

**EDWIN AND JULIA REYNOLDS HOUSE  
CHEVY CHASE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD**

**MASTER PLAN HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION FORM  
MAY 2026**



 **Montgomery Planning**

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

|                                                                                                                  |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1. NAME OF PROPERTY .....</b>                                                                                 | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>2. LOCATION OF PROPERTY .....</b>                                                                             | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>3. ZONING OF PROPERTY.....</b>                                                                                | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>4. TYPE OF PROPERTY.....</b>                                                                                  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>5. FUNCTION OR USE.....</b>                                                                                   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>6. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY .....</b>                                                                          | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.....</b>                                                                         | <b>4</b>  |
| A. <i>Applicable Designation Criteria.....</i>                                                                   | <i>4</i>  |
| B. <i>Statement of Significance.....</i>                                                                         | <i>4</i>  |
| C. <i>Period of Significance .....</i>                                                                           | <i>4</i>  |
| D. <i>Significant Dates .....</i>                                                                                | <i>4</i>  |
| E. <i>Significant Persons .....</i>                                                                              | <i>4</i>  |
| F. <i>Areas of Significance .....</i>                                                                            | <i>4</i>  |
| G. <i>Architect/Builder .....</i>                                                                                | <i>4</i>  |
| H. <i>Narrative .....</i>                                                                                        | <i>4</i>  |
| Early Ownership – Perry, Shoemaker, and Crown Families .....                                                     | 4         |
| Louis Charles & Sarah Good Sólyom .....                                                                          | 5         |
| Opening of the Glen Echo Railroad & the Sólyom Property .....                                                    | 6         |
| Julia V. and Edwin C. Reynolds.....                                                                              | 7         |
| Julia V. Sólyom, Edwin C. Reynolds, and Harriet C. Reynolds .....                                                | 7         |
| Builder Charles H. Kelley and Construction of the Reynolds House .....                                           | 8         |
| Reynolds Property and Little Falls Branch.....                                                                   | 9         |
| Expansion of the Reynolds Property, Division of the Sólyom Estate, and Surrounding<br>Suburban Development ..... | 10        |
| Reynolds House and Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park.....                                                         | 11        |
| I. <i>Areas Exempt from Designation.....</i>                                                                     | <i>11</i> |
| J. <i>Designation Criteria.....</i>                                                                              | <i>12</i> |
| K. <i>Conclusion .....</i>                                                                                       | <i>13</i> |
| <b>8. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/GEOGRAPHICAL DATA .....</b>                                                          | <b>13</b> |
| <b>9. PROPERTY OWNERS .....</b>                                                                                  | <b>13</b> |
| <b>10. FORM PREPARED BY.....</b>                                                                                 | <b>13</b> |
| <b>11. MAJOR SOURCES CONSULTED .....</b>                                                                         | <b>14</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX ONE: ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING .....</b>                                                                 | <b>15</b> |

|                                                                            |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>APPENDIX TWO: MAPS AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS.....</b>                      | <b>17</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX THREE: HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS .....</b>                          | <b>34</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX FOUR: CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS .....</b>                            | <b>45</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX FIVE: ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS .....</b>                | <b>50</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX SIX: OTHER MATERIALS.....</b>                                  | <b>57</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX SEVEN: MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FORM.....</b> | <b>60</b> |

DRAFT

Maryland – National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
Montgomery County Planning Department  
Master Plan Historic Site Designation Form

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

Historic Name: Edwin and Julia Reynolds House  
Current Name: Reynolds House  
Other Names: N/A  
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties #(s): M: 35-215

**2. LOCATION OF PROPERTY**

Address Number and Street: 5320 Willard Avenue  
County, State, Zip: Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland 20871

**3. ZONING OF PROPERTY**

R-60: The intent of the R-60 zone is to provide designated areas of the County for moderate density residential uses. The predominant use is residential in a detached house. A limited number of other building types may be allowed under the optional method of development.

**4. TYPE OF PROPERTY**

A. Ownership of Property

☐ Private  
☒ Public – Local  
☐ Public – State  
☐ Public – Federal

B. Category of Property

☒ Building  
☐ District  
☐ Site  
☐ Structure  
☐ Object

C. Number of Resources within the Property

Contributing

☒ Buildings  
☐ Structures  
☐ Objects  
☐ Archaeological Sites  
☒ Total

Noncontributing

☐ Buildings  
☐ Structures  
☐ Objects  
☐ Archaeological Sites  
☐ Total

D. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places: The property has not been evaluated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

## 5. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Function(s): DOMESTIC; Single Dwelling

Current Function(s): DOMESTIC; Single Dwelling

## 6. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

### Site Description:

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House, located on the west side of Willard Avenue in Friendship Heights, is owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The one-acre property sits within Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park and the house is managed by Montgomery Parks as part of its rental portfolio. The Reynolds family built the house circa 1899 and their descendants retained ownership until M-NCPPC acquired the property in 1995.<sup>1</sup> The site is bound by a single-family house at 5326 Willard Avenue to the north, Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park to the south, Willard Avenue to the east, and Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park—including the Willard Avenue Park Trail and Little Falls Branch—to the west.

The Reynolds House is set back approximately 110 feet west of Willard Avenue, atop a ridge approximately 8' higher than the road. The house is orientated south, facing River Road and Little Falls Branch rather than Willard Avenue.<sup>2</sup> A concrete sidewalk runs parallel to the public right-of-way. Within the first 15 feet from the sidewalk, the terrain rises sharply to a chain-link fence near the eastern edge of the property. This fence encloses the entire property, clearly demarcating its boundaries. To the east of the house is a functional, nearly level side yard devoid of trees. Beyond the house, the wooded landscape drops steeply to the southwest, west, and north—falling at least 15 feet—toward Little Falls Branch and the former right-of-way of the Glen Echo Railroad. The property is accessed from Willard Avenue by an asphalt driveway towards the southern end of the property. The driveway leads to a large asphalt parking pad measuring 35' x 45'. A concrete pathway connects the driveway to the house's façade (south elevation).

### Architectural Description (see App. 3 and App. 4 for historic and current photographs):

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House, a Queen Anne-styled dwelling designed by builder Charles H. Kelley, was constructed in 1899. This two-and-a-half-story dwelling consists of a single dominant front gable with shallow cross gables on its west and east (side) elevations creating a cross-like form. The wood-frame structural system rests on an irregular course, rough-cut, rubble stone foundation with a decorative beaded mortar joint. It is clad in wood clapboard siding on the first and second stories and wood shingles in the upper gable ends. The asphalt-shingle gable roofs have overhanging, boxed eaves with gable-end returns. A single brick chimney pierces the western slope of the roof above the western cross gable's ridge. Typical fenestration consists of one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl-sash replacement windows and Queen Anne multi-light windows, featuring a large central glass pane surrounded by smaller rectangular panes. Most original wood sills and surrounds are encased in aluminum, though some remain exposed.

South Elevation (Façade): The three-bay façade faces River Road and is distinguished by a full-width, wood-frame porch accessed by wide replacement wood stairs with a wood balustrade. The porch rests on a brick pier foundation with diagonal wood lattice infill. Three stop-chamfered wood posts support an asphalt shingle hipped roof. The porch has a tongue-and-groove wood floor and a simple wood rail and balusters. A non-historic wood deck on the side of the house adjoins the porch's western end.

The first story consists of the four-panel, single-light, wood door in the eastern bay and a typical window in the western bay. The second story, above the porch roof, has two typical windows, with the eastern window offset towards the side elevation and misaligned with the door below. The upper gable end features varied wood shingle patterns oriented around a central typical window: staggered shingles above the window, square-butt on

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Robert C. and Carolyn B. Wooden to M-NCPPC," May 22, 1995, Liber 13415, Folio 6, MDLandRec.

<sup>2</sup> Willard Avenue did not exist at the time of construction.

either side, and flared staggered shingles below, projecting slightly beyond second-story plane for added texture and depth.

East Elevation (Side): The side elevation, facing Willard Avenue, is composed of four sections: 1) the front porch to the south; 2) the side of the front gable; 3) a shallow cross gable (projecting less than 18") slightly offset from the center of the elevation; and 4) the northern portion of the front gable, which aligns co-planarly with the cross gable and includes a recessed, one-story porch. The recessed porch rests on a concrete block pier foundation and has a single wood post at its corner that provides structural support to the second story. It is accessed via a wide, open wood stair. While the east elevation of the porch lacks a railing, a wood balustrade runs along its north elevation.

The first story includes a small Queen Anne multi-light window and a typical window on the southern section of the front gable, two typical windows on the cross gable, and a replacement two-panel, nine-light, single-leaf door on the recessed front porch. The second story has a larger Queen Anne multi-light window, a square non-historic oriel window (supported by a single wood bracket) with paired one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl-sash, replacement windows on the southern section of the front gable. In addition, the oriel window has a narrow two-light, fixed wood window on its southern face. The cross gable continues the fenestration pattern with two typical windows and above the recessed porch is a single typical window. The upper gable end mirrors the façade's shingle design, but uses only square-butt shingles above the window lintel. In addition, it features a Queen Anne multi-light window instead of a typical one-over-one window.

North Elevation (Rear): The rear elevation consists of the front-gable and an above-ground stone foundation due to the property's slope. At the eastern end, a crawlspace under the recessed porch is screened by diagonal wood lattice panels. The basement has two bays: an original, paired, two-light, wood casement window to the east, and a single-leaf, six-panel door to the west. The first story features a single typical window within the recessed porch and two typical windows on the front gable. The second story includes three typical windows and one Queen Anne multi-light window. The upper gable end has a single typical window but lacks the shingle siding or visual complexity of the other elevations.

West Elevation (Side): The five-bay west elevation, facing Little Falls Branch, consists of three sections: 1) the side of the front gable to the north; 2) a projecting cross gable (extending approximately 4') slightly offset from the center of the elevation; and 3) the southern section of the front gable.

The steep topography exposes a nearly full-height basement with five original, paired, two-light, wood casement windows: one in the northern section of the front gable, two in the cross gable, and two in the southern section of the front gable. The three-bay, first story has a modern wood deck that nearly spans the entire elevation. There is no fenestration on the northern section of the front gable. The projecting cross gable has a single typical window on its north and south elevations and a non-historic sliding glass door on its east elevation that accesses the deck. The southern section of the front gable has two typical windows.

The second story follows a similar pattern. The window on the south elevation of the projecting cross gable was replaced by a non-historic single-leaf, single-light glass door with a railing. The door formerly accessed a now razed non-historic wood deck. The southern section of the front gable consists of a matching door, that also provided access to the removed deck, and a typical window. The upper gable end of the cross gable mirrors the shingle and window design of the eastern cross gable.

## 7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### A. Applicable Designation Criteria as described in Chapter 24A: Historic Resources Preservation, §24A-3, Montgomery County Code

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House meets three of the nine designation criteria as described in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code. See Section J of this report for a detailed analysis.

### B. Statement of Significance:

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House reflects nineteenth century development along River Road prior to its suburbanization, offering insight into the area before the development of Friendship Heights. As the oldest of five houses built by the descendants of Louis, an immigrant and veteran of the Union Army, and Sarah Sólyom, the Reynolds House stands as a testament to the enduring success of the family and their presence along the Little Falls Branch for 150 years. The house is prominent within the landscape due to its orientation toward River Road and the former Glen Echo Railroad rather than suburban street network established with the development of Willard Avenue. Today, the Reynolds House is an established landmark within Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park, connecting visitors to the community's history.

### C. Period of Significance: 1899

### D. Significant Dates: 1899

### E. Significant Persons: Louis Charles and Sarah Sólyom, Edwin and Julia Reynolds

### F. Areas of Significance: Domestic; Single-family dwelling

### G. Architect/Builder: Charles H. Kelley

### H. Narrative:

#### *Historic Context: Early Ownership – Perry, Shoemaker, and Crown Families*

The land history of the subject property is rooted in an inauspicious past, marked by the legacy of slavery. In 1847, George Beckwith conveyed to trustee Robert W. Willett an enslaved African American girl named Harriet, then approximately 13 or 14 years old.<sup>3</sup> The bill of sale directed Willett to sell Harriet and use the proceeds to purchase a house for Beckwith's daughter and son-in-law, Mary and James T. Crown, residents of Washington, D.C.<sup>4</sup> Following Harriet's sale, trustee responsibilities passed to Samuel Viers and, in 1855, he purchased an eight-acre property along River Road near Little Falls Branch from C. Eli Perry, Sarah Perry, and Isaac Shoemaker on behalf of the Crown family. Viers paid \$323.50 for the property using funds generated from the sale of Harriet.<sup>5</sup> The Crowns likely built the house where Julia Reynolds (nee Sólyom) would later be raised.

In 1850, the United States Census listed James T. Crown as a laborer residing in District Four, Rockville, where the family rented a house.<sup>6</sup> He likely died around the time of the acquisition of the eight-acre River Road property. By 1860, Mary Crown owned and likely resided on the property valued at \$1,000.<sup>7</sup> The Crown family

---

<sup>3</sup> The deed included the conveyance of an eleven-year enslaved African American boy named Thomas, but he is conveyed for the benefit of Francis Beckwith, George's granddaughter. Montgomery County Circuit Court, "George Beckwith to Robert W. Willett," February 4, 1847, Liber STS 2, Folio 370-372, MDLandRec.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Beckwith and James T. Crown married on February 10, 1836, in Washington, D.C. District of Columbia, U.S., Compiled Marriages, 1826-1850, "James Crown," Ancestry.

<sup>5</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "C. Eli Perry, Saran Ann Perry, and Isaac Shoemaker to Samuel C. Veirs," March 1, 1855, Liber JGH 4, Folio 181-183, MDLandRec.

<sup>6</sup> United States Federal Census, "James T Crown," (1850), Ancestry.

<sup>7</sup> United States Federal Census, "Mary Crown," (1860), Ancestry.

sold their interest in the property to John O. Crown for \$1,500 in 1868.<sup>8</sup> Mary Crown died three years later in 1871.<sup>9</sup> On January 5, 1875, Crown sold the 8-acre property to Louis Charles Sólyom de Antalfa, more commonly known as Louis Charles Sólyom, for \$1,800.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Historic Context: Louis Charles & Sarah Good Sólyom***

Louis Charles Sólyom was born on May 25, 1836, in Pienkowce, Zbaraz, located in the former Galicia, Austria, an area now part of modern-day Ukraine.<sup>11</sup> His parents were Ludoviscus Sólyom de Antalfa, an imperial official, and Vincenta Husty, who descended from Hungarian gentry. Sólyom was well educated and served for eight years in the Austrian cavalry before unsuccessfully attempting to join Giuseppe Garibaldi's Italian unification movement. He left Italy and emigrated to the United States in April 1861. Upon arrival, he may have briefly worked as a gardener, teacher of languages, bank clerk, and bookdealer before enlisting with the Union Army that October. He joined as a Private in the New York 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment. His military experience and aptitude quickly earned him a series of promotions: Corporal and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in December 1861, Sergeant in February 1862, 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant in June 1862, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in July 1862. He mustered out with his entire company in June 1863.<sup>12</sup>

According to written and oral histories, Sólyom fought in over 11 battles during the Civil War. At the Battle of Salem Heights, the 9<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry Regiment reportedly captured him, but he escaped by swimming across the Rappahannock River. Sólyom was later wounded at the Battle of Chancellorsville. During his convalescence, he met Sarah J. Good, the daughter of Thomas and Jane Good, of Georgetown, Washington, D.C., whom he married in 1866.<sup>13</sup> Family lore added that the Good family, divided in their loyalties, hosted Louis and Sarah on the front porch while simultaneously entertaining Sarah's sister and her Confederate fiancé on the back porch, to avoid potential conflicts.<sup>14</sup> In 1943, the *Evening Star* reported that Sólyom may have attempted to change allegiances during the Civil War; however, no documentation has been found to confirm or refute this claim.<sup>15</sup>

After the Civil War, Sólyom returned to New York and gained employment at a secondhand bookstore. Not long afterward, he worked as a bookkeeper at the Union Dime Savings Bank which required fluency in multiple languages. Sólyom, a skilled linguist, reportedly could read 30 languages and speak between 12 to 15 languages by the end of his life. According to family accounts, his application letter to the bank started in English and then changed languages with each successive sentence, showcasing his remarkable linguistic range.<sup>16</sup> While continuing part-time work at the bookstore, Sólyom met Ainsworth Rand Spofford, the Librarian of Congress. After the United States purchased Alaska in 1867, Spofford recognized the need of a Russian-language specialist and offered Sólyom a position with the Catalog Division the following year. He accepted the offer and remained employed at the Library of Congress for the rest of his life.<sup>17</sup>

After accepting the position, the Sólyoms moved to Montgomery County and rented a house near present-day Friendship Heights. In 1870, the United States Census recorded Louis, Sarah, their three-year-old daughter Julia, their mother-in-law Jane Good, and Martin and Jane Black, an African American farm laborer and domestic servant, respectively, living at a rented property.<sup>18</sup> On January 5, 1875, Sólyom acquired the 8-acre

---

<sup>8</sup> The 1870 United States Federal Census listed John O. Crown as residing on the property of Samuel Shoemaker, but it noted that he owned \$500 in real estate. United States Federal Census, "John O. Crown," (1870), Ancestry.

<sup>9</sup> "Mary R. Beckwith Crown," Congressional Cemetery, Find A Grave.

<sup>10</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "John O. Crown to Louis Solyom," January 5, 1875, Liber EBP 13, Folio 123-125, MDLandRec.

<sup>11</sup> United States, Passport Applications, 1795-1925, "Louis Solyom," (1896), FamilySearch.

<sup>12</sup> New York, U.S., Civil War Muster Roll Abstracts, 1861-1900, "Solyom, Louis," Ancestry.

