

A HISTORY OF BEVERLY HILLS, CHICAGO

by

Mrs. Walter F. Heinemann

1926

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The Weekly Review of Beverly Hills, Chicago, in its issue of October 29, 1926, said:

The Weekly Review presents herewith the first of a series of articles on the history of Beverly Hills, which are published through the courtesy of Mrs. Walter F. Heinnemann, 10423 S. Seeley Avenue.

The seven articles appeared October 29, to December 17, 1926. They were copied from the files the Weekly Review graciously made available and have been re-produced for the convenience of local residents.

A sociological survey of Beverly Hills involves many problems peculiar to that community. Boundaries have shifted, are shifting today; the entire boundary line of the district has never been officially determined, and can be given only according to the opinion prevailing at present.

Beverly Hills is a suburban community inside the city limits of Chicago. It lies east of Western Avenue from 87th Street to 107th Street. Its eastern boundary is the Right-of-Way of the P.C.C. & St. L. Railway from 87th Street to 100th Place, Charles Street to 103rd Street, and Church Street between 103rd and 107th Streets.

This district includes the eastern part of the elevation known in early days as the Blue Island Ridge and two lower ridges lying almost parallel to it on the east. These elevations have been and in many places still are heavily wooded, the trees being for the most part several varieties of oak.

Beverly Hills is entirely a residence community. There is no business that does not exist to meet purely local needs. There is no hotel, no restaurant, except in connection with a bakery, no moving picture theater and only one apartment house. There are a few two family houses, most of them built to resemble single family dwellings. There is no street car inside Beverly Hills, the only transportation being the suburban line of the C.R.I. & P. Railway. Most of the houses are occupied by their owners and are surrounded by well-kept grounds.

There are two parks, seven churches, two public schools, four private schools, the latter not including music and dancing schools. The State Bank of Beverly Hills has been opened--in August, 1926--the first bank in Beverly Hills. The residents are dependent on Washington Heights for their post office, freight depot, express and telegraph.

The history of most communities reveals a shifting population and changing social structure in a geographical location of more or less fixed boundaries under one name. The population of Beverly Hills has changed by addition only and that comparatively slowly, but the community has been known by several well-established names. The changes of name and shifting of boundaries have made research into the history of Beverly Hills difficult and confusing. It has seemed best to give as full and detailed a history as possible of that period ending in 1874, the year of the incorporation of Washington Heights as a village. This is advisable for two reasons. Much material is still accessible which should be gathered up and preserved before it is too late; and if the period preceding the last fifty years is treated fully, it will mark a point of departure from which phases of later history can be worked out more fully than the limits of the present paper permit.

In order to understand the history it will be necessary to review first the succession of names. The whole elevation of land of which Beverly Hills is a part was originally called Blue Island, and this name was chosen by the first village which was located at the south end of the island, the present city of Blue Island. After that, the rest of the ridge was called North Blue Island, until the early seventies. In 1844 Thomas Morgan bought the Blackstone House and established

his home there. This was about 92nd Street and Pleasant Avenue. He called the place Upwood. Although he owned perhaps 3000 acres, the name Upwood seems to have been confined to the neighborhood of his house and only while he lived there.

A few years after 1865, what is now Washington Heights was called "The Crossing". In 1874 the village of Washington Heights was incorporated. It included the higher land between 107th and 95th Streets. The name seems to have been chosen by real estate men to describe the three ridges of land. But the names Washington Heights and Morgan Park were used almost interchangeably for some time.

In 1870 the first train ran over the branch line of the Rock Island. This line left the main track at about 97th Street, curved west on 99th Street to near Wood Street where it turned south and continued through Morgan Park to Blue Island. The station near 97th Street was called "Dummy Junction". There was a station or rather a platform on the south side of 99th Street near what is now Beverly Avenue and was then Oak Street. It was called the Oak Street station. The next was at Prospect Avenue, and was called the Prospect Avenue station. The one at what is now 103rd Street was known as Tracy. Tracy Avenue was the name of that street, named for a Rock Island conductor. The one at 107th Street was called Belmont.

In 1889 the suburban line was changed. The new line left the main line at Gresham, and following its present course joined the old line at 99th Street. This gave a new series of names, Beverly Hills at 91st Street, Longwood at 95th Street and Walden at 99th Street. In 1890 the village of Washington Heights and the territory north of it were annexed to the city of Chicago. The people who lived near to what was called the "Dummy Line" and who went back and forth between these stations and the city got in the habit of saying they lived at Tracy or Longwood even though they were inside the village of Washington Heights and its post office, freight station and stores.

Many people when they wanted to indicate the higher ground in the village of Washington Heights and north of it by some inclusive name, called it The Ridge.

In 1917 various agencies petitioned the C.R.I. & P. Ry. to change names of all the stations between 91st and 107th Streets to Beverly Hills, adding the street name to each. This was done except at Belmont over which there was some disagreement as the station lay south of 107th Street and therefore in Morgan Park territory. A vote was taken in 1925 of the people who use this station and, following this, the station was named Beverly Hills, 107th Street.

The giving of one name to the seven stations which were half a mile apart in a homogeneous community was probably suggested by the action of the Chicago Telephone Company which chose the name Beverly for its new exchange, which, in July, 1914, replaced three old exchanges named Washington Heights, Longwood and Morgan Park. The name Beverly was, of the local names available, best suited for telephone use.

