

HISTORIC

FAIRMOUNT

HEIGHTS



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY MARYLAND

## **Margaret L. Brooks**

The brochure is dedicated to the memory of Margaret L. Brooks (1920-2009). Mrs. Brooks was a longtime resident of Fairmount Heights and a founder of the Friends for the Historic Preservation of Fairmount Heights. This brochure was developed in cooperation with the Friends and with the assistance of Nancy Dixon Saxon, founder of Community Preservation and Revitalization, Inc.



***Margaret Brooks***  
***(May 1, 1920-April 25, 2009)***



Fairmount Lodge 92 at 5501 Addison Road, as it appeared c. 1980. Heavily remodeled by 1990, the c. 1940s building once closely resembled the Old Treasury on the State House grounds in Annapolis.

72-09

## Fairmount Heights

**Bounded by Sheriff Road, Balsamtree Drive, 62nd Place, and Eastern Avenue**

Historic sites (4), historic resources (13)

National Register of Historic Places

In the late-nineteenth century, the area that would become Fairmount Heights was comprised of several small farms. These were purchased and consolidated by land speculators in the first decades of the twentieth century. Fairmount Heights contains six subdivisions platted between 1900 and 1923 by different developers. The first was platted as Fairmount Heights in 1900 by Robinson White and Allen Clark, two attorneys and developers from Washington, D.C. The initial platting contained approximately 50 acres that were divided into lots typically measuring 25 by 125 feet. White and Clark encouraged African-Americans to purchase property, and the subdivision became one of the first planned communities for black families in the county. White and Clark sold the lots at affordable prices, making home ownership attainable for many. The earliest dwellings were wood-frame construction and of modest size; however, several substantial houses were also built. Early on, the neighborhood was home to several prominent African-Americans, including William Sidney Pittman, a noted architect and son-in-law of Booker T. Washington. Pittman took an interest in the development of his own neighborhood. He formed the Fairmount Heights Improvement Company, whose purpose was to construct a social center for the community. Pittman had Charity Hall constructed, which was used for social events, as a church, and as the community's first school. In 1908, the Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis Electric Railway opened, providing easy access for Washington, D.C., commuters. Residents of Fairmount Heights used the neighboring Gregory Station, located in Seat Pleasant. Because of the early success of Fairmount Heights and new transportation options available nearby, several new subdivisions were platted adjacent to it. Waterford, a very small subdivision



adjacent to the northeast corner of Fairmount Heights, was platted by J.D. O'Meara in 1907. Mount Wiessner was platted by the Wiessner family in 1909 and featured lots approximately 50 by 125 feet. In 1910, Elizabeth Haines platted North Fairmount Heights on approximately 15 acres of land. The Silence family platted West Fairmount Heights (also known as Bryn Mawr) in 1911 around their family farmstead.

Other African-Americans, encouraged by the development in Fairmount Heights, soon settled in the area. In addition to the Pittmans, James F. Armstrong (supervisor of Colored Schools in Prince George's County), Henry Pinckney (White House steward to President Theodore Roosevelt), and Doswell Brooks (supervisor of Colored Schools in Prince George's County and the first African-American appointed to the Board of Education) all erected houses in the neighborhood. Many residents worked as clerks or messengers for the federal government. In 1920, developer Robinson White constructed 19 bungalows on 62nd Avenue in the original Fairmount Heights subdivision. In 1922, approximately 35 acres of farmland located east of Fairmount Heights was purchased by the Weeks Realty Company and platted as Sylvan Vista. The development marked the sixth and final subdivision making up the present-day Town of Fairmount Heights. Sylvan Vista had deep, narrow lots, generally measuring 25 by 125 feet, similar to the original subdivision of Fairmount Heights. The neighborhood was designed around a market circle with radiating streets. Although the lots were of similar size, the dwellings were generally smaller and more modest than the houses built in the earlier subdivisions. After several unsuccessful attempts to incorporate in the 1920s, the Town of Fairmount Heights was officially incorporated in 1935 with a mayor-council form of government. The town included all six subdivisions platted between 1900 and 1923. In 2011, the Fairmount Heights Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The district was nominated under Criterion A and its significant themes include community planning and development, politics and government, and African-American ethnic heritage. The period of significance extends from 1900 to 1960. The district contains 301 contributing resources and 261 non-contributing resources, distributed over approximately 144 acres.

72-09-9 *Fairmount Heights Elementary School*

**737 61st Avenue**  
Historic site; built 1912

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School is one of the largest buildings in the community. Before its construction, classes were held in nearby Charity Hall, but in early 1911 a group of residents approached the Board of School Commissioners and requested that an elementary school be built. The board agreed, and a building committee (which included W. Sidney Pittman) was appointed. Architect Pittman was chosen to submit a design for the school, and in April 1911 the board ordered that the school be erected in accordance with Pittman's plans and specifications. A few months later, the board purchased four unimproved lots at the corner of Chapel (now 61st) Avenue and Addison Road. The school was constructed and ready to open by June 1912.