<sup>13</sup> Elemer Bako, "Louis C. Solyom: Collector of Languages," *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 22, no. 2, (1865): 104-115; Edmund Vasvary, *Lincoln's Hungarian Heroes: The Participation of Hungarians in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Washington, D.C.: The Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, 1939), 81; Helen K. Starr, "Mr. Hanson and His Friends," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, and Policy*, 4, no. 2 (April 1934): 329-333.

<sup>14</sup> Helen K. Starr, "Mr. Hanson and His Friends," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, and Policy*, 4, no. 2 (April 1934): 329-333.

<sup>15</sup> "Daughter Visiting Ex-Premier of France and Mme. Chautemps," *Evening Star*, March 28, 1948, Newspapers.com.

<sup>16</sup> Helen K. Starr, "Mr. Hanson and His Friends," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, and Policy*, 4, no. 2 (April 1934): 331.

<sup>17</sup> Elemer Bako, "Louis C. Solyom: Collector of Languages," *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 22, no. 2, (1865): 104-115.

<sup>18</sup> United States Federal Census, "Louis Solyom," (1870), Ancestry.

property on River Road where he located his permanent homestead.<sup>19</sup> That same day, the Sólyoms acquired a \$1,800 mortgage from Frederick W. James for the purchase of the property.<sup>20</sup> George Morton Churchill, Sólyom's future son-in-law, stated that:

His desire was to return to the country life in which he had grown up, and naturally he named his place Antalfa, after the family estate in Hungary. There he spent as much as possible of the last forty years of his life. A good part of the time, in the early years, must have been spent in driving over the somewhat primitive road to Georgetown, the terminus of the horse-car line, the only way of reaching the Capitol. For several winters the Sólyoms moved into the city, but as transportation conditions improved and the family became larger they settled down at Antalfa, in what was then a country environment, with only one family near, the Loughboroughs, across the road, but at a distance.<sup>21</sup>

The African American community at River Road was located to the north of the Sólyom property. Historians and family histories have suggested that African American families lived and labored on the estate in the late nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> In 1880, the United States Census recorded the Sólyom family and Bettie C. Eichholtz, a white teacher, and Cora Botts, a 27-year-old African American domestic servant, residing on the same property. Pascal Botts, a 67-year-old African American laborer, William Botts, a 32-year-old shoemaker, and William Botts, a 9-year-old child are recorded in the adjacent household.<sup>23</sup> The descendants of the Sólyom family have a photograph of a log tenant house captioned "Pascal's house, Antalfa, Mont. Co. Md.," that researchers suggest are members of the Bott's family who may have rented property from Sólyom.<sup>24</sup> However, the 1880 Non-Population Schedule of the United States Federal Census recorded very little agricultural production on the property, consisting of an overall farm value of \$1,500 including all buildings and a single horse valued at \$100. There are no other crops or products recorded, and no amount noted for paid wages.<sup>25</sup> In 1890, the *Montgomery County Sentinel* stated that "Mr. Louis Sólyom is the owner of about eight acres of land near the District line on the River Road and grows upon it nothing but gladiolas ...that will yield him eight hundred dollars [this season]."<sup>26</sup> The 1900 United States Federal Census recorded no African American laborers living directly with the family on the property, but Bettie Eichholtz remained at the household.<sup>27</sup> The location of any African American archaeological resources on the former Sólyom property remains unknown.

#### Opening of the Glen Echo Railroad & the Sólyom Property

On December 12, 1889, the Glen Echo Railroad Company was incorporated in Maryland.<sup>28</sup> It was authorized to construct an electric streetcar line connecting Glen Echo and Cabin John to Washington, D.C., to the terminus of the Georgetown & Tenleytown Railway near present-day Wisconsin Avenue and Western Avenue. Soon thereafter, the Montgomery County sheriff-initiated condemnation proceedings to secure the track right-of-way through the properties of Louis E. Shoemaker, Henry W. Offutt, Mary Shoemaker, Sarah Perry, Louis C. Sólyom, and James H. Loughborough.<sup>29</sup> In 1890 and 1891, the Sólyoms conveyed to the railroad company land

<sup>19</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "John O. Crown to Louis Solyom," January 5, 1875, Liber EBP 13, Folio 123-125.

<sup>20</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Louis and Sally Solyom indebted to Frederick W. Jones," January 5, 1875, Liber EBP 13, Folio 120-123.

<sup>21</sup> Helen K. Starr, "Mr. Hanson and His Friends," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, and Policy*, 4, no. 2 (April 1934): 332.

<sup>22</sup> David S. Rotenstein, "The River Road Moses Cemetery: A Historic Preservation Evaluation," <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Moses-Cemetery-Report-FINAL-LR-with-MIHP-form.pdf>; David Kathan, Amy Rispin, and L. Paige Whitley, "Tracing a Bethesda, Maryland, African American Community and its Contested Cemetery," *Washington History* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 24-41, Bethesda Historical Society.

<sup>23</sup> United States Federal Census, "Louis Solyom," (1880), Ancestry; United States Federal Census, "Pasco Botts," (1880), Ancestry.

<sup>24</sup> David S. Rotenstein, "The River Road Moses Cemetery: A Historic Preservation Evaluation," <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Moses-Cemetery-Report-FINAL-LR-with-MIHP-form.pdf>; David Kathan, Amy Rispin, and L. Paige Whitley, "Tracing a Bethesda, Maryland, African American Community and its Contested Cemetery," *Washington History* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 24-41, Bethesda Historical Society.

<sup>25</sup> United States Federal Nonpopulation Agricultural Schedule, "Louis Solyom," (1880).

<sup>26</sup> "Town and Country," *Montgomery County Sentinel*, May 23, 1890, Chronicling America.

<sup>27</sup> United States Federal Census, "Louis Solyom," (1900), Ancestry.

<sup>28</sup> "The Glen Echo Electric Railway," *Electrical Review* 17, no. 3 (September 13, 1890): 34, Internet Archive; "A New Railroad," *Evening Star*, December 16, 1889, Newspapers.com.

<sup>29</sup> "Real Estate Deals—A Child Drowned—Glen Echo Railroad Condemnations," *Evening Star*, May 23, 1890, Newspapers.com.

that formed part of the original mainline track leading to Wisconsin Avenue.<sup>30</sup> Five years later, in 1896, the Sólyoms conveyed an additional right-of-way that formed the left fork line that branched off the original tracks on their property.<sup>31</sup> The new line crossed Wisconsin Avenue near present-day Oliver Street and proceeded east towards Connecticut Avenue and Chevy Chase. After it opened in 1897, the original line to Tenleytown was superfluous and ceased operations; however, the entire Glen Echo Railroad (then named the Washington and Glen Echo Railroad) ceased operations in the early 1900s.<sup>32</sup> Though short-lived, the Glen Echo Railroad provided a new means of transportation from Montgomery County to the District of Columbia. In relation to the subject property, the Reynolds family oriented their house towards it and River Road in 1899.

### ***Historic Context: Julia V. and Edwin C. Reynolds***

#### Julia V. Sólyom, Edwin C. Reynolds, and Harriet C. Reynolds

Born on June 18, 1867, Julia Vincenza Sólyom was the daughter of Louis and Sarah Sólyom. She attended Spencerian Business College where she graduated with a degree in shorthand and typewriting.<sup>33</sup> Louis and Sarah Sólyom conveyed 2.57-acres of their estate to Julia as a wedding gift after her marriage to Edwin Clark Reynolds on December 28, 1896.<sup>34</sup> Like many members of her family, Julia and Edwin were married on the porch of the Sólyom house.<sup>35</sup>

Edwin Clark Reynolds, known to his family as “Ned,” was born on January 26, 1870.<sup>36</sup> He was the son of Edwin Clark Reynolds, Sr., and Harriet (nee Collins) Reynolds. Edwin’s father died possibly before his birth, and he was raised by his mother in North Providence, Rhode Island. She taught him at a one room school that she also ran. Later in life, Harriet Reynolds was highly accomplished and known for her pioneer humanitarian work towards animals. She was a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, initiated the Band of Mercy in Rhode Island, and was Vice-President of the American Humane Education Society. She was a national lecturer, author, and humane worker, but her greatest accomplishments occurred overseas. Harriet organized a humane society in Greece under the sanction of Queen Olga, and joined Clara Barton in Turkey during the Red Cross relief of the Hamidian (Armenian) massacres in 1896. In addition, she distributed printed materials in France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, China, and Japan. She edited the book, *Thoughts on Humane Education: Suggestions on Kindness to Animals and Notes on Their Habits and Usefulness* (1919).<sup>37</sup> Towards the end of her life, Harriet and Edwin purchased nearby property and constructed the extant house at 4604 North Park Avenue in Friendship Heights for her to be closer to the Reynolds family.<sup>38</sup>

Edwin Reynolds attended Brown University between 1887 and 1889 for his freshman and sophomore years of college; however, he never graduated from the university.<sup>39</sup> Records suggest that Reynolds left school for employment with the Chevy Chase Land Company.<sup>40</sup> In *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation’s*

---

<sup>30</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Louis C. and Sallie J. Solyom to Glen Echo Railroad Company,” July 14, 1890, Liber JA 19, Folio 441-443, MDLandRec; Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Louis C. and Sallie J. Solyom to Glen Echo Railroad Company,” February 18, 1891, Liber JA 23, Folio 480-482, MDLandRec.

<sup>31</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Louis C. and Sallie J. Solyom to Glen Echo Railroad Company,” July 21, 1896, Liber TD 2, Folio 126-127, MDLandRec.

<sup>32</sup> Supreme Court of the United States, “Richard L. Solyom, et alia, v. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, et alia,” Judicial Statement and Appendix; Leroy O. King, Jr., *100 Years of Capital Traction: The Story of Streetcars in the Nation’s Capital* (College Park, MD: Taylor Publishing Company, 1972), 42.

<sup>33</sup> “Business is Their Bent,” *Times Herald*, May 3, 1895, Newspapers.com.

<sup>34</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Louis Charles and Sarah Jane Solyom to Julia Vincenza Reynolds,” July 19, 1887, Liber JA 58, Folio 468-470, MDLandRec.

<sup>35</sup> “Married, Reynolds—Solyom,” *Evening Star*, December 29, 1896, Newspapers.com.

<sup>36</sup> “Edwin Clark ‘Ned’ Reynolds,” FindAGrave.com.

<sup>37</sup> “Harriet C. Reynolds,” *Our Dumb Animals* 64, no. 5 (May 1931): 80, Internet Archive.

<sup>38</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Henry W. Offutt and Florence G. Offutt to Harriet C. Reynolds and Edwin C. Reynolds,” August 11, 1927, Liber PRB 434, Folio 277-278, MDLandRec.

<sup>39</sup> “U.S., School Catalogs, 1765-1935, Rhode Island, Brown University, “List of Non-Graduates—Edwin Clark Reynolds,” (1898): 81, Ancestry.

<sup>40</sup> The reasons behind his acceptance of the position remain unclear. However, Samuel M. Gray—recognized in *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation’s Capital* as one of the company’s and nation’s leading engineers—was from Providence, Rhode Island, which is also Reynolds’s hometown. It is possible the two had a prior association. Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, “Chevy Chase, Maryland Survey District, Phase 2,” (1997), <http://www.chevychasehistory.pastperfectonline.com>.

*Capital*, historians Lampl and Williams noted that the company hired Reynolds as part of the “engineer corps” who were responsible for streets, gutters, and drains.<sup>41</sup> In addition, a survey drawing from the Chevy Chase Land Company is dated “June 8, 1891, E.C. Reynolds.”<sup>42</sup> In all likelihood, Reynolds met Julia Sólyom during his employment with the company.

Reynolds returned to school and enrolled at Lehigh University in 1892. The following year, he graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering.<sup>43</sup> He worked as the Chief Engineer for the Niagara Power and Development Company between 1894 and 1896 and then as a topographer for the Government Survey Ship Canal in the Mohawk River Valley, New York, between 1897 and 1898. Reynolds returned to Montgomery County and the Federal government employed him at the Patent Office on July 19, 1898. He was promoted to Principal Examiner in 1920 and retired after forty-two years of service on February 1, 1940. Outside of work, he briefly served as Editor-in-Chief for the *Journal of the Patent Office Society*.<sup>44</sup>

Edwin Reynolds wrote numerous letters to the editorial board of the *Washington Post* and appears to have had progressive leanings. Reynolds weighed in on the national story of Louise Hadley, a white chambermaid, allegedly fired from her position at a hotel in Indianapolis for refusing to make the bed of Booker T. Washington in 1903. He openly mocked the woman’s refusal to service the room in his published letter:

The writer has been anxiously waiting to see the editor treat the Indianapolis chambermaid incident in the vigorous language that the case seems to demand. ...What would happen to one of the Post reporters if he refused to interview a person on account of his color? What does the editor imagine the Commissioner of Patents would do to the writer if he should refuse to examine the papers in a patent case, or grant an interview, on the ground that the inventor was a negro? So far from the affair’s showing any proper self-respect on the chambermaid’s part, the only natural inference is that as she felt insulted by being asked to make up Booker Washington’s bed, she would crawl around on all four for the privilege of making up the bed in which had reposed the august [noble] form of the Grand Duke of Thingumbob or his royal highness of Ruritania.<sup>45</sup>

#### Builder Charles H. Kelley and Construction of the Reynolds House

The Reynolds returned to Washington, D.C., in 1898, prompted by Edwin’s employment at the Patent Office and a desire to establish their home on the 2.57-acre wedding gift from the Sólyoms.<sup>46</sup> On July 15, 1899, the couple secured a \$1,600 mortgage from Harriet Reynolds to fund the construction of the subject house.<sup>47</sup> They hired their uncle Charles H. Kelley—an experienced builder from Putnam, Connecticut—who was married to Harriet Reynolds’ sister, Olive Collins.<sup>48</sup>

In Putnam, Kelley had trained as a master carpenter from a young age under Horace Hazzard, eventually co-founding the firm Hazzard & Kelley. He later joined French, McKenzie & Company, a major contracting firm with 700 workers, known for constructing the Olneyville Mills in Providence, Rhode Island. After returning to Putnam in 1876, Kelley started his own business and expanded into a wide range of building trades including

---

<sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Jo Lampl and Kimberly Prothro Williams, *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation’s Capital* (Silver Spring, Maryland: Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, 1998), 38.

<sup>42</sup> E.C. Reynolds, “Chevy Chase Land Co.,” Chevy Chase Land Company, Washington, D.C., Subdivision & Suburban Communities, January 8, 1891, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site, Flickr.

<sup>43</sup> Lehigh University, *Epitome: Yearbook 1894* (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Lehigh University, 1894), 23, Internet Archive.

<sup>44</sup> “Resignation of Editor-In-Chief Reynolds,” *Journal of Patent Office Society* 8 (April 1926): 357, HeinOnline; “Retirement of E. C. Reynolds,” *Journal of Patent Office Society* 22 (April 1940): 311, HeinOnline; “Edwin C. Reynolds,” *Journal of Patent Office Society* 48 (February 1966): 129, HeinOnline.

<sup>45</sup> “Chambermaid’s Reward: Stimulus to Passing the Hat for Similar Action About Negroes,” *Washington Post*, May 25, 1903, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>46</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Louis Charles and Sarah Jane Solyom to Julia Vincenza Reynolds,” July 19, 1887, Liber JA 58, Folio 468-470, MDLandRec.

<sup>47</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Julia V. and Edwin C. Reynolds indebted to Harriet C. Reynolds,” August 1, 1899, Liber TD 9, Folio 138, MDLandRec.

<sup>48</sup> United States Federal Census, “Olive F. Collins,” (1850), Ancestry.com; United States Federal Census, “Olive F. Reynolds,” (1900), Ancestry.com; “Olive F. Collins Kelley,” FindAGrave.com; “Obituaries – Mrs. Chas. H. Kelley,” *Putnam Patriot*, March 6, 1925, Newspapers.com.

carpentry, grading, masonry, and painting. He also offered architectural designs, plans, and cost estimates to his clients. Kelley was credited with constructing most of Putnam's late nineteenth century commercial buildings, numerous homes in the surrounding area, and several churches. He passed away in 1903, shortly after the completion of the Reynolds House.<sup>49</sup>

Kelley designed the Reynolds a Queen Anne-styled dwelling, one of the dominant styles for domestic architecture in the late nineteenth century. The style was characterized by asymmetrical massing, steeply pitched and irregularly shaped roofs, wraparound front porches, towers, exuberant spindle work and gingerbread trim, avoidance of smooth wall surfaces, and bay windows. A front gable massing with or without a tower and shallow cross gables was one of its typical forms. The upper gable ends often featured wood shingles to add complexity to the wall surface. Typical windows included one-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows and multi-light accent windows. In *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia McAlester called the style's transition away from turned posts, spindle work, and gingerbread trim towards classical details and columns, Palladian windows, and restrained ornamentation as its "free classic" adaptation.<sup>50</sup> Kelley's original design included a conical roof at the eastern extent of the front porch, Palladian window in the facade's upper gable end, and ornamental trim (App. 5).<sup>51</sup> Descendents of the family suggest that these elements were excluded for financial reasons.

### ***Historic Context: Reynolds Property and Little Falls Branch***

In the early twentieth century, the *Evening Star* offered a description of the landscape of the immediate surrounding area in an article focused on the Little Falls Branch:

Crossing it [the Little Falls Branch at River Road], you pass up a steep hill, clay and rock, and on the right is a large and very old house heavily screened with silver poplars all tangled with honeysuckle. This is the home of L. C. Solyom. The family cemetery with a number of white marble tombs rests on the crest of a gentle hill that rises above the branch. This is a farming country and you seem far from the city. Some of the farmers living in the neighborhood are J. H. Loughborough, E. C. Reynolds, William Shoemaker, Benjamin Perry, Boyd Perry, and John Willet.<sup>52</sup>

Prior to infrastructure improvements, the Little Falls Branch at the Reynolds House experienced heavy pollution as numerous sewer lines emptied into the branch and caused health and sanitation issues. As reported in the *Annual Report of the State Department of Health of Maryland* (1911):

The sewage-toilet and bathroom-from the six aforesaid places lodges and accumulates along the banks of the Little Falls Branch. During a freshet this effete [affected] material is carried to the lowlands, where it is deposited, wherein it dried and contaminates the surrounding atmosphere by reason of foul odors generated therefrom. The residents have informed me that the bad smell can be detected for a distance of several hundred yards. This is especially true in the summer season, at which time flies and mosquitos flourish in almost tropical profusion.