This long, but necessary, discussion of names may be extended to include Longwood Manor, though it is not part of Beverly Hills. This is the name chosen in 1924 by that part of the old village of Washington Heights, which lies between Beverly Avenue and Vincennes Avenue and 95th Street and 100th Place. Two R.I. stations on the main line have recently been painted with the names Longwood Manor-95th Street, and Longwood Manor-99th Street.

The history of the beginnings of Beverly Hills has been written by Miss Alice S. Barnard and her brother, the late W. W. Barnard. Their father was William Barnard, who came out in 1846 as a teacher in the Morgan family. In 1841 he bought a farm extending north from 103rd Street, where he lived in 1847 and bought a farm lying between 103rd and 107th Streets, and between Wood Street and about Longwood Drive. The two brothers, William and Erastus, married sisters, daughters of Wm. Wilcox, who bought 180 acres in 1844. Mr. Barnard's paper was written for a meeting of the Fortnightly Club of Tracy in 1894. Miss Barnard's papers were written for the Historical Society of Morgan Park in 1924. Miss Barnard has given the writer much valuable help, including permission to make use of these papers, which will be largely quoted.

The following is an extract from Alice S. Barnard's "Historical Sketch of Beverly Hills" which extract originally appeared in "The Chicago Democrat", February 4, 1834, when the population of Chicago was about 3000 or estimated 3625 in 1835:

"Nearly south from this town and 12 miles distant is Blue Island, situated in the midst of an ocean of prairie. The name is peculiarly appropriate. It is a table of land about six miles in length, and, on an average about two miles in breadth, of an oval form, rising suddenly some 30 or 40 feet high out of an immense plain that surrounds it on every side. The sides and slopes of the table as well as a portion of the table itself is covered with a handsome growth of timber, forming a belt surrounding about four or five thousand acres of prairie except a small opening at the south end. In summer the plain is covered with luxurious herbage. It is uninhabited and when we visited it, from its stillness, loneliness, and quiet, we pronounced it a vast vegetable solitude. Blue Island, when viewed from a distance, appears standing in an azure mist or vapor--hence the appellation "Blue Island".

"A map of Indian trails in the Chicago Historical Society shows that two trails--one from a portage trail from the mouth of the Calumet River to Lemont and Lockport, and another to Vincennes, Indiana passed through this region, crossing it at Washington Heights. From this crossing the portage on or near the line of 103rd Street, about one half mile, then deflected slightly to the south, probably to avoid a slough, crossed the island diagonally, going down the west slope where Mount Olivet Cemetery is. The Vincennes Trail followed the low ridges to the east of this table of land, crossing this island through the present site of the Village of Blue Island. The map shows also, signal stations at both the north and south ends of the island and a village on Stony Creek just south of Blue Island. Arrow heads, hatchets, etc., found by those who first turned the sod in this vicinity bear silent witness that the Indians were here. Evidences of fires and many Indian implements were found by E. A. Barnard on a sandy ridge which was on or near the portage as described above. The Pottawatomies met in the last great council with the whites, held near Chicago in the autumn of 1833, a few months before the description of Blue Island quoted above, was written, and signed away their last Illinois land. Most of them removed in 1835. E. A. Barnard stood on the corner of 47th Street and Vincennes Avenue in 1847, saw the last of them in a train of 35 or 40 wagons, pass by.

"For 25 years after that, occasional stories floated around of having seen an Indian who had returned to visit the home of his fathers.

"Probably the reporter for the Chicago Democrat drove out over the Vincennes road, the only well-established thoroughfare, the survey of which was completed in 1832 and its course marked by milestones, giving the distance to Vincennes. The course of this road from Gresham to Blue Island was not that of our present Vincennes road. From Gresham it ran diagonally a little south of west to the Blue Island, striking it near 91st Street where it went uphill and ran along nearly south a little west of the grove skirting the east side of the island.

"There was a milestone on 115th Street on top of the hill, and one on 123rd Street east of Western Avenue. It went downhill at the south end of the island nearly at the same place as the present Western Avenue. Many of us remember a post with a hand pointing east down 95th Street marked "To Chicago" where Robey Street enters 95th Street from the north. This post was erected to turn travellers down the new town line road.

"The first white settler, De Witt Lane, built his log cabin in 1834, south of 103rd Street to the east of the grove which bordered the west side of the island. The same year Norman Rexford built a large log house in the northeast part of the island near 91st Street. He put up a sign "The Blue Island" and entertained

travellers. Both of these first settlers soon moved. Mr. Lane sold his claim in 1836 for \$1000 and moved to Lane's Island. Mr. Rexford moved out of our vicinity to the south end of the island.

"Jefferson Gardner built a house in 1836 which he built as a tavern. This house, although additions have greatly altered it, still stands. My grandfather, Wilcox, bought this house and his family moved into it in 1844. There were five other houses in the vicinity, the two log houses of 1834 are no longer occupied. The Pringle house where Mount Olivet Cemetery is, the Peck house near what is now the corner of 95th and Western, the Blackstone house near where the old Rexford tavern was. All of these were commodious frame houses. The Spring house was a small house on the site of the Vanderpoel School and so-called because there was a natural spring of water there. A log house near where 95th Street goes downhill at the west side of the island completes the list for our neighborhood. The Village of Blue Island had a cluster of houses."

