

Spring 2023

Vol. 2 No. 1



Montgomery Preservation, Inc.

NEWSLETTER

Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad – Now the MARC Brunswick Line



150 years ago the train came through Montgomery County – and nothing was ever the same. The train brought with it new agricultural products; steam-powered factories and mills next to the tracks; new stores selling the latest fashionable; hotels were built for the city people wanting a healthy weekend in the country. Life pulsed around the tracks that cut diagonally across the County and time revolved around the coming and going of the train.

The train created a new type of town – the railroad suburb. Down-county the real estate market boomed as new railroad suburbs were built to accommodate people from the city who wanted to bring their families up away from the smoke and noise of the city. Takoma Park, Woodside, Linden, Capitol View, Kensington, and Garrett Park appeared south of Rockville. Lincoln Park, a railroad town for African Americans was established by a former Union soldier just north of Rockville. A large hotel was built at Forest Glen.

Up-county, the coming of the train meant a big change in agriculture as products could be shipped by train to the big city markets. This meant that farmers could grow more beef cattle and pigs, more chickens and eggs, more wheat, corn and potatoes. Some farmers branched out into new products that spoiled easily, but that now could be shipped speedily by train. They began cultivating peach and apple trees, making honey from the bees needed to pollinate those fruit trees, and milking cows. The new milk-stops for the train included Clopper's, Waring's, Boyds, Bucklodge, Barnesville and Dickerson.

The train ushered in a new era of prosperity for all of Montgomery County and changed the demographics, politics and focus of the County forever.

A County-wide celebration of this 150th Anniversary featuring exhibits, performances, lectures and tours will be at various locations in the County during the month of May. Check our website to see what is happening near you.

Our Mission

To preserve, protect, and promote Montgomery County's rich architectural heritage and historic landscapes.

Our Story

MPI is Montgomery County's county-wide nonprofit historic preservation organization. The group incorporated in 1984 to actively encourage and defend preservation efforts in local communities and throughout the county. Today, MPI remains dedicated to saving our buildings, landscapes, and sites for future generations. MPI encourages preservation efforts in every corner of Montgomery County, working with all parties to ensure that our towns, owners of historic properties, businesses, and volunteer groups can step up to the modernization, revitalization, demographic, and development challenges of the 21st century.

Excursion Train

On Memorial Day, May 29, an Excursion Train will run from Silver Spring to Brunswick and back. The train will leave Silver Spring at 11 am and stop at Kensington, Garrett Park, Rockville, Gaithersburg and Germantown. Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$15 for children 2-17. Go to montgomerypreservation.org for Eventbrite tickets.

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The Fate of the Wellers Dry Cleaning Building Hangs in the Balance



In 1961 Charlie Weller, the son of Ukrainian immigrants, opened a new One Hour Martinizing Dry Cleaners on Fenton Street in Silver Spring. At that time Silver Spring was the commercial center of Montgomery County and served the needs of a growing number of new suburban residents. Wellers, designed by local architect Ted Englehart, featured alternating pink and white porcelain enameled panels, ground-to-roof plate glass windows and a dynamic cantilevered sloped roof. Wellers has been an iconic example of Googie Architecture ever since. It was still in operation (with different owners) in 2022, when the “Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan” recommended evaluation for designation to the Master Plan of Historic Preservation.

In September of 2022 the HP staff, finding that Weller’s met the criteria for designation, recommended to the HPC that Weller’s be placed on the Location Atlas, and in December 2022 be designated to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. In both cases the HPC voted unanimously in support. In February 2023 the Wellers case was brought before the interim Planning Board, which voted *not to recommend* the Wellers designation, despite voluminous expert testimony in support. The three Board members who opposed designating Wellers seemed to base their votes on emotion and misinformation rather than the law and the Secretary of the Interior Standards for designation. Before the public hearing the current owner painted the exterior of the building beige, including the colorful porcelain enamel panels.

Protection for Weller’s is now under review by the County Council, which must make its own determination. Unless the Council reverses course, as MPI and others have urged it to do, Weller’s is endangered due to the owner’s stated intention to demolish it.