...Mr. E. C. Reynolds is also badly annoyed by these contaminations. In addition to the bad smell, which undoubtedly is prejudicial to the health and happiness of the persons living in this section, human fecal material clings to the feet of men and farm animals, and is thus disseminated about the premises and even in the home. Other persons, besides Mrs. Loughborough and Mr. Reynolds, residing in the infested area have proclaimed this condition of affairs an intolerable nuisance and a menace to the public health.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> "Putnam Builder: Death of Charles H. Kelley, a Well Known Contractor," *Hartford Courant*, September 8, 1903, Newspapers.com.

<sup>50</sup> Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 264.

<sup>51</sup> Montgomery Parks, "Finding of Eligibility Form – Reynolds House," (2009).

<sup>52</sup> "When Water From Little Falls Branch Flowed Into The Aqueduct," *Evening Star*, April 6, 1913, Newspapers.com.

<sup>53</sup> State Department of Health, *Annual Report of the State Department of Health of Maryland for the Year Ending December 31, 1911* (Baltimore, Maryland: Geo. W. King Printing Co., 1913), 159-161.

Reynolds provided the State Board of Health recommendations data and abatement measures for Little Falls Branch.

***Historic Context: Expansion of the Reynolds Property, Division of the Solyom Estate, and Surrounding Suburban Development***

The Reynolds House predates the subdivision of its immediate surroundings. In 1901, Aquilla Eld subdivided “The Hills,” followed by Henry W. Offutt’s “Friendship Heights” in 1902. Later that decade, Stephen B. Perry subdivided “West Friendship Heights” in 1908, which was officially recorded in 1909.<sup>54</sup> This subdivision included the precursor of Willard Avenue—initially named Friendship Avenue—and consisted of ten lots approximately 20,000 square feet, equally split on either side of road.<sup>55</sup> Willard Avenue itself was plated in 1909.<sup>56</sup> Notably, Edwin C. Reynolds was the surveyor of record for the West Friendship Heights subdivision, and between 1908 and 1913, Julia Reynolds purchased Lots 3-5 adjoining their property to expand their land.<sup>57</sup> Together, Willard Avenue’s development and the acquisition of these lots reconfigured the Reynolds property’s circulation network, giving the family access from the new road.

Following the death of Sarah Solyom in 1901, Louis Solyom continued to subdivide his original 8-acre estate to provide housing opportunities for their children. In 1911, he conveyed 1.92 acres to his daughter, Mary Josephine Churchill, after her marriage to George Morton Churchill.<sup>58</sup> The couple constructed the extant house at 5001 River Road the following year, which continues to be owned by their descendants. Before his death in 1913, Louis and his son Herbert Louis Solyom, who had not yet received a portion of the property, agreed on a section of land to be conveyed to him. As directed in Louis’ will, the estate transferred 2.5 acres to Herbert Solyom in 1914, where he and his wife, Stella, constructed the extant Dutch Colonial Revival house at 4925 River Road.<sup>59</sup> Lastly, Louis Solyom instructed his estate that Bettie C. Eichholtz, who had lived with the Solyom family since at least 1880, be allowed to reside in a no-longer-extant-house at the southwest corner of the estate until her death and to receive \$1,000 for repayment of a loan.<sup>60</sup> According to newspaper accounts, Louis and Sarah Solyom’s house was demolished in the 1930s.<sup>61</sup>

The children of Louis Solyom further divided their lands to allow for housing opportunities for their children. In 1929, Edwin C. and Sarah Reynolds conveyed Lot 5 to their son, Edwin L. Reynolds, six months before his marriage to June Cooper.<sup>62</sup> It is likely that Edwin and June constructed the bungalow that stills stands at 5326 Willard Avenue at that time, but real estate records suggest an earlier date of construction.<sup>63</sup> Herbert and Stella Solyom divided their property in 1939 and conveyed a .7-acre lot as a wedding gift to their daughter, Phyllis Vincenza, when she married Hadd Stewart Lane.<sup>64</sup> The couple commissioned architect Thomas Allen Pope and

---

<sup>54</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, “The Hills” (1901), Plat 44, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>; Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, “Friendship Heights” (1902), Plat 45, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>; Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, “West Friendship Heights” (1908), Plat 93, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>.

<sup>55</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, “West Friendship Heights” (1908), Plat 93, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>.

<sup>56</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, “Plat of Road at Friendship Heights” (1910), Plat 119, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>.

<sup>57</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Stephen B. and Virginia F. Perry to Julia Vincenze Reynolds,” August 12, 1908, Liber JLB 200, Folio 91-92, MDLandRec; Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Stephen B. and Virginia F. Perry to Julia Vincenze Reynolds,” July 1, 1911, Liber JLB 222, Folio 244-245, MDLandRec; Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Stephen B. and Virginia F. Perry to Julia Vincenze Reynolds,” June 10, 1913, Liber JLB 236, Folio 235-237, MDLandRec.

<sup>58</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Louis C. Solyom to Mary Josephine Solyom Churchill,” May 5, 1911, Liber JLB 218, Folio 486-487, MDLandRec.

<sup>59</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Julia V. and Edwin C. Reynolds, and Mary J. and George C. Churchill to Herbert L. Solyom,” April 21, 1914, Liber JLB 242, Folio 490-491, MDLandRec; Maryland Register of Wills, 1629-1999, Montgomery County, “Louis C. Solyom,” October 15, 1907, Liber, HCA 14, Folio 183-184, FamilySearch.

<sup>60</sup> Maryland Register of Wills, 1629-1999, Montgomery County, “Louis C. Solyom,” October 15, 1907, Liber, HCA 14, Folio 183-184, FamilySearch.

<sup>61</sup> “Daughter Visiting Ex-Premier of France and Mme. Chautemps,” *Evening Star*, March 28, 1948, Newspapers.com.

<sup>62</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Julia V. and Edwin C. Reynolds to Edwin L. Reynolds,” February 12, 1929, Liber PBR 478, Folio 25-26, MDLandRec.

<sup>63</sup> The Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation lists a construction date of 1923. For more information, see <http://www.sdat.dat.maryland.gov>.

<sup>64</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Herbert Louis and Stella M. Solyom to Phyllis V. Solyom,” February 20, 1939, Liber CKW 728, Folio 15-16, MDLandRec.

constructed the Modern-styled split-level home in 1939.<sup>65</sup> The house was purchased by Montgomery Parks and, as part of the planned park development, later demolished ca. 2010 to incorporate the property into Willard Avenue Park.

Outside of the Sólyom family compound, development on Willard Avenue in West Friendship Heights remained sparse in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Perry family retained their homestead (built ca. 1903) on Lot 7. In the 1910s, Jacob and Fannie Horn constructed a craftsman-styled bungalow on Lot 1, located at the northwest corner of Willard Avenue and River Road. As part of the planned park development, this house was demolished in 2024 by Montgomery Parks to improve the entrance to Willard Avenue Park. The present built environment of Willard Avenue emerged following the resubdivision of Lots 8-10 by Westgate, Incorporated, in 1938, and Lots 2, 6-7 by Hartsell O. Bowman in 1941 that led to the construction of many of the existing homes.<sup>66</sup>

The characteristics of Friendship Heights underwent significant change in the mid-twentieth century. The expansion of commercial zoning permitted the establishment of the Woodward and Lothrop Department Store in 1950 at Wisconsin and Western avenues, introducing a major retail anchor into a predominately residential suburb. Coupled with a growing population, its success spurred a rise in rezoning applications for commercial, office, and multi-family residential development. Examples include the Government Employee Insurance Company (GEICO) Headquarters that opened in 1959 and The Irene, a high-rise, 524-unit, multi-family apartment building in 1964. That same year, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission adopted the *Master Plan for West Chevy Chase and Vicinity* that recommended a Commercial Office Zone for the entire GEICO parcel and a C-2 Zone for the remainder of the Central Business District. Friendship Heights' rapid transformation continued after its identification as a future Metrorail stop in the early 1960s. By 1969, the *Washington Post* estimated that only 30 homes remained in the area, and predicted that most would be demolished in five years.

#### ***Historic Context: Reynolds House in the mid-to-late Twentieth Century and Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park***

Edwin C. and Julia Reynolds remained at the subject house for the rest of their lives. Julia passed away in 1948, followed by Edwin in 1966.<sup>67</sup> Their daughter, Hazel Reynolds, inherited the home and retained ownership until her death in 1987. Robert Wooden, whose grandmother was Julia Reynolds' sister, inherited the property, and in 1993, submitted a zoning map amendment application seeking to rezone the property from R-60 (Residential, One-Family) to RT-10 (Residential, Townhouse). The Planning Board ultimately denied the request.<sup>68</sup>

Following on the recommendation of earlier Master Plans, Montgomery Parks acquired land between 1977 and 1995 to establish Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park. This effort required the purchase of multiple parcels owned by descendants of the Sólyom family. In 1995, the Planning Board approved the acquisition of a 1.07-acre property owned by Robert Wooden—including the Reynolds House—using Acquisition Revolving Funds.<sup>69</sup> Montgomery Parks subsequently added the Reynolds House to its rental portfolio, with plans for demolition at a later date.

#### **I. Areas Exempt from Designation:** There are no areas exempt from designation.

---

<sup>65</sup> Montgomery Parks, "Finding of Eligibility Form – Lane House," (2009).

<sup>66</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, "Subdivision of Lots 8, 9, and 10 West Friendship" (1938), Plat 989, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>; Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, "Subdivision of Lots 2, 7, and Part of 6 West Friendship" (1941), Plat 1436, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>.

<sup>67</sup> "Mrs. Julia V. Reynolds," *Times Herald*, January 16, 1948, Newspapers.com; "Edwin Reynolds Patent Office Retired Aide Dead at 95," *Washington Post*, January 11, 1966, Proquest.

<sup>68</sup> Montgomery County Planning Board, "Planning Board Recommendation on Zoning Map Amendment Application No. G-705," September 14, 1993, Montgomery Planning Archives.

<sup>69</sup> Montgomery County Planning Board, "Agenda for Regular Meeting of the Montgomery County Planning Board, February 23, 1995," Montgomery Planning Archives.

## **J. Designation Criteria:**

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House meets Designation Criteria 1.A, 1.D, and 2.E as listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code.

### **1.A Historical and cultural significance. The historic resource has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation.**

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House reflects late nineteenth-century development along River Road in this section of Montgomery County. Completed in 1899, the Reynolds House predates the establishment of nearby subdivisions including The Hills (1901), Friendship Heights (1902), and West Friendship Heights (1908), and stands as a tangible reminder of an earlier settlement pattern. Few resources on River Road near Friendship Heights evoke this period of the county's history.

Before the Civil War, River Road primarily consisted of plantations owned by white landowners. Following the war, the rapid expansion of the Federal government created new opportunities for employment and growth in the region. The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House, constructed in 1899, was the first and oldest of five homes constructed by Sólyom descendants on or adjacent to the original family property. Although the original Sólyom home was demolished in the 1930s, four of these five houses—including the Reynolds House—remain standing today. Among them are the houses at 5001 River Road (built ca. 1912), 4925 River Road (built ca. 1914), and 5325 Willard Avenue (built ca. 1928). As part of the planned park development, Montgomery Parks demolished the fifth house, known as the Lane House (built in 1939), in 2010.

### **1.D Historic and cultural significance. Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historical heritage of the county and its communities.**

The Edwin and Julia (nee Sólyom) Reynolds House embodies the success and establishment of a nineteenth-century immigrant family after the Civil War. Julia's father, Louis Sólyom, originally from Galicia, Austria, emigrated to the United States and served in the Union Army. Concurrent with the expansion of the Federal government following the war, the Sólyoms moved their young family from New York to Montgomery County after Louis secured employment with the Library of Congress. Like other landowners along River Road, the Sólyoms farmed their property and may have rented land to African American tenants, such as the Botts family. Today, several descendants of the Sólyom family continue to reside on part of the original 8-acre parcel.

The Reynolds House also reflects the transformative impact of improved transportation on Montgomery County's development as this section of the country shifted from an agricultural to suburban character. The establishment of the streetcar network helped propel the development of numerous nearby subdivisions such as Chevy Chase, Somerset, and Friendship Heights. The Sólyom family conveyed part of their land to the Glen Echo Railroad Company to facilitate the construction of the streetcar line through the property. This new transportation option helped enable the Sólyom family to remain in Montgomery County during the harsher winter months rather than renting a house in Washington, D.C., closer to the Library of Congress. Upon Julia's marriage to Edwin C. Reynolds, the couple received a portion of the family's land on which to build their home. Reynolds, a skilled engineer and land surveyor who previously worked for the Chevy Chase Land Company, recognized the strategic location of the property in relation to River Road and the emerging, albeit short-lived, streetcar. In 1899, the Reynolds oriented their new home toward River Road and the Glen Echo Railroad line. Positioned on an apex of the original Sólyom property, the Reynolds House anchors the Sólyom's family presence on River Road and Little Falls Branch, and foreshadows the change of the surrounding landscape to its current suburban character.

**2.E Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular characteristic or landscape.**

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House stands as a prominent visual feature in Friendship Heights due to its current placement within Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park. The Reynolds House's elevated position from the park trail, particularly where the trail follows the former right-of-way of the Glen Echo Railroad, creates a memorable sightline and reinforces the relationship between the stream and transportation networks to the Sólyom family properties. As trail users walk through the park, they experience a glimpse of the former country landscape of Friendship Heights before widespread suburban development.

**K. Conclusion:**

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House retains sufficient history integrity to convey its period of significance. The house has integrity of location and setting. While the mid-twentieth century suburban development of West Friendship Heights has affected its integrity of setting, the house's relationship to Willard Avenue holds limited significance for the resource. Paramount to understanding the setting of the Reynolds House is its connection to River Road, Little Falls Branch, the former Glen Echo Railroad right-of-way, and other properties built by descendants of the Sólyom family. Most of these relationships remain intact, due in part to the establishment of Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park. The house also retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Its character defining features and materials reflecting the Queen Anne style remain largely unaltered. Lastly, the house retains its integrity of feeling and association, continuing to express its period of construction.

**8. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**Property Land Area:** .93 acres

**Account Number:** 00432622, 02800903, 02800914

**Environmental Setting Description:** The environmental setting incorporates the parcels conveyed to Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning from descendants of the Reynolds family.

**Environmental Setting Justification:** The environmental setting encompasses the land acquired by the Reynolds family from the Sólyoms, along with its subsequent expansion through additional lots purchased in West Friendship Heights.

**9. PROPERTY OWNERS**

Name: Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Premise Address: 5320 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD

Mailing Address: 2425 Reddie Drive, Wheaton, MD

**10. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title: John Liebertz, Cultural Resource Planer III, Montgomery County Planning Department

Date: May 2026

## 11. MAJOR SOURCES CONSULTED

Ancestry.com [numerous].

*Evening Star* [numerous].

Montgomery County Land Records, <http://www.mdlandrec.net>.

*Washington Post* [numerous].

DRAFT

**APPENDIX ONE:**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

DRAFT



Figure 1: Proposed environmental setting for the Reynolds House Master Plan Historic Site, Friendship Heights, Montgomery County, Maryland.

**APPENDIX TWO:**  
**MAPS AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS**

DRAFT

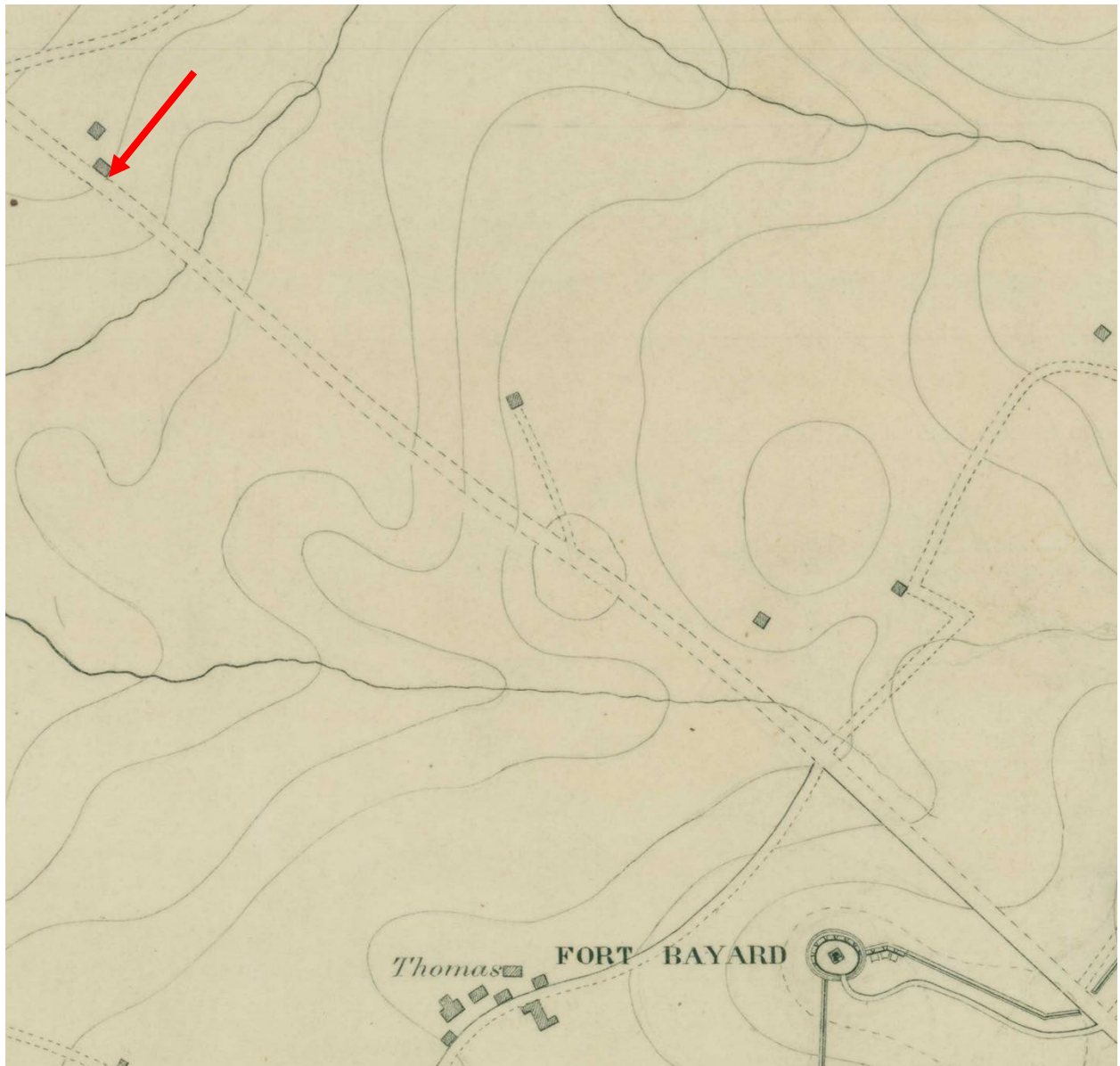


Figure 1: Map of the Defenses of Washington, 1865. The red arrow points to the original Sólyom house purchased in 1875 fronting River Road and demolished in the 1930s. Little Falls Branch is located to the east.  
Source: National Archives.