The Original Tracy--from W. W. Barnard's Tracy 50 Years Ago. 1894

"Let us look at the present site of Tracy as it appeared then from the top of the hill, choosing a familiar spot, about where Mr. E. L. Roberts now lives (the corner of 101st Street and Longwood Drive). The whole country was a common, covered with a growth of nature's sowing, the only exception being five or ten acres around each settler's home. From the point selected you may look north over an unbroken prairie and see in the distance the smoke hanging over Chicago, which then extended no further south than 12th Street. To the east the view is quite unobstructed, as the ridges, which are now covered with trees, had then only brush which the prairie fires kept so low that with a very few exceptions, their tops rubbed against the shoulders of a man passing through. Looking south the view between the hill and the ridge where the Dummy Track now runs, was a slough in which the waters seldom dried up even in midsummer, and the greater part of the season was difficult to cross. Conclusive of this fact it is stated, a sandhill crane, as late as in the sixties, built her nest for several years between Uncle Erastus' house and the site of the Tracy depot (corner of Wood and 104th Streets), unmolested. No one would wade out after the eggs. Also, when he fenced his farm, the corner of Wood and Belmont Avenue was left without fencing, the water there being so deep that the cattle would not cross. Father told of driving, also, from here to Purington on ice. This slough was covered with a growth of coarse grass edged by high weeds. The weeds were the thickest for two or three rods just under the bluff, especially where the ravines poured their waters into the lowlands. Here, in autumn, wild artichokes, wild sunflowers, and iron weed waved their yellow flowers high above the heads of the tallest men, far surpassing in height the young oaks and hickories beyond. Their rank growth was attained during the summer when the immense swarms of flies kept the cattle away. When the frosts finally killed these insects, droves of from 50 to 100 cattle entering them would be completely hidden from view in the high grass and weeds. Father tells of one day being in the weeds with a farm wagon and a yoke of oxen, having stepped a few rods away he could not find them again except by shouting to his brother, who had remained with the team. The ravine opposite Mr. Hauke's was known as Horse Thief Hollow. Here horse thieves utilized their friendly shade as a hiding place.

"On the place just west of our present school house jointed blue grass and pea vine grew together and were so dense and thickly interlaced that snakes ran along on the top of them.

"Where the fires had swept the ground clean of the coarse growths the more delicate varieties of prairie flowers, phlox, shooting stars, violets, etc., literally covered the earth with varied and beautiful flowers as the grass covers with green, a profusion of bloom of which we have no adequate conception. The orchid family was represented by several varieties of lady slippers, of which great masses showed their pink and white or yellow heads under the trees at the edge of the

groves. Wild fruits were abundant. West Pullman was then a huckleberry patch. Wild strawberries grew thickest on the prairie east of Prospect. Aunt Mary tells of seeing the ground red with them at their place after her older brothers had mowed off the long grass with a scythe so she could find them. Blackberries were thick on almost all of the ridges. Plums were plenty. Hazelnuts were found, but the hickory trees were too small to bear the abundant supply which we enjoyed in our childhood.

"The nearest adjoining community was to the south, at Blue Island, where lived the Robinson, Rexford, Wattle, Jones, Wadham and Brittan families and where Samuel Huntington, Mrs. Sutherland's father, came almost, if not quite, a half century ago. Kyle's tavern, the old ten-mile house on Vincennes Road near Auburn, was the first house north. The nearest house east, situated a little west of a point where State Street strikes the ridge east of South Englewood, was occupied by a member of the great Smith family. The nearest school house was at Blue Island, here the Methodist circuit rider spoke on Sunday. The doctor came from Chicago.

"The Vincennes Road has been mentioned as on the hill, later travel followed the present line of Vincennes Road. Far away settlers in Indiana and Illinois carried their produce to market in Hoosier wagons, called prairie schooners, that is, wagons with white canvas covers. Long trains of these passed by from morning till evening, their numbers fully equal to that of the teams which now drive over the road. When night time came, their camp fires glowed in the darkness. Near grandmother's house where they could enjoy the water from her excellent well was a favorite camping ground, and one of the diversions of the family was to visit the campers in the evening.

"Cattle, hogs, sheep, and occasionally turkeys drifted across the prairie in droves of from 100 to 500. In the fall thousands of these animals covered the prairies, for miles around the city as thick as they could be herded, in separate droves, waiting to get into the stockyards at 12th Street.

"The wild animals had not wholly disappeared, yet were greatly reduced in numbers. At night the howl of the wolf filled the air, but this occasioned no alarms. The game, such as prairie chickens, pigeons, quail, rabbits, squirrels, etc., were abundant and with guns and traps the tables were well supplied. The only large game were the deer, the hunting of which afforded the most exciting sport. Preparatory to these hunts in the fall of the year it was the habit to burn off the prairie grass beyond the timbered ridges to the west. These fires were started and spread by a man mounted on horseback dragging a long burning rope saturated with turpentine through the dry grass. This left the prairie clear for the horses and hounds. The 'Morgan Boys', as they were always called by my uncles, kept a pack of 25 or more greyhounds for deer hunting. Taking advantage of the fact that the deer would come to water then always found in the slough in this valley, the hunters would gather well-mounted on horseback, with their dogs and start the game to the west in a wild chase across the prairies. The strife among the hunters was to reach the game first and claim the horns as a trophy.

"Stagnant water and the breaking up of the new soil made prevalent the fever and ague. Many families still talk of all being sick at one time and of retiring to bed with a pitcher of water to quench the thirst which was sure to come and to which no one would be able to administer. Chills every day for a whole year were not infrequent experiences.