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School is a two-story, hip-roof frame structure. The original entrance was through double doors centered in the west facade; an enclosed shed-roof porch now obscures this entrance, and a new double-door entrance has been constructed to the south. The two windows that flank this new entrance have been reconfigured with round arches for the use of the building as a church. The pyramidal-roof cupola, which originally housed the school bell, survives but has been enclosed. The eaves have a deep overhang, punctuated by exposed rafter ends, which have a curved jigsawn profile.

By 1915 enrollment had increased to 160 pupils; there were five teachers, four classrooms and a carpentry shop. At that time this was the only public school with "industrial" training facilities for black students in Prince George's County.<sup>1</sup> This building served as the public school for Fairmount Heights until 1934 when a new eight-room brick school was built at the corner of Addison and Sheriff Roads. At that time, the old school property was purchased by the Mount Zion Apostolic Faith Church. The building has served as a church since the 1930s.



<sup>1</sup> The St. Thomas' Church-supported Croom Industrial and Agricultural Institute offered similar training during the same period. See 86A-027-24.



## 72-09-17 *Samuel Hargrove House*

**5907 K Street**

Historic resource; built 1918

The Hargrove House was built in the North Fairmount Heights subdivision, platted in 1910. It was built for (and probably by) brick mason Samuel Hargrove; it is an unusual dwelling form, with molded brick detail, and is possibly unique in Prince George's County.

The Samuel Hargrove House is a brick town dwelling with unusual molded brick decorative detail. It is two stories high with a shallow hip roof and has a long, narrow floor plan well suited to the lots of the Fairmount Heights subdivision. Most of the long west elevation is sheltered by a one-story porch supported by square brick posts. The main entrance to the house is in the second bay of the narrow north facade, and the remainder of that facade is lighted by large paired windows set in segmentally arched wooden enframements. There is a wide belt course of links and bands at the first story. The second story is embellished with two more of the same belt courses beneath which is a wide band of alternating floral-motif panels. Molded beads arranged in a shallow segmental arch further decorate each opening on the north facade.

Samuel Hargrove was born in North Carolina in 1870; he was listed as a brick mason in the 1910 census, the year in which he and his wife purchased four lots in the newly platted North Fairmount Heights subdivision. There was a small house on the property at that time, and it is not certain whether that house may be incorporated into the present brick structure, or whether the Hargroves lived in the smaller dwelling while constructing the new one. In any case, the present large brick house was finished by 1918 when the assessed value of the improvements leaped to a very substantial \$1,750, nearly three times the value at which they had been assessed consistently since 1910. The property was conveyed by Hargrove's son, Earl W. Hargrove, to Maggie Simms in 1929. Shortly thereafter Simms conveyed the property to Virginia Cooper in 1931. Cooper sold the property in 1938 to Cornelius B. and Lillian R. Weeks. Members of the Weeks family have owned the property since that time.

*The John N. Francis House (72-009-22) at 5909 K Street, stood directly east of the Hargrove house on three lots, and was similar in style. It was Italianate, but executed in wood rather than brick. Three bays across, it had a front porch and a bracketed cornice. The house was built in 1912 for Francis, a foreman for the water company, and demolished circa 1995 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.*



William Sidney Pittman.

*The house was known to the family as "Little White Tops."*

72-09-18

*William Sidney Pittman and Portia Washington Pittman House Site*

**505 Eastern Avenue**

Historic site; 1907 - 2013

The Pittman House was designed and built as a family home by architect William Sidney Pittman in 1907, the year in which he married Portia, daughter of his former mentor, Booker T. Washington. Pittman (1875-1958) had attended Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and then received a degree in Architectural and Mechanical Drawing from Drexel Institute in Philadelphia in 1900. He returned to Tuskegee to teach until 1905, at which time he opened his own architectural office in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington, D.C. After their marriage in 1907, the Pittmans moved into the house that he had designed in the developing suburb of Fairmount Heights. (The house was known to the family as "Little White Tops;" possibly the name derives from roof decorations that have long since disappeared.) Actively involved in the progress of this new community, Sidney Pittman established the Fairmount Heights Mutual Improvement Company. His wife, a professional musician, gave frequent piano recitals at their new home.



The Pittman House is a front-gabled dwelling that stands on high ground overlooking the boundary between Prince George's County and the District of Columbia. The gable front is sheltered by a one-story porch that wraps half way around the east (side) elevation of the house. The long sides of the house are varied by flush crossgables centered in the east and west elevations. There is a one-story, shed-roof projecting bay at the end of the wraparound porch; its three windows light the dining room of the house. A one-story kitchen wing extends to the north. The original German siding is now covered with aluminum siding. The interior features a Classical Revival mantel, multiband moldings and staircase details typical of the period. In 1906 Pittman had won a national competition for the design of the Negro Building at the Tercentennial Exposition at Jamestown, Virginia. This exposition building, completed in 1907, assured Pittman widespread fame and respect in a new but increasing group of African-American architects. The Pittmans left Washington at the end of 1912, moving to Dallas, Texas, where Pittman spent the rest of his life. The house was sold in 1915 to Ellen Adams and was still owned and occupied by her descendants until 2012. The dwelling became a boarding house with a dance pavilion on the grounds, and later a private residence for the family. Typical of the suburban dwellings which were being built in the early years of this century, the Pittman House was significant because it was designed and occupied by one of the area's first and most prominent black architects. Damaged by fire, it was demolished in 2013.



