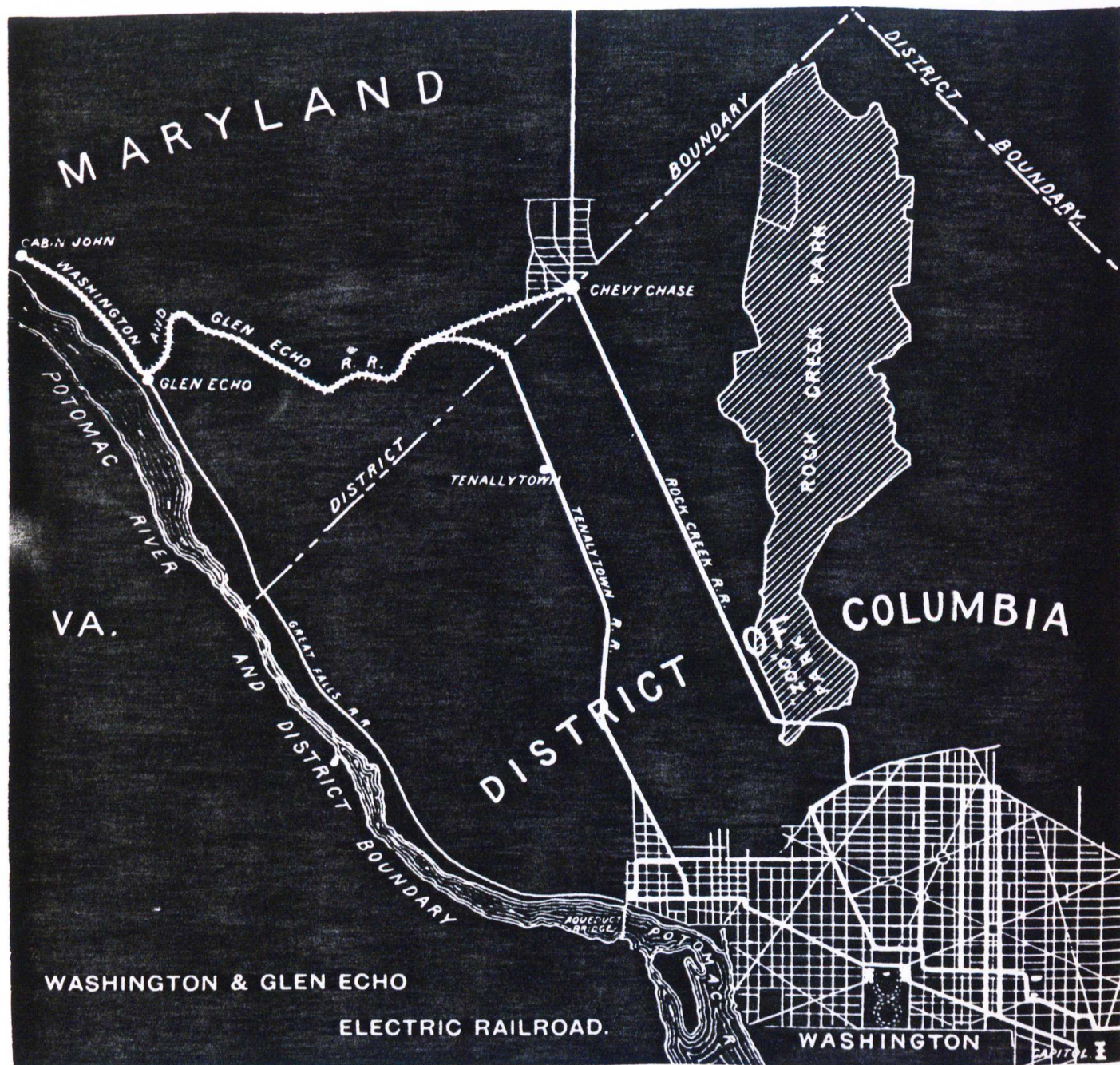
Source: King, p.38.

were extended quickly. Shortly after the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge opened, a new subdivisions (East Washington Heights)[1] was platted near the far end of the bridge (Proctor, I, p.164); the developer, Colonel Arthur Randle, "to make sure that his developments had transportation to downtown...chartered and operated the first electric streetcar lines to cross the river, one out Pennsylvania Avenue and the other out Nichols Avenue" (Cantwell, p.345). However, neither the bridge connection itself nor the extension of trolley lines appreciably boosted the growth of the trans-Anacostia part of the District. Growth again was more prevalent toward the north and now to the northwest of the city.

By the end of 1890, in the northwest the Georgetown and Tenally-town Railroad, following the present Wisconsin Avenue, was completed all the way to the District line, originating at the Georgetown water-front.[2] A second line, the Rock Creek Railway, along what is now Connecticut Avenue, was built for the express purpose of connecting Washington to Chevy Chase Village, a completely planned suburban development located across the District line in Maryland, about six miles from the White House and over four miles from Florida Avenue.[3]

---

[1] East Washington Heights was also known as Randle Highlands; the developer's other subdivision was Congress Heights.

[2] Since Georgetown was a separate entity, but outside the Washington City limits, the complete line was considered located beyond the boundary and operated with electric trolleys from the beginning.

[3] The community was developed in Maryland so that its residents could have the vote, something Washingtonians did not have.

Chevy Chase was the most prominent and successful of Washington's "streetcar suburbs" intimately connected with the development of a streetcar line.[1] It was during the construction of this line, an engineering feat through rough terrain, that the gorge of Rock Creek was first bridged (Map 15).

These two lines and their later extensions and connections encouraged growth in the northwest of the District. The formerly rural land had earlier become a fashionable retreat from Washington's hot and humd summers; by 1900 it became a desirable area for year round residences. Land in the northwest was generally more expensive than in other suburban parts of the District, and subdivisions here, especially Chevy Chase Village, catered to the well-to-do. The lines also made accessible some small farming communities, notably Tenleytown (as it is now spelled), which were drawn into the urban sphere and lost their rural character (See "Tenleytown", Appendix A).

Other suburban trolley lines were instrumental in spawning a number of completely new communities. While closely tied to the growth of the extending lines, the majority of these was developed by entrepreneurs independent from the various streetcar syndicates.[2]

---

[1] The Chevy Chase Land Company, formed expressly to acquire land along the Connecticut Avenue right-of-way, shared its members of the board with those of the Rock Creek Railway; the founder of the Land Company was also the railway's majority stockholder (See "Chevy Chase, Appendix A).

[2] Chevy Chase was the exception in the Washington area.

This was the case especially in Arlington County, Virginia, which changed rapidly from a rural area to one which became accessible to the city via a number of trolleylines.[1]

Virginia Streetcar Suburbs. Until the turn of the century, Northern Virginia had remained essentially rural. Both its terrain and the barrier of the Potomac River had kept it remote from the city. Now several trolley lines began to fan out from Rosslyn, an early settlement on the Virginia side of the Aqueduct Bridge.[2] As a consequence, between 1900 and 1910 plats for over seventy new subdivisions were entered in Arlington County (Young, p.50). The population of Arlington rose from about 6,000 to over 10,000 during the first decade and by nearly 6,000 more in the next ten years, with half of this population located in seven prominent streetcar suburbs alone. (Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6.   Growth of Population, Arlington County, Va. 1900-1920

Year	Population
1900	6,430
1910	10,232
1920	16,040

Source: Statistical Abstract of Virginia, 1966, Volume I, p.7.

[1] The present Arlington County was the Virginia part of the original Federal District and until 1920 part of "Alexandria County", from which it was separated after it had begun to grow rapidly after the turn of the Century. For clarity's sake, it is here consistently referred to by its present-day name.

[2] Rosslyn had originally been oriented toward bridge and road connection with Georgetown and later became a railroad switch yard location, before it became important to the electric streetcar system.

Table 7.   Selected Streetcar Suburbs and Their Populations
1920, Northern Virginia

	Population	Families	Houses
Arlington*	500	125	105
Ballston	1,200	295	240
Cherrydale	2,500	542	514
Clarendon	2,500	574	509
Ft. Myer	300	10	10
Potomac	1,000	180	170
Rosslyn	300	75	73
Falls Church (not part of Arlington County)			
	1,659	360	341

* This is a community within the county of the same name. None of the places are incorporated. The Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, in a ruling against Clarendon in 1920, decided that Arlington was a "continuous, contiguous, and homogeneous community" and as such could not be subdivided for the purpose of incorporating selected communities within it (Young, p.55).

Source: The Book of Arlington County, Virginia, 1928, p.13.

Land and home prices were less expensive here than in the northwest of the city. In most cases, communities were not planned, but--as was the case with early walking suburbs and the railroad suburbs along the Washington Branch of the B&O railroad--often coalesced from a number of small subdivisions (See Map 16 of Clarendon, one of the most prominent of the Arlington County communities. People who moved to the Virginia suburbs were not nearly as well-to-do as those who began to settle along the electric streetcar lines in the northwest part of the District. In Arlington County, they exchanged the lower price of land for the more inconvenient commuting from the area across the Potomac River. For a number of years, heads of household as well as older pupils--until 1925, there was no education

Map 16.   Subdivisions Making Up The Community of Clarendon, Va., 1900.

from — 1900 Howell and Taylor Map of Arlington County

Source: Young, p.58.
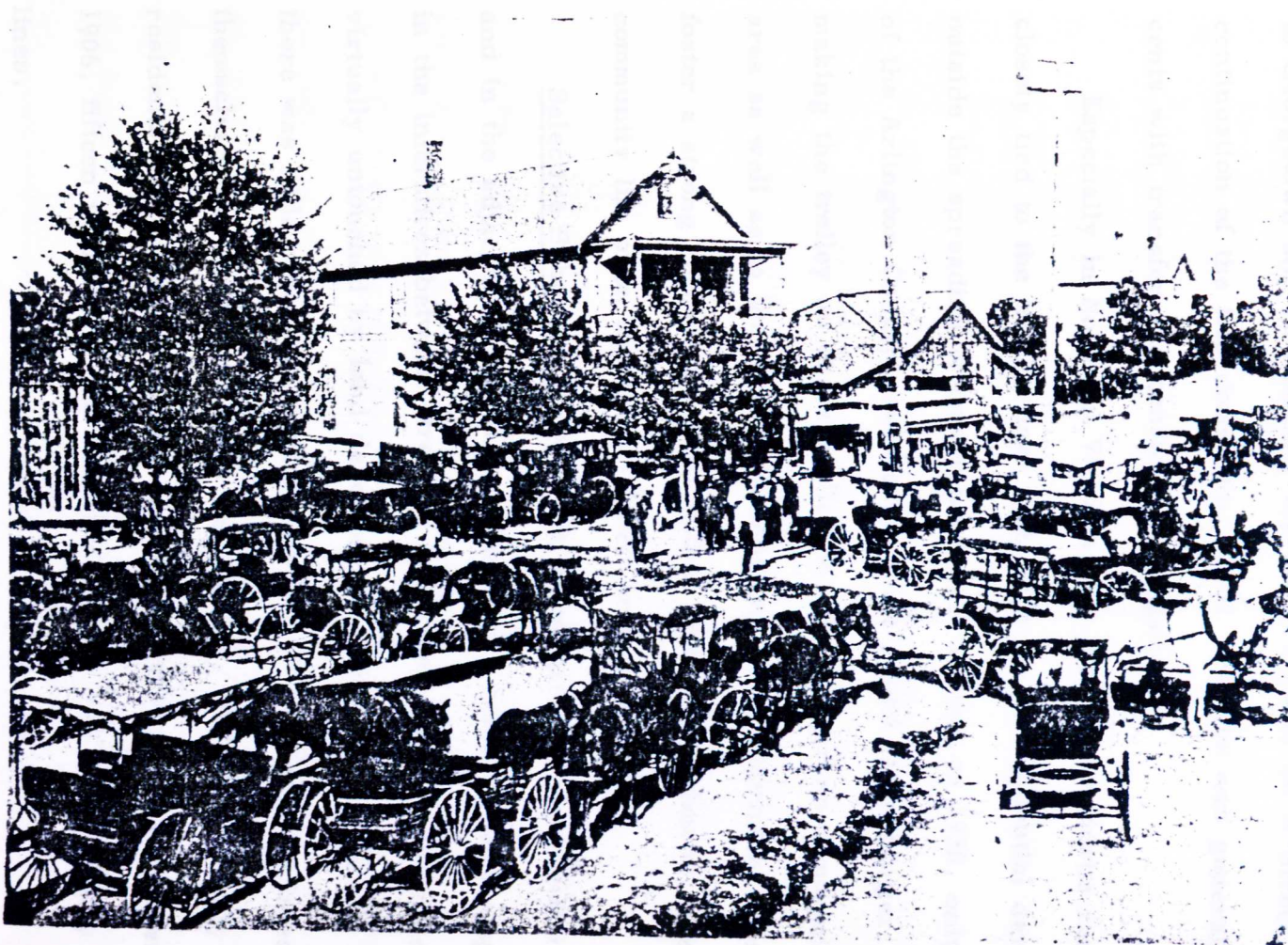
Electric Trolley Provides Community Focal Point -- Private Vehicles Meeting Trolley at
Falls Church Station, about 1900.

beyond the 8th grade in Arlington County--commuted to the city on a daily basis by taking the trolley to Rosslyn, walking across the bridge to Georgetown and re-boarding the street railway on M Street for the continuation of the trip downtown. Still, the fare was generally five cents with transfer and considered inexpensive.

Especially in Northern Virginia, the streetcar suburbs remained closely tied to the trolley lines with little or no residential development outside the spreading streetcar network. As late as 1930, only 34 miles of the Arlington County road system were paved (Stoneburger, p.22), making the trolley an essential link to other suburban communities in the area as well as to the city of Washington. This dependence tended to foster a strong community spirit within individual suburbs, and community life often focused on "their trolley lines."

Selective Suburban Growth. In other areas of the District as well, and in the adjacent Maryland counties, large tracts of land--especially in the interstices between streetcar lines--remained inaccessible and virtually untouched by land development. This was especially so as there was little crosstown trolley service. Even along the lines themselves there remained much vacant land. One of the early residents of Cleveland Park remembers that even by the summer of 1906, fifteen years after the completion of the two major trolley lines,

> there was not a single house or building from the
> Calvert Street bridge to the foot of Newark and
> Macomb Streets on either side of Connecticut
> Avenue. Newark Street was not a throughway
> from Connecticut to Wisconsin Avenue. At the
> top of the first rise on Newark Street one had
> to turn right on Highland Place, thence left to
> 33rd Place and then right to regain Newark Street.
> One could walk over the gully on a wooden foot
> bridge to a rough unpaved road as far as 33rd
> Place, where Newark Street again began....
> Although it was only about three miles from the
> White House, there was a country atmosphere
> about the place. The houses were not in blocks....
> (Mrs. Philip Sidney Smith, quoted in Peter and
> Southwick).

In almost all areas outside the old city limits, growth was also

selective. Lower Montgomery County remained largely rural, despite

the founding of Chevy Chase Village and the extension of some trolley

lines into the county.[1] In this area, where the terrain was rugged,

roads were in notoriously poor condition. Close to the turn of the

century, even such major roads leading into the County from the District

as Canal road, Tenleytown road (the present Wisconsin Avenue) and

Connecticut Avenue extended were--as the Commissioners complained

in 1897--"in a most dilapidated condition and a source of constant

complaint; in short, the main throughfares are, without exception, in

an extremely bad state, and the minor roads are rapidly approaching

the same condition in spite of all that can be done to prevent it with

the funds available" (Comm. Rpts. 1896-97, p.9). Even for those,

---

[1] While Bradley Hills on the Washington and Great Falls Electric
Railroad, southwest of the Bethesda crossroads, was a "fashionable
new subdivision" by 1912, Bethesda itself was still called a "quaint
Maryland village" by 1920.

therefore, who could afford their own "conveyance" (a distinct minority among homeowners), it was the steam railroad and electric trolley which provided Montgomery County's access to the city.