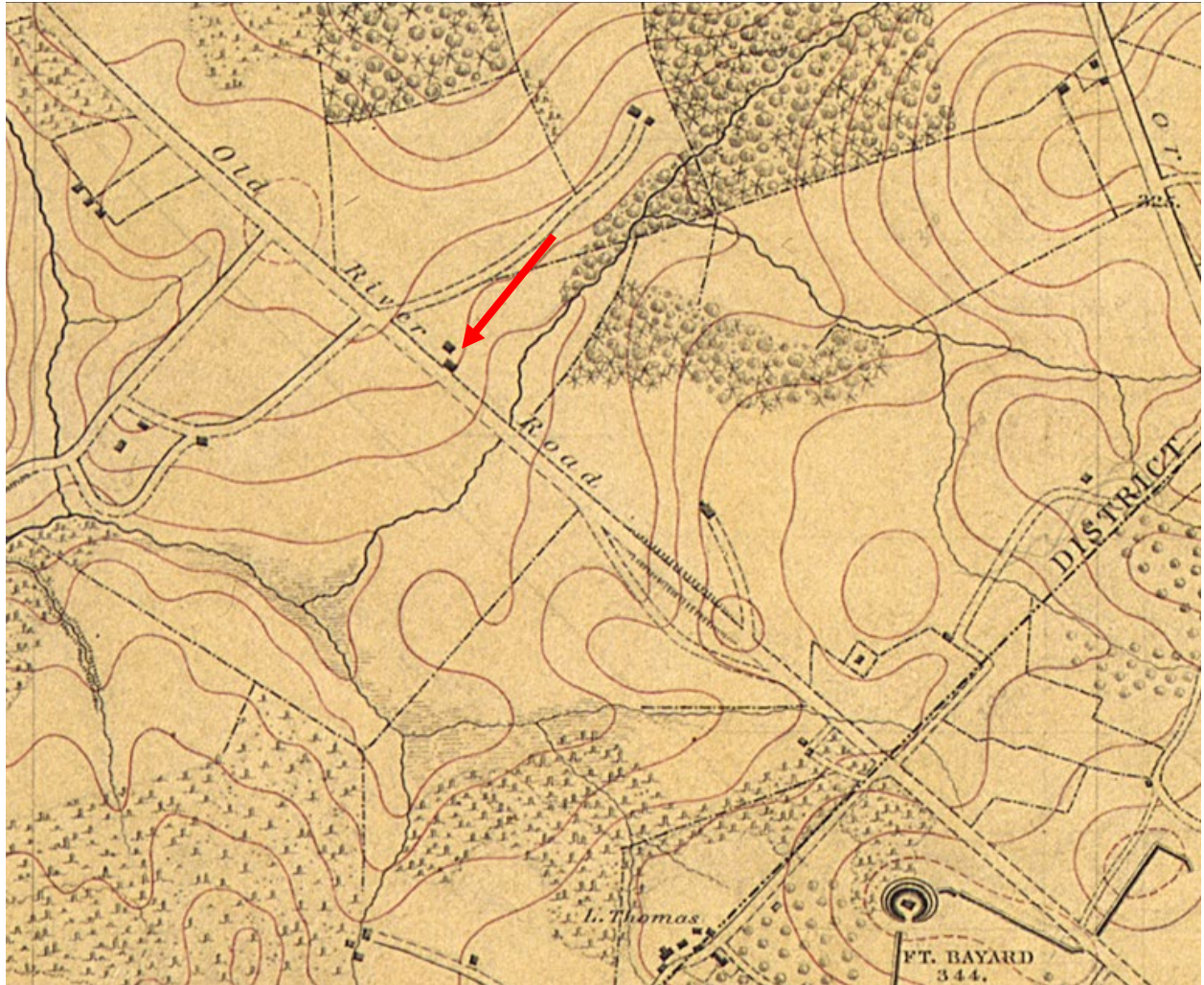


Figure 2: Map of the Defenses of Washington, 1865. The red arrow points to the original Sólyom house purchased in 1875 fronting River Road and demolished in the 1930s. Little Falls Branch is located to the east.  
Source: Library of Congress.

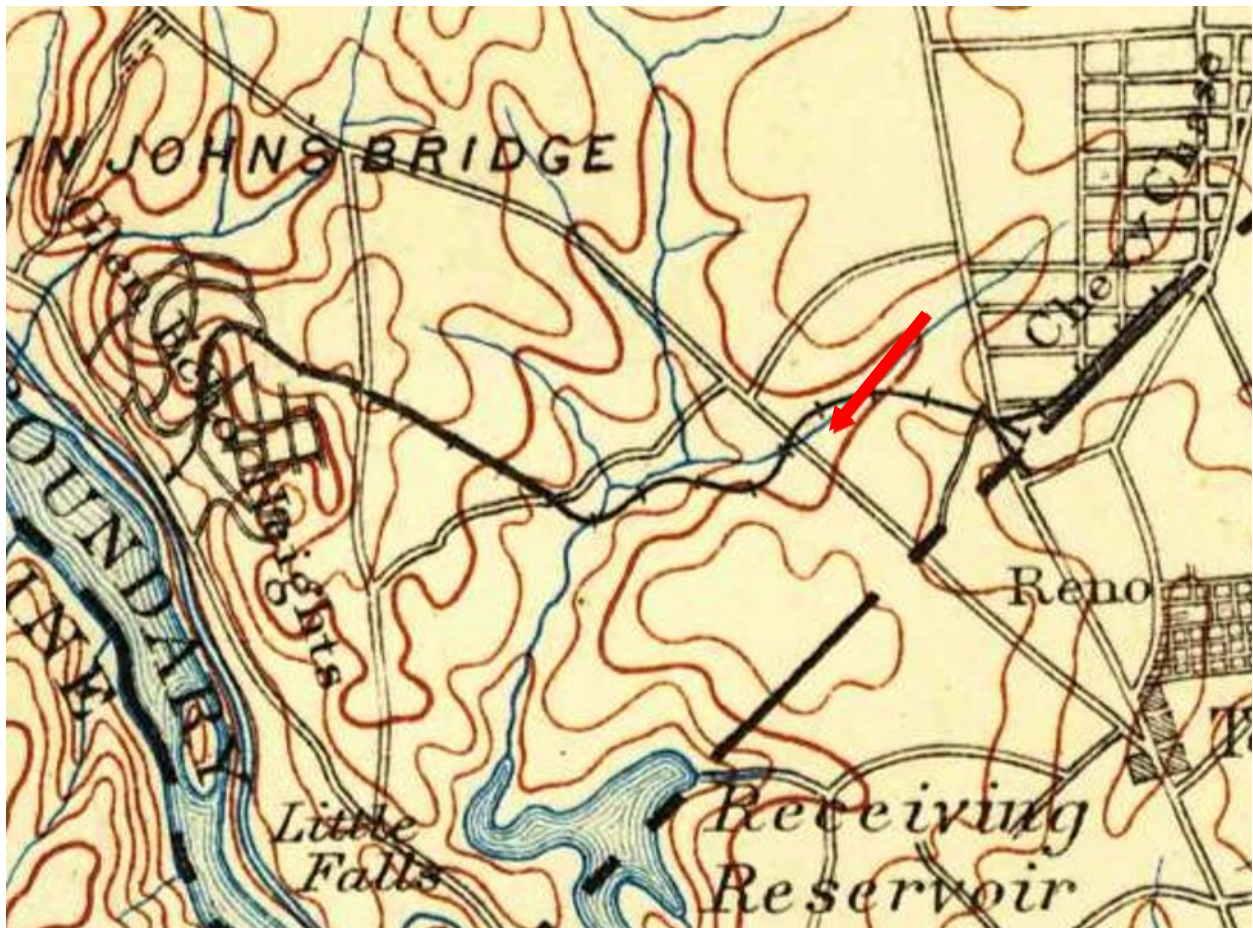


Figure 3: Detailed view of the United States Geological Survey Map, 1894. The red arrow points to the approximate future location of the Reynolds House. Note the Glen Echo Railroad line that traverses the Solyom property.  
Source: United States Geological Survey.

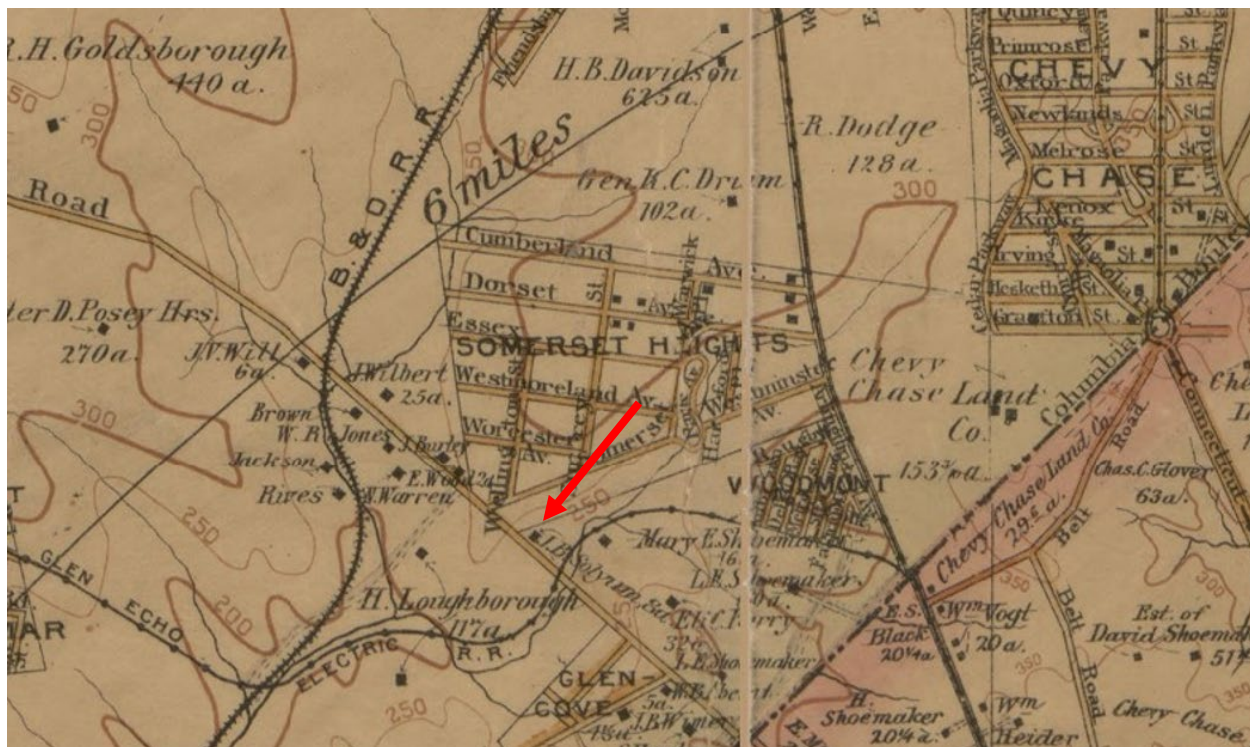


Figure 4: Griffith M. Hopkins, The Vicinity of Washington, D.C., 1894. The red arrow points to the original Sólyom House demolished in the 1930s. Note the Glen Echo Railroad line traversing the property.  
Source: Library of Congress.

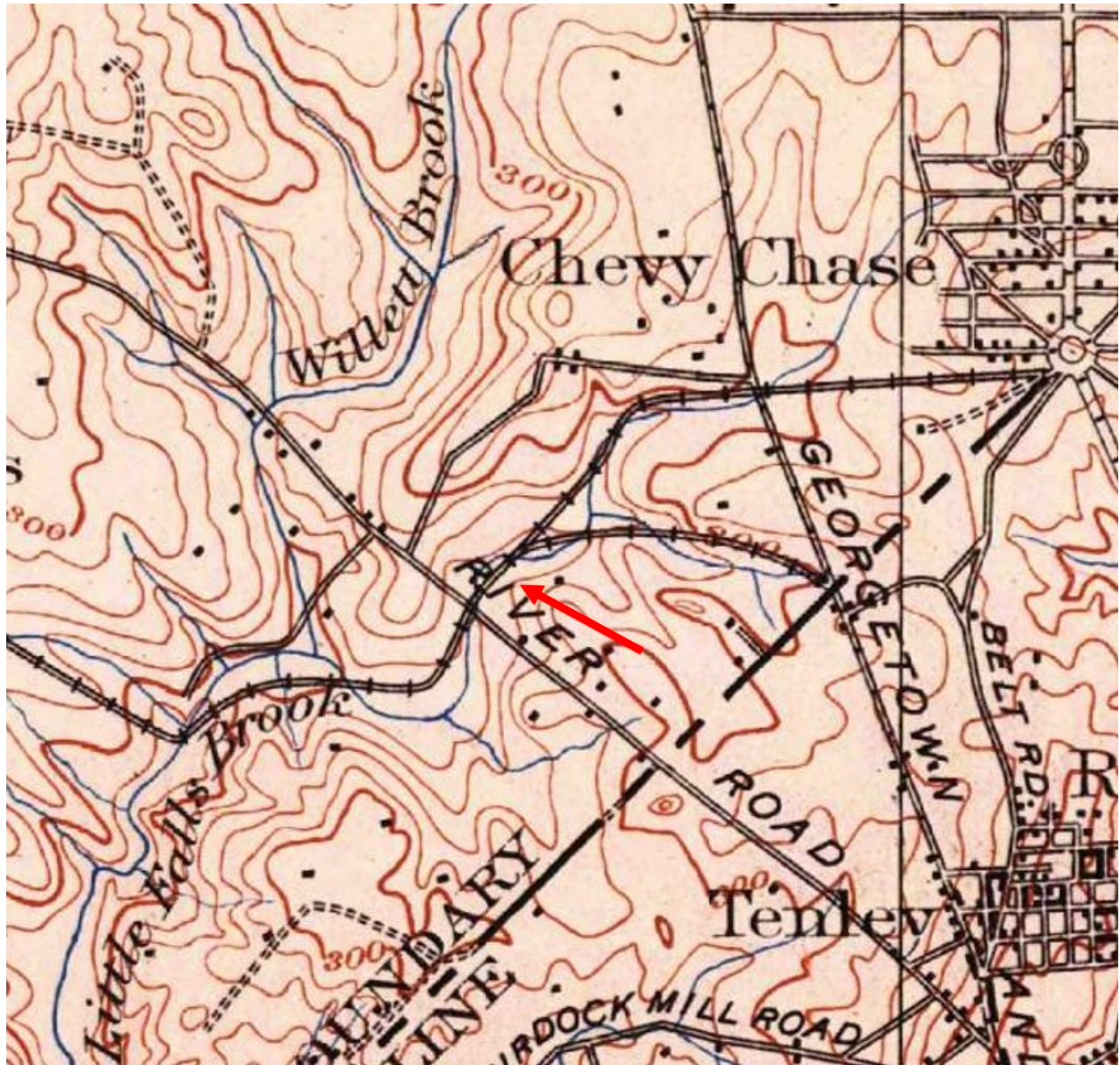


Figure 5: Detailed view of the United States Geological Survey Map, 1900. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Reynolds House. Note the new split of the Glen Echo Railroad line that traverses the Solyom property and ends at Chevy Chase Circle. Source: United States Geological Survey.