72-09-23 *Alice Dorsey House*

**910 59th Avenue**

Built c. 1904

The Alice Dorsey House is one of the larger dwellings among the early housing stock in Fairmount Heights. Basically square in plan, it is a variation on the

Foursquare form which was very popular at the turn of the twentieth century, in this case varied by a pedimented crossgable asymmetrically placed on the main facade.

The Alice Dorsey House is a variation on the popular Foursquare house form and is two-and-one-half stories high, with a hip roof and of wood frame construction. Entrance is in the second (center) bay of the irregular four-bay east facade through a door with a single-pane transom and a plain board surround. A small pediment surmounts the northernmost two bays, an unusual feature for a house with a hip roof. This feature gives the house an irregular appearance and suggests that the house was significantly altered in the past. The main east facade is sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with turned posts and plain balustrade. The original wood siding is covered with synthetic siding.

Two lots in the first subdivision of Fairmount Heights were purchased by Alice R. Dorsey, who had the house built circa 1904. She listed herself as a messenger for the U.S. Treasury in the 1910 census; she was then 51 years of age, had been born in South Carolina, and lived in this house with her sister, Anne Bryant, and her daughters, Marion Dorsey and Daisy Thornton, and Daisy's two children.

72-09-24 *James F. Armstrong House*

**908 59th Avenue**

Historic site; built c. 1905

The James F. Armstrong House exhibits typical and fine detail in its wraparound porch, pediment and projecting bays. This house was built for Armstrong, who, like many of the other early settlers in Fairmount Heights, was a graduate of Tuskegee Institute. Armstrong had subsequently attended Howard University Law School, graduating in 1904. In the following year he purchased three lots in the original Fairmount Heights subdivision and had the house built. It remained in the ownership of his family for nearly 90 years.

The James Armstrong House is a two-and-one-half-story cross-gabled house of wood frame construction. Its principal east facade exhibits gable-front-and-wing plan, with the wing to the left and the gable front to the right. Entrance is in the second bay of the two-bay wing, and there is another entrance in the first bay of the front-gabled section. Both entrances are sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with plain rail balustrade, turned posts, jigsawed openwork brackets and a decorative rail frieze; this porch wraps around and shelters both the front-gabled section and the entrance bay of the wing. The



wide, three-bay front-gabled section is lighted by a two-story projecting semi-octagonal bay with two-over-two windows in all faces; above this projecting bay, the modillioned cornice forms a pediment at loft level. Within the pediment is a four-pane round-arch window with wood keystone molding.

The Armstrong House is a good example of late-Victorian domestic architecture and one of the handsomest of the early dwellings in the Fairmount Heights community. In 1911 James Armstrong was appointed as a member of the building committee for the proposed Fairmount Heights Elementary School, and a few years

later was named Director of Manual Training at that school. He also served until 1919 as the Supervisor of Colored Schools in Prince George's County. He continued to be active in Fairmount Heights community affairs, serving as chairman of the citizens association and as one of the first council members after the town was incorporated.



72-09-25

*Fairmount Heights  
Methodist Episcopal  
Church*

**716 59th Avenue**

Historic resource; built 1911

Fairmount Heights Methodist Episcopal Church (now known as Grace United Methodist Church) was originally established in 1909, and the first services were held in Charity Hall. For a short

time after this, services were held in Pastor Joshua Barnes' home near the church's present location. In 1909, after Barnes' death, the trustees of the church acquired two unimproved lots on Fairmount Avenue and began to raise money for the construction of a church. The building was completed in 1911 and was a simple frame meetinghouse-style structure, with three gothic-arch windows in the principal gable front and a small belfry at the ridge. In 1950, under the pastorate of the Reverend Edward S. Williams, the church was enlarged, the entry tower was constructed and the entire structure was covered with stucco.

Fairmount Heights Methodist Episcopal Church is a large stucco-covered building of wood frame construction; it is cross-gabled in form, with a corner entry tower. The six bays of the main block are lighted by gothic-arch windows with tracery, and the principal east gable front is lighted by a tall gothic-arch window flanked by two smaller ones, all filled with stained glass. Entrance is into the east facade of the entry tower, through plain wooden double doors with a single pane transom. Above the transom, a wide arch is inset in the stucco surface, giving the entrance a round-arch enframement. Above the entrance a window in the form of a cross is inset in the stucco covering. The tower has a shallow pyramidal roof, and is lighted on the south side by a tall louvered window.



72-09-26

*Trammell-Taylor House*

**717 59th Avenue**

Historic resource; built c. 1910

One of the most substantial houses in the early development of this community, the Trammell-Taylor House was built for John and Martha Trammell, who purchased two unimproved

lots from developer Robinson White in 1907. John Trammell worked as a waiter in a restaurant when he first settled in Fairmount Heights. The Trammells remained in their family home until 1937.