Weller’s is one of a very few remaining examples of the whimsical, Jetsons-like style of midcentury architecture called “Gooogie” in all of Montgomery County. The loss of this significant Silver Spring icon would be a loss to current and future generations. Please consider calling or emailing your Councilmember now to urge them to protect the unique historic Wellers’ Dry Cleaning building.

(<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/contact.html>)

OPEN HOUSES

Silver Spring Train Station 10 am-2 pm

SATURDAY, JUNE 3

Pop Up Exhibit

"Remember Then and Now!" Take the journey from past to present as this exhibit spotlights Black contributions and achievements in American History. The display is sponsored by the City of Gaithersburg.

SATURDAY, JULY 1

"Casey Jones and the Great American Railroad"

An interactive musical journey along the rails with Grammy-nominated performer Ray Owen. Hop on the Wabash Cannonball and hobo down the line with Old Casey Jones on the Great American Railroad.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5

"Art and Craft with Mr. Rodriquez"

We will be talking trains and metro. We will also be building a train! Bring a regular sized (empty!) shoe box and your imagination. We'll provide the crayons, other craft supplies and inspiration!

Special Event

SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 7 P.M.

Live Theatre performance \$\$

"Murder on the Metropolitan "
by Dan Fiala.

Limited Seating – Advanced Reservation required. See montgomerypreservation.org for tickets and program information.

PRESERVATION NEWS

Edward U. Taylor Elementary School



The Montgomery County Planning Board recommended the County Council designate Edward U. Taylor School in Boyds as historic by adding it to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* at a public hearing on Thursday, February 23. The Council decides on historic designations of properties. The former Edward U. Taylor School (19501 White Ground Road) was built as an elementary school for Black students at a time when Montgomery County used legally sanctioned racial segregation to prohibit Black children from attending White schools. The Modern Movement-influenced building, completed in 1952, features several additions built between 1954 and 1969. It represents the cumulative efforts of the county's Black community to obtain better facilities and opportunities after decades of public underinvestment in educational facilities for Black children. The building currently serves as the Taylor Science Center for the processing and storage of science kits for Montgomery County Public Schools.

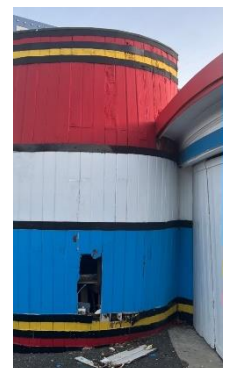
Pleasant View church and school

Pleasant View Historical Association is in the process of preserving and restoring its church and two-room schoolhouse in Quince Orchard, with the help of State and Federal funds. Future generations will appreciate what transpired in this Black community over more than 130 years and learn from its experience. Pleasant View was the subject of the documentary film, "*Finding Fellowship*," about the merging of this African American church with two White congregations to form a new religious community, Fairhaven United Methodist Church, in 1968. This documentary received the County Executive's Award for Historic Preservation in 2021.



Damage to the Cider Barrel

On April 20 the iconic Cider Barrel in Germantown was damaged by vandals. The lessee of the building, Laura Richman, said that insurance would cover repair of the damage, which has now been completed. The Barrel was hand-constructed in 1922 to sell locally made non-alcoholic cider during prohibition. It continued operation though 2009.



MPI Awards

The annual awards program, sponsored by Montgomery Preservation, showcases the great work being done in the private, non-profit, and public sectors in Montgomery County. Since 1987, at MPI's signature program, preservation advocates, elected officials, local historical groups, friends, and families have celebrated the accomplishments of dedicated property owners, creative non-profits, talented architects, and community activists. The 2022 Awards will be announced in September 2023.

Don't Forget ---

Montgomery County Heritage Days June 24 & 25

More than 30 heritage sites around the County will be open Free of charge.

Download a brochure at:

www.heritagemontgomery.org

Membership Dues and Donations are critical to MPI's programs and preservation efforts.

Annual Dues

Individual -- \$25

Family -- \$40

Organization -- \$50

Business -- \$75

Mail membership dues and/or donations to MPI with Name, address, telephone, email and date to:

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MPI encourages citizen participation in preservation activities. If you have a concern or would like to volunteer please contact us at:

mpi@montgomerypreservation.org

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