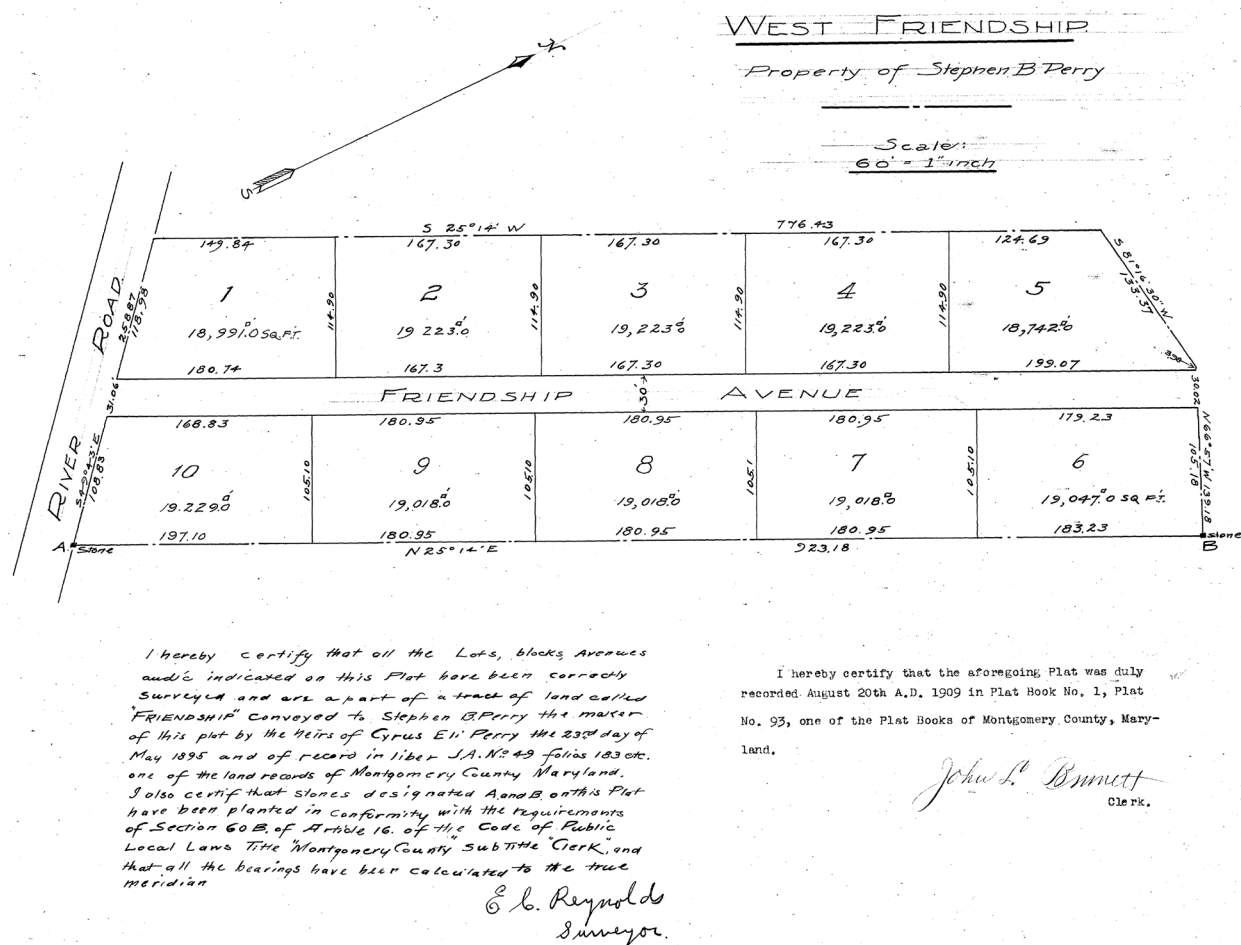


Figure 6: Plat of West Friendship, 1908. Edwin Reynolds surveyed the subdivision, and the family purchased Lots 3-5.

Source: Maryland State Archives.





Figure 8: Frank Sutton, Washington and Vicinity, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, 1917. The red arrow points to the Reynolds House.  
Source: Library of Congress.



Figure 9: Aerial of Montgomery County, 1928. The aerial shows Willard Avenue and Friendship Heights in 1928. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Reynolds House.  
Source: Montgomery Planning.

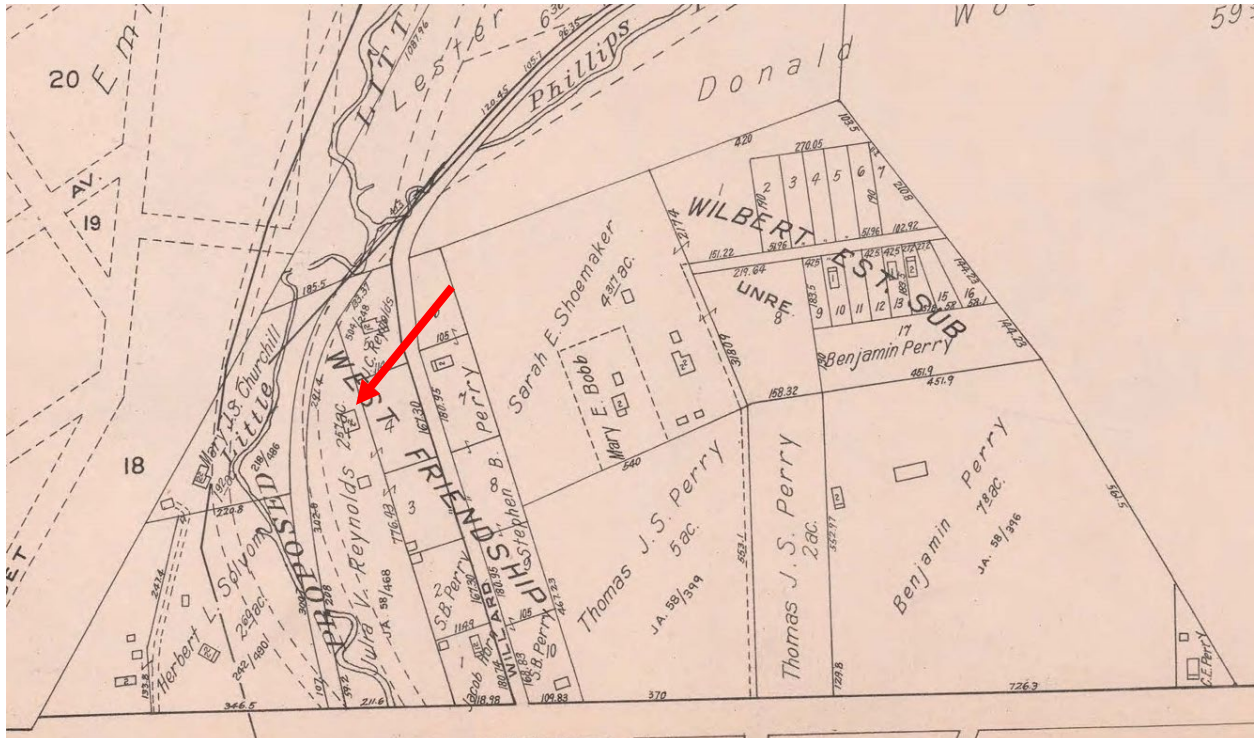


Figure 10: Frank H.M. Klinge, Atlas of Montgomery County, 1931. The red arrow points to the Reynolds House.  
Source: Montgomery Planning.

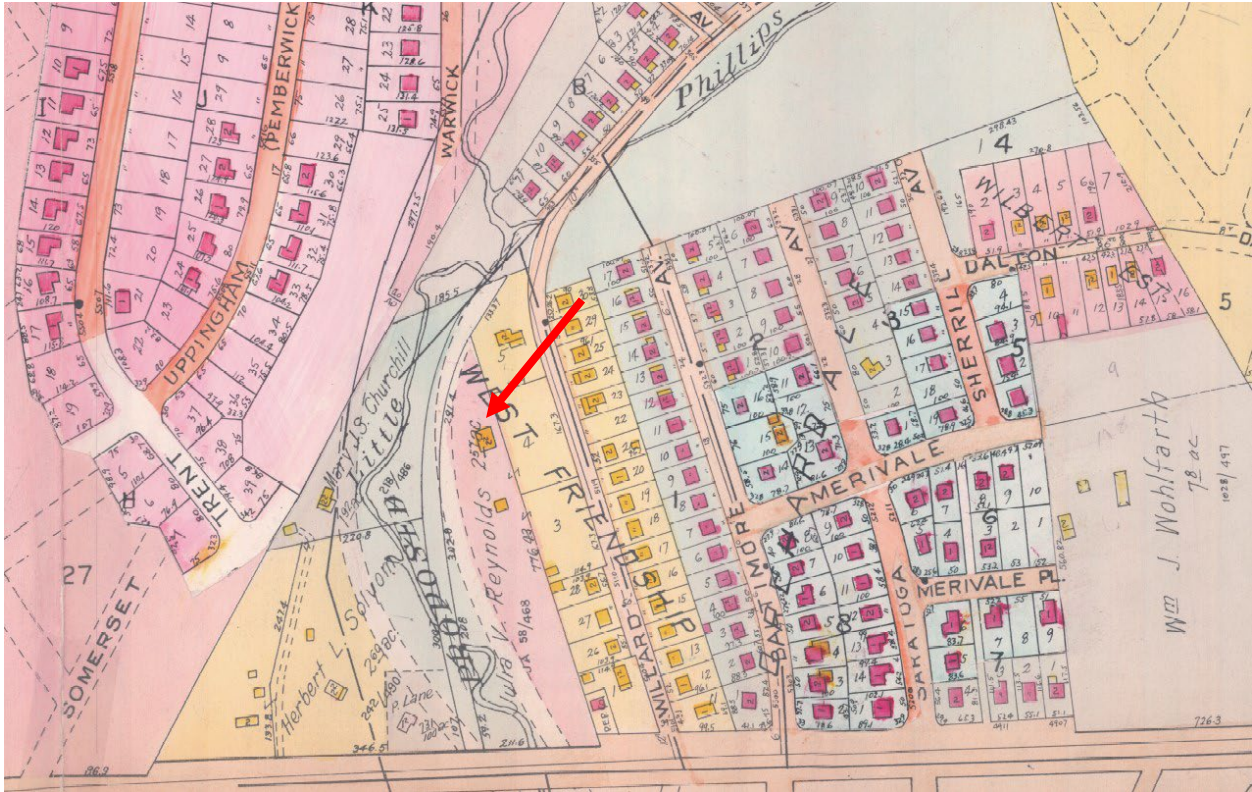


Figure 11: Frank H.M. Klinge, Atlas of Montgomery County, 1949-1953. The red arrow points to the Reynolds House. Note the additional suburban development to the west and east of the subject property.  
Source: Montgomery Planning.

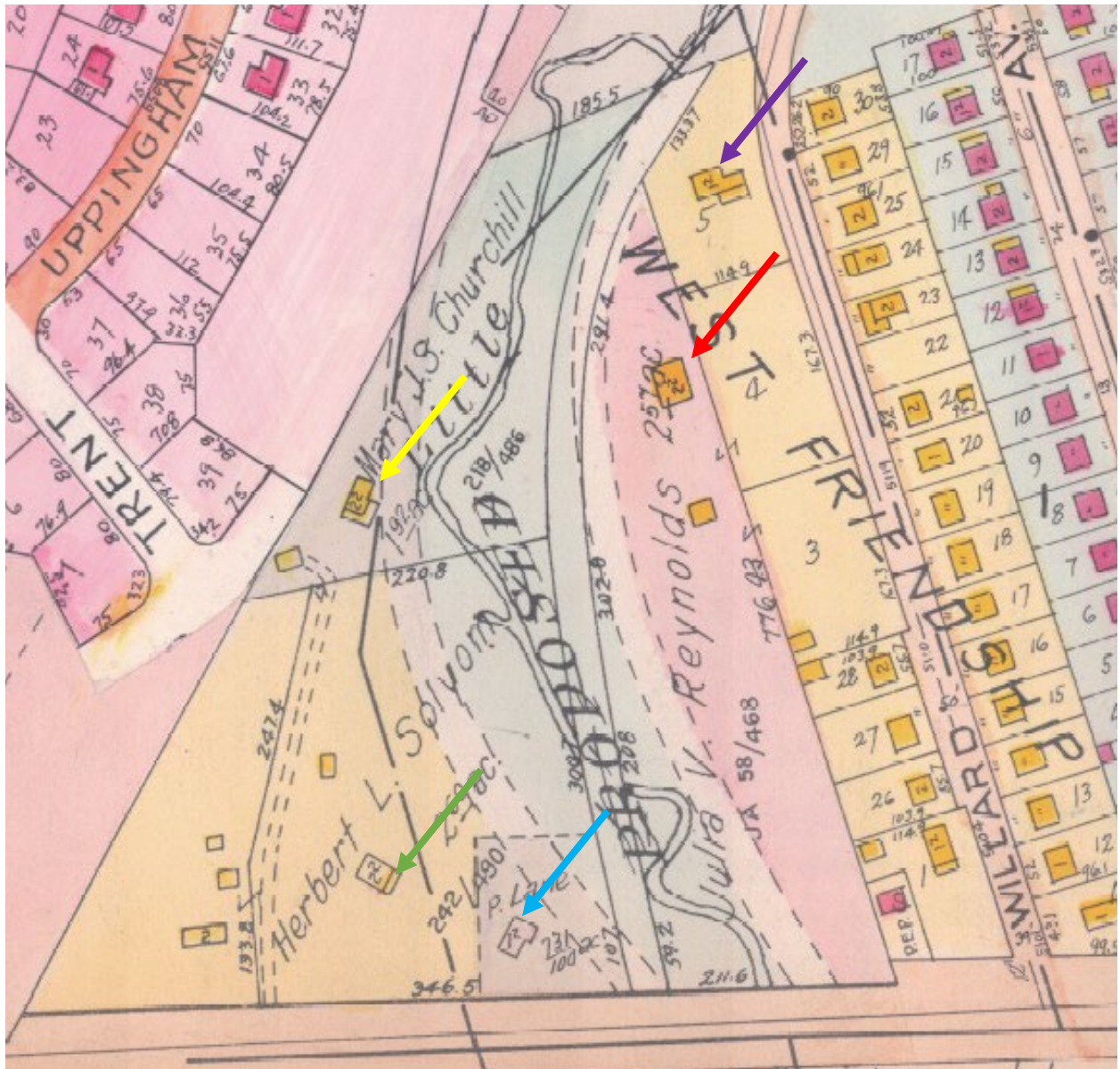


Figure 12: Frank H.M. Klinge, Atlas of Montgomery County, 1949-1953. The map shows the various houses built by descendants of the Solyom family: the red arrow points to the Edwin and Julia Reynolds House (1899), the yellow arrow to the George and Mary Solyom Churchill House (ca. 1911), the green arrow to the Herbert and Stella Solyom House (ca. 1914), and the purple arrow to the Edwin and Jane Reynolds House (ca. 1929), and the blue arrow to the Herbert and Phyliss Solyom Lane House (1939).  
Source: Montgomery Planning.

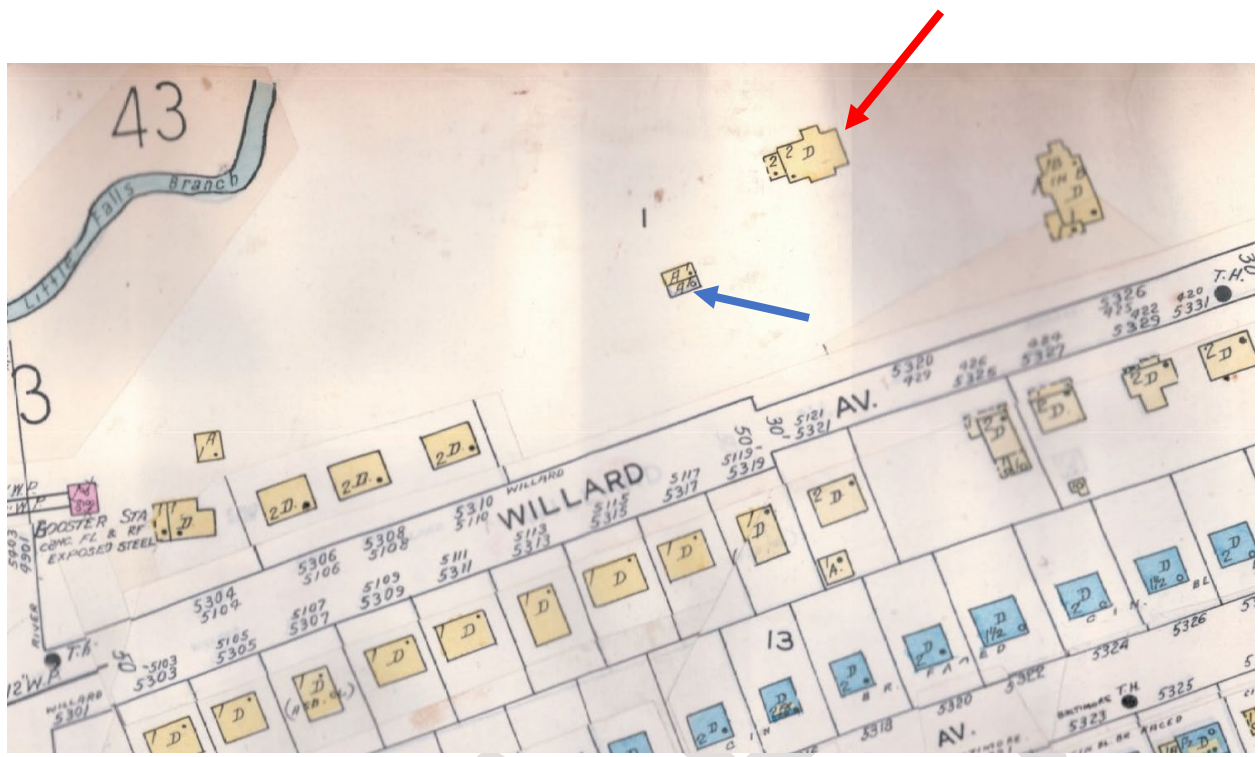


Figure 13: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1927-1963. The red arrow points to the Reynolds House and the blue arrow points to a no longer extant wood-frame garage.  
Source: Montgomery Planning.