The Trammell-Taylor House is a frame dwelling with Classical Revival decorative details. It is two-and-one-half stories high, side-gabled and of wood frame construction. It is distinguished by its deep boxed cornice returned at the gable ends, and its cornice decoration of jig-sawn brackets alternating with smaller modillions. Entrance is in the central bay of the three-bay west facade and is sheltered by a one-story gabled entry porch with Tuscan columns. Above the entry porch is a narrow nine-pane diamond-shaped window, and a single-pane octagonal window lights the loft level in each gable end. In 1961 this house became the home and law office of Circuit Court Judge James H. Taylor, a Marylander who was educated at Howard University and was admitted to the Maryland Bar in 1956. During the 1960s, he served as Assistant State's Attorney for Prince George's County and Master for Juvenile Cases. In 1969 he was appointed to the Seventh Judicial Circuit Court and served there until 1988.



72-09-27 *Towles-Brooks House*

**708 59th Avenue**

Historic resource; built c. 1910

The Towles-Brooks House is a good example of a cross-gabled suburban dwelling with late-Victorian decorative detail. It is representative of a popular house form of the early twentieth century, particularly the type built on one large subdivision lot.

The Towles-Brooks House is two-stories high, cross-gabled, and of wood frame construction. It is clad with synthetic siding. Entrance is in the third bay of the three-bay main east gable front, sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch that wraps around the house and leads to a secondary entrance in the cross-gabled wing. The porch has turned posts with jigsawn brackets and an openwork criss-cross balustrade. The plain boxed cornice is returned at the gable ends.

This house was built circa 1910 by Samuel Towles, shortly after he purchased two unimproved lots from developer Robinson White. Samuel Towles, like many others who settled in Fairmount Heights, commuted to Washington where he worked as a messenger for the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The property passed to his nephew, Lawrence Brooks, who served on the Town Council of Fairmount Heights and as its mayor from 1967 to 1972. Brooks died in 1990, and his family remains in the house to the present day.

In the 1960s the Brooks family ran a store that stood nearby called the Brooks Market. According to Margaret Brooks, who was interviewed shortly before her death in 2009, the market sold a roster of items with an early-twentieth-century savor, including kerosene, cold cuts, candy, tobacco, and loose cigars. Coal oil was sold outside, from the porch.



72-09-31

*William B. Coles House*

**730 60th Avenue**

Historic resource; built 1906

The William B. Coles House is prominently sited on one of the highest hills in the Town of Fairmount Heights. It was built in 1906 on a group of lots (amounting to approximately 1/3 acre) in the first subdivision of the town. It was built by Ezra and Florence Kemp, who bought four unimproved lots from developer Allen C. Clark in 1900. In 1908, after the death of Ezra Kemp, his widow sold the property to William B. and Isadora Coles, who raised their family in this house.

The Coles House is cross-gabled and two-and-one-half stories high, of wood frame construction. Entrance is in the third bay of the three-bay east gable front, through a door with a transom and sidelights; the facade is sheltered by a one-story porch with turned posts and plain balustrade. The original wood siding is now covered with white aluminum siding, and the windows have black synthetic louvered shutters. The grounds are defined by a low stone wall, with gateposts which lead to the main entrance. Like many of his neighbors, William Coles commuted to Washington, where he worked as a clerk in the U.S. Department of the Treasury. An interesting detail about the house is a surviving legal agreement in which it is recorded that, in 1914, William Coles contracted with the Detroit Heating Company to have a complete system of central heating installed in the house. The property passed, after the deaths of William and Isadora Coles, to their son, William T. Coles, and remained the home of his family until 1936.

*A similarly styled dwelling is the Juliet Hill House (72-009-34) located at 604 60th Place, and built for Juliet Hill circa 1910.*



72-09-32

*John S. Johnson House*

**612 60th Place**

Historic resource; built 1911

The John S. Johnson House is a cross-gabled frame dwelling, typical of the houses built on larger lots or groups of lots in developing subdivisions of the early twentieth century. It was built in 1911 for John S. Johnson, who had settled in Fairmount Heights a few years earlier and rented a house three blocks to the north of the present house. In 1908, Johnson, who worked as a Pullman porter, purchased from developer Clark two unimproved lots on Addison Avenue (now 60th Place) and in 1911 had this house constructed. Johnson later became the first president of the United Citizens Associations of Fairmount Heights.

The Johnson House is two stories high and of wood frame construction; it is distinguished by its decorative wraparound porch and its setting on a partially wooded corner lot. Entrance is in the third bay of the three-bay principal gable front, sheltered by a one-story porch with turned posts and decorative jig-sawn brackets; the porch turns and wraps around part of the side elevation. The windows were originally two-over-two in configuration as shown in this photograph, but have since been replaced with vinyl in a one-over-one configuration.

72-09-33 *Henry Pinckney House*

**608 60th Place**

Historic resource; built c. 1905

The Pinckney House is representative of the American Foursquare, a popular dwelling type with a basically square floor plan. Wider than the standard front-gabled house form and typically built on several lots, the Foursquare was one of the most substantial house forms in the subdivisions of the early twentieth century.

The Henry Pinckney House is a large, two-story dwelling of Foursquare plan; it has a hip roof pierced by gable dormers on three planes of the roof. Entrance is in the center bay of the main east facade through a shallow projecting pavilion surmounted by a small pedimented crossgable which breaks the east plane of the roof. Unlike the pedimented dormers in the north and south planes, this east dormer does not include a window. The original wood siding is covered on the first story by formstone veneer and on the second story by aluminum siding.

