

the Preservationist

Spring 2008



Higgins Tavern before restoration (left) and after.



The Resurrection of Higgins Tavern

From Colonial times until the late 19th century, taverns occupied almost every crossroad and trading center. They were the center of life for rural communities. This is where mail was received, goods were traded, travelers slept, newspapers were read, and local news shared – as well as where hard liquor was imbibed.

Higgins Tavern was built in 1823, not long after the Georgetown-to-Brookeville Turnpike (present Georgia Avenue) was constructed. This tavern is unique because it was owned by women -- which was unusual since it was rare for women to visit taverns – Lucretia Beall from 1823 to 1867, and Margaret Higgins from 1867 until her death in 1905, although it is referred to in historical records by the names of the men with whom they lived, Thomas Higgins and Hilleary Orme Higgins respectively. Thomas Higgins was the son of Revolutionary War soldier James Higgins, who is buried at historic Higgins Cemetery in Rockville.

Lucretia Beall purchased the property in 1826, consisting of about 1/4 acre with improvements. The “improvements” may have included the log building, but it did not appear in records as a tavern until 1829 when Lucretia was assessed for “one-half acre improved lot with Tavern Stand.” In 1847 Thomas Higgins purchased 127.5 acres of land adjoining the tavern, and turned it over to Lucretia Beall. In a lawsuit against Higgins about that time, Lucretia said that Higgins was acting as agent in buying land for her, and although he had been living in the same house as she for the last 20 years, he was not responsible for any improvements to the property and she was not responsible for his debts.

In an 1851 professional directory Thomas Higgins is listed as a Hotel Keeper “near Mechanicsville” (present-day Olney). When Thomas Higgins died in 1856 Lucretia Beall sold 27.5 acres to Margaret Higgins, wife of Hilleary Orme Higgins, whose relationship to Thomas Higgins is unknown. The 1865 Martenet and Bond Map shows “H. O Higgins Hotel” on the site.

Higgins Tavern gained a bit of notoriety in October 1872 when a meeting of the Democratic party was held there, attended by Horace Greeley, Benjamin Brown, and Maryland Governor John Ritchie. Greeley, founder and editor of the *New York Tribune*, was a candidate for president. He died on November 29, 1872 at the age of 61, after the general election, which he lost to Grant, but before the electoral college met. Brown, a former senator, governor of Missouri, and Greeley’s vice-presidential candidate, returned to his law practice. Ritchie, a native of Frederick Town, lost his bid for re-election, but went on later to become a Judge in the Maryland Court of Appeals.

The original log structure had several additions over the years, the main one being the 2-story frame structure on the south side, added in the mid-19th century. In 1922 the property was sold to Oscar Martin. The Martin family had a very popular ice cream parlor on the premises, and operated Martin’s Dairy, processing milk brought in by local farmers for a half a century. The property was sold in 1956. From 1965 to 1998 the Silo Inn, a popular local restaurant, operated on the property in a building adjacent to the Tavern.

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Historic Preservation News and Notes



Historic Silver Spring Train Station

Montgomery Preservation, Inc. 2008 Preservation Awards

The 22nd annual Montgomery County Awards for Excellence in landscape and resource preservation, restoration, new construction, and achievement in heritage leadership, education and craftsmanship will be held on Friday June 6, 2008 at the historic 1891 Red Brick Courthouse in Rockville by Montgomery Preservation, Inc. (MPI). Nominated landscapes, vistas and construction need not be designated to be eligible, but should be at least 50 years old. Nominations are reviewed by MPI and reviewed by a panel of experts, who select the award winning projects. Nominations must be submitted by April 30, 2008. Call 301-926-2650 for a nomination form or email MPI@montgomerypreservation.org. This event is supported with the help of a grant from the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission.

Lyttonsville Exhibit

To shine a spotlight on the unique history of the historically African American community of Lyttonsville, the Planning Department's historic preservation staff collaborated with a local citizens group to create an exhibit for the Gwendolyn Coffield Recreation Center in west Silver Spring for Black History Month. Before there was a Linden, Woodside, or Forest Glen, there was Lyttonsville, a 68 acre tract settled by African Americans. The community began in 1853 when Leonard Johnson, a white landowner, gave a parcel of land to Samuel Lytton, a freed

slave for whom the community is named. To find out more about Lyttonsville visit: <http://silverspringhistory.homestead.com/>.