In Prince George's County also, growth was largely confined to the transportation corridors of the B&O railroad and the trolley lines, while the southern part of the county remained virtually untouched by urban growth.

Commuting by the Turn of the Century. As in other nineteenth century cities of comparable size, commuting from suburban residential areas into the city became part of urban life in Washington with the proliferation of electric streetcar lines. Already, by 1891, when the Washington Post was available in such "walking suburbs" as Columbia Heights, Meridian Hill, and Mt. Pleasant, it was

> possible and even convenient to work in Washington
> and live in Glen Echo, Maryland (eight miles west of
> the White House) or in Seat Pleasant, Maryland, to the
> east, or in Congress Heights in Southeast Washington.
> Chevy Chase Circle could be reached in thirty-five
> minutes in cars leaving every fifteen minutes from the
> Treasury Department. This service continued on to
> Jones Bridge Road without necessity of transfer, a
> distance of nearly eight miles from the White House
> (French, p.304).

On the eve of World War I, streetcar lines extended to Forest Glen, to Berwyn, and even to Laurel, Maryland, and such distant places as Herndon, Vienna, and Fairfax in Virginia, beyond the Arlington County line, became linked to the city of Washington via ever expanding street railway lines (Map 17).

Washington's Suburban Growth Pattern. While Washington's suburban growth in the initial stages of the walking-horsecar era was not as closely tied to public transportation as it was in other nineteenth century cities, it now began to conform more and more to the general model of urban growth. By 1917, its urban development can be clearly seen as stretching outward from the urban core along the transportation corridors and especially along the lines of steam railroad and electric streetcar (Map 18). Note that the pattern in maps 14 and 15 are almost identical. By the second decade of the twentieth century, therefore, Washington had taken on the local variant of the "irregularly shaped metropolis in which axial growth along radial arterials outruns that of the less accessible interstices" (Muller, p.5). This pattern was accentuated in the Washington area since there was little crosstown connection among communities outside the old city limits. Even within the city, crosstown service was sparse (King).

Washington, D.C. on the Eve of World War I. By 1917, Washington's urban core spread immediately beyond Florida Avenue, the old boundary, in a crescent shape toward the north and northwest, while individual settlements had grown up along steam railroad lines, and increasing numbers of subdivisions were reached by the electric streetcar lines; land in the interstices of these outward reaching routes, in some cases of rugged topography, remained almost inaccessible and often rural. By the same year, both within the former county of the District of Columbia as well as the three surrounding

Map 17.   Suburban and Interurban Electric Streetcar Lines, Washington,D.C. and Vicinity; about 1915.

ROCKVILLE
FAIRGROUNDS
HALPINE
MONTROSE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
NORRIS STATION
KENSINGTON
FOREST GLEN
WOODSIDE
SLIGO
ALTA VISTA
SILVER SPRING
CHEVY CHASE LAKE
WILDWOOD
TAKOMA PARK
LAKELAND
COLLEGE PARK
GREAT FALLS (MD)
GREAT FALLS (VA)
CABIN JOHN
BETHESDA
CHEVY CHASE
RIVERDALE
GLEN ECHO PARK
HYATTSVILLE
McLEAN
TENALLYTOWN
BROOKLAND
SOLDIERS HOME
BLADENSBURG
VIRGINIA
KENILWORTH
VIENNA
THRIFTON
ROSSLYN
SEAT PLEASANT
FALLS CHURCH
BENNING
BLUEMONT JCT
BALLSTON
ARLINGTON JCT.
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
FAIRFAX
NAUK
LUNA PARK
CONGRESS HEIGHTS
FOUR MILE RUN
FAIRFAX COUNTY
ARLINGTON COUNTY
ALEXANDRIA
PRINCE
GEORGES
COUNTY
MARYLAND
FT FOOTE
RIVER
RIVERVIEW
MT VERNON
FT WASHINGTON
POTOMAC
LAUREL
CONTEE
BELTSVILLE
BRANCHVILLE
BERWYN

SUBURBAN AND INTERURBAN
CAR LINES
WASHINGTON, D.C. AND VICINITY

———— SUBURBAN LINES
- - - - VIRGINIA LINES
++++++ INTERURBAN LINES

Not to scale

Gerald Cunningham

Source: King, p.94.

Map 18.   Evolution of Washington, D.C. over Time: 1800, 1857, 1917.

1800

1857

1917

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC PROPERTY

BOUNDARY OF ORIGINAL CITY

GRAPHIC SCALE IN MILES
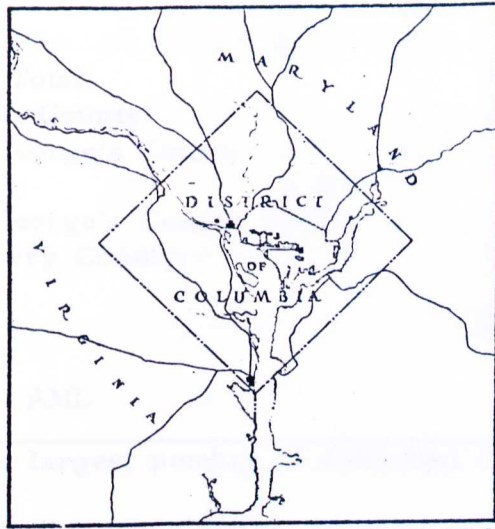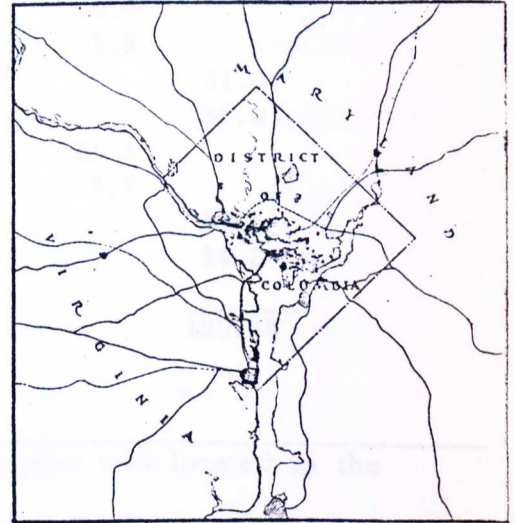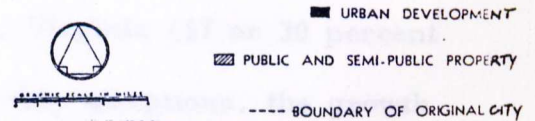
Source: National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Maryland and Virginia counties.[1]

Table 8.   Washington's Suburbs, 1917

Location		Number	Percentage of Total Nr. of Suburbs
District of Columbia,	N.W.	28	14.7
	N.E.	20	10.5
	S.E.	11	5.8
District Total:		59	31.0
Arlington County:		57	30.0
Prince George's County,	N.E.	40	21.1
	S.E.	7	3.7
Prince George's County Total:		47	24.8
Montgomery County:		27	14.2
		190	100.0%

Source: AML

The largest number of suburban communities was located in the former Washington County, as were all walking suburbs. This area was of course closely tied to the growth of the city itself and therefore the logical extension of the built-up urban core. Washington's uneven growth continued into the suburban area; close to half of the District's total number of suburbs was located in the northwest section, admittedly of the largest area extent; in contrast, only 11 (18.5 percent) of the former County's suburbs were in the southeast trans-Anacostia territory.

More interesting is the fact that by 1917 almost an equal number of suburbs was located in Arlington County, Virginia (57 or 30 percent of all suburbs within the study area). With few exceptions, the growth of these communities was closely tied to the extension of the electric

[1] While actual numbers may vary slightly, proportions can be assumed to be accurate.

streetcar network. The number of Virginia communities represents a growth of almost 100 percent since the turn of the century, as few suburbs existed in Arlington County before the electric railway system tied the area to Washington city. The few earlier steam railroad communities had been largely oriented toward Alexandria which had been the important urban place of the region since before Washington's beginning.

By 1917, Prince George's County contained 47 suburbs or 24.8 percent of the study area's total. These suburbs were almost totally tied to the steam railroad; only later they received added impetus for growth from the extension of electric streetcar systems. The close ties to transportation accounts for the predominance of Prince George's growth toward the northeast, while the southern part of the County remained almost totally rural until a much later period.

Finally, suburban growth was slowest in Montgomery County, and suburbanization remained confined to and almost evenly divided between two distinct corridors and connected to the city by two different transportation methods. Only 24 suburban communities, or a little over 14 percent of the area's total, appeared on the 1917 Map. The first area of growth was the corridor along the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad, confined to usually small communities close to the line and distinct from each other. The second growth area was located in the lower part of the County, close to the District line and included Chevy Chase Village.

The built-up area of the city itself stretched to a distance of three miles from the center into the north, two miles toward the west, and stretched somewhat less than three miles to the northeast along Rhode Island Avenue and its streetcar line, roughly ending at the B&O railroad tracks in the Eckington area. Several of the early walking suburbs had become continuous with the built-up area, were beginning to lose their individual almost village-like characteristics, and became simply residential or even commercial sections of the city.[1]

By 1917, a number of these walking suburbs were no longer listed as separate communities:

Table 9.   Former Suburban Areas No Longer Listed in 1917

District of Columbia, Northwest Section:

LeDroit Park	Meridian Hill
Columbia Heights	Lanier Heights
Bloomingdale	Ingleside
Parkview	Washington Heights

Northeast Section:

Eckington	Rosedale
Edgewood	Winthrop Heights
Brentwood Village	Montello

Source: See Appendix B.

Others, such as Mt. Pleasant and communities farther outward from Florida Avenue, developed into streetcar suburbs, retaining suburban characteristics, but with increasing density of population.

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[1] The area much later referred to as the "14th Street Corridor" became an important commercial and entertainment center.

This was especially so with the introduction of the rowhouse. The first rowhouses had appeared in LeDroit Park as early as 1888, and rowhouses also joined the earlier single family houses in areas farther to the north and northeast, such as Petworth, Brookland, and along the extension of Rhode Island Avenue(Gutheim; Green, II; Thomas). Still, in many communities, in addition to the advantages of a higher altitude and lower summer temperature, "the physical arrangements initially offered much open space" (Gutheim, p.107).

Railroad suburbs and streetcar suburbs somewhat removed from the urban core--such as those at the terminal of their trolley lines-- tended to retain their suburban atmosphere for a much longer period of time. Some of them remained suburban or even village-line into the 1930's and the coming of individually owned automobiles used for commuting. Some rural townships also, such as Bladensburg, Laurel, and Rockville, showed a relatively small influx of Washington commuters and only some construction of summer homes (The Neighborhoods...; McMaster and Hiebert). Others, as for example Tenleytown and Brightwood, with the extension of public transportation and public utilities became closely tied to the growing urban core and eventually ceased to be considered independent villages.[1]

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[1] For Tenleytown, see Appendix A.

Up to now, only the spatial change of Washington's suburbs has been documented. In the next section, closer attention is given to the resulting suburbs themselves and their inhabitants.

CHAPTER V

WASHINGTON'S SUBURBS--A CASE FOR THE VALIDITY OF THE "RURAL IDEAL"

> The great activity during the past year in making subdivisions of land and putting the same on the market, not only within the District but in the adjoining States near by, has brought into prominence the fact that the subdivisions lying immediately outside of the city are so far from being what they should be as to have had a very deleterious effect upon the advancement of these properties.
>
> Commissioners' Report, 1890-1891

Suburban Amenities. Despite marked improvements in urban amenities within the city after its recovery from the Civil War, these improvements were not strong enough to overcome the inclination of an increasing number of its citizens to settle in suburban subdivisions outside the old city limits. This is somewhat surprising when we take a closer look at conditions in some of these suburbs.

While urban conditions and services within Washington were becoming superior to those in many other cities of comparable size beginning with the rapid improvements instigated by Alexander Shepherd in the 1870's, conditions in many of its suburbs remained relatively primitive for a number of years after their founding. With few exceptions, such as in completely planned communities as LeDroit Park (a walking-distance suburb) and, later, Chevy Chase

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With few exceptions, such as in completely planned communities as

LeDroit Park (a walking-horsecar suburb) and, later, Chevy Chase

Village (a suburb of the electric streetcar era), the majority of Washington's suburbs started out lacking most if not all urban amenities and public utilities. This was the case not only in suburbs that evolved early, but remained so into the beginning of the twentieth century. In most of Washington's subdivisions, neither piped water nor sewer connections were provided in the beginning and in many cases not for several years afterwards.

This was in sharp contrast to suburbs in other large cities. In Boston, for instance, Warner tells us that "as fast as new street railway transportation brought new houses to outlying parts of the city, the sanitary department hastened to provide facilities (1962, p.31); utilities, in fact, "had to be laid before most men would be willing to build" (p.154). This was never the case in Washington, where suburban subdivision and development consistently outstripped the benefits of urban amenities or public utilities.[1] This took place not only in areas of lower middle income or working class suburbs but also in many solidly middle class subdivisions.

In their report of 1885, for instance, the Commissioners warned that a danger of contamination of the relatively shallow wells was a cause of constant concern in a number of suburbs, where no central sewage system existed and private privies were used (See Table 10).

_____

1 As was shown, suburban growth during the walking era sometimes took place even without the availability of public transportation.

Table 10. <u>Water and Sewage Conditions in Selected Suburban Subdivisions</u>
District of Columbia, 1884-85

Suburb	Nr. of houses	Nr. of privies	Nr. of wells, etc.	Houses w/o privy accomodation	Unlawful privies or wells	Privies w/o boxes and leaky privies	Wells unfit for use
Mount Pleasant	137	118	66	1	43	3	1
Meridian Hill	106	103	20	-	-	-	-
Sherman's Subdivision	5	6	2	-	-	-	-
Columbian College Grounds	20	20	1	-	-	-	-
Widow's Mite	7	6	4	-	-	-	-
Pleasant Plains	243	195	52	-	-	-	-
Howard University Lands	94	87	22	-	-	-	-
LeDroit Park	65	-	3	-	-	-	-
Uniontown	200	191	72	5	1	-	-
Ivy City	15	9	3	2	-	6	-
Montello	24	14	9	6	-	13	2
Total:	916	749	257	14	44	22	4

Wells In Suburbs: 257
Wells In Washington City: 218
Total: 475

Source: <u>Commissioners' Reports</u>, 1884-85, p.328

Provision of services outside the old city limits was always hampered
by the reluctance of Congress to make available sufficient funds for
improvements in that territory. It was this reluctance rather than a
lack of private enterprise that continued to influence Washington's
suburban conditions within the District.

Especially by the turn of the century, the situation within the
city had improved faster than it did in suburban areas. From 1897
on, for instance, a law "decreed that all premises [within the city]
must be connected with sewers" (Green, II, p.46); by 1898, the overall
death rate in the city was appreciably lower than that of the county.[1]
Each year, the Commissioners' Water Department reiterated that "a
new high service system is badly needed to serve the portion of the
District lying outside of Washington" (Comm. Rpts., 1891-1892, I, p.18).
By 1905, a number of suburban areas were in fact reached by sewer
trunk lines, but growth of housing always exceeded growth of
services. In 1910[!] city service sewers reached Tenleytown, Reno,
Chevy Chase, Cleveland Park, Petworth, Brightwood, Takoma Park, and
Langdon, "the largest mileage of suburban service sewers constructed
in one year" (Comm. Rpts., 1910, p.45). The annual report
continues:

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1 19.32 per thousand. "In the county the rate of 35.82 was partly
due to the high incidence of malaria at St. Elizabeth's Hospital" Green
comments (II, p.46).