Henry Pinckney was born in South Carolina and moved to the area when Theodore Roosevelt served as steward to Roosevelt during his vice presidency and then during his presidency. Pinckney was known throughout Washington, D.C., especially at Eastern



**LEFT:** The Pinckney House today  
**BELOW:** Henry Pickney's son Roswell playing with Teddy Roosevelt's son Quentin at the south front of the White House, Washington, D.C.



Market, because he frequently made purchases for the President there. He also delivered messages for Roosevelt. The Pinckney children played with the Roosevelt children as well. His work under Roosevelt helped him to secure positions with other political figures following Roosevelt's tenure. Henry Pinckney died in 1911, leaving the house to his wife Lenora and three children, Roswell, Theodore, and Lenore Emily. Lenora Pinckney worked for the United States Department of Agriculture and was, with her husband, one of the founding members of the First Presbyterian Church of Fairmount Heights. Henry Pinckney's great-granddaughter, Emily McGhee, taught English at Fairmount Heights Senior High School. The current owner was one of her pupils. Henry Pinckney's great-grandson, Kevin Clay Pinckney, wrote an extended essay called "Henry Pinckney, White House Steward." Material from this work was used for a 2008 exhibition called *The Working White House: Two Centuries of Traditions and Memories*, held by the White House Historical Association and the Smithsonian Institute Traveling Exhibition Service.



72-09-35 *Cornelius Fonville House*

**602 60th Place**  
Historic resource; built 1912

The Fonville House is representative of the Foursquare houses popular in the early years of this century; it is one of the larger houses of the early building period in this community. It was built by Cornelius Fonville, who worked as a messenger for the Bureau of Engraving, and who settled in Fairmount Heights with his wife and family in the early years of the development.

The Fonville House is two stories high with a hip roof; its floor plan is basically square, three bays by three. Entrance is in the central bay of the main, southeast facade, which is sheltered by a one-story porch. The original wood siding of the house is presently covered with white vinyl siding, and the original wood columns have been replaced by metal tracery supports. The house rests on a high brick basement, and a flight of steps provides access to the porch.

*"A fine eight room dwelling with cellar, furnace and all modern improvements. . . . Fairmount Heights is on a boom."*

In 1912, *The Washington Bee*, Washington's principal African-American newspaper, reported that it was "a fine eight room dwelling with cellar, furnace and all modern improvements. . . .Fairmount Heights is on a boom." Fonville was active in the citizens associations of Fairmount Heights and was one of the leaders in the movement toward the town's incorporation in 1935.

72-09-36 *Doswell Brooks House*

**6107 Foote Avenue**

Historic resource; built 1928

The Doswell Brooks House is a small bungalow, representative of a dwelling type that was frequently popular in the years between the world wars. This house is also significant for the prominence of its owner and resident, Doswell Brooks.

The Brooks House is one-and-one-half stories high, with hip roof, and of wood frame construction. The entrance is centered in the northeast facade, sheltered by a screened porch inset beneath the principal plane of the roof, supported by paneled, tapered posts set on molded block bases. Centered in the principal plane of the roof is a small hip-roof dormer that encloses two narrow windows. The original wood siding of the house is now sheathed with yellow synthetic siding, and the building stands on a high basement of molded concrete block.

The Brooks House was built in 1928 on a lot in the Mount Wiessner subdivision of Fairmount Heights, the third subdivision to be platted in the community. It was built for Doswell and Anita Brooks after they purchased unimproved Lot 8. Doswell Brooks was active in the Prince George's County school system; he served as Supervisor of Colored Schools beginning in 1922, and in 1956 was appointed as the first African-American member of the Board of Education. He also served as a member of the Fairmount Heights Town Council and as mayor of the town from 1955 until shortly before his death in 1968. This bungalow remained the home of Anita Brooks for nearly 20 years after the death of Doswell Brooks.

**RIGHT: The D. Brooks House.**

*The James A. Campbell House (72-009-37) at 709 61st Avenue, was built by carpenter Louis Brown in 1921 and was similar in style to the Doswell Brooks House. A frame bungalow with a pyramidal roof, it was topped by a semi-octagonal dormer and was four bays across, with an entrance sheltered by a porch in the westernmost bay. Campbell served as the Mayor of Fairmount Heights from 1943–1955. The house was demolished in 1991.*





### *72-09-28 Louis Brown House*

**701 58th Avenue**

Historic resource; built c. 1920s

The Louis Brown House is a Tudor Revival-style dwelling. It was built by and for Brown, a carpenter, who was associated with several other buildings in the town. The Brown House is a two-story asymmetrical cross-gabled dwelling of wood frame construction. It has considerable variety in the lines of its gables and dormers; a wraparound porch shelters the entrance into the asymmetrical west facade and wraps around to shelter much of the north elevation as well. The porch roof is supported by pairs of tapered wood posts on high bases of molded concrete block. The original wood siding is now covered by synthetic sheathing of two different colors and textures.

This house stands on the boundary between Prince George's County and the District of Columbia. A small house was built on the lot as early as 1905, after the lot was purchased by Daniel Brown, and it was the home of Daniel Brown's family for nearly a generation. This earlier building was demolished when the present house was built in the late 1920s. The new construction was undertaken by Louis, son of Daniel Brown; the younger Brown resided in the house for the remainder of his life.