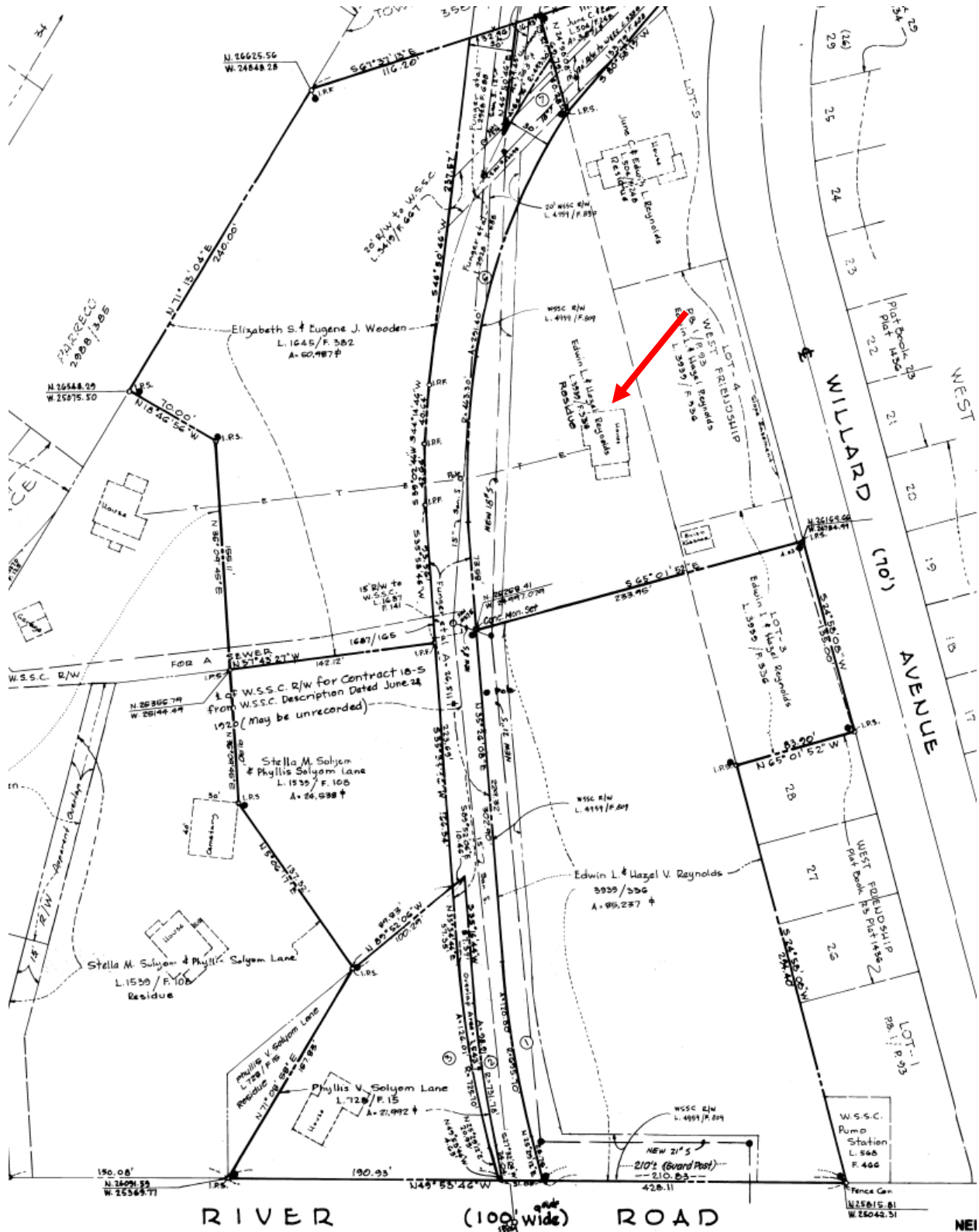


Figure 15: Survey along Little Falls Branch, 1977. The red arrow points to the Reynolds House.  
Source: Montgomery Parks.



Figure 16: Aerial view of the Reynolds House, 2025.  
Source: Connect Explorer.

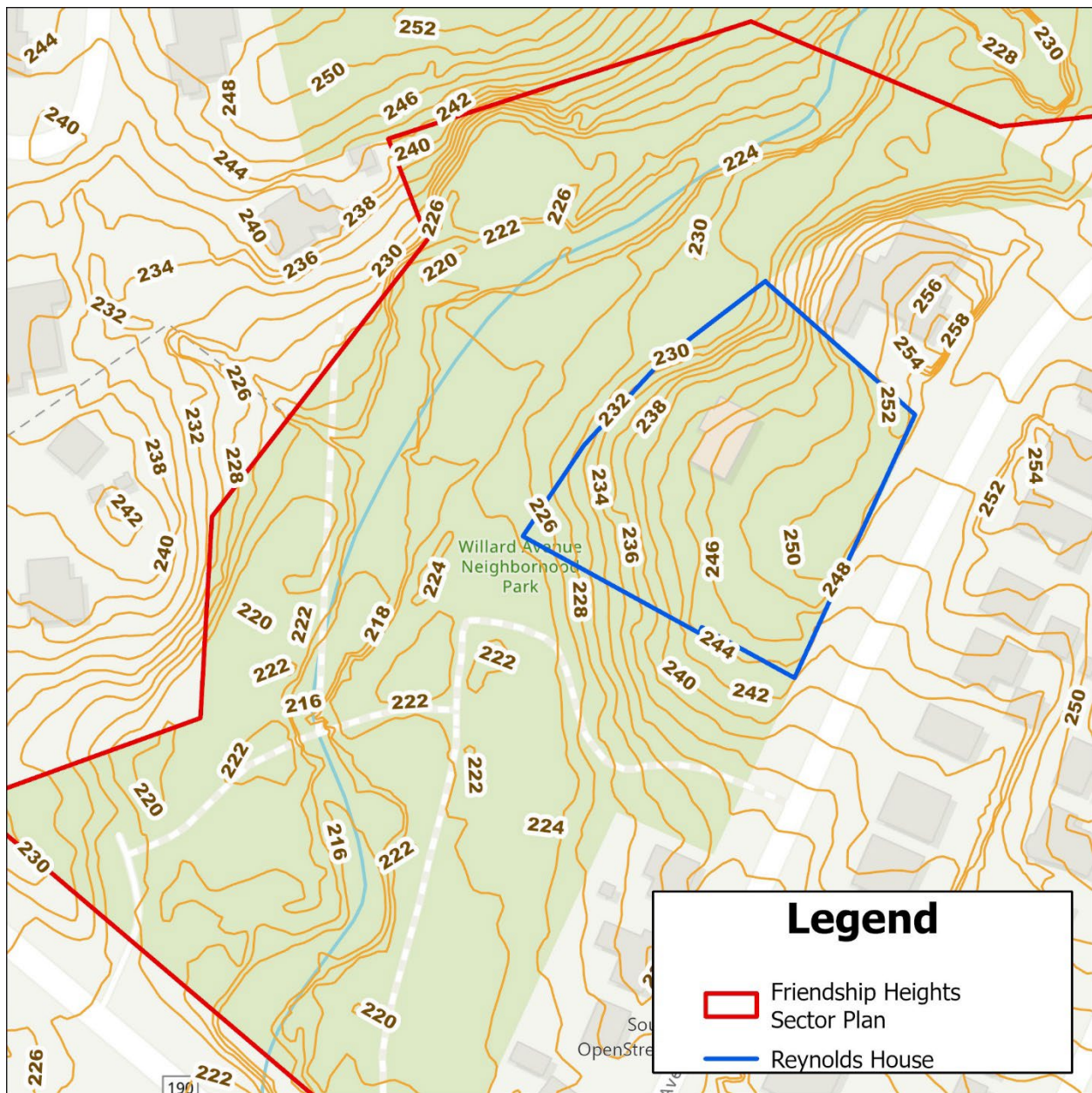


Figure 17: Topography of the Reynolds House, 2023.  
Source: Montgomery Planning.

**APPENDIX THREE:**  
**HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS**

DRAFT



Figure 1: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the south (front) and west (side) elevations from the former Glen Echo Railroad line, ca. 1900.  
Source: Wooden Family Archives.



Figure 2: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the north (rear) and west (side) elevations from the former Glen Echo Railroad line, ca. 1900. The track is visible in the foreground.  
Source: Wooden Family Archives.



Figure 3: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the south (front) and east (side) elevations, undated.  
Source: Montgomery County Parks.



Figure 4: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the south (front) and east (side) elevations, 1970.  
Source: Montgomery County Parks.



Figure 5: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the south (front) and east (side) elevations, 1970.  
Source: Montgomery County Parks.



Figure 6: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the south (front) and east (side) elevations, 1976.  
Source: Montgomery County Parks.



Figure 7: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the south (front) and east (side) elevations from Willard Avenue, 1975.

Source: Montgomery County Parks.



Figure 8: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the west (side) elevation from across Little Falls Branch, 1975.  
Source: Montgomery County Parks.



Figure 9: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the north (rear) elevation, 1975.  
Source: Montgomery County Parks.



Figure 10: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the west (side) elevation, 1975.  
Source: Montgomery County Parks.

**APPENDIX FOUR:**  
**CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS**

DRAFT



Figure 1: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the south (front) and east (side) elevations, 2025.  
Source: Montgomery Planning.



Figure 2: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the south (front) and east (side) elevations, 2025.  
Source: Montgomery Planning.



Figure 3: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the east (side) elevation, 2025.  
Source: Montgomery Planning.



Figure 4: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the south (front) and west (side) elevations, 2025.  
Source: Montgomery Planning.



Figure 5: View of the Reynolds House, looking at the west (side) and south (rear) elevations, 2025.  
Source: Montgomery Planning.

**APPENDIX FIVE:**  
**ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS**

DRAFT

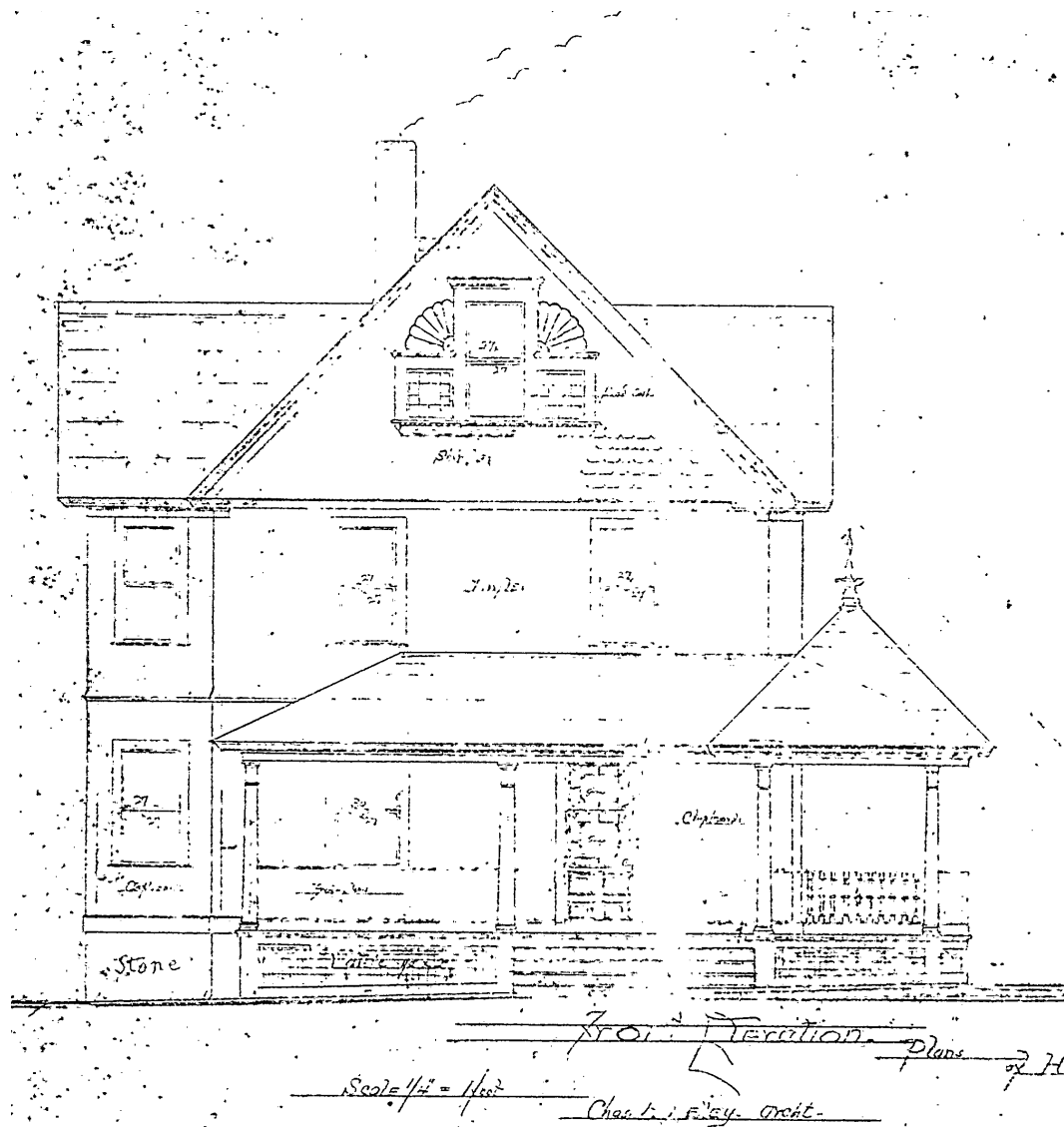
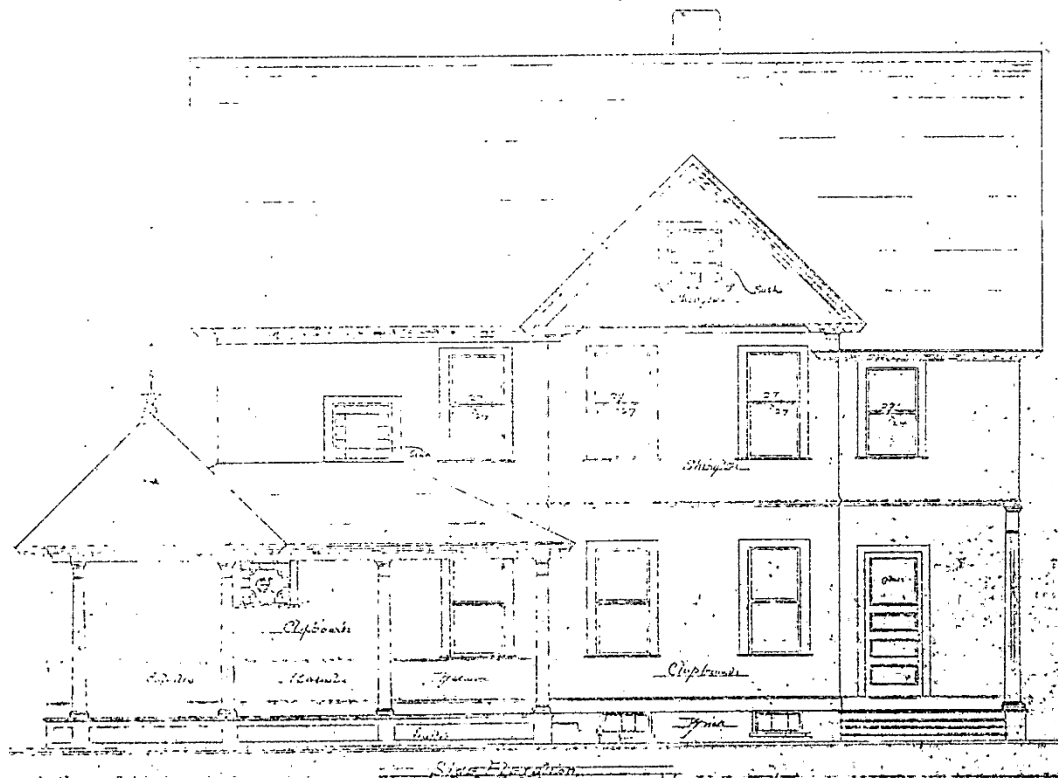


Figure 1: Front (south) elevation of the Edwin and Julia Reynolds House.  
Source: Wooden Family Archive.





S320 WILL  
EAST ELEV.

Figure 3: East (side) elevation of the Edwin and Julia Reynolds House.  
Source: Wooden Family Archive.

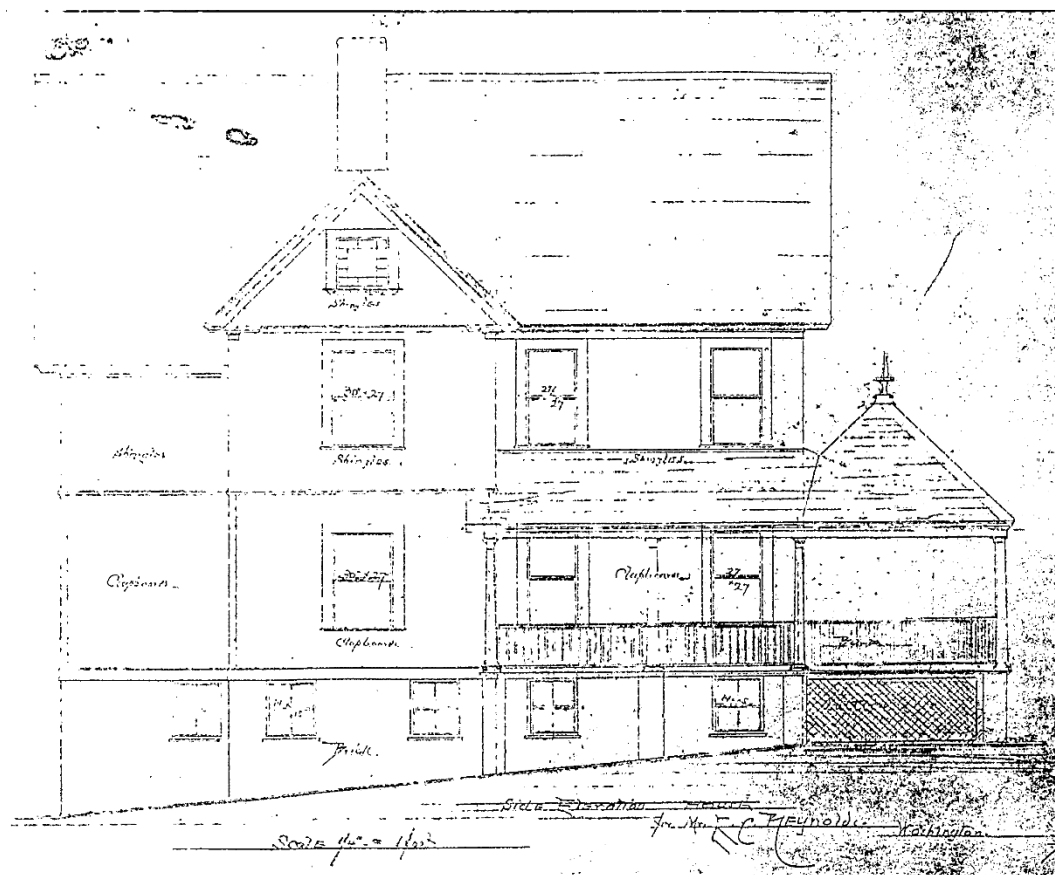


Figure 4: West (side) elevation of the Edwin and Julia Reynolds House.  
Source: Wooden Family Archive.