"Prairie fires were very frequent and much dreaded. I feel no account of the early days of Tracy would be complete without a prairie fire. In the afternoon of an autumn day of 1845 our family had their first experience with a prairie fire. Grandfather had died within the first few months of their residence here. The oldest son was sick in bed with the ague. Grandmother with her four younger sons and 14 year old daughter went out to fight the flames, but Mary who was too small to help, remained at home, carrying water to her brother watching the fire. As

she looked to the west and south she heard loud roaring and saw the flames running to 10 to 12 feet high where they reached the tall weeds and extending as far as she could see. Eagerly she watched the family who were fighting the flames. They had nothing with which to plow and they could only set backfires and whip it with wet bags and brush. They fought heroically but were continually obliged to retreat. Nearer and nearer the house it came, but at last, when it came to the low grass only a few rods from the door the fighters conquered. It was the custom to plow around the houses and stacks for protection against these fires. Sometimes two circles were plowed and the grass between them burned off, thus an effectual barrier was made. Dr. Egan, one of the early doctors of Chicago, asked one of the farmers the best way to protect his stacks from fire and was told to plow around them and burn between. He followed the instructions by plowing several times around the stacks and then burning between them and the stacks, which resulted in his burning up his own hay.

"Someone has asked me to add a few words about the price of real estate. In 1836 Mr. Lane sold his pre-emption rights to 160 acres for \$1000. As long ago as that real estate had its ebb and flow in prices. Soon after this real estate went down. Land around here was sold for \$1.25 an acre and many said it was not worth that."

The appended Material is taken from Alice S. Barnard's "Historical Sketch of Beverly Hills".

"In 1852 the Rock Island railroad was completed. A stage coach route which had been passing through Blue Island since the late '30's was discontinued. Trains stopped at Blue Island Village and at times a certain train stopped on signal at 95th Street. All produce was still hauled to Chicago in wagons. The line of the Vincennes road was altered and travel followed the new railroad. The drainage of the land by the railroad made this possible. In time the name followed the travelers, the road Commission formally gave the name Vincennes road to the new route.

"I can learn of not more than ten or twelve houses in 1852, about twice as many as bought in 1844. My father bought land and built in 1851. John Lynch had a home here. Reuben Smith lived on Western Avenue near 109th Street. Probably the first resident on the site of Morgan Park, William Betts, had a good house on 103rd Street on the West Side of the Island. I have not been able to learn the date when the town line roads were first used. Part of them--certainly 95th Street and Western Avenue--were used in 1852 or '53. A notice in the Chicago Democrat in July 1853, called for subscriptions to the stock for the new Plank road. This road was built beginning near 87th or 91st Street on Western Avenue where the toll gate stood. It ran into the present Blue Island Avenue at 26th Street. This was the most direct route from Blue Island to Madison Street. It became a free road in the early '60's.

"Timothy W. Lackore, fresh from the California gold fields, where he met with very moderate success, settled here in 1853, having bought the land both sides of Western Avenue, extending some distance along the north side of 95th Street. The coming of the Lackore's was a notable event--there were so many of them who followed their leader, either that year or very soon. There were the three brothers, Timothy, Lemuel and William, their three cousins, Luke Lackore and the Brightenballs, and Mullens, a cousin of Mrs. William Lackore and parents of Mrs. Timothy--eight families. Then they started things. Nat Mullen taught the first public school in the old spring house. Luke Lackore, a Methodist exhorter, led the first gathering for public worship in the Peck house, then owned and occupied by T. W. T. W. Lackore built a blacksmith shop on the northwest corner of Western Avenue and 95th Street which he and Lemuel ran. Here you might see groups of men talking as at a corner grocery. The district school was discontinued and it was soon moved to a temporary structure about one half mile west on 95th Street. On the north side of 95th Street about two blocks east of Western Avenue there stands a row of poplar trees

*Lackore
Lemuel
Mullens
1853*

which were on the edge of the ground of the district school which was completed in 1856--the North Blue Island School. Luke Lackore continued to hold religious meetings, class meetings, etc., after the first one mentioned above and when the school house was finished, North Blue Island became a regular preaching station where a Methodist circuit rider held services once in two weeks."

The following is contained in Miss Alice S. Barnard's "Reminiscences of North Blue Island in the '60's":

"By 1860 most of the land in this vicinity was fenced and tilled as farms. But considerable tracts, notably hundreds of acres owned by the Morgans, were neither tilled nor fenced, and the cattle of the community pastured in it freely. It is owing to these untilled acres that those of you who came in the '70's and '80's found so great an abundance and variety of wild flowers, especially the prairie flowers, as most of the farmers owning groves--the habitat of the wood flower, spared a part at least of the tract.

"The '60's--the decade of the Civil War! When I was a very little girl, standing by my mother, her brother in a tense whisper said something in her ear. With a look of surprise she said 'Another?' It was many years after, before I learned what this might mean. A few times my uncle, going in the morning to the barn, found a fugitive slave lying in the hay of the manger where he could feel the warm breath of the cattle. I asked the aunt who told me this: Did the farmers have similar experiences? She replied 'I don't know, we never told--you didn't know which side they were on.'

"When Lincoln was candidate for president there was held in the North Blue Island school house what was probably the first political meeting of the neighborhood. The torch-light procession came down the road giving invitation in song to 'Come and join the Wide awakes, the wide Awakes of Illinois', Feeling at the meeting ran high. Mr. Welch, a school teacher and a democrat, was asked to speak. But when he expressed views contrary to republican sentiments he was attacked and had not personal friends and men of fairer minds protected him, he might have been roughly handled. The attackers and defenders, struggling together, produced quite a melee.