### *72-09-29 World War II Monument*

**701 59th Avenue**

Historic site; erected 1946

The World War II Monument was erected to honor the citizens of Fairmount Heights who served in the armed forces during the war. In the early years of the Fairmount Heights community this small park was the property of the Reverend Joshua Barnes. The earliest Methodist worship services were held in his house on this site before the construction of the Fairmount Heights Methodist Episcopal Church in 1911. The monument, together with the curved wall and grassy park area, serves as an entryway into the town from Eastern Avenue.

The World War II Monument is an obelisk, constructed of blocks of gray granite and orange sandstone in random arrangement. The principal section of the monument is a pyramid, rising from a square base of the same random stone. The base rests on a single, wide course of granite; a similar course of granite forms a line of demarcation between the base and the pyramid, and two more

courses form horizontal lines of decoration. The monument stands in a triangular lot with benches and shrubs fronted by a curved section of brick wall. It was documented that on the south (principal) plate was inscribed: "In honor of the men and women of Fairmount Heights who served in World War II/Erected in November 1946 by the Monument Memorial Committee." The monument and park were restored in 2012, and both are now protected by an established easement held by M-NCPPC.



The Isaac Brown house, photographed in 1995.

### *72-09-30 Isaac Brown House*

**715 59th Place**

Historic site; built c. 1911

This is a good example of a house form that was popular in the developing suburbs of the early twentieth century. The house was built circa 1911 for Isaac and Maria Brown, who had purchased two unimproved lots from developer Robinson White in 1909. The Browns did not reside in the house but instead used it as a rental property. The house remained in the possession of the family until 1954, when it was sold by the heirs of Isaac and Maria Brown. For more than 30 years afterwards, this was the home of the Gordon family.

The Isaac Brown House is a two-story, front-gabled frame house. Entrance is in the first bay of the two-bay northwest gable front. This facade was originally sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with plain rail balustrade, and turned posts with jig-sawn openwork brackets. There is a brick chimney centered at the ridge, and the boxed cornice is returned at the gable front. Siding is plain horizontal board. Houses of this type were built over a nearly 50-year time period; they were particularly suitable for the deep, narrow lots of early twentieth-century residential subdivisions. Similar dwellings, and those of a slightly larger form, can be found in communities like Fairmount Heights, North Brentwood, and Bowie. Although very simple in plan, this dwelling is a representative and therefore important example of a type of house popular in these developing suburbs.

Marjorie Osborne is a former long-time neighbor and recent owner of the Isaac Brown House. In an oral history related to Charlotte King in June 2008, Ms. Osborne recalls the Isaac Brown House as a gathering place for residents of the neighborhood. The previous tenant, Mrs. Hester Gordon, was an "aunt" to everyone on 59th Place. Ms. Osborne also describes the house as originally having no running water and no central heat. The bathroom is an addition to the rear of the house. The original porch collapsed in the 1990s and was rebuilt without the decorative brackets and turned posts.



Charity Hall as it looks today.

72-09-38 *Charity Hall*

**715 61st Avenue**  
Built c. 1908

Charity Hall, although drastically altered from its original form, is an important historic feature of the Fairmount Heights community. The main block of the building was constructed by the Fairmount Heights Mutual Improvement Company to serve as a public hall for religious, charitable, and social functions. The Mutual Improvement Company had been organized by architect William Sidney Pittman, and one of its purposes was to provide a social center for the community. In 1908 the company purchased two unimproved lots on Chapel (now 61st) Avenue and erected the main part of this building, following Pittman's design. The building then served not only as a social hall, but also briefly as the first location of Methodist church services in 1909. It also served as a classroom until the public school was completed in 1912. In 1924, the two lots were purchased by Malkiah Charity, one of the original directors of the Mutual Improvement Company, and the building continued to be used as a gathering place for a variety of religious, social and charitable events. It has, apparently, always been known as Charity Hall.

The hall suffered serious damage by fire and was rebuilt in the 1960s. In recent years, the building has been enlarged by both a rear wing and two asymmetrical flanking additions to the gable front. Consequently it bears little resemblance to its original form; it is, however, an important element in the history of the Fairmount Heights community.

72-09-39 *Robert S. Nichols House*

**802 58th Avenue**

Historic resource; built 1908

The Robert S. Nichols House was certainly one of the community's most handsome and substantial houses when it was built in 1908 by John F. Collins, who sold the house and two lots in 1909 to Robert S. Nichols. Nichols had come to Maryland from Texas and worked in the U.S. Pension Office in the District of Columbia. He settled with his young family in this new house on White (now 58th) Avenue and soon became active in community affairs. He headed the citizens committee which pursued and brought about the establishment of the public school in Fairmount Heights, and in 1912 served on the building committee of that school. Nichols worked toward the incorporation of Fairmount Heights and, in 1935, when the town was incorporated, he was elected as its first mayor. He served two consecutive one-year terms. The house remained in Nichols family ownership until after the death of Robert Nichols in 1960.