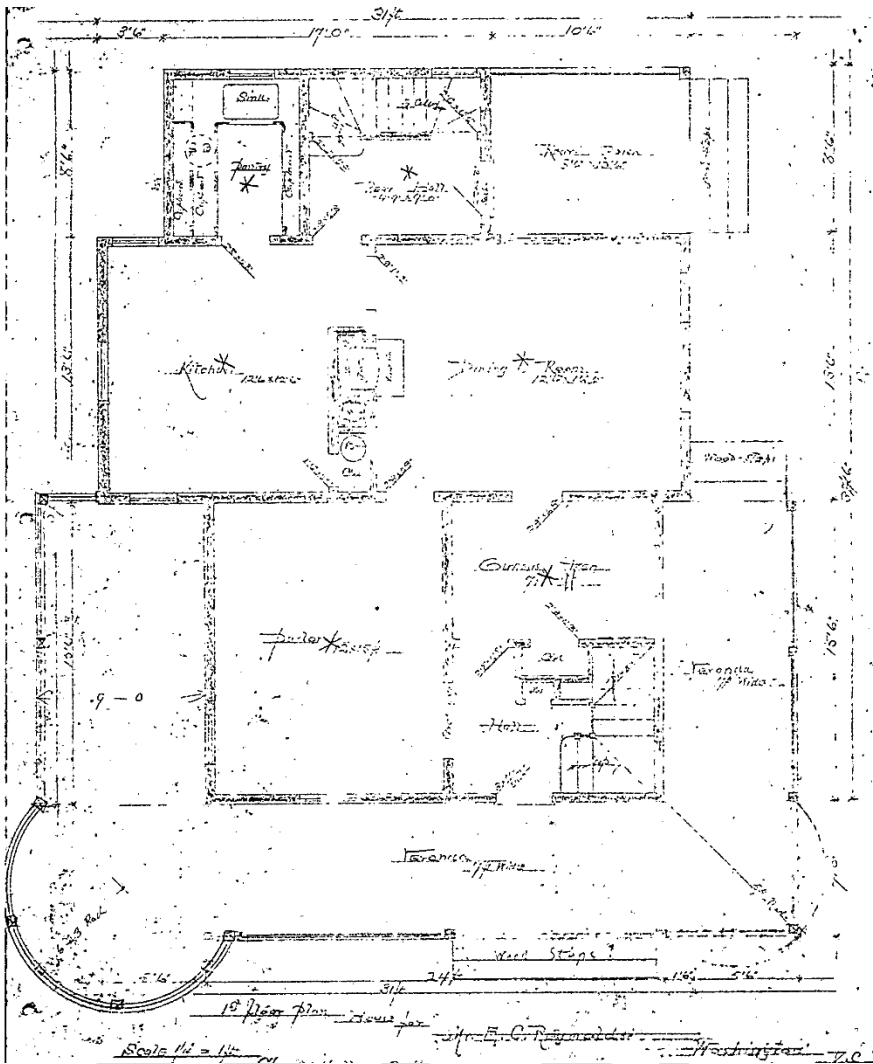


Figure 5: First floor plan of the Edwin and Julia Reynolds House.  
Source: Wooden Family Archive.

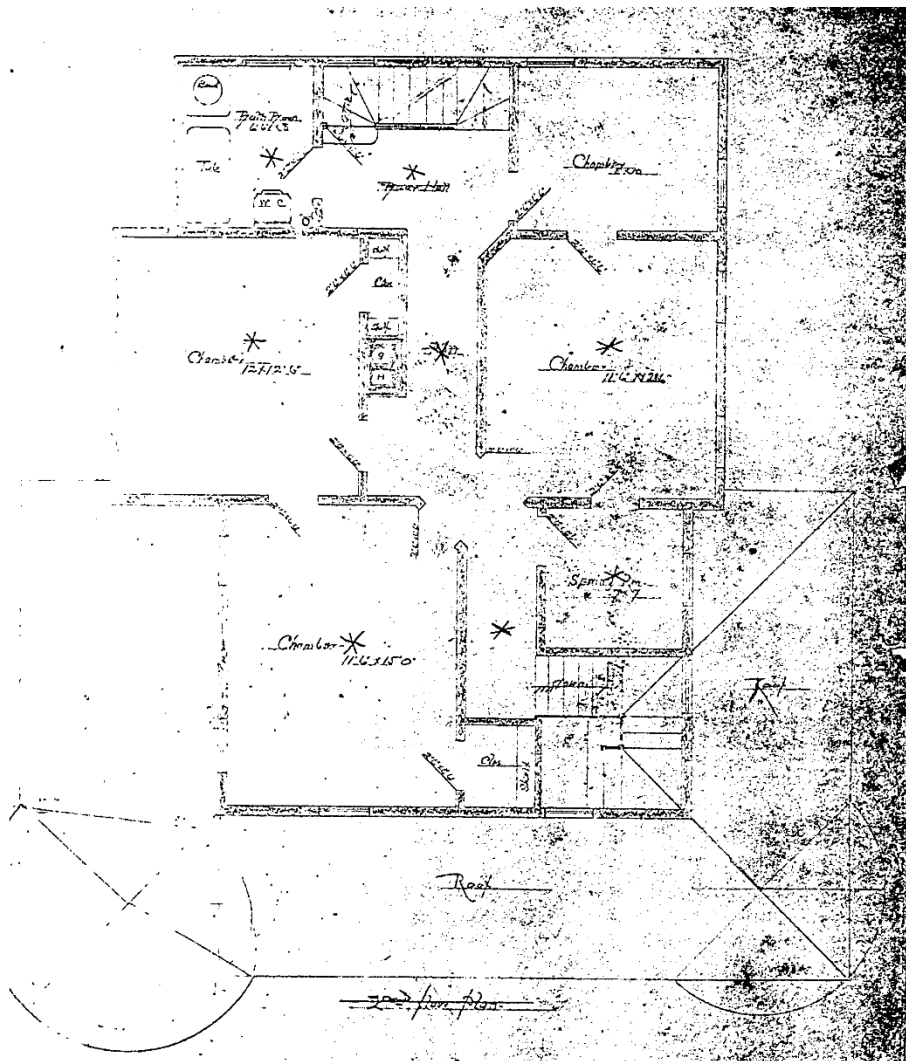


Figure 6: Second floor plan of the Edwin and Julia Reynolds House.  
Source: Wooden Family Archive.

**APPENDIX SIX:**  
**OTHER MATERIALS**

DRAFT



Figure 1: Portrait of Edwin C. Reynolds, undated.  
Source: Wooden Family Archive.



Figure 2: Portrait of Julia V. Reynolds, undated.  
Source: Wooden Family Archive.

**APPENDIX SEVEN:**  
**MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FORM**

DRAFT

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of

### Historic Properties Architecture Form

#### Section 1. Name of Property *(indicate preferred property name)*

historic: Edwin and Julia Reynolds House

other:

#### Section 2. Location

street & number: 5320 Willard Avenue

not for publication ☐

city/town: Chevy Chase

county: Montgomery County

vicinity ☐

#### Section 3. Owner of Property *(give names & mailing addresses of all owners)*

name: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

phone: phone here

street & number: 2425 Reedie Drive

city/town: Wheaton

state: MD

zip code: 20902

#### Section 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: Circuit Court

liber: 13415

folio: 6

city/town:

tax map: HM23

tax parcel: P413

tax ID #: 00432622

#### Section 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

Contributing Resource in National Register District ☐

Contributing Resource in Local Historic District ☐

Determined Eligible for the National Register ☐

Determined Ineligible for the National Register ☐

Recorded by HABS/HAER ☐

Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT ☐

Other ☐ (If other, please explain:     )

#### Section 6. Classification

category    district ☐    building(s) ☒    structure ☐    site ☐    object ☐

ownership    public ☒    private ☐    both ☐

agriculture ☐    commerce/trade ☐    defense ☐    domestic ☒    education ☐

current    funerary ☐    government ☐    health care ☐    industry ☐    landscape ☐

function    recreation/culture ☐    religion ☐    social ☐    transportation ☐    work in progress ☐

unknown ☐    vacant/not in use ☐    other ☐ (specify:     )

resource count:

contributing    buildings (1)    sites (    )    structures (    )    objects (    )    total (1)

non-contributing    buildings ( )    sites (    )    structures (    )    objects (    )    total (    )

Number of contributing resources previously included in the Inventory: (    )

## Section 7. Description

condition      excellent ☒      good ☐      fair ☐      deteriorated ☐      ruins ☐      altered ☐

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House, located on the west side of Willard Avenue in Friendship Heights, is owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The one-acre property sits within Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park and the house is managed by Montgomery Parks as part of its rental portfolio. The Reynolds family built the house circa 1899 and their descendants retained ownership until M-NCPPC acquired the property in 1995.<sup>1</sup> The site is bound by a single-family house at 5326 Willard Avenue to the north, Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park to the south, Willard Avenue to the east, and Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park—including the Willard Avenue Park Trail and Little Falls Branch—to the west.

### Site Description:

The Reynolds House is set back approximately 110 feet west of Willard Avenue, atop a ridge approximately 8' higher than the road. The house is orientated south, facing River Road and Little Falls Branch rather than Willard Avenue.<sup>2</sup> A concrete sidewalk runs parallel to the public right-of-way. Within the first 15 feet from the sidewalk, the terrain rises sharply to a chain-link fence near the eastern edge of the property. This fence encloses the entire property, clearly demarcating its boundaries. To the east of the house is a functional, nearly level side yard devoid of trees. Beyond the house, the wooded landscape drops steeply to the southwest, west, and north—falling at least 15 feet—toward Little Falls Branch and the former right-of-way of the Glen Echo Railroad. The property is accessed from Willard Avenue by an asphalt driveway towards the southern end of the property. The driveway leads to a large asphalt parking pad measuring 35' x 45'. A concrete pathway connects the driveway to the house's façade (south elevation).

### Architectural Description:

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House, a Queen Anne-styled dwelling designed by builder Charles H. Kelley, was constructed in 1899. This two-and-a-half-story dwelling consists of a single dominant front gable with shallow cross gables on its west and east (side) elevations creating a cross-like form. The wood-frame structural system rests on an irregular course, rough-cut, rubble stone foundation with a decorative beaded mortar joint. It is clad in wood clapboard siding on the first and second stories and wood shingles in the upper gable ends. The asphalt-shingle gable roofs have overhanging, boxed eaves with gable-end returns. A single brick chimney pierces the western slope of the roof above the western cross gable's ridge. Typical fenestration consists of one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl-sash replacement windows and Queen Anne multi-light windows, featuring a large central glass pane surrounded by smaller rectangular panes. Most original wood sills and surrounds are encased in aluminum, though some remain exposed.

South Elevation (Façade): The three-bay façade faces River Road and is distinguished by a full-width, wood-frame porch accessed by wide replacement wood stairs with a wood balustrade. The porch rests on a brick pier foundation with diagonal wood lattice infill. Three stop-chamfered wood posts support an asphalt shingle hipped roof. The porch has a tongue-and-groove wood floor and a simple wood rail and balusters. A non-historic wood deck on the side of the house adjoins the porch's western end.

The first story consists of the four-panel, single-light, wood door in the eastern bay and a typical window in the western bay. The second story, above the porch roof, has two typical windows, with the eastern window offset towards the side elevation and misaligned with the door below. The upper gable end features varied wood shingle patterns oriented around a central typical window: staggered shingles above the window, square-butt on either side, and flared staggered shingles below, projecting slightly beyond second-story plane for added texture and depth.

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Robert C. and Carolyn B. Wooden to M-NCPPC," May 22, 1995, Liber 13415, Folio 6, MDLandRec.

<sup>2</sup> Willard Avenue did not exist at the time of construction.

East Elevation (Side): The side elevation, facing Willard Avenue, is composed of four sections: 1) the front porch to the south; 2) the side of the front gable; 3) a shallow cross gable (projecting less than 18”) slightly offset from the center of the elevation; and 4) the northern portion of the front gable, which aligns co-planarly with the cross gable and includes a recessed, one-story porch. The recessed porch rests on a concrete block pier foundation and has a single wood post at its corner that provides structural support to the second story. It is accessed via a wide, open wood stair. While the east elevation of the porch lacks a railing, a wood balustrade runs along its north elevation.

The first story includes a small Queen Anne multi-light window and a typical window on the southern section of the front gable, two typical windows on the cross gable, and a replacement two-panel, nine-light, single-leaf door on the recessed front porch. The second story has a larger Queen Anne multi-light window, a square non-historic oriel window (supported by a single wood bracket) with paired one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl-sash, replacement windows on the southern section of the front gable. In addition, the oriel window has a narrow two-light, fixed wood window on its southern face. The cross gable continues the fenestration pattern with two typical windows and above the recessed porch is a single typical window. The upper gable end mirrors the façade’s shingle design, but uses only square-butt shingles above the window lintel. In addition, it features a Queen Anne multi-light window instead of a typical one-over-one window.

North Elevation (Rear): The rear elevation consists of the front-gable and an above-ground stone foundation due to the property’s slope. At the eastern end, a crawlspace under the recessed porch is screened by diagonal wood lattice panels. The basement has two bays: an original, paired, two-light, wood casement window to the east, and a single-leaf, six-panel door to the west. The first story features a single typical window within the recessed porch and two typical windows on the front gable. The second story includes three typical windows and one Queen Anne multi-light window. The upper gable end has a single typical window but lacks the shingle siding or visual complexity of the other elevations.

West Elevation (Side): The five-bay west elevation, facing Little Falls Branch, consists of three sections: 1) the side of the front gable to the north; 2) a projecting cross gable (extending approximately 4’) slightly offset from the center of the elevation; and 3) the southern section of the front gable.

The steep topography exposes a nearly full-height basement with five original, paired, two-light, wood casement windows: one in the northern section of the front gable, two in the cross gable, and two in the southern section of the front gable. The three-bay, first story has a modern wood deck that nearly spans the entire elevation. There is no fenestration on the northern section of the front gable. The projecting cross gable has a single typical window on its north and south elevations and a non-historic sliding glass door on its east elevation that accesses the deck. The southern section of the front gable has two typical windows.

The second story follows a similar pattern. The window on the south elevation of the projecting cross gable was replaced by a non-historic single-leaf, single-light glass door with a railing. The door formerly accessed a now razed non-historic wood deck. The southern section of the front gable consists of a matching door, that also provided access to the removed deck, and a typical window. The upper gable end of the cross gable mirrors the shingle and window design of the eastern cross gable.

## Section 8. Significance

**period** 1600-1699 ☐ 1700-1799 ☐ 1800-1899 ☒ 1900-1999 ☐ 2000- ☐

**area of significance** agriculture ☐ archaeology ☐ architecture ☐ art ☐ commerce ☐ communications ☐  
community planning ☒ conservation ☐ economics ☐ education ☐ engineering ☐  
entertainment/recreation ☐ ethnic heritage ☐ exploration/settlement ☐ engineering ☐  
industry ☐ invention ☐ landscape architecture ☐ law ☐ literature ☐ maritime history ☐  
military ☐ performing arts ☐ philosophy ☐ politics/government ☐ religion ☐ science ☐  
social history ☒ transportation ☐ other ☐ (specify:\_\_\_)

**specific dates:**

**construction dates:**

**architect/builder:**

**evaluation for:** National Register ☐ Maryland Register ☐ not evaluated ☒

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable area(s) of significance, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Edwin and Julia Reynolds House reflects nineteenth century development along River Road prior to its suburbanization, offering insight into the area before the development of Friendship Heights. As the oldest of five houses built by the descendants of Louis, an immigrant and veteran of the Union Army, and Sarah Sólyom, the Reynolds House stands as a testament to the enduring success of the family and their presence along the Little Falls Branch for 150 years. The house is prominent within the landscape due to its orientation toward River Road and the former Glen Echo Railroad rather than suburban street network established with the development of Willard Avenue. Today, the Reynolds House is an established landmark within Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park, connecting visitors to the community's history.

### Early Ownership – Perry, Shoemaker, and Crown Families

The land history of the subject property is rooted in an inauspicious past, marked by the legacy of slavery. In 1847, George Beckwith conveyed to trustee Robert W. Willett an enslaved African American girl named Harriet, then approximately 13 or 14 years old.<sup>3</sup> The bill of sale directed Willett to sell Harriet and use the proceeds to purchase a house for Beckwith's daughter and son-in-law, Mary and James T. Crown, residents of Washington, D.C.<sup>4</sup> Following Harriet's sale, trustee responsibilities passed to Samuel Viers and, in 1855, he purchased an eight-acre property along River Road near Little Falls Branch from C. Eli Perry, Sarah Perry, and Isaac Shoemaker on behalf of the Crown family. Viers paid \$323.50 for the property using funds generated from the sale of Harriet.<sup>5</sup> The Crowns likely built the house where Julia Reynolds (nee Sólyom) would later be raised.