Next Stop: Silver Spring

Next Stop: Silver Spring, an hour-long video tells the story of the saving and restoration of the 1945 Silver Spring Train Station. The documentary also describes the history of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the Metropolitan Branch of that railroad that goes through Montgomery County. The production of this video, which was featured on WETA television on Sunday, March 9, was aided by two Montgomery County Historic Preservation grants. This film includes an abundance of historic train footage and still photographs, much of which is making its public debut in "Next Stop: Silver Spring." Also being presented for the first time is the original music created especially for this film. Many of the songs are reminiscent of the folk songs of the early to mid-20th century.

The Silver Spring train station was preserved and restored by the non-profit group Montgomery Preservation Inc. Following an outpouring of community support to restore the station, MPI took over the title from CSX in 1998 for \$1. It eventually took \$500,000, raised from private donations, a state bond bill, and grants to complete renovations. A Historic Preservation grant was used to help sponsor the renovation design.

Higgins, from page 1

Higgins Tavern, 16800 Georgia Avenue, was placed on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation on May 12, 2006 with .5 acre as environmental setting. Both the original log building and the 2-story addition have been restored by the current owner, Finmarc Management, with Miche Booz as architect. The building will house Penny Chocolates, a shop selling fine chocolates and gelato.

the Preservationist

The Preservationist is the official publication of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Phone: 301-563-3400. Statements herein do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Commission. Created by the Historic Resources Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 24A, Montgomery County Code) the Commission is responsible for identification, designation, and regulation for purposes of protection, preservation, continued use, and enhancement of sites and structures of historical, archeological, architectural, or cultural value. Commission members are appointed by the Montgomery County Executive and confirmed by the Montgomery County Council.

Commission

Jef Fuller, AIA, Chair David S. Rotenstein, Vice Chair
Nuray Anahtar, AIA Lee Burstyn Caroline Alderson
Timothy J. Duffy Thomas C. Jester Warren Fleming Leslie K. Miles
Historic Preservation Supervisor Scott Whipple

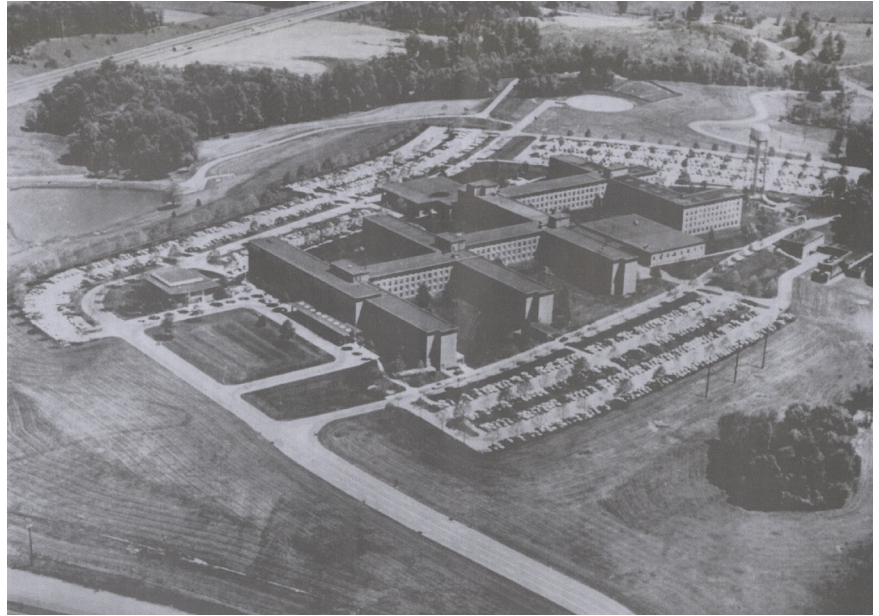
Requests to be on the mailing list and content information should be directed to the Commission.

Department of Energy Building Deemed Eligible for National Register

In considering proposed routes for the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), county planners and the State Highway Administration (SHA) determined that one alternative was not viable because it would have an adverse effect on the Department of Energy (DOE) building in Germantown. In considering potential routes for the CCT, SHA flagged the DOE site for historic preservation review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires federal undertakings - that is those projects funded, licensed, or permitted by the federal government - to be reviewed for their potential effect "on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register."