Suburban conditions, as they once existed, practically no longer obtain within the District, and a water-supply system and a sewer system are now practically a health requirement throughout the District. The number of dwellings without sewer connections, [however] has recently increased rather than diminished....There are now 3,000 dwellings without available sewers [in the County] (Emphasis added).

Not only the sewer systems were lacking in suburban areas. In the District, as well as in the surrounding Maryland and Virginia suburbs, at a time when many Washington residential areas had paved streets, complete with regular street sweeping service, as well as a water supply judged "abundant, clear and wholesome" (Gutheim, p.91), the majority of suburban communities lacked many if not all urban amenities, as a few memoirs by contemporaries make clear:

At this time [1900] my home was in Tenleytown, but desiring a better place to live in, was attracted to Woodridge, which was accessible by Bladensburg Road, Brentwood Road, or the street car line which then used as its roadbed Rhode Island Avenue.... The [plot] had been surveyed and sub-divided but no water or sewer had been supplied....The only street was South Dakota Avenue, which was impassable during rainy weather and in winter. The children carried newspapers for the purpose of stepping on same in order to keep out of the mud when going to and coming from Langdon School. There were no lights of any kind....The streetcar service at that time was very poor....If anyone wanted to ride to town after dark, he or she had to have either matches or a lantern to signal the car to stop (Harberts, "Woodridge in 1900").

Those who came to Arlington in 1920 were pioneers in more ways than one. Their wives gave up the luxury of gas light, running water, and bathrooms in the City of Washington, or other cities, to come to Arlington where there were kerosene lamps, oil stoves, and outdoor privies. There was no running water in the houses and the water for the Monday wash had to be pumped from the back porch and heated in wash boilers.

Few houses had telephones and an accident or serious
illness meant a long trip for the doctor. Even in 1910,
there were still few stores and all but the bare
essentials had to be bought in Washington. There was
no fire protection....(Lee, A History of Arlington County,
Virginia.

Early recollections [of living in Glencarlyn] include
memories of a fight to get Arlington County to give
more attention to our roads. When the frost went out
of the ground, many of them were impassable. Pictures
of Carlin Springs Road might well have been taken in a
ploughed field....When my brother moved here in the
spring of 1921[!] his wife would drive [the automobile]
while he and I pushed....On Sundays and holidays we
would go out with hoes and shovels to work on the
worst spots....(The Glencarlyn Story").[1]

Even connection to the city itself was sometimes tenuous,

especially in the early years of a particular mode of transport. During

fair weather many suburban homes did not seem far from the city,

but in winter people often had to consider themselves in a

"community apart" and had to fall back "onto their own resources"

(Proctor,1930, I, p.146). Even thirty-five years after the beginning

of suburbanization in the northeastern suburbs of Prince George's

County, commuting was no easy matter:

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1 Glen Carlyn, a resort and amusement park on the steam
railroad which became the only subdivision in the western part of
Arlington County until the 1920's, had one train to the city in the
morning and one coming out in the evening. Usually these trains
were late. When the trolley reached Veich, commuting heads of
household as well as pupils and occasional housewives walked to
the trolley from Glen Carlyn, a walk of at least one and a half miles
or more through "uncharted terrain" (Stoneburger).

[Streetcar] service remained unsatisfactory; passengers
still had to change cars in 1913 which met head-on....
When the cars were late these meeting places might be
anywhere. Also the trolley continuously jumped off the
wires, due to the rough tracks between Bladensburg
and Berwyn (History of Cottage City).

Patterns of Individual Subdivisions. Few of the suburbs were as

completely planned as LeDroit Park, the early Anacostia, or Chevy

Chase Village. Generally, land developers, either individual

owners or syndicates formed for the purpose, concentrated on sub-

dividing and selling the land. Individual tracts were often not

large enough for a viable community; sometimes several subdivions,

their shape determined by land ownership and availability, were

opened by different developers and only much later coalesced.

During their early years, their sharp divisions presented a

pattern not unlike that of an unfinished quilt (Map 19). Some large

subdivisions, such as Mt. Pleasant or Brookland, did become true

communities, and it was these which often retained their suburban

characteristics for many years.

Despite the relative cheapness or availability of land, many of

the subdivisions were laid out in the conventional grid system;

sometimes this was done without regard to the local terrain.[1]

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1 Petworth, for instance, laid out in the 1890's, in a "critical
streetplanning era...reflected a strong reaction to privately designed
street layout...and emerged, like a piece of fabric cut out of the
original cityplan" (Gutheim, p.107. See Maps 20 and 21).

Map 19. Pattern of Several Small Subdivisions, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 1892.
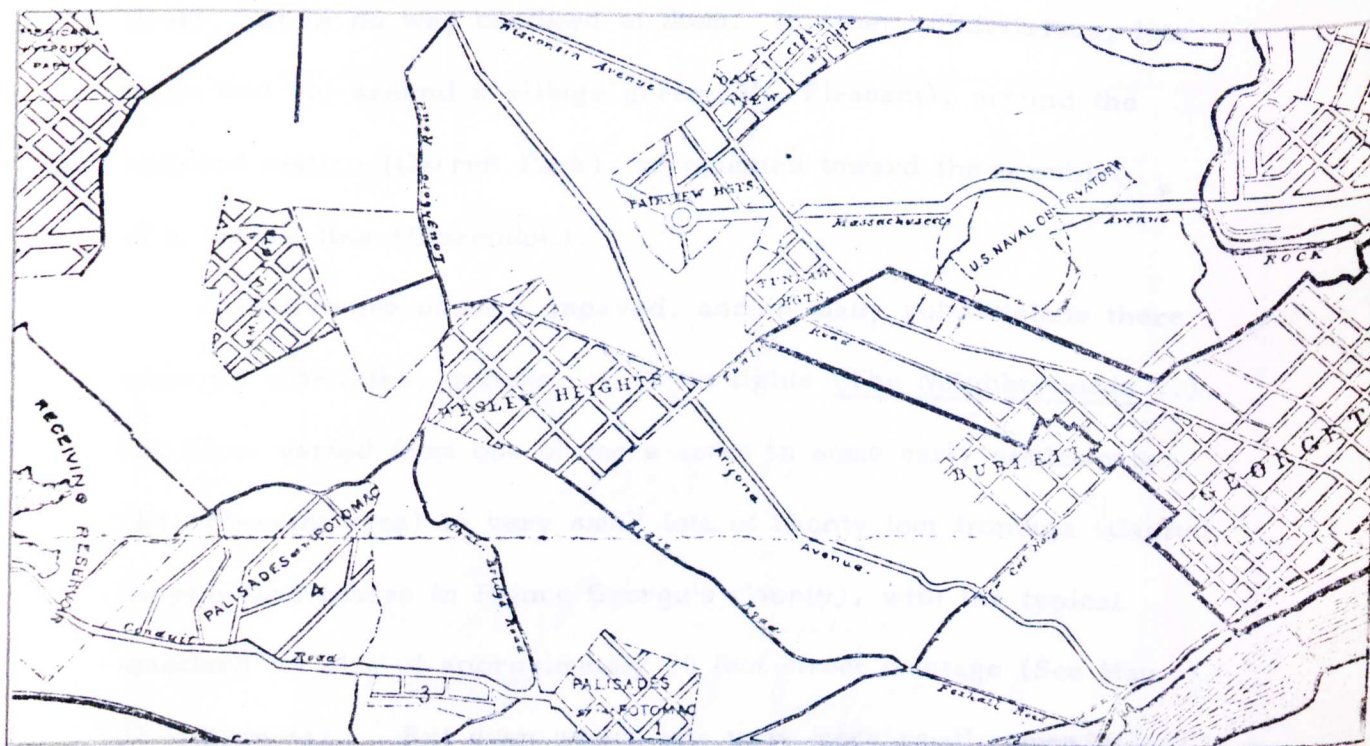
Source: Commissioners' Report, 1898.

Map 20. Petworth.   Map 21. Bowie.
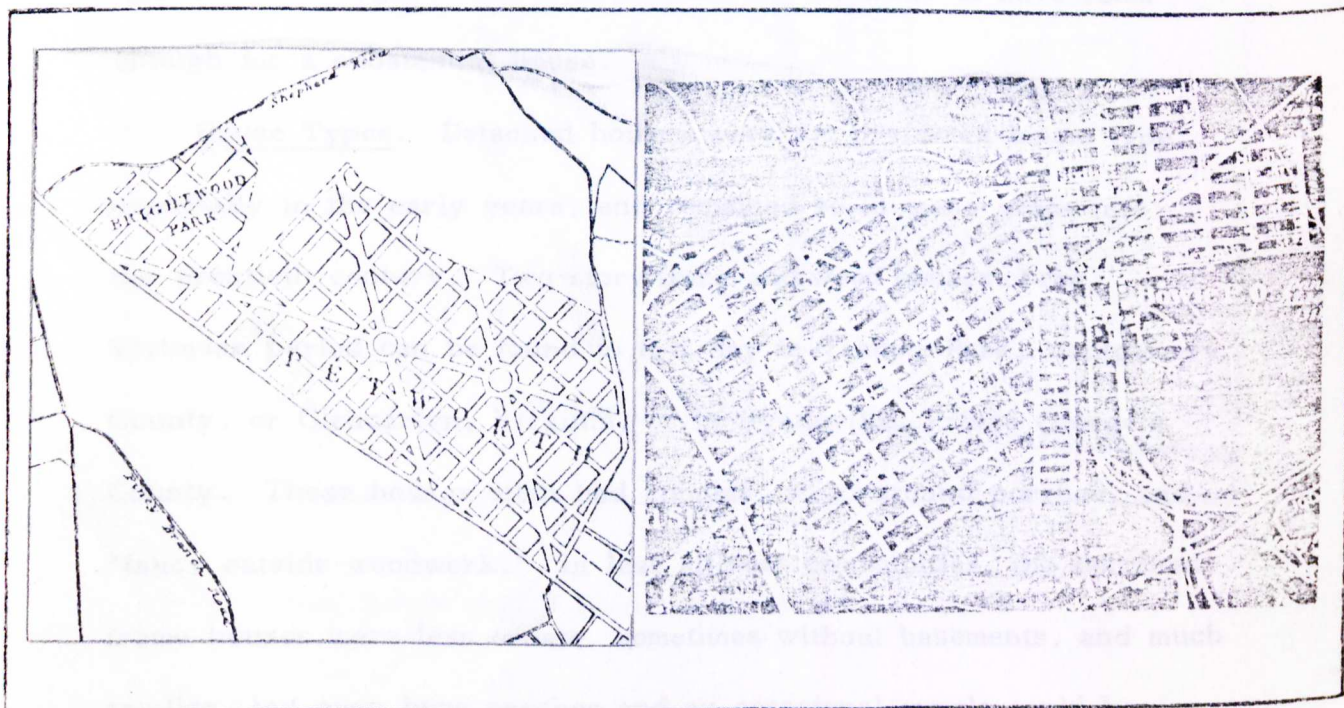
Source: Same as Map 21.   Source: Hopkins, 1894.

This was especially true in subdivisions catering to the less well-to-do, but in no way confined to them. In other subdivisions, lots were laid out around a village green (Mt. Pleasant), around the railroad station (Garrett Park), or oriented toward the terminal of a trolley line (Clarendon).

Streets were usually unpaved, and in many subdivisions there were no sidewalks, gutters, or street lights (The Neighborhoods...). Lot sizes varied from one or more acres in some early settlements (Mt. Pleasant area) to very small lots of twenty foot frontage (Capitol Heights and others in Prince George's County), with the typical standard lot size of approximately 50 foot street frontage (See Map 22 of Berwyn). But even where lots were very small, some detached single family homes were built nevertheless; sometimes homeowners bought three or even more lots in order to have room enough for a substantial house.

House Types. Detached houses were the preferred house type, especially in the early years, and remained so in many areas into the twentieth century. Two-story frame and wood houses of the Victorian period can be found to this day in Takoma Park, Montgomery County, or Glencarlyn, Virginia, or in Hyattsville, Prince George's County. These houses often had cupolas, wrap-around porches, and "fancy outside woodwork." In less affluent communities, the detached frame houses were less ornate, sometimes without basements, and much smaller, but even here porches and an occasional cupola could be found in the "suburban manner" (Clarendon; Kensington).

Map 22. Map of Berwyn, Prince George's County, Maryland, 1890.
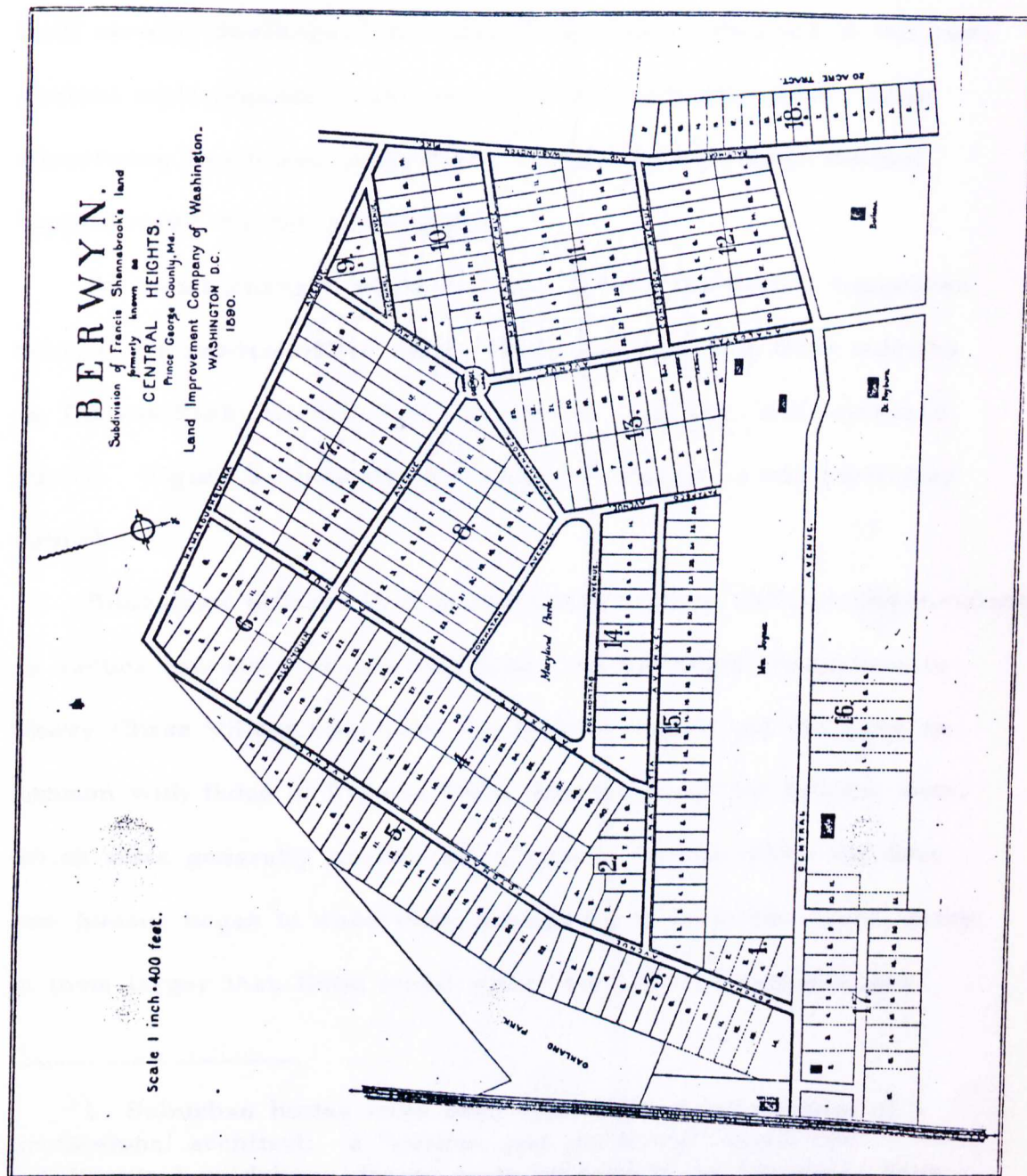
Source: Real Estate Map; Library of Congress.