The Robert S. Nichols House is a two-part frame dwelling: the main block is two-and-one-half stories high with a hip roof, and attached to its north elevation is a two-story hip-roof wing inset from the principal east facade. The east entrance to the main block is sheltered by a porch with turned posts and jig-sawn brackets, which wraps around to shelter another entrance into the wing. There is a hip-roof dormer in the east plane of the roof.





72-09-41

## Bungalow Row

**62nd Avenue between Foote Street  
and Addison Avenue**

Built 1920

**Pictured here are 611, 609, and 607 62nd Avenue. Since this photograph was taken in 1991, 609 has been replaced with a new house, 607 has been remodeled to serve as a church, and 611 is intact but its porch has been removed.**

In 1920, developer Robinson White had 19 small frame bungalows, of identical form and style, built on the lots on both sides of a block of Fairview (now 62nd) Avenue in the original Fairmount Heights subdivision. These one-story, four-room dwellings closely resemble the “Rosita” style of bungalow being produced by Sears, Roebuck and Company during this period, and it is likely that they were all built from Sears material. Each had a hipped roof and central chimney and a shed-roof porch sheltering the three-bay principal facade. Most were built into a slope and rested on a high basement; others were built on more level ground and rested on a simple foundation. Robinson White began to sell these small, inexpensive dwellings as soon as they were completed; by 1926 he had sold seven of the bungalows and by 1929 three more. He rented to tenants some of the unsold bungalows, gradually selling all of the rest by the time of his death in 1939.

*Another identical bungalow, the Rice House (72-009-44) also built in 1920 by developer White, stood at 904 59th Avenue; it was purchased by the Town of Fairmount Heights and demolished circa 2001. These small bungalows illustrate the importance of mail-order houses in developing communities of the post-World War I era, and represent a significant trend in the development of Fairmount Heights.*

## 72-09-42 Municipal Center Site

**717 60th Place**

1942—2000

The Fairmount Height Municipal Center was constructed as a fire hall; it later served as a health clinic, library, general meeting space and, most importantly, as the town hall. The lots on which it stood were purchased by the town between 1939 and 1941, and two citizens undertook to erect a building to serve both as a fire house and a meeting place.

The Municipal Center was a two-part building, constructed of brick and concrete block. The main block was two-and-one-half stories and front-gabled, fronting west on 60th Place. The gable front originally had a wide garage door in the first bay; it had been partially filled in, and the closed inset space was lighted by a window. At the west end of the roof ridge stood a small gabled belfry which originally housed the fire bell. In the 1960s the walls of the entire building were covered with white stucco; a formstone veneer was applied to the first story of the west front, and formstone trim was applied around the windows.

The main block was completed and in use by 1942; a fire engine was purchased and stored in the garage space on the first story, and the second story was used as the town's principal meeting space. The south wing was built in 1946. Within a few years the Fire Department had moved out of the building, and offices were created for the mayor and council, the town clerk, and health and police departments. A health clinic was maintained in the building for several decades. In 1948 a library was established in the wing and was maintained for more than a decade.

**The Municipal Center in the 1980s.**

In the 1990s the town offices and meeting space were reestablished in the community center building in Sylvan Vista, and the Town of Fairmount Heights demolished the building.



72-09-43

## Prince Albert Washington House

49 Eastern Avenue

Historic resource; built 1922-24

The Washington House was built on property purchased by Prince Albert Washington in 1921 in the West Fairmount Heights subdivision; this was the fifth subdivision (platted in 1911) to make up the community of Fairmount Heights. Washington spent the

next two years, with the help of friends, building a house (Model 13085) with plans and materials ordered from Sears, Roebuck and Company. This model was nearly identical to Sears popular "Westly" model.

The Prince Albert Washington House is a one-and-one-half-story, side-gabled frame bungalow. Principal entrance is in the central bay fronting on Eastern Avenue and is sheltered by a facade-wide front porch. The porch is inset beneath the principal plane of the roof and supported by four tapered, paneled wood posts that rest on bases of molded concrete block. The first story is sheathed with wood siding painted white, and the gables are sided with brown rectangular shingles. Centered in the front plane of the roof is a large balconied dormer, whose overhanging eaves are supported at the apex and corners by decorative stick-style brackets.

Prince Albert Washington's mother had emigrated from Darmstadt, Germany, and his father was from Columbia, South Carolina. Washington served in the armed forces during World War I before beginning work at the Department of the Interior.

### SEVEN ROOMS AND BATH



**THE WESTLY** is a high grade two-story home, retaining the architectural beauty of a modern bungalow. Built everywhere. Every customer satisfied. Praiseworthy letters from Westly owners tell of the fine interior arrangement, beautiful woodwork, our approved "Honor Bill" ready-cut system of construction, and of savings even as high as \$1,500.00.

**Exterior.** Sided with narrow bevel clear cypress siding in first story; dormer, roof and second story covered with best grade of thick cedar shingles. Large front porch, 30 feet by 8 feet. Porch can be screened or glazed.

Can be built on a lot 35 feet wide



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

**Honor Bill**  
*The Westly*  
No. P13085 "Already Cut" and Fitted  
**\$2,614.00**

#### FIRST FLOOR

**The Living Room.** Size, 17 feet 8 inches by 15 feet 9 inches. An attractive feature is the open stairway that leads to the second floor. A coat closet with a mirror door is near the stairway. Furniture can be attractively arranged because of space. There are two windows at the side and one window at the front.