SHA Architectural Historian Anne Bruder determined the building to be National Register-eligible. According to Bruder's "Determination of Eligibility" report, the property qualifies for National Register designation because it is "associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history" (National Register criterion A) in recognition of the DOE building's importance to the development of nuclear sciences and energy and its impact on suburban development. Ms. Bruder also determined that the building embodies the distinct characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction (criterion C) because of its unique construction, designed by Voorhees, Walker, Smith & Smith, which was used as a prototype for other buildings. For more information about the National Register, see <http://www.nps.gov/nr/>.

On August 6, 1945 the United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. This put an end to World War II, but began the "Atomic Age." The U.S. Congress realized immediately the grave danger imposed by this enormous power and as soon as the war was officially ended, transferred the Manhattan Project and anything to do with nuclear power to the civilian government. The five-person Atomic Energy Commission was formed in 1946. It was housed in temporary buildings in Washington, D.C. before being relocated to Germantown in response to security concerns after the Soviet Union developed atomic capabilities.



In 1949 the Soviet Union created their own atomic bomb and began "the Red Scare" and security issues for government offices in D.C. A paper was written by scientists on what would happen if an A-bomb was dropped on D.C. and in response to this President Truman developed the "Dispersal Policy" to remove government offices at least 10 miles outside the boundary of D.C. The Atomic Energy Commission was the first federal government facility built "beyond the beltway," moving into what is now known as the DOE building in November, 1957.

*Atomic Energy Commission,
Germantown*

Although determined eligible for the National Register, the DOE building has not been formally nominated for listing in the Register nor has it been evaluated for listing in the *Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

Did You Know?

The "card catalog" of the Maryland Historical Trust Library is now publicly accessible online. The Trust's library-with more than 10,000 volumes-is the State's principal repository for information relating to Maryland's architectural, archeological, and cultural heritage. The following types of resources are available to researchers: books, journals, site-specific reports, historic maps, written and photographic documentation about Maryland's architectural and archeological sites, oral histories which capture the State's cultural traditions through written transcripts as well as audio and video recordings, historic structure reports, preservation plans, and architectural drawings. <http://www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net>

Calendar

Ongoing Exhibits

March 25 - September 21: *Good Advice*, a survey of almost 200 years of American advice books and examples of the material culture the authors espouse (or decry). Beall-Dawson House, 111 West Montgomery Ave., Rockville. Tues.-Sun., noon-4 p.m. 301-762-1492. www.montgomeryhistory.org

April 19 - June 29: *Family Bibles: Keepsake and Testament* includes a range of bible types and styles from the Montgomery County Historical Society's collection, and explores advances in printing and transportation, changing demographics, and denominational differences. Waters House, 12535 Milestone Manor Lane, Germantown. 301-515-2887. www.montgomeryhistory.org. Wed. & Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and by appointment.

April

9 & 23 HPC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. 301-563-3400. www.mc-mncppc.org

May

6 Takoma Park House & Garden Tour, *Carroll Connections*. 1-5 p.m. www.historictakoma.org

10 Peerless Rockville's Homes and Hospitality Tour. 4 - 8 p.m., Charming Homes in Neighborhoods West

of 270: *Wootton's Mill, Hectic Hill, Flint Ledge Farm, Log House, Victorian Farmhouse, Hidden Gems, and Bold Contemporaries*. A grand evening of gourmet hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and beverages catered by Rockville's finest restaurants. For tickets contact 301.762.0096 or manager@peerlessrockville.org.

12 Rockville Awards for Preservation Excellence. Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Ave., Rockville, reception 6 p.m., Awards 7 p.m. Peerless Rockville, 301-762-0096. www.peerlessrockville.org.

14 & 28 HPC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. 301-563-3400. www.mc-mncppc.org

29- 30 Maryland's Annual Preservation & Revitalization Conference, Hagerstown, Maryland. www.preservationmaryland.org. 410-685-2886, ext. 302.

June

6 Montgomery Preservation Awards. Red Brick Courthouse, Rockville. 301-926-2650, www.montgomerypreservation.org.

11 HPC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. 301-563-3400. www.mc-mncppc.org

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