Individual homes were generally built according to the taste and pocketbook of the new owner, although sometimes the same contractor built several dwellings,[1] and often houses were designed in the same general style popular in the area and at a particular time. Some advertising brochures suggested a variety of house styles deemed "appropriate" for the subdivision.

As tastes changed and population density increased, bungalows became the representative single family home style in such suburbs as Takoma Park, Garrett Park, Clarendon, Ballston, and numerous others. Figure 5 illustrates the temporal changes in one particular suburb.

Bungalows differed in size and comfort among different subdivisions as earlier two-story houses had done; the substantial bungalows in Chevy Chase Village only have the general outline and the name in common with those in Takoma Park, Riverdale, or the Ballston area, which were generally smaller and plainer. By the 1880's the first row houses began to make their appearance in suburban areas, many of them larger than those found within the city and with porches

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1 Suburban homes were often built without involvement of a professional architect; a "builder and contractor" would use architectural guidelines described in guidebooks by Downing, Vaux, and others popular at the time. There is as yet little material availabile on vernacular architecture--"people's homes"--so important a part of the suburbanization process (Senkevitch, 1977).

Figure 4. Population and Housing - Garrett Park, Montgomery County, Maryland. Pre 1900, 1900-1909, 1910-1919, 1920-1929.

Houses   Population

Pre 1900   37   1900   175

1900 1909   1   1910   185

1910 1919   3   1920   159

1920 1929   45   1930   295
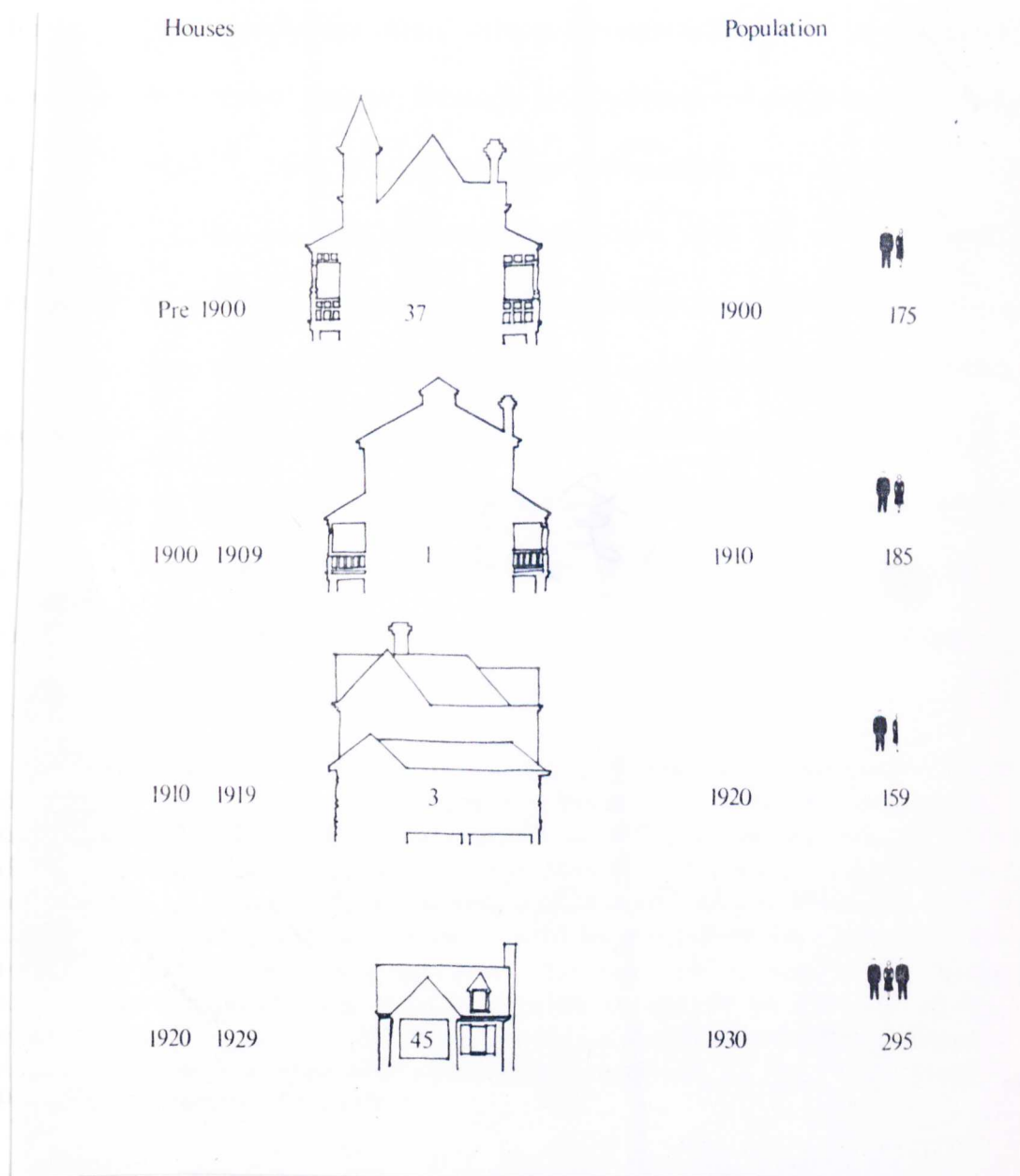
Source: Shidler.

toward both street and backyard.[1]

Use of Covenants. Developers of land, even though they did

not continue control over the emerging suburban communities for

long, were nevertheless often able to place a number of restrictions

on individual subdivisions through the inclusion of certain covenants

in land deeds.[2] With the use of these covenants, and since a certain

sorting as to income had already taken place with the price of land,

some of the resulting subdivisions were surprisingly homogeneous.

In many suburban settlements there was little or no commercial

activity. In some subdivisions, as in Chevy Chase, all commercial

activity was banned by covenant; in Takoma Park and in some Clarendon

subdivisions, the dispensing of alcoholic beverages was prohibited.

In some settlements, there were no shops of any kind or only one

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1 The row house was historically popular in Washington; "triple-deckers" as in Boston were unknown here (See Gutheim, especially pp. 103-105). Some of these rowhouses were converted into apartments during the beginning decades of the twentieth Century, but renters had begun to live in the northern walking suburbs already by the 1880's. By 1883, a whole house could be rented in Mt. Pleasant for twelve to fifteen dollars a month. That same year, the "flats" in the first apartment buildings then beginning to appear in the city were renting for forty to fifty dollars a month (in the Fernando Woods Flats) and up to one hundred and fifty dollars a month in the "high-class" Portland (Proctor, I, p.151).

2 They could establish minimum and maximum size and value of homes; they could regulate styles--and in some cases specific construction material--as well as setback of homes from the suburban streets and size and number of outbuildings. Covenants were also used to keep black prospective homeowners from buying land and/or homes in some instances. Uniontown, Washington's early planned suburb, was restricted to whites by covenant.

general store, because the suburbs were too small and relatively isolated.[1] Commercial nodes formed usually where transportation made the congregation of people easy. This was the case in Hyattsville, where two railroad lines and the trolley converged, or in Clarendon, where two trolley lines as well as an early road provided access and were instrumental in the commercial importance these and similar suburban communities took on.

In general, shopping for more than immediate necessities seems to have meant shopping in downtown Washington. While people living in the suburbs considered themselves part of their respective communities, they were closely connected to the city by jobs, newspapers, shopping and shared interests.

Different Income Groups. Suburban homeowners in the Washington area seemed to have come from almost all walks of life, ranging from upper middle to middle to lower middle income, with some suburbs catering to the "working man". Only the rich were not represented among suburban dwellers, preferring instead such residential neighborhoods within the city as the DuPont Circle area, along Massachusetts Avenue, and later the Kalorama and 16th Street areas when these had

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1 In Glencarlyn, the grocer and butcher came once a week with horse and cart to hawk their wares among the housewives. In general, it is always surprising to the researcher to realize how small many of the suburban communities remained. In Chevy Chase, considered among the most important suburbs of the Washington area, less than fifty families lived in the Village by 1900, and as late as 1915 it contained only 175 houses (French, p.326). Other subdivisions, especially those located in areas outside the District of Columbia, remained smaller still. See also population for Garrett Park, Figure 5.

become part of the built-up part of the city. The majority of Washington's suburbanites were not wealthy, in contrast with most other American cities of the time, where the less well-to-do rather than the rich remained in the urban core (Green, I, p.195; French, p.312).

Many of the new suburban dwellers had white collar occupations; not surprisingly in the nation's capital, many were civil servants.[1] Much advertisement for suburban real estate was therefore aimed at "government clerks" as most likely clients for middle income residential areas. The majority of suburban communities was white; since there were few immigrants from other countries, there was no clustering of ethnic groups. There is litle evidence that people in Washington's suburbs grouped together according to religious bachground. Brookland, located close to Catholic University and a number of Catholic institutions, is perhaps the most obvious exception. There were, however, exclusively black settlements, some of which were among Washington's earliest suburbs.[2]

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1 Mt. Pleasant was begun by civil servants who had originally come to Washington during the Civil War from the New England area; Columbia Heights, another northern walking suburb, was dubbed "Clerksville", and a goodly number of those living in Montgomery County railroad suburbs were connected with the Federal Government (Gutheim; Proctor; material on Takoma Park, LeDroit Park and others).

2 Since black suburban settlements other than rural communities were exceptional within the suburbanization process in American cities at that time, some space is given this phenomenon here.

Table 11.   Population of Suburban Areas, 1896-1897

Name of Subdivision or Area	White	Black	Total
Anacostia	2,571	68	2,639
Congress Heights	165	-----	165
Garfield	-----	486	486
Giesboro	208	84	292
Hillsdale (Barry Farm)	102	2,062	2,164
Harrison Street and Good Hope	245	11	256
Twining City	200	-----	200
Harlem (west of Rock Creek and Georgetown)	358	23	381
Tennallytown	758	368	1,127
Bloomingdale	395	8	403
Brightwood Park	272	14	286
Brightwood Avenue, from Florida Avenue to District line	361	60	421
Brookland	671	55	726
Brookland, south	194	21	215
Eckington			
Eckington, west	798	51	849
Eckington, central			
Howard University Subdivision	340	2,056	2,396
LeDroit Park	1,721	146	1,867
McLaughlin Subdivision	295	64	359
Territory bounded by 14th Street ext. on the east, Florida Avenue NW on the south, Rock Creek on the west and unnamed road on the north, comprising the subdivisions of Mount Pleasant, Lanier Heights, Ingleside, etc. *	2,619	1,539	4,158
Territory bounded by 7th Street ext. on the east, Florida Avenue NW on the south, 14th Street NW, ext. on the west, and Spring Road on the north, comprising the subdivisions of Holmead Manor, Todd & Brown, Columbia Heights, etc.	3,367	2,773	6,140
Takoma (exc. Maryland portion)	165	16	181
Bennings	321	66	387
Ivy City	131	248	379
Langdon	217	6	223
Rosedale	1,113	94	1,207
Trinidad	1,356	301	1,657
Winthrop Heights	43	161	204

* Includes Meridian Hill. These "suburban" areas are all within the District of Columbia, outside of the old city limits, and do not include any suburban areas in Maryland and Virginia.

Source: Report of Commissioners of District of Columbia, Report of the Health Officer, 1896-1897, p.157.

Black Settlements in Suburban Areas.   Generally, as many as fifteen percent of the black population of the District of Columbia lived in suburban areas around the turn of the century, roughly the same percentage as for whites (French, p.309).   In some suburbs, blacks and whites lived close to one another; this was especially true in areas in which suburban "settlement clusters had formed haphazardly over a period of years" (French, p.310), as in Tenleytown and in some of the northern walking suburbs (Table 11).   But schools, churches, and other institutions were nevertheless organized separately.   In other, often planned, communities, racial covenants prohibited sale or lease to blacks.[1]   French generalized that "whenever a suburban subdivision was created by a developer, e.g. Brookland, it was segregated" (p.310).   During the period from 1870 to 1900, the pattern of increasing racial concentration and segregation in the suburban areas paralleled that of the city.

Some blacks who lived in areas outside the old city limits tended to do so in pockets of rural communities.   There were, however, a number of exclusively black communities which were among Washington's earliest suburbs.   These were settlements undertaken by freed slaves

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1 Even without overt restrictions, black home seekers found it difficult by the turn of the century to find housing in white neighborhoods even if they could afford it.   See, for example, M.C. Terrell's A Colored Woman in a White World about the difficulties of buying a house in Washington for a well educated middle class black family.

with the aid of the Freedmen's Bureau after the end of the Civil War. Barry's Farm, or Hillsdale, its preferred name, is among the best known of several of these settlements.[1] Barry's Farm was a walking suburb; others, especially those in Virginia, remained rural rather than suburban until they were brought into the urban network by advancing transportation systems.

But with the extension of electric streetcar lines, new subdivisions were developed exclusively for black homeowners, many of whom were commuting to the city. This took place especially along the lines into the extreme eastern part of the District and into Prince George's County.[2]

Some of the land was originally held by black owners and therefore subdivided for blacks, other tracts were made available by white owners. Black subdivisions tended to be found on less desirable land, either on steep terrain or in lowlying areas along stream beds, where lots were subject to flooding. Urban street grids were often imposed on

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1 Barry's Farm, across the Anacostia River, was settled on a former farm close to Uniontown; freedmen also settled Reno City, in upper northwest in the Tenleytown area, on land of a Civil War fort, and similar communities could be found in Arlington County, where Hall's Hills, Queen City, Johnson's Hall, Green Valley, Nauck, and others. formed a belt of black settlements in the Virginia county's rural areas. Some of these communities disappeared when the Pentagon was built in the 1940's, and Reno was razed when the land was purchased by the Park Service (For Barry's Farm, see Appendix A).

2 Deanwood, East Deanwood (present spelling) and Burrville, within the District, and Fairmount Heights and others in the Seat Pleasant area in Prince George's County are among those subdivisions, originally settled by blacks, as are North Brentwood and Lakeland-- now part of College Park--toward the northeast.

plats by developers without regard to topography. As a result, these subdivisions had narrow streets with steep grades, with neither gutters nor sidewalks, in which roads remained unimproved and where such amenities as electricity and piped water and sewage were usually not available for many years (The Neighborhoods...).[1]

Such subdivisions catered to homeowners of very modest means, who built small frame houses, often without basements; nevertheless, improvements were made over time, and homeownership was a source of pride.[2]

Black suburban dwellers shared this pride of suburban homeownership with their white counterparts. The aspirations of low and moderate income families, both black and white, "paralleled the desires or ambitions of wealthier hoseholds", that is, to relocate in suburban areas, away from the city (The Neighborhoods..., p.167). Washington's suburban movement must therefore now be examined in the light of an important stimulus, the expression of the "rural ideal".

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1 In a number of black neighborhoods in Prince George's County, such improvement remained nonexistant into the 1950's. It should be remembered, however, that some of these conditions could also be found in lower middle income suburbs settled by whites (for example, in the Greater Capitol Heighs area).

2 In several such communities in Prince George's County, extended families or groups of friends tended to acquire several adjoining small lots and aid each other with the construction of houses; later, basements were built, and porches and extra bedrooms added, as funds became available (See The Neighborhoods.... on Seat Pleasant, Fairmount, and Landover Road area).