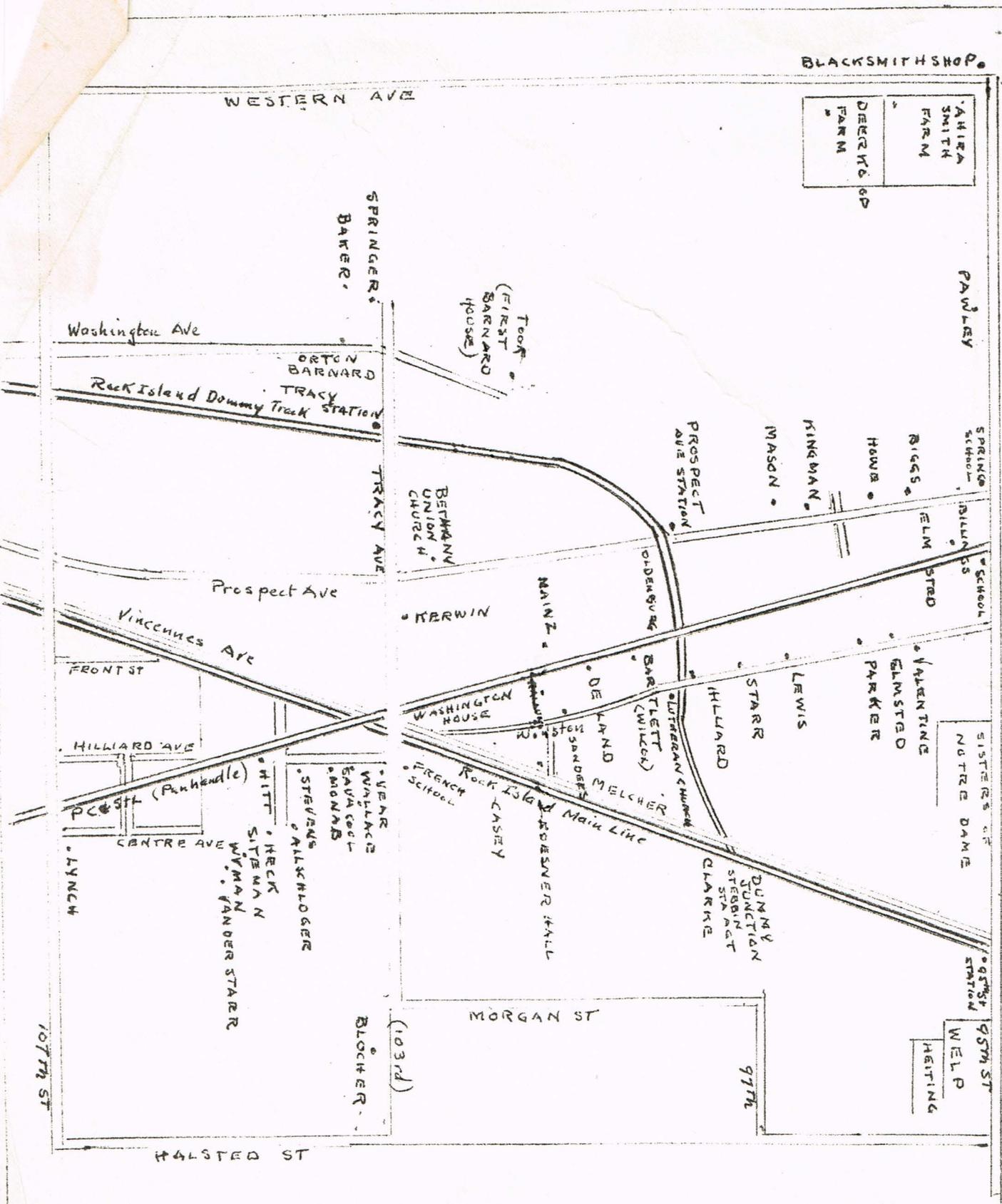
"The call came for three months enlistments. In the Wilcox family were five sons. The two youngest enlisted. Returning at the end of this term they told the story of the reenlistment. Their company stood in line! The sign of reenlistment was a step forward--one after the other took the step--many hesitated. But finally all but one had taken the decisive step and when he finally came forward, wild cheering rent the air. The war went on, the two oldest sons enlisted, leaving the brother incapacitated for military service to care for the farm and the aging mother. One of these never returned and the other spent ten months in Andersonville. This account of the Wilcox boys explains the name of the local G.A.R. post, the Wilcox Post. Of the seven Morgan boys several enlisted and all returned. Erastus A. Barnard marched with Sherman to the Sea.

"Several of the returning soldiers came home on the Panhandle which was completed in 1865 just before the close of the Civil War. This road ran an accommodation train, stopping near its crossing with the Rock Island, and at Upwood, the name of the Morgan place. Commutation tickets were sold and it became possible to go to Chicago and back the same day for a day's shopping, visiting or business, without the long tedious ride with horses. Around the crossing of the R.I. and the Panhandle, or called in Common Parlance 'The Crossing' grew the nucleus of a settlement of the telegraph operator, station master, freight handlers, section hands, and a few others not railroad men, as a blacksmith, carpenter, mason, etc.

"In the early '60's three new school houses were built which affected the North Blue Island school by taking part of the pupils. One was on the site of the Mount Greenwood School; one down on the Plank Road where now is the school at the corner of 79th Street and Western Avenue, a third near where the Washington Heights

SKETCH MAP OF VILLAGE OF WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - 1874

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Vol 19 No 10
December 17 1926



substation of the Chicago post office now stands. The North Blue Island school was still the meeting place on Sundays. For some years service had been held there on alternate Sundays by a Methodist circuit rider.