**The Music Room.** French doors connect with the living room. This music room is sometimes used for a bedroom instead. Size, 11 feet 2 inches by 9 feet 5 inches. Has a double window at the side and a high wash looking over the space for piano at the rear.

**The Dining Room.** A wide casad opening connects the living room and dining room. Size of dining room, 11 feet 2 inches by 12 feet 2 inches. Space for a complete dining set, including a buffet. Two side windows and one front window provide light and air.

**The Kitchen.** 11 feet 2 inches by 10 feet 8 inches. A swinging door connects with dining room. The space for sink, range table and chair is laid out to save steps for the housewife. One side window and one rear window furnish light and cross ventilation. The pantry has five roomy shelves and a window.

A door from the kitchen opens into the rear porch, which has stairs to basement and to grade.

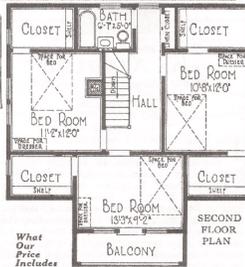
#### SECOND FLOOR

**The Bedrooms.** Stairs from the living room lead directly into a well lighted hall. This hall connects with the three bedrooms, bathroom and linen closet. The three bedrooms are all of good size. The front bedroom has a door to balcony. Each bedroom has two windows and a spacious clothes closet with a window. One bedroom has two clothes closets.

**The Basement.** Space for furnace, laundry and storage.

**Height of Ceilings.** First floor, 9 feet from floor to ceiling. Second floor, 8 feet 2 inches from floor to ceiling. Basement, 7 feet from floor to joists.

For Our Easy Payment Plan See Page 144



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

**What Our Price Includes**  
At the price quoted we will furnish all the material to build this seven-room house, consisting of:  
Lumber; Lath;  
Roofing, Best Grade Clear Red Cedar Shingles;  
Siding, Best Cypress or Clear Red Cedar, Best;  
Framing Lumber, No. 1 Quality Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;  
Clear Oak for Living Room, Dining Room and Music Room, Clear Maple for Kitchen, Pantry and Bathroom, Clear Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock for Balance of Rooms;  
Porch Flooring, Clear Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;  
Ceiling, Clear Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;  
High Grade Millwork (see pages 110 and 111);  
Interior Doors, Six-Panel Design for First Floor, and Two-Panel Design for Second Floor, All of Douglas Fir;  
Trim, Beautiful Grain Douglas Fir or Yellow Pine;  
Windows, California Clear White Pine;  
Medicine Case;  
Eaves Trough Down Spout;  
48-Lb. Building Paper; Sash Weights;  
Chicago Special Hardware (see page 133);  
Paint for Three Coats Outside Trim and Siding;  
Stain for Two Brush Coats for Shingles on Gable Ends;  
Shellac and Varnish for Interior Trim and Doors;  
Shellac, Paste Filler and Floor Varnish for Oak and Maple Floors;  
Complete Plans and Specifications.  
We guarantee enough material to build this house. Price does not include cement, brick or plaster. See description of "Honor Bill" Houses on pages 12 and 13.

#### OPTIONS

Sheet Plaster and Plaster Finish, to take the place of wood with \$214.00 extra. (See page 109)  
Oriental Asphalt Shingles, for roof, guaranteed 17 years, instead of wood shingles, \$26.00 extra.  
Oak Doors and Trim for living room, dining room, also Storm Doors and Windows, \$109.00 extra.  
Screen Doors and Windows, guaranteed wire, \$62.00 extra.  
For prices of Plumbing, Heating, Wiring, Electric Fixtures and Shades, see pages 110 and 111.

Washington purchased the Fairmount Heights property, began the building project and then moved into the house with his new bride in 1924. His daughter, Anne Donelson, now a grandmother, still owns and occupies the house with her family.



**RIGHT:** The house under construction in the 1920s.  
**BELOW:** The house today.





*72-09-48 Dorsey-Bush House*

**5603 Addison Road**  
c. 1905

The Dorsey-Bush House was presumably constructed by Samuel Fowler, a carpenter by trade, who had purchased the lots in 1904 from Robinson White, the original subdivider. The dwelling remained in the Fowler family until 1919, when it was conveyed to Charles M. Dorsey. Dorsey enlarged the property with the purchase of Lot 3 in 1923. The Dorsey

family owned the property until 1984, when it was inherited by the current owners, Tyrone and Carolyn Bush. Although altered, the building still retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as an early twentieth-century dwelling constructed in the Town of Fairmount Heights.

This two story, two-bay single-family dwelling has a rectangular, detached rowhouse form. The wood frame structure is covered with stucco that conceals the original German siding. Set on a solid stretcher-bond brick foundation, the dwelling is capped by a shed roof covered with asphalt shingles. The roof is finished with overhanging eaves, a boxed-wood cornice, sawn wood brackets and a wide fascia board on the facade (northeast elevation). A centered gable projects from the façade of the dwelling. A brick chimney rises from the interior of the dwelling and pierces the roof.





 **THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANING COMMISSION**