The "Rural Ideal" and its Variation in Washington. Washington's process of suburbanization had its beginning at a time, during and immediately after the Civil War, when the city was unattractive and crowded. But this situation improved rapidly and continued to do so into the twentieth century.[1]

It is true that, in contrast with many other North American cities, in Washington it was often the "high cost of real estate and of housing in particular which drove many working class and lower-middle class people to find less expensive homes in distant suburbs, where land was cheaper but the amenities fewer" (French, p.312). But especially members of middle and upper middle income groups, such as were attracted to Chevy Chase Village and other suburban developments especially in the northwest, had a number of options as to residential choices open to them. As mentioned earlier, much land had remained available for real estate development within the old city limits; people with means did not, therefore, have to leave the city in order to build homes according to their taste and pocketbook.

Washington's Climate. There was in Washington one factor which everyone had to contend with, and that was its climate. A number of mild winters in the 1890's had been added inducement for

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1 By 1884, Washington was thought to give "all the evidence of a great and prosperous city" (Moore, p.3); especially with the "City Beautiful" movement in the 1900's, this evidence became even more apparent.

for some of the wealthy to locate in Washington,[1] where they wintered

during the "season", but left in the summer for their country

estates. Congress also was in session only during the winter months

and eager to recesss at the beginning of the oppressive summers.

Those who lived in the Capital the year around, however, had to

contend with Washington's summers which were hot, humid, and

extremely unpleasant. Anyone who could afford to do so left for

summer cottages and vacation spots in the surrounding countryside.

As permanent suburban living became possible in the surrounding

"heights", relief from summer heat and the "miasma" of the city were

powerful inducements offered in advertising suburban real estate

throughout the years of suburbanization. Mt. Pleasant called itself

the "most healthy suburb of Washington" where one could be "excempt

from the chills and autumnal fevers" of the basin city ("Mt. Pleasant...",

1876). "The high location, healthfulness and coolness of the place

is particularly desirable from a sanitary point of view" averred the

pamphlet of the Palisades of the Potomac subdivision. And in dis-

cussing Takoma Park, which is at an altitude of about 300 to 400 feet,

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1 See Froncek, p.339. Washington was suggested as a "winter
watering place" in 1896, when shirtsleeves were seen on front porches
in December during one of the city's balmiest winters in many years.

a pamphlet states that "the advantages of this greater altitude, especially during the summer period, is apparent without comment" (Button, about 1914, p.29). The theme is repeated in numerous brochures and newspaper ads, emphasizing the elevation of suburban property, the healthfulness of the climate--cooler and more pleasant than in the city--and the general superiority of summers in the suburbs. By stressing the obvious advantages of health and general wellbeing in the suburbs, real estate entrepreneurs could avoid dwelling on any disadvantages of living in the city--displaying acute business acumen in a situation where urban condtions and services may well have been superior to those existing in the newly advertised suburban subdivision.

The Lure of the "Suburban Ideal". As in other urban places, Washingtonians succumbed to the charms and promises of the romantic rural ideal in suburban guise. "It is necessary to read only a few samples of the literature prepared by our local suburban developers to be impressed by the strength of the emotional appeal inherent in the vision of a comfortable life in a salubrious natural setting" (French, p.312). In Washington also, this natural setting was suburban, not rural.

Uniontown, the first planned suburban development of Washington, sounded this theme as early as 1854, when advertisements encouraged prospective buyers to move to new homes "situated in the most beautiful and healthy neighborhood around Washington," but added as

inducement that "the streets will be graded, the gutters paved, and edged with shade trees..." (Hutchinson, p.51). LeDroit Park chose as its motto "T'is town, yet country too" to describe the ambiance of the middle-class subdivision north of Boundary Street ("LeDroit Park Illustrated"), and the self-confident author of the Takoma Park pamphlet, after having extolled the altitude, the "abundant shade", and the "crystal-like" water supply, asserted that "we are so accustomed to metropolitan ways and methods here, that they now appear but commonplace" (Button, p.53). These are sub-urban, not rural images.

Still, the country appeal was enhanced by streets named after trees and flowers, and the "country surroundings" and the "beautiful and varied scenery" were stressed.

In 1900, the agents for the Cleveland Park subdivision described it as

> Within the District limits, and consequently enjoys every advantage which a downtown resident can claim, and in addition it is as beautiful a spot and as free from the annoyances of the city as if it were in the heart of the Adirondacks.... Besides municipal improvements, there is every blessing of fresh country air, plenty of elbow room, woods and fields, peacefulness, coolness in summer and comfort in winter.[1]

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1 The "municipal improvements" included sewerage and an unlimited water supply, gas or electric light, a fire engine and a special detail of police. Cleveland Park was a suburban community with all the urban amenities one could desire. (Washington Post, 10 May 1903).

The "rural ideal" was definitely suburban in Washington, as it was in other urban centers; urban advantages and rural blessings went hand in hand to appeal to prospective homeowners.

But it was not only the hyperbole of the land improvement companies and real estate developers who paraded the "suburban ideal". People themselves seemed enthusiastic about their suburban homes. "The homestead sentiment exists and has existed for all time," the Neighborhood News insisted in 1922.[1] In retrospect, even the primitive conditions at the beginning of many suburban communities filled home-owners with pride--they saw themselves as pioneers no less than those who had conquered the West. As the Neighborhood News continued:

> Ours is a community of homeowners, of people who intend to make it their permanent abiding place, where they expect to enjoy the pleasures and the comfort of home life.... The homestead sentiment exists even though the early habitation may have been lowly; how much more so if the impression of later years is of a place of beauty--vine covered porches, immaculate expanses of lawn, trees and shrubs and flowers, with song birds giving forth their cheery notes....

the typical expression of the suburban ideal and a sentiment often repeated by contemporaries.

The suburban settlers worked hard to improve their homes and communities. Many citizens' associations were founded,[2] which worked to improve streets and water and sewer systems, brought pressure to

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1 The "Official Organ for the Rhode Island Avenue Citizens' Association for the good of the whole community", 1920 (MLK Library).

2 In black communities, these were called "civic" associations and were just as active.

to bear on government officials for fire and police protection and started classes in private homes until school buildings could be constructed. Electricity and telephone lines were brought to many communities in direct response to citizens' pressure. In the Maryland counties where this was possible, a number of communities incorporated in order to be able to raise bond issues for necessary improvements.

In Washington, then, as in other American cities, many had found it desirable to live in a suburban home. It was for them, as for Americans in general, an expression of the "rural ideal", and they were prepared to live--at least in the beginning--under primitive conditions and to work hard to improve their communities. Middle and upper middle income groups shared this enthusiasm for suburban residences with those of "moderate means", and a number of blacks as well were attracted by suburban homeownership. This urge toward suburban living was not necessarily dictated by the real estate market in Washington--a market favorable at least for the upper middle and many middle income groups--nor was it the response to the conditions of the city--conditions superior to other urban places at the time and often to those in the new subdivisions. It was a quest for a healthful environment in the cooler, more elevated areas surrounding the city, to be sure. More importantly, perhaps, it was a strong belief in the "suburban ideal", a belief apparently as strong and prevalent among Washington's inhabitants as those ideals were among American urban dwellers elsewhere.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

An inspection of Washington's development leads one to the conclusion that it differed markedly from the contemporary cities of the manufacturing belt, as well as from the generalized urban model of the nineteenth century city.

It had few negative attributes once it had overcome the primitive conditions of its early history and those associated with the rapid changes caused by the Civil War. It was the only city to attain metropolitan status without an industrial, manufacturing base. There were therefore few of the offensive conditions present which were associated with large scale industry and manufacturing, and there was little influx of foreign immigrants. Crowded inner city ethnic neighborhoods, "typical" of the industrial city, were lacking in Washington, and while "alley dwellings" housed large numbers of the city's poor, these alleys were neither as widespread nor as blatant as the urban slums which blighted parts of many nineteenth century cities.

Washington's population differed from those of other cities not only in its low percentage of foreign born, but also in the unusually

high proportion of blacks, giving the city's population a composition
unique among metropolitan areas of the U.S. Additionally, since the
great majority of both blacks and whites were either born in the
District of Columbia or had come from the neighboring states of
Maryland and Virginia, the population of the District had a homogeneity
usually lacking in other cities.[1]

The dependency of the capital city on the federal government
influenced most aspects of Washington life. Where private enterprise
alone was actively involved in the physical growth of many other cities,
often without regulation or control, Congress regulated Washington's
growth, it controlled its municipal budget, and--as its largest employer--
it shaped its economy and that of its people. The federal government
provided a stable source of income relatively immune from the
fluctuations of economic conditions in the rest of the country. As a
consequence of a permanent civil service corps, the employment
structure showed a larger than usual white collar middle class,[2] the
members of which tended to have incomes within a predictable, relatively

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1 The high percentage of blacks makes this "homogeneity"
somewhat simplistic and certainly deserves more scrutiny; such
homogeneity, even within this reservation, did set Washington's
population apart from that of other metropolitan places.

2 French suggests that "owing to the absence of heavy industry,
the negligible foreign immigration, and the educational requirements
of government service, at least sixty percent of Washingtonians...
belonged to a relatively homogeneous middle class"(p. 307); see also
Green, Nolen.

narrow range dictated by the pay scale of the Federal Government.
Personal income, although not high, nevertheless could be com-
pared favorably with the country as a whole.

Physically, the city presented a pleasing appearance in many of
its neighborhoods at least after the 1870's and 1880's; the provision
of services and urban amenities was superior to those of many con-
temporary cities. With the introduction of the electric street railway,[1]
Washington closed the gap between it and other metropolitan places in its
public transportation system, which until then had only served the
built-up area within the limits of the old city.

In contrast to other American places of the period where new
construction, especially residential construction, took place pre-
dominantly outside the old urban core, physical growth in Washington
could and did continue within the ample confines of L'Enfant's
original layout. Since the city had been planned for a large population,
space for residential growth remained plentiful and, in fact, several
areas of the old city were not built up until the last decades of
the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth century.

There were, therefore, few of the conditions present which are
seen as providing a "push" outward in the suburbanization process
so prevalent during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Despite

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1 Washington's electric streetcar system got its start before that
of New York and Boston.

the many differences between Washington and its sister cities--
to the extent that the city did not conform to the generally
accepted urban model of the nineteenth century metropolis--Washington
shared one important aspect of that model, i.e., a distinct movement
toward suburban residential areas. From small beginnings, the number
of Washington's suburban dwellers increased so that by 1910, over 25
percent of the District's population lived in the territory outside the
original limits of Washington and Georgetown.[1] This proportion fell
only slightly toward the 1920's, as the population of the old city
itself continued to grow and is comparable to the suburban
proportion of a number of metropolitan places of the period (see Table
2). This population does not include suburban areas in the
adjoining Maryland and Virginia territories. Although it achieved
metropolitan status relatively late (1870), Washington's process of
suburbanization began, albeit on a smaller scale, at the same time as
that of such cities as Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and New York (Jackson,
1972, p.198).

According to the suburban model, development of suburban
residential areas is closely tied to the evolution and extension of
transportation systems. During the later period of its suburban growth,

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[1] 25.5 percent, an increase from 11.9 percent in 1890, and from
16.5 percent in 1900 (Statistics of Population, 1910, p.4).

this is also applicable for the Washington area. However, some of the earliest suburbs saw their beginnings without the benefit of public transportation; some ten suburban communities to the north of Florida Avenue and six in the southeast, across the Anacostia River, were clearly within walking distance of the city in areas which were only later directly connected to the transportation network. It is also interesting to note that while growth toward the north was enhanced when this network eventually extended into that section of the District, development remained slow across the Anacostia, even though the area was reached by public transportation at about the same time or even earlier.

The difference in suburban development between the two sections is typical of a process which remained selective throughout the Washington area and throughout the study period. Spatial extension of Washington's suburbs did not take place in concentric rings, as expected from and presented in the generalized urban model; the city did not develop distinct bands of new suburban construction, as took place in Boston, for example, with successive rings outward from the city, within which the inner zone was that of crosstown street railway service. Washington's suburban growth beyond the original city limit of Florida Avenue almost exclusively consisted of arterial growth, with empty interstices between the axes. This pattern was partially interrelated to the general lack of crosstown transportation connections

and partially influenced by the local terrain.[1]

Distance from the city center, in any event, was not indicative in itself of potential suburban growth. During the first stage of Washington's suburbanization process, this can be clearly seen in the extension of walking suburbs; here the characteristics of the terrain made the growth of suburban subdivisions possible in a crescent to the north of the boundary, and along extending roads, while land directly adjacent to the boundary in the northwest, with more rugged terrain, was left untouched. At the same time, but already a part of the second stage of the suburbanization process, development along the steam railroads in Prince George's County at distances beyond eight miles could take place at a time when areas much closer, adjacent to the sparsely populated northeastern sections of the city, showed little development.

Furthermore, also in contrast with the urban model, among Washington's suburbs income differences among the various areas were not necessarily, not even usually, correlated with distance from the city center--as the concentric ring model suggests--nor did the availability of the same transportation mode insure the development

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1 Since transportation routes of the period were also somewhat circumscribed by the accessibility of terrain, this turns out to be a "chicken and egg" question. In any event, even during the automobile era, cross county connection in Montgomery County, as one example of the Washington area, continued to remain poor until the con- struction of the Beltway in the 1960's.

of similar settlements. Washington's suburbanization rather followed somewhat generalized sectors.[1] This was especially apparent in the northwest of the city, which remained solidly middle and upper middle class, independent of distance from the city center; this characteristic extended into Montgomery County. These northwestern suburbs represented the extension of the wealthy northwest quarter of the urban core. In the northeast and east also, the characteristics of the urban quarters extended into the suburbs; here both the sections of the city and the suburban communities housed people of somewhat more moderate means. As already discussed elsewhere, such dissimilarities were also represented among steam railroad suburbs, among which the earlier settlements toward the northeast projected a less affluent appearance than the later railroad communities in the northwest.

At this time, two points should be made. Firstly, Washington's suburban process was much aided by transportation by steam railroad, more so than would be expected from its negation in the generalized urban model; in Montgomery County, the steam railroad was as important to suburban growth during the study period as was the electric streetcar; communities associated with the two transportation means are evenly divided in number. In the northeast also, suburban

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1 Washington seems to conform to Hoyt's "sector theory". Hoyt maintained that especially high quality areas "do not skip about at random...; they follow a definitive path in one or more sectors of the city" (Hoyt, p.114). In Washington, this took place not only in the case of high quality areas, but the particular characteristics of all sectors extended outward into the suburban area.

growth was exclusively tied to the steam railroad until the turn of the century; only then did the early suburbs receive further impetus for growth through the electric trolley as new settlements became associated with this newly extending mass transport. The results of this study underline the important role that the steam railroad played in the suburbanization of the Washington area; at least for Washington, a negation of this role, as indicated in the literature, is not justified.

Secondly, Washington's steam railroad suburbanization did not result in communities which were representative of the well-to-do settlements generally described as "railroad suburbs" in the literature. Washington's steam railroad suburbs, although removed from the urban core and originally settled in nucleated clusters, were not wealthy "exurbs", nor were they the location of estates of the wealthy; it is doubtful that the "method of transportation (the train)... was accepted as genteel"(Yeates and Garner, p.217) or even perceived as such. As was shown, in the Washington area the subdivisions along the steam railroad extending into the northeast of the study area give no indication of wealth and those toward the northwest were for middle income owners at best.