"In 1866 a revival came. For many evenings in the summer under the leadership of our pastor, Brother Close, meetings were held, farmers came after their day's work--two at least, from six or seven miles away. In the small school room, dimly illuminated by candles brought for that purpose, the interest was intense. These meetings resulted in the formation of the North Blue Island Methodist Church. This church never had a resident pastor during its independent existence. Most of the preachers were Evanston students. They came down near the end of the week staying over Sunday with one of their parishioners, frequently calling on others, thus entering into real pastoral relations with their charges. The circuit, as I remember it, was North Blue Island, Lanes Island and Black Oak. They preached in the morning at N.B.I. and on alternate Sunday afternoons at the other charges. Occasionally, when the presiding Elder came, three charges united in what was called a quarterly meeting.

"It is hard for you to realize how much the hearing of this Elder, who came from elsewhere, was anticipated by people who seldom heard any public speaker on any subject, except their own minister. The people of the visiting charges were entertained at dinner by the people of the neighborhood where the meeting was held. And this social intercourse was also highly valued. Sunday school was held in the summer in pleasant weather. There were no Christmas festivals, for there was no Sunday school held during the winter, but we had a few picnics, though not annually. One long remembered one which was called the 'Four horse picnic' because each wagon was drawn by four horses. We owed to a gift of used books from the First Presbyterian Church of Chicago that we had a really interesting library. A small case of books owned by the school district constituted the first circulating library of this vicinity.

"We had certain customs of our own. A few years ago the name of a man who used to attend that church was mentioned in my presence. I thought there was something odd about that man--what was it? Soon memory answered, he used to sit with his wife in church. We were strictly segregated in church. The men sat on one side, the women on the other. Occasionally a bride and groom sat together on their first appearance in church. In each of these instances the man did not embarrass himself by sitting on the women's side; she sat on the men's side.

"Persons going to The Crossing in the spring and summer of 1869 saw unwonted activities, new fences whitewashed, men clearing the underbrush from the grove, graders making streets. The explanation of all this was that the Blue Island Land Company had purchased a tract of land bounded, as nearly as our old maps show, on the west by Wood Street, between 99th and 107th Streets, extending east, north of 101st Street to Prospect and south of 101st to the main R.I. track. Prospect Avenue following the Grove was their principal street. There were miles of land vacant between here and Chicago, but this company had seen the beauty of these groves and ridges and was platting their ground for suburban lots. The R.I. road was making suburban life here possible by building the branch road to Blue Island. This branch left the main line a little north of 99th Street, paralleled that street through part of its course, joining the track as it now is, a little south of 99th Street. The road was completed as far as the Panhandle tracks by the Fourth of July, 1869. On that day a great advertising picnic was held on the Ridge, east of the Panhandle between 95th and 99th, then unoccupied. Many trains ran out on the Panhandle and R.I. and hundreds of people came. There was picnicing in the grove--and military maneuvers given on the prairie just east of the grove.

"1869 is the last year in the history of this neighborhood as a strictly farming community, thirty-five years after the first settler's cabin was built."

In January, 1874, a meeting was held to organize a village government. The first annual election took place in April, 1874.

The village was called Washington Heights. Its boundaries were Western Avenue on the west between 107th and 95th Streets, on the north, 95th Street from Western Avenue to Halsted Street; the eastern boundary was Halsted Street from 95th Street south to 97th Street, west on 97th to Morgan Street, south on Morgan Street to 103rd Street, east on 103rd Street to Halsted Street, south on Halsted Street to 107th Street; the southern boundary was 107th Street between Western Avenue and Halsted Street.

Home building which followed the real estate picnic of 1869 had been greatly stimulated in 1871 by the Chicago fire. There was a boom in real estate and building which collapsed in the panic of 1873.

A map has been prepared of the Village of Washington Heights as it was about the time of its incorporation. This shows the location of most of the buildings. There has been no attempt at the kind of accuracy that only a tract book and deeds will give. The items of the map are located entirely by the memories of the old settlers.

The village consisted of about a dozen farms with a business and residence center at the railroad crossing. The principal residence street was Prospect Avenue which lay just east of a low ridge of land and followed its curves. Parallel to the R.I. railroad was Vincennes Road, constantly used by farmers and drovers. There were several taverns on this road. There were two picnic groves and a few houses on 103rd Street. The population of the village was made up of farmers who were there before the village grew, people whose work lay in the village, and in railroad service, and a rapidly increasing number of people who worked in the city, but wished to live in a suburban community.

Hilliard and Hitt subdivided eighty acres bounded by what are now 103rd Street, Loomis Street, 107th Street and Racine Avenue. They built a double store, still standing on the southeast corner of what is now Throop and 103rd Streets, but were then called Hilliard and Tracy Avenues. The corner store was used by William Vear as a grocery; the other was a post office and shoe store, and Mr. Dittman, a shoemaker, was the postmaster. A few yards east, in the same block, was a shoe shop owned by Mr. Ebel. Across Throop Street west were four stores, one of which was the drug store of Dr. Louis Lowenthal. The others were a saloon, a hardware store, and a feed store. On the north side of 103rd Street was the school. In the south angle of the railroad crossing was a hotel, the Boutwell House. On Vincennes Road near 102nd was the Washington House, a tavern. Further north were Roesner's Hall and Melder's Tavern and a grocery. There were two schools on 95th Street, one at Winston Avenue and one a little east of Western Avenue.

The first church in Washington Heights was Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church. It was founded in 1870 by Rev. A. Reinkl.

Bethany Union Church was organized in May, 1872, with fourteen charter members representing six denominations. It was the first union church west of the Allegheny Mountains. In July of the same year, the Rev. D. S. Heffron was elected regular pastor and remained sixteen years. For the first two years the services were held in the Lutheran Church. In December, 1874, the congregation moved into their own building on Prospect Avenue near 103rd Street, where they met in the basement for two years until the church was completed. In February, 1905, the present building on Wood and 103rd Streets was dedicated.

The Academy of Our Lady was founded in 1874.

Of these three churches, established before the incorporation of Washington Heights, only the Bethany Union Church is now in Beverly Hills. The other two are in Longwood Manor.

The rest of this paper will have to deal in the briefest fashion with the history of Beverly Hills after 1874, attempting no more than a summary of the most important facts.

The development of Washington Heights between 1874 and 1889 was steady. In 1887 the Chicago Bridge & Iron Works was founded. This business was started in a

small wooden shed at 105th Street, just east of the R.I. Ry., by Horace E. Horton and a partner whom he afterward bought out. The shop burned in 1897, and the building that was erected after that was the nucleus of the present large plant. They do an extensive business, having contracts in Australia, India, Africa, to mention only a few places, at the present time. They employ over four hundred men. This is the only large manufacturing concern near Beverly Hills.

As the population grew building went further west. The ground was more rolling and wooded, and there was no business to break into the strictly residence streets. Another reason was that until a few years ago there were many saloons in Washington Heights. Very early legislation was passed confining them to Vincennes Road and east. The west end of Washington Heights came to be called Tracy, as that was the name of the station which most people used.

A frame meeting hall was built on the north side of 103rd Street east of Prospect Avenue. After it burned, Tracy Hall was built just east of the Rock Island. In the deed, when the property was purchased from William Barnard, was a stipulation that no liquor should ever be sold there. This building still stands. The school built in 1875 afterward burned and the present Alice L. Barnard was built.

The high ground north of Ninety-ninth Street was not accessible until after 1889. In that year the R.I. put in the present track for suburban service and opened up "The North End" to settlement. This centered around Longwood where there was a hall with stores for groceries, and hardware.

On November 4, 1890, the Village of Washington Heights and the land north of it to Eighty-seventh Street were annexed to Chicago. This tended to break up the unity of Washington Heights. That name became more and more confined to the neighborhood of the station. Two other centers developed, one at Tracy and also at Longwood.

For a number of years, in the Ninety's, the Fortnightly Club flourished. It was a very democratic organization, having neither by-laws, president, or dues. It met at the houses of the members and the program was furnished almost entirely by the members.

Among the people who were active in the club the following names have been mentioned: C. O. Howe, Bennett, Kingman, Barnard, Gorton, Griswold, Parker, Warfield, Murray, Beaman, Caberry, E. G. Howe, Wagner, Horton, Mrs. Sutherland, Dr. Heffron, Dr. Morgan, Halliwell, Givens and two ministers of Bethany Union Church, Mr. Worrell and Mr. Hunt. Mr. Horton was head of the Bridge Works and Mr. Parker was V.P. of the R.I. Ry.

Among the early settlers at the north end, was Mr. W. M. R. French, the director of the Art Institute. He built a beautiful home near the site of the old Morgan home.

He influenced John Vanderpoel to come to Beverly Hills. The French's were a charming family and active in maintaining the social life of our neighborhood, which they kept simple and on a high intellectual level. There is still a pronounced interest in art in the north end of Beverly Hills. About 1910, after much agitation, the school board allowed the school at 95th and Prospect Avenue to be renamed the John Vanderpoel School as a memorial to the artist who had recently died. His friends began sending pictures to hang in the school, which now houses a very fine collection of modern American art.

In September 1893, St. Paul's Union Church was organized. In the spring of that year a Sunday School was conducted in the Longwood Station. In the summer it was held in a tent nearby. By September a small frame church was built on the northeast corner of 94th Street and Vanderpoel Avenue. This was a union church from the beginning, eight denominations being represented by the first members. In 1902 and 1903, a stone church was built at the corner of 96th and Wood Streets, where it was used for a time as a studio by Mr. Schreiber, the husband of one of the Hofer sisters.

*town down
1950's*

The Church of the Holy Nativity grew from a small group of people who held weekly meetings at the different homes for several years. These services were conducted by the Rector of the Church of the Mediator in Morgan Park. Then for a time they had afternoon services in St. Paul's Church. But the desire grew for morning services, and in 1899 one of the members offered her barn, rent free. The members worked together and soon the carriage room was ceiled, papered and carpeted, and converted into a comfortable and dignified chapel. In November, 1899, this Chapel was organized into a Mission Church. It was from the association with a stable that the name "Holy Nativity" was chosen. On February 12, 1905, the present church at 95th Street and Longwood Drive was opened. In 1910 this was enlarged.