It is appropriate to warn of a certain stereotyping not only in the case of "railroad suburbs", but also, and very pronouncedly so, among Washington's "streetcar suburbs". In this area, a wide spectrum of characteristics was found among the suburbs whose growth

was facilitated by the electric streetcar. Clarendon, for example,
or a series of other streetcar subdivisions in Arlington County, or such
communities as Mount Rainier or Brentwood, in Prince George's
County, showed marked differences from Chevy Chase Village and
other communities along the trolley line on Connecticut Avenue--in
income, house type and size, urban amenities, and other characteristics,
even though they were all justifiably referred to as "streetcar suburbs".[1]
They also showed some differences from the accepted model of such
suburbs in availability of commercial enterprises and spatial layout.
It is clear, therefore, that the somewhat glib description of "streetcar
suburbs", as found in the literature, should be accepted with some
caution, at least as related to the Washington area.

Washington's suburban growth, related to streetcar lines,
continued to remain selective. While the Arlington area showed
immediate population growth once the electric streetcar breached the
barrier of the Potomac River, the territory beyond the Anacostia River
did not respond to the connection with the city by electric streetcars
in the same way; here population growth remained slow.

A wider spectrum of population than generally accepted in the
literature was attracted to Washington's suburban residences; this
spectrum not only included the middle class, but ranged from upper

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1 A number of black subdivisions toward and beyond the eastern
edge of the District of Columbia were among streetcar suburbs.

middle income groups through the broad range of middle and lower

middle class to working people; members of Washington's black

population were also represented among the suburban dwellers of

the metropolis, again unusual for this time period. There is little

need to re-iterate the primitive conditions that could be found in many

suburbs at various time periods, and to state that these conditions

often compared unfavorably with those in the city, especially during the

later periods of this study. The statements of contemporaries, . If

some of which are included in the body of this paper, speak eloquently

enough of the lack of many urban amenities in suburban subdivisions.

Despite the inconveniences, primitive conditions, and certain

restrictions certain Washington suburban dwellers had to cope with, the

number of those who preferred to live in the suburbs continued to

increase.[1] Why was this so; what were some of the reasons for

this preference?

One important impetus for moving into suburban residences was

Washington's hot and humid climate. Suburban communities were

1   Between 1900 and 1910, the population in the territory
of the District of Columbia outside the former limits of Washington and
Georgetown grew "more than fourteen times that for Washington and
more than eight times that for Georgetown" (Statistics of Population,
District of Columbia, 1910, p.4. In Montgomery County also, where
suburban growth was restricted to two distinct areas, the "Wheaton
District", which included the steam railroad corridor, grew from
2,559 to 5,107 between 1890 and 1910, or an increase of over 100 percent;
"Bethesda District" close to the District line, increased nearly 200
percent during the same period, from 1,143 to 3,217.

generally located at higher elevations and were therefore cooler, healthier, and more pleasant than urban residential areas in the low-lying basin city.

Also, among the early settlers of the walking suburbs as well as those along the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, there was perhaps a desire to escape the city's unfavorable conditions of the post Civil War period. Many also, then and later, wished to own property rather than rent, a wish that could be satisfied more easily in suburban communities rather than in the city where real estate prices were relatively high for lower income groups. As can be seen, in Washington also a number of interacting factors provided a "push" outward from the city, even though they differed in kind from those found in the cities of the manufacturing belt. What is more important, however, is the fact that so many of Washington's inhabitants seemed to have been influenced by the "pull" toward living in the "country", just as increasing numbers of their counterparts were in other cities.

It is not always easy to sort out the various impulses that combine in a decision making process. What is a fact, though, is that an increasing number of decisions was made prefering living in suburbs rather than in the city. To this extent, the suburban dwellers were willing to disregard the often primitive conditions which they found in their suburban communities and the inconveniences that were sometimes associated with commuting to the city for jobs, school, and

shopping. Since living in Washington was possible under "agreeable conditions" for a broad spectrum of income groups, we can assume that at least those who left the city shared a belief in the "rural ideal" which was translated into a "suburban ideal", as was increasingly common among Americans in general. Real estate advertisements as well as the writings of suburban dwellers themselves attested to the strength of this belief. There is no question that the city shared the penchant for suburban growth that was displayed in the North American city in general. Living in countrified surroundings rather than on city streets was as important to many Washingtonians as to those living in Pittsburgh, Chicago, or Baltimore. If Washington is an indication, a strong belief in the "suburban ideal" should be considered a universal phenomenon, regardless of the urban center of which the suburbs are a part.

Despite the differences in its urban conditions and its history with those of other cities, and despite its "uniqueness" as the nation's capital, Washington, as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, had taken its place among urban places in the United States in its growth and especially in the process of its suburbanization. It is therefore appropriate to end this paper with a quote by one of the city's foremost chroniclers: "Utterly a-typical of American cities, unrepresentative of American customs and thought, Washington still embodies the essence of the nation" (Constance McLaughlin Green).

APPENDIX A

EIGHT INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDIES OF SELECTED SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES

OF THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA

Profiles of eight suburban communities are offered in this appendix. They were chosen as being broadly representative of the 190 suburban settlements which existed in the Washington area by 1917 and which had evolved during different periods of the city's suburbanization process.

All eight communities developed into established neighborhoods and have remained recognizable entities--even those which are no longer separate suburbs. While some of the chosen suburbs were more populous than others of the type, they share the same general characteristics with smaller sub-divisions within the same general area and category.

The same three major categories--i.e. walking-horsecar, steam railroad, and electric streetcar suburbs--were chosen as were used throughout this study, as well as for the map offered in Appendix B. As mentioned earlier, this was done to facilitate description of a process which could take place simultaneously and which resulted in a great variety of suburbs differing from each other, even when closely associated with the same trans-portation mode. For this reason, two suburbs from each category are discussed; each will illustrate different aspects within the three general categories. In addition, a black community and a formerly rural settlement

were included as two examples of the many ways a "suburb" could evolve.

Within each of the three major categories, one "planned" and one "unplanned" community were chosen. "Planned" communities were usually not only laid out and plotted but also were provided with a number of urban amenities, usually by the developer. In "unplanned" communities, often a number of individual subdivions, provided only with a rough streetplan and laid out in lots, evolved into a larger community without an overall plan. In every case, independent from the temporal setting and the mode of transportation prevalent at the time, conditions, while "suburban" in both cases, tended to be less primitive in "planned" than in "unplanned" communities; the former tended to cater to a somewhat more affluent homeseeker.[1]

The eight suburban communities and their categories are as follows:

1. Mt. Pleasant and LeDroit Park; walking-horsecar suburbs.

2. Hyattsville, Prince George's County, and Takoma Park, Montgomery County; steam railroad suburbs.

3. Clarendon, Virginia, and Chevy Chase Village, Maryland; electric streetcar suburbs.

4. Tenleytown; a formerly independent rural community.

5. Barry's Farm-Hillsdale; a black community.

As was pointed out elsewhere, a number of communities, especially

1. Not too fine a point should be put to these labels; with "planned" communities, again, there was a great variety of conditions, and not all "unplanned" communities were primitive. In some instances, some amenities were provided by developers, while others were left to the householders' initiative and discretion.

those which evolved during the early period of the suburbanization process, were transformed from one type of settlement into another by the introduction of a new mode of transport. This is touched upon in each individual profile, but not taken into consideration here within the categorization.[1]

Walking-Horsecar Suburbs

Mt. Pleasant. The name Mount Pleasant was applied to a general area of high land east of Rock Creek between Columbia Road and Piney Branch. The settlement pattern of the area before the Civil War consisted of farmland, some country homes, and a race track. By 1845, the race track was defunct, and land in the area was offered for sale "to those wanting country residences"(Proctor,1930,I,p.122). The lots varied in size from five to fifty acres at first and later were offered in parcels of four to six acres, at a price of about $ 200 per acre. However, until the end of the Civil War, there were no permanent suburban settlements.

During the War, the estate of a Southern sympathizer was occupied for a time by Northern forces, and there was an Army Hospital as well as encampments and lines of defense between 14th and 17th Streets. In 1865, the new owner of the estate subdivided the plot of about 73 acres into lots of no less than one acre and offered them as permanent suburban

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1 In Appendix B,when mapping suburban settlements, more than one category is sometimes used where important changes were brought to a suburb by a new mode of transportation.

property. This became the original subdivision of Mt. Pleasant, along 14th Street, "with a commanding view of the capital city" (Gutheim, p.106).

The subdivision attracted "a large number of gentlemen, mainly clerks in the government employ" (Proctor, 1930), many of whom had come to Washington during the Civil War years and shared a common New England background. Among them were treasury clerks, lawyers, and patent attorneys, as well as journalists representing their hometown papers in Washington (Fisher, 1978). They were well educated and solidly middle class.

Streets were laid out west of the major north-south street around a village green on "oddly tilted cross streets" (Gutheim, p.106)-- a pattern one can still see on present-day maps; the village's grid was not in conformance with the city street system. Settlers built their own detached frame homes on spacious, fenced, wooded lots; there were gardens and sometimes chickens, a horse, and a cow (Emery, p.209).

From a handful of houses which were built in 1865 and 1866, the village gradually grew in the 1870's and 1880's, but land was still available as low as ten cents a square foot by 1887.[1] Several "additions" were sub-divided and eventually became part of the Mt. Pleasant area. In 1885, the suburb had grown to 137 houses, but water was supplied by wells

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1 In 1866, land in Mt. Pleasant sold for approximately $ 650 per acre. Within five years the price rose to $ 2,000 - $ 4,000 per acre (Emery).

and there was no sewer system. Private privies served the population (Comm. Rpts., 1885-86, p.329). The major road connection with the city was by the 14th Street, which formed the village's eastern border; 16th Street was not cut through until some thirty years after the beginning of the suburb. The streets within the village were unpaved dirt roads, with sidewalks covered with cinders across which "tetering planks" were laid (Emery). There was a small business center at 14th and Park road, but major shopping was done in the city.

The new suburbanites formed a true suburban community with its own social ties and institutions. A public school was opened in 1869;[1] the "Mount Pleasant Assembly" formed in 1870 as the first suburban Citizens' Association. The same year, a private omnibus company was organized with one trip to the city in the morning and a return trip at night; two or three times during the week, there were extra shopping trips to "downtown" scheduled. Later, Mt. Pleasant settlers could use the horse streetcar from Boundary Street or--after its extension in the 1880's-- from Park Avenue, the "Gateway to the Village" and from there walk the rest of the way. The village was located, however, well within walking distance of the Treasury, and the streetcar line did not reach Mt. Pleasant proper until about 1890, some twenty-five years after the

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[1] Not only the husbands but also the wives and daughters of Mt. Pleasant were educated. Schooling was important; during the census between 1870 and 1900, many of the sons and daughters were listed as being away at college--following a New England tradition of higher education (Fisher,1978).

beginning of the suburb, and walking continued a preferred mode of

transportation for many . When travelling to the city for shopping and

entertainment became difficult in the winter, the villagers

organized their own amusements:

> During the winter, the villagers have a continual round of
> festivities, which includes minstrel entertainments by an
> organization known in the village as the "Tropical Exotics",
> balls, parties and soirees, entertainment by the temperance
> day, a literary organization...all these associations providing
> in a general way for the amusement of the villagers during
> the winter....There is no spirituous liquor sold in the
> village (Proctor, 1930, I, p.146).

Eventually, piped water and sewer lines were extended from the

city (1910), and with the extension of electric streetcar lines in the

1890's, Mt. Pleasant would become "the epitome of the booming, turn-of

the-century streetcar suburb in the District of Columbia"(Fisher,1974,

p.12). Blocks of rowhouses began to appear (some of which would later

be converted into flats), as well as at least one apartment house.

Despite this growth, Mt. Pleasant, today bordered roughly by 16th Street,

NW, Columbia Road, and Rock Creek Park, remained a "pastoral"

community whose inhabitants continued to share a uniformity of back-

ground and interests, and which was able to offer "suburban living

in the city" until after World War II (Fisher, 1978).

LeDroit Park, a Planned Community. LeDroit Park was somewhat

more ambitious than Mt. Pleasant and subsequent subdivisions in the

area. It was a well-planned early walking suburb directly north of and

adjacent to the original Boundary Street (the present Florida Avenue)

and with 7th Street along its western edge. LeDroit Park had begun to be developed in 1873 and soon became a desirable suburban residential area. On level ground, still within the general elevation of the city, the area south as well as north of the boundary was still quite suburban at that time, with much vacant ground. Within a few years

> LeDroit Park [had] wholly changed its appearance and today
> [written in 1877] it stands the largest and most successful
> enterprise of its kind in the District; indeed, no other
> can vie with or will suffer comparison with it. It lies in
> the direct line of the natural growth of the city and is the
> nearest, the cheapest, and the best suburban property in
> the District of Columbia ("LeDroit Park illustrated", 1877).

The developers aimed their advertisement at the "merchant, professional man or government clerk", and its "ease of access" to employment in the city was emphasized, both by walking and by close proximity to the horse streetcar terminal at Boundary and 7th Streets.

The developers of the park caused detached and semi-detached homes to be designed and built--over sixty units, which were designed in the Calvert Vaux cottage tradition by James H. McGill, a well-known local architect (Ganschinietz, p.155). The homes were in "picturesque styles" and in different sizes, ranging in price from $ 3,000 to $ 12,000 current dollars.

> In addition to the erection there of a fine type of dwelling,
> more than $ 3,000 were early spent in purchasing and planting
> ornamental shade trees and hedges and about $ 50,000 in
> street improvements, including sewer and water mains....
> The Park has its own ash and garbage service, and even
> employed a watchman to keep out intruders and un-
> desirables....(Proctor, 1928).

Streets with sidewalks, which remained in private hands until 1901, were laid out in a grid system, with one circle imitating the city's system of circles. However, here as elsewhere, LeDroit Park's streets were not in conformance with the street system of the city directly across Boundary Street.

Fences between individual homes within the Park were not erected so as to enhance the feeling of spaciousness of the suburban village, but for a number of years--in order to insure the exclusive continuation of its "bright future"--the Park was fenced in, with a gate on Rhode Island Avenue. This fence, meant to keep out "dogs and negroes" [sic], remained until 1900. Even before then, the proximity of Howard University and the Freedmen's Hospital attracted black professional people who began moving into the suburb in the 1890's--often not until after much difficulty in obtaining housing. The developer sold the remaining land in the area for the purpose of rowhouse construction, and by World War I, the Park was almost entirely black. Still, it retained much of its suburban character, and despite inroads made by commercial development, LeDroit Park provided a comfortable residential enclave for Washington's professional middle class residents for several more decades, as it had done earlier for its white homeowners.[1]

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1 It would be incorrect to speak of invasion and succession in the case of LeDroit Park. The status of the new black homeowners was not noticeably different from that of the former white owners; the character of the neighborhood was not diminished by the change from white to black.

LeDroit Park was an exception among Washington's suburbs in its relatively rapid change from white to black homeowners. Suburbs settled by blacks were usually black from the beginning and were generally "unplanned", that is with few if any urban amenities. "Planned suburbs" usually remained white until well after World War II. The process of invasion and succession, well-known as being part of the general suburbanization process, was not part of that process in Washington before World War I to any extent.

LeDroit Park, as a completely planned suburban village, was also an exception among walking suburb; most other suburbs in the area to the north of the city grew from individual subdivisions, the development of which was pretty much left to the initiative of the original settlers and which remained small and their conditions primitive. Such areas as Eckington, Langdon, Bloomington, Petworth, Meridian Hill--before its change into a very prestigious area after the turn of the century--as well as some others evolved, usually remaining less coherent than Mt. Pleasant, and with few of the urban amenities provided by the developers of LeDroit Park. They eventually became part of the general built-up part of the city, with little to differentiate them from other urban neighborhoods.

LeDroit Park today is a category II landmark of the National Capital, listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Ganschinietz, p.155). Mt. Pleasant today is occupied by a mixture of white, black, and hispanic, and there is interest in restoration of some of the early dwellings.

Steam Railroad Suburbs

<u>Hyattsville, Maryland; An Early Steam Railroad Suburb</u>. Some of

the earliest of Washington's suburban development took place along the

Washington Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, where a number

of suburban settlements evolved starting in the 1850's. Hyattsville is a

prime example of such a railroad community.

In 1845, Clark Hyatt had purchased large tracts of land along the

Washington Turnpike crossing of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and

established a small store on the wedge of land formed by the turnpike and

the railroad. When another B&O spur, the Washington and Point Lookout

Branch, was opened which also ran through the area, the enlarged wedge

between the two lines and bisected by the turnpike, became a focal

point of some residential and commercial development. By 1859, the

settlement was officially listed as a post village (<u>The Neighborhoods</u>...,

p.72)(Map 23).

. After the Civil War, several large parcels of land were subdivided into

small homebuilding lots. By 1878, an estimated fifty homes had been

built in the new settlement and by 1880, the population of what was now

called "Hyattsville" was 288 plus another fourty residents of a second

nearby residential section (<u>The Neighborhoods</u>...). A subdivision

planned by a group of entrepreneurs in 1870, south of Hyattsville at the

sites of the present Cottage City and Brentwood, called the "Highlands"

Map 23. <u>Hyattsville, Prince George's County, Maryland, 1875</u>.

MAP OF
HYATTSVILLE
PRINCE GEORGE CO
MD.

Source: Library of Congress.

was not successful.[1]

The community of Hyattsville itself grew; between 1880 and 1890, much land was subdivided and there was continued construction activity--so much so that the town was incorporated in 1886. Urban amenities such as sidewalks, surfaced streets, street lighting, and a small water system were provided by the town after incorporation.[2] A little telephone exchange began to operate and electric lines were installed. In 1904, voters authorized a bond issue for a public sewerage system.

Early residential dwellings tended to be detached single family homes in various "Victorian" styles, set on ample lots with room for gardens. But as population increased, smaller houses and smaller lots became the rule. Hyattsville, and especially the smaller settlements along the B&O in Prince George's County, tended to cater to middle income but even more to lower middle income families (The Neighborhoods....[3]

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1 It was notf for want of trying. The Highlands advertising brochure is thorough and well laid-out, with 21 pages crammed full of information about the "City of Highlands"--eight minutes from Washington City by steam railroad, with plans for handsome cottages, fine villa residences, and large country residences, complete with plan and design. Interestingly, this brochure refers to a future link to the city via the Columbia horsecar line, a link which never materialized during the horsecar era.

2 In 1901--one of the first publicly, that is, community-owned water works in Maryland.

Land advertised in the "Highlands" brochure cost between 3-5 ¢ a square foot and lots were sold for $ 150 down and the rest in several payments. Cottages were to be erected for $ 1,600, while "large country residences" cost $ 3,000.

Hyattsville's population grew from 334 to 1222 (1900); 1,917 (1910) and to 1,675 in 1920. The town had its own commercial center, with a number of grocery, butcher, drygoods, and tinsmith shops, a post office, a blacksmith shop, and other establishments typical for towns of that era, as well as possibly the first buildings and loan association in Prince George's County. This business center catered not only to the townsPeople but also to settlers, both rural and suburban, in the nearby communities.

Commuters to the city were dependent on the Railroad until the late 1890's when an electric trolley line began to extend outward from the city, paralleling both the railroad line and Baltimore Avenue (U.S. 1). When in 1892 the B&O threatened to cancel a morning commuter train-- which meant that some commuters would have to take a train one hour earlier--people began to look forward to using the electric trolley lines. Electric operation from Hyattsville to the Treasury began in May of 1899 (King, p.55) and the trolley became the predominant link to the city.

By World War I, the steam railroad was no longer an important factor for the passenger service of the town; connection with the city was by electric trolley lines until after World War I, when increasing use of the privately owned autombile began to supplant focus on the electric streetcar with that on U.S. 1 as a major connecting link to the city.

Hyattsville's experience was repeated, if to a much smaller extent, in many smaller communities along the B&O's Washington Branch. A number of subdivisions were laid out along the line, often providing small plots of land, not all of which were successful. For the communities that did evolve, the steam railroad originally provided access to the city and made suburban living possible in this transportation corridor.

Takoma Park, Railroad Suburb of the 1880's. Takoma Park, Maryland, was a "planned" community even though its beginnings were small. Benjamin F. Gilbert, the founder and developer of Takoma Park, was typical of a number of entrepreneurs who were involved in suburban real estate by the 1880's. He had come to Washington during the Civil War and had been involved in some earlier real estate speculations but did not do well. In 1883, when he returned to the Capital, he was convinced that "the time was ripe for suburban development" in the District of Columbia and nearby Maryland (McMaster and Hiebert, p.214).

He selected 90 odd acres of wooded land on a 300 foot elevation about six miles north of the Capital.[1] While interested in "pure drinking water", for which he "was a great stickler" (Heaton), Gilbert also found the tract conveniently located along the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. His own family and one other, "tired of the marshes and summer miseries" of Wasington, were the first inhabitants

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1 This tract became the first of fourteen subdivisions which today make up Takoma Park.

of the new community. He enthusiastically promoted the area, appealing

to the less affluent home seeker. "The man of moderate means finds it

possible to become the owner of his own home by moving to the suburbs"

he declared (McMaster and Hiebert, p.214).

Streets were laid out and named after trees to emphasize the "sylvan

atmosphere" of the Park, and electricity was provided; other urban

amenities such as water mains and sewer lines, and street paving had to

wait several years. Gilbert donated land for the town's first church,

erected in 1888, and during the same year, the first school was opened.

Dispensing of liquor was prohibited by covenant; the town, under Gilbert's

influence, stayed legally dry.[1]

In the beginning, land sold for as little as from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 5 cents a

square foot. Houses were advertised: "Lot 100 x 150, 6 room cottage...

$ 2,700; lot 100 x 170, 9 room cottage...$ 3,500" (Evening Star. 28 December

1888). The "cottages" were usually goodsized, mostly two story, wood

and frame Victorian homes, some in Queen Anne and "stick" style,

located on wooded lots and generally oriented toward the B&O Railroad

station. There was a general store across from the station, and in

1900, a library was founded closeby. In 1890, with 500 inhabitants,

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1 Before his early real estate ventures in the 1870's, Gilbert had
operated tje Temperance Lunch Room on F Street.

Takoma Park was incorporated, with Gilbert as the new town's first mayor.[1]

For about ten years, the steam railroad provided the only public transportation and the only link to the city. The "7th Street Pike" and a road leading to a nearby estate were the only two roads close to the Park, but were not serviceable as thoroughfares for commuting purposes. Early Takoma Park inhabitants--among them the "banker, the lawyer, the merchant and the clerk"--shuttled back and forth on the train from the city to their "sylvan suburb", whose "presence of trees and absence of malaria" was heralded.

By 1900, there were 1,159 people in the town of Takoma Park. During the same year, the Wildwood Park and resort (also known as the Glen Sligo Hotel) was opened. The resort was popular for several summers, with the obligatory merry-go-round and dance pavillon and boating on Sligo Creek. It was a "drawing card" and eventually became to be connected to the city by the electric streetcar of the Baltimore and Washington Transit Company. In 1892, already, the extension of the Brightwood line had been authorized which reached Takoma Park in 1893. The local line, however, was remembered by oldtimers as the

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1 At that time, Takoma Park became separated from its counterpart in the District of Columbia. The parcels of land which made up the original Takoma Park straddled the District line and also included a small area in Prince George's County. Takoma, D.C. had its own library and post office, and its streets conformed to the numbered system of the city.

"Dinky line" route, riding of which was an "experience", and most commuters continued to use the railroad on a daily basis.

With the Twentieth Century, a number of trolley extensions reached the vicinity of the Park, and the railroad became a less important transportation link for the community. Smaller, somewhat cheaper lots were subdivided--8 to 10 per acre, as compared to 4 to 5 per acre in the older subdivisions--and bungalows appeared, now oriented toward the trolley terminal. The newer streets were somewhat narrower and steeper, some high above Sligo Creek. School children commuted via trolley to high school in the city, boarding at Florida Avenue and U Street for the return trip. While the B&O railroad continued service on a much limited basis until the 1960's, the trolley--and later the bus--became the major link with the city. For other communities on the Metropolitan Branch, however, such as Garrett Park or Capitol View, which were not easily reached by trolley, the railroad remained the link to Washington; these communities remained of small size and pure railroad suburbs well into the Twentieth Century.[1]

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1 Commuters use the railroad from Garrett Park to this day.

Electric Streetcar Suburbs

<u>Clarendon, Arlington County, Virginia</u>. Clarendon is
representative of many of the communities which grew up along the
lines of the extending streetcar links, perhaps the most successful of
streetcar suburbs in Arlington County. The first streetcar line in
Arlington led from Rosslyn to the Arlington Gate at Fort Myer. This was
at first a horsecar line,[1] but was soon electrified and in 1896 extended
to the area which became Clarendon. Quickly, several subdivisions were
laid out in the vicinity of the lines by individual developers. The
first subdivision, dedicated in 1900, consisted of 25 acres of land and
was named, for unknown reasons, for the Earl of Clarendon, English
historian and statesman of the 17th Century (Young, p.51). In the
following ten years at least five "additions to Clarendon" were laid out
by several entrepreneurs (see map 16). Some of these imposed
various clauses on deeds of land sold, such as "liquor shall never be
sold or dispensed" from any of the houses or that none of the property
"shall be sold or leased to anyone not of the Caucasian race." It was
also stipulated that a house had to cost at least $ 2,000.

"Moving to Clarendon in the early days was like moving to the
country" (Young, p.52), with cows walking through the dirt streets

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1 The horses pulled the cars up the steep incline at the gate,
but on the way down the horses rode on a special platform in the
back of the car.

of the subdivisions and farmland surrounding the community. Water had to be pumped from wells, with hand pumps on back porches or in the back yard.[1] Septic tanks were used for sewage, but soon became insufficient with increasing population.

An active citizens' association formed and was instrumental in bringing more amenities of the city to the suburb of Clarendon. A post office and a school soon existed; a fire fighting force was formed in 1908, electricity was brought in by 1913, and water and sewer systems were installed. A number of stores grew up at this strategic location at the junction of two trolley lines and what is now Wilson Boulevard, and by 1920 Clarendon was the economic center of Arlington County.

Clarendon and other communities in northern Virginia were spawned by their close proximity to the trolley lines, and the trolley was an important part of community life, with the trolley station the informal meeting house of the area. This was true for any number of streetcar suburbs, especially in Northern Virginia, which remained closely tied to the trolley lines and linked to each other. Transportation was cheap, five cents "would get you anywhere you wanted to go" (Young, p.51).

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1 Until 1925, five independent privately owned water distribution systems were in operation in Arlington County: in Cherrydale, Livingstone Heights, Bon Air, Virginia Highlands, and Aurora Hills. "The majority of homes in the county were not connected to these systems and had to rely on individual private wells"(Lee, p.78).
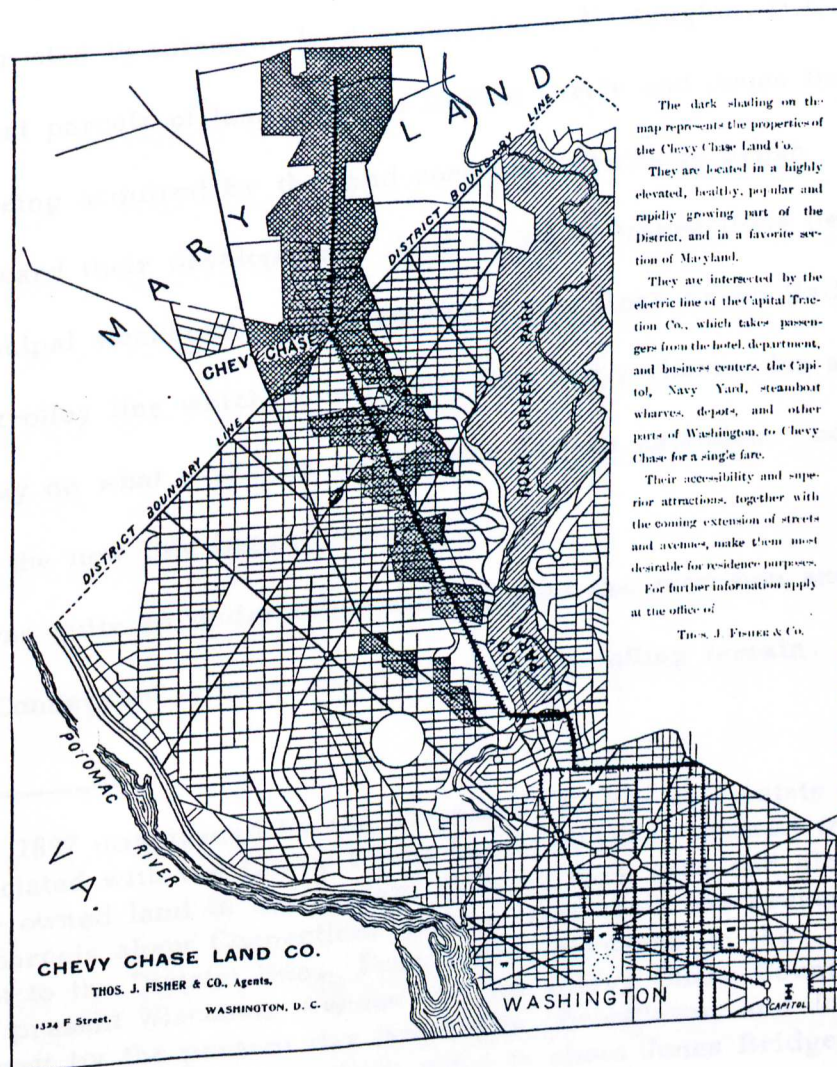
Community parties used the trolley just for "riding around, singing hymns" (Young, p.50). Heads of households commuted to the city by trolley, walking across the bridge from Rosslyn to M Street. The majority of householders who moved to these suburban areas, although generally white collar, were not among the wealthy.

Chevy Chase, Maryland, a Planned Streetcar Community. Clarendon was typical for the majority of new streetcar suburbs not only in Virginia, but also in the District and parts of Maryland. In contrast, one of the most prominent streetcar suburbs of the Washington area--and one most closely associated with the development of street railways-- was Chevy Chase Village, appealing strictly to the well-to-do.

Chevy Chase was located across the District line in Maryland, at the northern terminus of Connecticut Avenue, about six miles from the White House, and over four miles from Florida Avenue, the former boundary. It was a thoroughly planned community, and the electric street railway was built through unimproved terrain for the explicit purpose of connecting the new suburb to the downtown area.

The Chevy Chase Land Company had been formed expressly to acquire land along the Connecticut Avenue right-of-way including the area north of the planned community. By 1897, it had recorded an immense number of plats on both sides of the Avenue and remained a dominant force in the suburban development of much of the area,

Map 24. Land Holdings of the Chevy Chase Land Company, 1897.

The dark shading on the map represents the properties of the Chevy Chase Land Co.

They are located in a highly elevated, healthy, popular and rapidly growing part of the District, and in a favorite section of Maryland.

They are intersected by the electric line of the Capital Traction Co., which takes passengers from the hotel, department, and business centers, the Capitol, Navy Yard, steamboat wharves, depots, and other parts of Washington, to Chevy Chase for a single fare.

Their accessibility and superior attractions, together with the coming extension of streets and avenues, make them most desirable for residence purposes.

For further information apply at the office of

Thos. J. Fisher & Co.

CHEVY CHASE LAND CO.