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church occupies a new building on 99th Street and Winchester Avenue. This church was formed by the union of the Trinity Church of Chicago with the Prospect Avenue Methodist Church in 1920. The beginnings of the Prospect Avenue Church were with those of the St. Paul's Union Church. The congregation met in the Longwood Station as a mission church maintained by the Morgan Park Methodist Church. When they felt themselves strong enough to have their own building, the Methodists built on Winchester Avenue and 94th Street. Those of the original congregation who were not Methodists, combined in a union church which was St. Paul's. After a few years the Methodists felt that their church was too far away from most of the members so they moved it down to Prospect Avenue and 99th Street where the building still stands. Coming down the hill at 99th Street it broke away and coasted down. When The St. Paul congregation outgrew their first building, they purchased their present site from the Methodist Church.

The Thirteenth Church of Christ, Scientist, 10317 Longwood Drive, was organized March 10, 1914. Its first reader was Dr. Elgin Mc Whinney.

St. Barnabas' Church, 101st Place and Longwood Drive, held its first services Christmas morning, 1914.

St. Andrews' Reformed Episcopal Church bought the old building of the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church on 99th Street and Prospect Avenue in 1924, and is being conducted as a mission church.

The Ridge Woman's Club was organized in 1908 under the presidency of Mrs. Harry Keeler. In the spring of 1926 this club changed its name to The Beverly Hills Woman's Club. It began as a mother's club and has grown to a membership of about 500 with six departments. It is affiliated with the General Federation of Women's Clubs. It was the first club in the federation to organize a Floriculture Department.

Ridge Park contains $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres. It lies between 96th and 98th Streets on the east side of Longwood Drive. The field house was opened to the public in January 1913. It is the center of many of the community activities, athletics, swimming, club meetings, dances, as well as large general gatherings like the Fourth of July celebrations.

The De Walt Mechlin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was organized December 6, 1915, and now has more than one hundred members. Just one of the achievements of the chapter may be mentioned here, the placing of a marker on the site of an Indian Signal Station in the Beverly Forest Preserve.

Beverly Post of the American Legion was organized in 1919.

The Ridge University Club was organized in 1923 and has grown rapidly.

In February, 1924, the Ridge Civic Council was organized as a clearing house for all organizations interested in the civic needs of this neighborhood. It includes Beverly Hills, Morgan Park, Washington Heights, and Brainerd. Delegates are sent to it from all the clubs and improvement associations. At present the following improvement associations are operating entirely or partially within the limits of Beverly Hills, Forest Ridge, Leavitt Street, Longwood Drive, Beverly Hills, Beverly Glen, Seeley Avenue, Washington Heights, and Ridge.

There is a weekly newspaper called The Weekly Review. Its business office is at 9908 Walden Parkway. Under the name of the paper is this sentence, "Devoted to the Interests of Beverly Hills, Morgan Park, Washington Heights, Longwood Manor, Brainerd and Fernwood". The present issue is of Volume 19. This must count the years when it was a little church paper called "The Prospect", and was published by and for the Prospect Avenue Methodist Church. Later it was taken over as a commercial venture something more than ten years ago.

After giving a record of the events which make up the history of a community there remains still the question as to what has given the community its own character.

On the physical side the strongest elements have been topography and transportation, in the development of Beverly Hills. It is the highest land in Cook County and could be used for farming when miles of land surrounding it were little better than swamps. It was early open to settlement because the only road entering Chicago from the south, the old post road from Detroit, crossed the whole length of the Blue Island Ridge. The road came this far west to avoid crossing the Calumet River which makes a bend at Blue Island. The character of the land, rolling and wooded, made it peculiarly suitable for homes.

On the social side it is not so easy to determine the dominating influence. The Normal School at 68th Street, easily reached by the R.I. Ry., and the academies in Morgan Park contributed an educational influence on the younger people. The kind of people who would endure the hardships of commuting forty years ago just to have a home in a beautiful place, would exert a very definite influence. Mr. and Mrs. W. M. R. French are examples of how far that influence can reach.

The fortunate outcome of what must have been started as an experiment, the Union Church, had a liberalizing influence. There is no statement that St. Paul's Church was modeled after Bethany Union, but the latter had 21 years successful history when St. Paul's was founded. Trinity Methodist Episcopal is the only other church that is not Episcopal, Christian Scientist or Catholic between 87th and 107th Streets.

A very strong unifying influence was the Rock Island Suburban line. It has always been like a moving club. It is the only transportation and many old friends are seen and new friends met in the stations and on the trains.

The Beverly Hills Woman's Club was for some years the only organization with members from every part of Beverly Hills, and was a factor making for unification. Another strong influence was Ridge Park because of its central location. Since 1920 organizations that represent the whole community have increased in number, for example, The Ridge University Club, and the Beverly Hills Post of the American Legion.

The occasions for conflict have been very few. In the early years there was a sharp line drawn and guarded between the parts of Washington Heights, where liquor could be sold and the rest of the village. In 1889 when the Village Board of Washington Heights voted to allow the Rock Island to change the suburban line there was bitter controversy. The people who owned property near the old line brought an injunction suit, and it was more than a year before the old tracks were removed.

Recently there was some controversy over the zoning laws which are not more than 3 years old. With the exception of one grocery at 91st Street, 99th Street is the only place where business has gone west of the Rock Island Suburban line. There is also a steady pressure being exerted to open up parts of Beverly Hills to apartment houses; it has so far been unsuccessful.

There are a few symbols of continuity. Barnard Park, about half a block in size, is on Longwood Drive and 105th Street. It was given to the city by Erastus Barnard. The Vanderpoel School was named for John Vanderpoel, the artist. A new school on Leavitt and 100th Streets is named Elizabeth Huntington Sutherland for the well-loved woman who was the principal of the Alice L. Barnard School for many