THOS. J. FISHER & CO., Agents,

1324 F Street.   WASHINGTON, D. C.

Source: Robert A. Truax Collection, Columbia Historical Society.

as well as Chevy Chase Village itself(Map 24).[1]

The founder of the Chevy Chase Land Company, founded in 1890, and the driving force behind the new suburb was Francis G. Newlands, the son-in-law of William Sharon, a wealthy senator from Nevada. Newlands owned much land in and around Reno, Nevada, before he became interested in suburban land speculation in Washington, D.C.. While the last parcels of land between DuPont Circle and Jones Bridge were still being acquired by the land company, Newlands began planning toward their development. In a series of transactions he became principal stockholder and president of the Rock Creek Railway, an electric trolley line which, since 1888, had had a charter for a street railway on what would be Connecticut Avenue extended; construction of the new line began presently.

This was quite an undertaking and included the extension and the grading of Connecticut Avenue which led through rolling terrain.

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1 The 1897 map issued by the Thomas J. Fisher real estate firm, closely associated with the Chevy Chase Land Company, showed that the company owned land in the present Woodley Park area and almost continuous parcels along Connecticut Avenue from about the present Ellicot Street to the District line. From there, bordered on the west by the present Wisconsin Avenue and the Chevy Chase Country Club, and on the east by the present day Brookville, Brooklawn, and Jones Mill roads, holdings extended on both sides to about Jones Bridge Road, in all a total of 1,712 acres (see Map 24). The Land Company remains in existance and is actively involved in all aspects of the community activity. This suburb, unlike many another streetcar suburb, has been able to maintain its character for over seventy-five years and its development was "totally planned and tightly controlled" (French, p.328). It has thereby avoided the haphazard development by dozens of individual landowners and real estate speculators.

The hills had to be cut down by pick and shovel and
the valleys filled by horse drawn carts.... A good
illustration of that operation was the cutting down of
what was known as Soapstone Hill on the west side of
the Avenue at Albemarle Street, and the earth had to
be taken across the Avenue and filled in...,a fill of
forty or fifty feet (Atwood, p.299).

By far the most important engineering feat was bridging the
gorge of Rock Creek. This gorge had until then confined suburban
development to the east of the Valley. Now two bridges were built
across Rock Creek, one at the present Klingle Street and a large
iron trestle bridge which was later known as Calvert Street Bridge.
Eventually, the upper northwest became as fashionable a residential
area as lower Connecticut Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, and the
area around Dupont Circle had been earlier. But at the time, it
took "courage and an iron will to build an avenue and street railway
seven and a half miles out to nowhere" (Atwood, p.299). Two power
plants were necessary, one of which also provided electricity for
street lighting and the homes that now were to be built. With the
opening of the first segment of the line in 1892, a new kind of suburb,
totally planned, was developed, which was opened in 1893.

Newlands' planning was comprehensive in every way. Wide
streets were laid out and no alleys were allowed. Pleasing English
and Scottish street names were selected in keeping with the dignified
image projected. Homes on the Avenue had to be set back thirty-five
feet and could cost no less than $ 5,000; those on side streets were
set back twenty-five feet and could cost no less than $ 3,000. No stores

or other commercial ventures were allowed within the limits of the
Village, although a cluster of stores was planned and eventually built
across the District line on Connecticut Avenue. In order to com-
pensate for this restriction, the railway ran a daily freight car from
the city which brought the groceries, medicines, and other purchases
ordered by the residents, free of charge.

The first four houses built by the Chevy Chase Land Company were
for their own members of the board, and these houses set certain
standards for subsequent residents. However, the developers maintained
that, while the village "was designed and has been maintained to meet
the requirements of discriminating people...that did not necessarily
mean...people of great wealth" ("Chevy Chase for Homes"). The village
was a mixture of upper middle and middle class residents and more
"aristocratic" homeowners, some of whom owned other houses elsewhere.

Dwellings were usually large, with a variety of styles, from
"true California Bungalow Type" to colonial, shingle style, or Italianate.
While the lots themselves were not too large, there were no fences, and
trees lined the streets, giving the whole a pleasing, countrified
atmosphere.

Land was donated on Chevy Chase Circle for a church, and a
school was started by two of Newlands' daughters. Newlands was
instrumental in attracting a former hunt club from Tenleytown to the
area; this became the Chevy Chase Country Club, an important
asset to the well-to-do suburban community.

The streetcar remained for a number of years an essential link with the city and was from the beginning a device, used by Newlands and his associates, to open up Connecticut to real estate investments. An amusement park was designed around Chevy Chase Lake, north of the Village, and a hotel was opened. People came out from the city on a five cent trolley ride and spent a pleasant Sunday or weekend in the country; at the same time they could not help but note the advantages of Chevy Chase Village and the northwest section of the city.

Chevy Chase did not grow quickly; sixteen houses were built in 1894, even fewer the next year. There were not quite fifty families living in the Village by the end of the century (French, p.326).[1] The real movement of people into Chevy Chase would not come until after World War I. But because the right of self-government had been obtained from the State of Maryland early, growth occurred with the Chevy Chase Land Company in tight control. The neighborhood remained essentially as it was envisioned by Newlands and his associates, with the character of a homogeneous, congenial community. The circumference of the original suburb amounts to about three and a half miles or a brisk walk of about one and a half hours. However, few, if any, of the streets were more than one half mile from Connecticut Avenue, with its connecting streetcar link, and most

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1 By 1915, there were 175 homes in the community. It must be assumed that the slowness of development was deliberate.

homes were located quite close to the Avenue. Today, a much larger area than the actual suburb is referred to as Chevy Chase, considered a prestigious address. Through its own high standards, the Village has been able to influence the quality of surrounding neighborhoods as part of the general trend of the affluent toward the northwest of the city.

Tenleytown, a Formerly Independent Community

One of the first suburban trolley lines extending from the city to the District line was the Georgetown and Tenallytown Railway, which originated at the Potomac River waterfront and led--beyond the built-up area mostly through fields and farms--to the District line to where the present Friendship Heights area is located, at the intersection of Wisconsin and Western Avenues. Operation of this line started in 1890; it took its name from Tenleytown (present spelling), a farming community five miles from the Capital; in early city directories the place was listed as a "post village".

Centered on the intersection of the Rockville Pike and River Road, two important thoroughfares as early as 1700, on the highest elevation within the District, it had been mostly self-contained, with a blacksmith shop and a few other rural businesses, and a hotel which first appeared on city maps in 1878. With the extension of the electric trolley to Tenleytown, the village became accessible and within commuting distance of the city.

The village grew rapidly. By 1899, it had grown from "barely eight houses" to a place where there were--as a contemporary tells it, somewhat "tongue in cheek"--

> two brand-new fancy and dry goods stores, three brand-new grocery stores, an altogether brand-new drug store, a brand-new lawyer's office, a brand-new addition to the school, a brand-new mail carrier, and hundred brand-new frame houses, and fifteen brand-new policemen, mounted and patrol ("Tenleytown", 1899).

By 1903, the commercial enterprises had increased to include four prosperous grocery stores and a "butcher shop, which is an industry seldom to be found in neighboring suburbs...("Tenleytown"). The town was also equipped with a good system of electric lights and by 1910, the District sewerage system had reached the town.

Earlier, Tenleytown's houses were described as "plain-fashioned and ugly" ("A Real Little Thrums", 1899), but by 1903, there were "several pretty cottages in the extended village...occupied by clerks and others whose business brings them daily to Washington..." (Holland). A small subdivision, Armesley Park, was planned and developed during the 1890's and 1900's, as a series of duplex houses along paved streets which the developer--not very successful in this venture--eventually deeded to the town. First school classes were held in the attic of a church; Tenley School was built in 1882 and enlarged in 1896. There was also a finishing school for girls in the vicinity and a boys' private school. In 1899, a citizens' association was founded which met in the new townhall.

Tenleytown changed from a small farming community, traces of

which can still be found in some of the early streets in the area, to a booming suburb of Washington through the convenience of trolley connection with the city.[1] Eventually, the formerly independent place became absorbed by the spreading metropolis.

Other farming communities felt the impact of street railway connection to a greater or lesser extent, mostly depending on the distance from the city via the transportation mode used for commuting. In some cases little change took place before the advent of the automobile-- this was the case, for example, in Rockville and Laurel. In other cases, communities were "swallowed up" by the city, transformed into suburban communities and eventually became part of the metropolis-- this happened in Brightwood and here in Tenleytown.

Barry's Farm or Hillsdale, a Black Community

At the end of the Civil War, the Freedmen's Bureau was established to aid the newly emancipated slaves in their transition to an unaccustomed new life. One of the tasks of the Freedmen's Bureau was to help relocate many of the thousands of new black residents of Washington. While Barry's Farm was a community of free blacks, the head of the Bureau "believed it to be within the implied spirit of the law" (Hutchinson, p.83) to help them with settling on a tract of land

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1 How far removed from Washington it still was by 1899 can be seen from the recollection of a teacher at the Tenley school who remembered taking his class on a trip to downtown Washington on the trolley; many of his pupils had never seen the city ("Footsteps").

Map 25.   Map of Barry's Farm, Washington, D.C., ("Potomac City");
Subdivision of Lots.
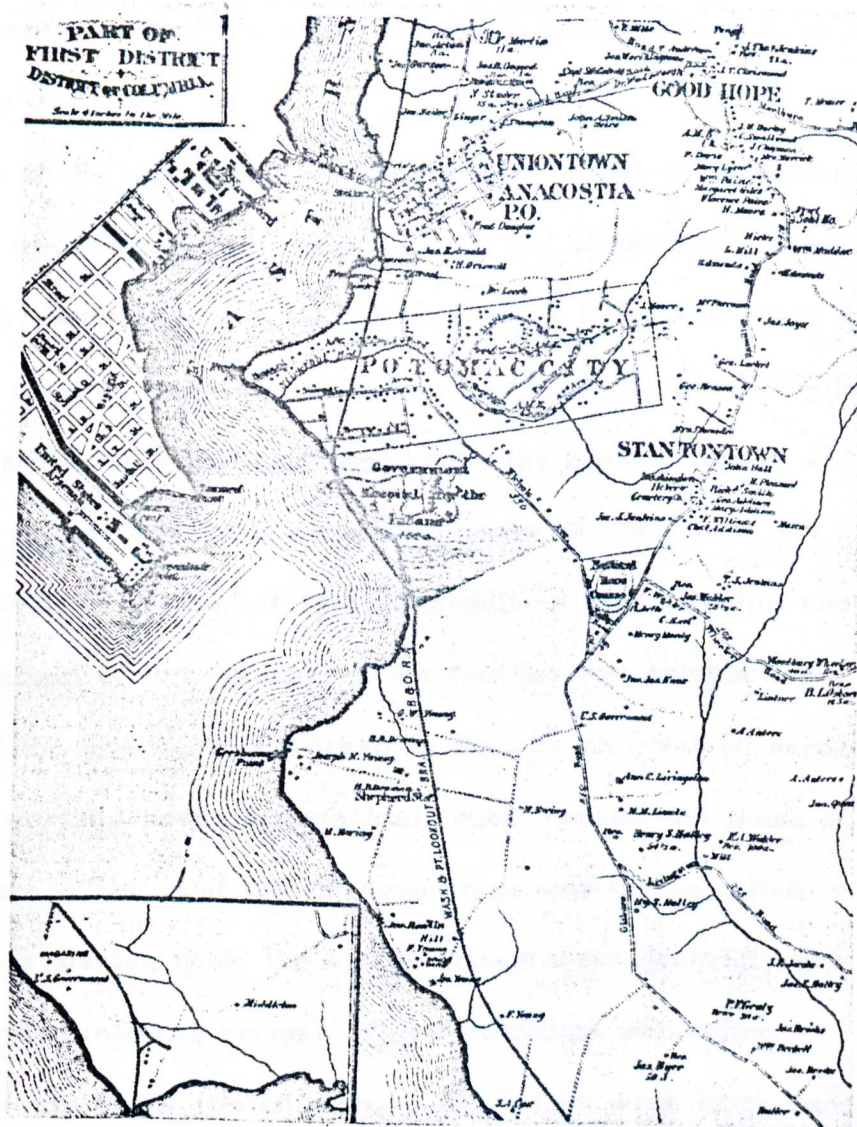
Source: Cantwell, pp. 336, 340 (Anacostia Museum).

across the Anacostia River, not far from the 11th Street Bridge and Uniontown; the tract straddled Asylum Road, the present Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue. (Map 25; Barry's Farm is here referred to as "Potomac City").

Because of the difficulty of obtaining land for resale to blacks, the 375 acre tract was bought "with a good deal of secrecy"; the land was ready for development in 1867. Trees were felled and roads cut, and by June of 1868, one acre lots could be bought by black families for $ 125 to $ 300; this included lumber for the construction of a house. The project was quite successful; only 59 lots out of 359 remained unsold by October of 1868 (Cantwell, p.343). Within two years a settlement of five hundred black families was established.

Many of the new settlers worked in the city and walked across the bridge after working hours to help build their houses and those of their neighbors. The most typical house type was the so-called A-frame with a slanted roof; the simple houses were generally two stories high and divided into two rooms. These dwellings were often enlarged over the years (Hutchinson, p.82). Lots were large enough for people to have goodsized gardens, and they were often able to sell surplus produce in downtown markets.

Before the first public school was opened in the community in 1871, the settlers themselves had built a school for their children. In 1889, a larger school, the James G. Birney School, was built which was joined by the second James G. Birney School in 1901,

reflecting the rapid growth of the area. Classes through eighth grade were offered, exclusively for black pupils.

Barry's Farm men "entered into a number of occupations: they labored as farm workers, gardeners, blacksmiths, cooks, and carpenters, and some were engaged in construction work in the city. Others found employment at the Navy Yard or St. Elizabeth's Hospital" (Hutchinson, p.89). Some were engaged in seasonal work. By 1888 not only tradesmen but also a number of white collar workers, including a black lawyer, a graduate of Howard University, as well as fifteen government employees lived in the community, according to the Census of that year (Hutchinson, p.90). By 1900, Barry's Farm residents counted among them a "wide range of trades and professions." Because of increasing segregation, a number of businesses exclusively catering to the black community, such as morticians, barbers, and beauticians, were opened in Hillsdale, as the community preferred to call itself, as well as a drugstore and some other shops (Cantwell, p.359).

Commuting to the city was possible via the Anacostia and Potomac horsecar line, which crossed the river from the city to the white suburb of Uniontown, but it is likely that the working men from the Hillsdale community walked to their places of work. The territory held only few communities besides Hillsdale and Uniontown, among them one (Garfield) which was built by ex-slaves. In the 1890's, the area was further connected to the city by electric streetcar lines and two

more subdivisions were developed (Congress Heights and Randle Highlands). In general, this section of the former county remained rural and sparsely developed, with small residential communities among farms.

Utilities and urban amenities came late to Hillsdale. When gas lines crossed the river, Anacostia had gas street lights, but Hillsdale's dirt streets continued to be lighted by oil lamps (Comm. Rpts., 1894). "The black residents of Hillsdale and Good Hope, farther from the center of the city, received the barest of municipal services--transportation, sewer and water mains, electric lines, and other needed services all stopped at the periphery of Hillsdale"(Hutchinson,p.119). Living conditions in the black communities remained primitive into the Twentieth Century.

Black and white communities were strictly separated from each other; Uniontown and Hillsdale, for example, had separate citizens' associations, and schools were segregated, as indeed they were in Washington itself. Only by the 1920' the local boundaries became more fluid, but various benevolent societies and other self-help organizations as well as a number of churches were oriented ex-clusively to the Hillsdale community, often because black members were either rejected or not permitted in those of white neighborhoods in the area. Today, the whole area is referred to as Anacostia, and what was formerly Barry's Farm is only a section of an almost all black neigh-borhood across the Anacostia River, part of the southeastern sector of the city.

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