In 1850, the United States Census listed James T. Crown as a laborer residing in District Four, Rockville, where the family rented a house.<sup>6</sup> He likely died around the time of the acquisition of the eight-acre River Road property. By 1860, Mary Crown owned and likely resided on the property valued at \$1,000.<sup>7</sup> The Crown family sold their interest in the

<sup>3</sup> The deed included the conveyance of an eleven-year enslaved African American boy named Thomas, but he is conveyed for the benefit of Francis Beckwith, George's granddaughter. Montgomery County Circuit Court, "George Beckwith to Robert W. Willett," February 4, 1847, Liber STS 2, Folio 370-372, MDLandRec.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Beckwith and James T. Crown married on February 10, 1836, in Washington, D.C. District of Columbia, U.S., Compiled Marriages, 1826-1850, "James Crown," Ancestry.

<sup>5</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "C. Eli Perry, Saran Ann Perry, and Isaac Shoemaker to Samuel C. Veirs," March 1, 1855, Liber JGH 4, Folio 181-183, MDLandRec.

<sup>6</sup> United States Federal Census, "James T Crown," (1850), Ancestry.

<sup>7</sup> United States Federal Census, "Mary Crown," (1860), Ancestry.

property to John O. Crown for \$1,500 in 1868.<sup>8</sup> Mary Crown died three years later in 1871.<sup>9</sup> On January 5, 1875, Crown sold the 8-acre property to Louis Charles Sólyom de Antalfa, more commonly known as Louis Charles Sólyom, for \$1,800.<sup>10</sup>

### Louis Charles & Sarah Good Sólyom

Louis Charles Sólyom was born on May 25, 1836, in Pienkowce, Zbaraz, located in the former Galicia, Austria, an area now part of modern-day Ukraine.<sup>11</sup> His parents were Ludoviscus Sólyom de Antalfa, an imperial official, and Vincenta Husty, who descended from Hungarian gentry. Sólyom was well educated and served for eight years in the Austrian cavalry before unsuccessfully attempting to join Giuseppe Garibaldi's Italian unification movement. He left Italy and emigrated to the United States in April 1861. Upon arrival, he may have briefly worked as a gardener, teacher of languages, bank clerk, and bookdealer before enlisting with the Union Army that October. He joined as a Private in the New York 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment. His military experience and aptitude quickly earned him a series of promotions: Corporal and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in December 1861, Sergeant in February 1862, 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant in June 1862, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in July 1862. He mustered out with his entire company in June 1863.<sup>12</sup>

According to written and oral histories, Sólyom fought in over 11 battles during the Civil War. At the Battle of Salem Heights, the 9<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry Regiment reportedly captured him, but he escaped by swimming across the Rappahannock River. Sólyom was later wounded at the Battle of Chancellorsville. During his convalescence, he met Sarah J. Good, the daughter of Thomas and Jane Good, of Georgetown, Washington, D.C., whom he married in 1866.<sup>13</sup> Family lore added that the Good family, divided in their loyalties, hosted Louis and Sarah on the front porch while simultaneously entertaining Sarah's sister and her Confederate fiancé on the back porch, to avoid potential conflicts.<sup>14</sup> In 1943, the *Evening Star* reported that Sólyom may have attempted to change allegiances during the Civil War; however, no documentation has been found to confirm or refute this claim.<sup>15</sup>

After the Civil War, Sólyom returned to New York and gained employment at a secondhand bookstore. Not long afterward, he worked as a bookkeeper at the Union Dime Savings Bank which required fluency in multiple languages. Sólyom, a skilled linguist, reportedly could read 30 languages and speak between 12 to 15 languages by the end of his life. According to family accounts, his application letter to the bank started in English and then changed languages with each successive sentence, showcasing his remarkable linguistic range.<sup>16</sup> While continuing part-time work at the bookstore, Sólyom met Ainsworth Rand Spofford, the Librarian of Congress. After the United States purchased Alaska in 1867, Spofford recognized the need of a Russian-language specialist and offered Sólyom a position with the Catalog Division the following year. He accepted the offer and remained employed at the Library of Congress for the rest of his life.<sup>17</sup>

After accepting the position, the Sólyoms moved to Montgomery County and rented a house near present-day Friendship Heights. In 1870, the United States Census recorded Louis, Sarah, their three-year-old daughter Julia, their mother-in-law Jane Good, and Martin and Jane Black, an African American farm laborer and domestic servant, respectively, living at a rented property.<sup>18</sup> On January 5, 1875, Sólyom acquired the 8-acre property on River Road where he located his

<sup>8</sup> The 1870 United States Federal Census listed John O. Crown as residing on the property of Samuel Shoemaker, but it noted that he owned \$500 in real estate. United States Federal Census, "John O. Crown," (1870), Ancestry.

<sup>9</sup> "Mary R. Beckwith Crown," Congressional Cemetery, Find A Grave.

<sup>10</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "John O. Crown to Louis Solyom," January 5, 1875, Liber EBP 13, Folio 123-125, MDLandRec.

<sup>11</sup> United States, Passport Applications, 1795-1925, "Louis Solyom," (1896), FamilySearch.

<sup>12</sup> New York, U.S., Civil War Muster Roll Abstracts, 1861-1900, "Solyom, Louis," Ancestry.

<sup>13</sup> Elemer Bako, "Louis C. Solyom: Collector of Languages," *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 22, no. 2, (1865): 104-115; Edmund Vasvary, *Lincoln's Hungarian Heroes: The Participation of Hungarians in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Washington, D.C.: The Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, 1939), 81; Helen K. Starr, "Mr. Hanson and His Friends," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, and Policy*, 4, no. 2 (April 1934): 329-333.

<sup>14</sup> Helen K. Starr, "Mr. Hanson and His Friends," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, and Policy*, 4, no. 2 (April 1934): 329-333.

<sup>15</sup> "Daughter Visiting Ex-Premier of France and Mme. Chautemps," *Evening Star*, March 28, 1948, Newspapers.com.

<sup>16</sup> Helen K. Starr, "Mr. Hanson and His Friends," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, and Policy*, 4, no. 2 (April 1934): 331.

<sup>17</sup> Elemer Bako, "Louis C. Solyom: Collector of Languages," *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 22, no. 2, (1865): 104-115.

<sup>18</sup> United States Federal Census, "Louis Solyom," (1870), Ancestry.

permanent homestead.<sup>19</sup> That same day, the Sólyoms acquired a \$1,800 mortgage from Frederick W. James for the purchase of the property.<sup>20</sup> George Morton Churchill, Sólyom's future son-in-law, stated that:

His desire was to return to the country life in which he had grown up, and naturally he named his place Antalfa, after the family estate in Hungary. There he spent as much as possible of the last forty years of his life. A good part of the time, in the early years, must have been spent in driving over the somewhat primitive road to Georgetown, the terminus of the horse-car line, the only way of reaching the Capitol. For several winters the Sólyoms moved into the city, but as transportation conditions improved and the family became larger they settled down at Antalfa, in what was then a country environment, with only one family near, the Loughboroughs, across the road, but at a distance.<sup>21</sup>

The African American community at River Road was located to the north of the Sólyom property. Historians and family histories have suggested that African American families lived and labored on the estate in the late nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> In 1880, the United States Census recorded the Sólyom family and Bettie C. Eichholtz, a white teacher, and Cora Botts, a 27-year-old African American domestic servant, residing on the same property. Pascal Botts, a 67-year-old African American laborer, William Botts, a 32-year-old shoemaker, and William Botts, a 9-year-old child are recorded in the adjacent household.<sup>23</sup> The descendants of the Sólyom family have a photograph of a log tenant house captioned "Pascal's house, Antalfa, Mont. Co. Md.," that researchers suggest are members of the Bott's family who may have rented property from Sólyom.<sup>24</sup> However, the 1880 Non-Population Schedule of the United States Federal Census recorded very little agricultural production on the property, consisting of an overall farm value of \$1,500 including all buildings and a single horse valued at \$100. There are no other crops or products recorded, and no amount noted for paid wages.<sup>25</sup> In 1890, the *Montgomery County Sentinel* stated that "Mr. Louis Sólyom is the owner of about eight acres of land near the District line on the River Road and grows upon it nothing but gladiolas ...that will yield him eight hundred dollars [this season]."<sup>26</sup> The 1900 United States Federal Census recorded no African American laborers living directly with the family on the property, but Bettie Eichholtz remained at the household.<sup>27</sup> The location of any African American archaeological resources on the former Sólyom property remains unknown.

### Opening of the Glen Echo Railroad & the Sólyom Property

On December 12, 1889, the Glen Echo Railroad Company was incorporated in Maryland.<sup>28</sup> It was authorized to construct an electric streetcar line connecting Glen Echo and Cabin John to Washington, D.C., to the terminus of the Georgetown & Tenleytown Railway near present-day Wisconsin Avenue and Western Avenue. Soon thereafter, the Montgomery County sheriff-initiated condemnation proceedings to secure the track right-of-way through the properties of Louis E. Shoemaker, Henry W. Offutt, Mary Shoemaker, Sarah Perry, Louis C. Sólyom, and James H. Loughborough.<sup>29</sup> In 1890 and 1891, the Sólyoms conveyed to the railroad company land that formed part of the original mainline track leading to Wisconsin Avenue.<sup>30</sup> Five years later, in 1896, the Sólyoms conveyed an additional right-of-

<sup>19</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "John O. Crown to Louis Solyom," January 5, 1875, Liber EBP 13, Folio 123-125.

<sup>20</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Louis and Sally Solyom indebted to Frederick W. Jones," January 5, 1875, Liber EBP 13, Folio 120-123.

<sup>21</sup> Helen K. Starr, "Mr. Hanson and His Friends," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, and Policy*, 4, no. 2 (April 1934): 332.

<sup>22</sup> David S. Rotenstein, "The River Road Moses Cemetery: A Historic Preservation Evaluation," <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Moses-Cemetery-Report-FINAL-LR-with-MIHP-form.pdf>; David Kathan, Amy Rispin, and L. Paige Whitley, "Tracing a Bethesda, Maryland, African American Community and its Contested Cemetery," *Washington History* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 24-41, Bethesda Historical Society.

<sup>23</sup> United States Federal Census, "Louis Solyom," (1880), Ancestry; United States Federal Census, "Pasco Botts," (1880), Ancestry.

<sup>24</sup> David S. Rotenstein, "The River Road Moses Cemetery: A Historic Preservation Evaluation," <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Moses-Cemetery-Report-FINAL-LR-with-MIHP-form.pdf>; David Kathan, Amy Rispin, and L. Paige Whitley, "Tracing a Bethesda, Maryland, African American Community and its Contested Cemetery," *Washington History* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 24-41, Bethesda Historical Society.

<sup>25</sup> United States Federal Nonpopulation Agricultural Schedule, "Louis Solyom," (1880).

<sup>26</sup> "Town and Country," *Montgomery County Sentinel*, May 23, 1890, Chronicling America.

<sup>27</sup> United States Federal Census, "Louis Solyom," (1900), Ancestry.

<sup>28</sup> "The Glen Echo Electric Railway," *Electrical Review* 17, no. 3 (September 13, 1890): 34, Internet Archive; "A New Railroad," *Evening Star*, December 16, 1889, Newspapers.com.

<sup>29</sup> "Real Estate Deals—A Child Drowned—Glen Echo Railroad Condemnations," *Evening Star*, May 23, 1890, Newspapers.com.

<sup>30</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Louis C. and Sallie J. Solyom to Glen Echo Railroad Company," July 14, 1890, Liber JA 19, Folio 441-443, MDLandRec; Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Louis C. and Sallie J. Solyom to Glen Echo Railroad Company," February 18, 1891, Liber JA 23, Folio 480-482, MDLandRec.

way that formed the left fork line that branched off the original tracks on their property.<sup>31</sup> The new line crossed Wisconsin Avenue near present-day Oliver Street and proceeded east towards Connecticut Avenue and Chevy Chase. After it opened in 1897, the original line to Tenleytown was superfluous and ceased operations; however, the entire Glen Echo Railroad (then named the Washington and Glen Echo Railroad) ceased operations in the early 1900s.<sup>32</sup> Though short-lived, the Glen Echo Railroad provided a new means of transportation from Montgomery County to the District of Columbia. In relation to the subject property, the Reynolds family oriented their house towards it and River Road in 1899.

### **Julia V. Solyom, Edwin C. Reynolds, and Harriet C. Reynolds**

#### Julia V. Solyom, Edwin C. Reynolds, and Harriet C. Reynolds

Born on June 18, 1867, Julia Vincenza Solyom was the daughter of Louis and Sarah Solyom. She attended Spencerian Business College where she graduated with a degree in shorthand and typewriting.<sup>33</sup> Louis and Sarah Solyom conveyed 2.57-acres of their estate to Julia as a wedding gift after her marriage to Edwin Clark Reynolds on December 28, 1896.<sup>34</sup> Like many members of her family, Julia and Edwin were married on the porch of the Solyom house.<sup>35</sup>

Edwin Clark Reynolds, known to his family as “Ned,” was born on January 26, 1870.<sup>36</sup> He was the son of Edwin Clark Reynolds, Sr., and Harriet (nee Collins) Reynolds. Edwin’s father died possibly before his birth, and he was raised by his mother in North Providence, Rhode Island. She taught him at a one room school that she also ran. Later in life, Harriet Reynolds was highly accomplished and known for her pioneer humanitarian work towards animals. She was a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, initiated the Band of Mercy in Rhode Island, and was Vice-President of the American Humane Education Society. She was a national lecturer, author, and humane worker, but her greatest accomplishments occurred overseas. Harriet organized a humane society in Greece under the sanction of Queen Olga, and joined Clara Barton in Turkey during the Red Cross relief of the Hamidian (Armenian) massacres in 1896. In addition, she distributed printed materials in France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, China, and Japan. She edited the book, *Thoughts on Humane Education: Suggestions on Kindness to Animals and Notes on Their Habits and Usefulness* (1919).<sup>37</sup> Towards the end of her life, Harriet and Edwin purchased nearby property and constructed the extant house at 4604 North Park Avenue in Friendship Heights for her to be closer to the Reynolds family.<sup>38</sup>

Edwin Reynolds attended Brown University between 1887 and 1889 for his freshman and sophomore years of college; however, he never graduated from the university.<sup>39</sup> Records suggest that Reynolds left school for employment with the Chevy Chase Land Company.<sup>40</sup> In *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation’s Capital*, historians Lampl and Williams noted that the company hired Reynolds as part of the “engineer corps” who were responsible for streets,

<sup>31</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Louis C. and Sallie J. Solyom to Glen Echo Railroad Company,” July 21, 1896, Liber TD 2, Folio 126-127, MDLandRec.

<sup>32</sup> Supreme Court of the United States, “Richard L. Solyom, et alia, v. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, et alia,” Judicial Statement and Appendix; Leroy O. King, Jr., *100 Years of Capital Traction: The Story of Streetcars in the Nation’s Capital* (College Park, MD: Taylor Publishing Company, 1972), 42.

<sup>33</sup> “Business is Their Bent,” *Times Herald*, May 3, 1895, Newspapers.com.

<sup>34</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Louis Charles and Sarah Jane Solyom to Julia Vincenza Reynolds,” July 19, 1887, Liber JA 58, Folio 468-470, MDLandRec.

<sup>35</sup> “Married, Reynolds—Solyom,” *Evening Star*, December 29, 1896, Newspapers.com.

<sup>36</sup> “Edwin Clark ‘Ned’ Reynolds,” FindAGrave.com.

<sup>37</sup> “Harriet C. Reynolds,” *Our Dumb Animals* 64, no. 5 (May 1931): 80, Internet Archive.

<sup>38</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Henry W. Offutt and Florence G. Offutt to Harriet C. Reynolds and Edwin C. Reynolds,” August 11, 1927, Liber PRB 434, Folio 277-278, MDLandRec.

<sup>39</sup> “U.S., School Catalogs, 1765-1935, Rhode Island, Brown University, “List of Non-Graduates—Edwin Clark Reynolds,” (1898): 81, Ancestry.

<sup>40</sup> The reasons behind his acceptance of the position remain unclear. However, Samuel M. Gray—recognized in *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation’s Capital* as one of the company’s and nation’s leading engineers—was from Providence, Rhode Island, which is also Reynolds’s hometown. It is possible the two had a prior association. Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, “Chevy Chase, Maryland Survey District, Phase 2,” (1997), <http://www.chevychasehistory.pastperfectonline.com>.

gutters, and drains.<sup>41</sup> In addition, a survey drawing from the Chevy Chase Land Company is dated “June 8, 1891, E.C. Reynolds.”<sup>42</sup> In all likelihood, Reynolds met Julia Sólyom during his employment with the company.

Reynolds returned to school and enrolled at Lehigh University in 1892. The following year, he graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering.<sup>43</sup> He worked as the Chief Engineer for the Niagara Power and Development Company between 1894 and 1896 and then as a topographer for the Government Survey Ship Canal in the Mohawk River Valley, New York, between 1897 and 1898. Reynolds returned to Montgomery County and the Federal government employed him at the Patent Office on July 19, 1898. He was promoted to Principal Examiner in 1920 and retired after forty-two years of service on February 1, 1940. Outside of work, he briefly served as Editor-in-Chief for the Journal of the Patent Office Society.<sup>44</sup>

Edwin Reynolds wrote numerous letters to the editorial board of the *Washington Post* and appears to have had progressive leanings. Reynolds weighed in on the national story of Louise Hadley, a white chambermaid, allegedly fired from her position at a hotel in Indianapolis for refusing to make the bed of Booker T. Washington in 1903. He openly mocked the woman’s refusal to service the room in his published letter:

The writer has been anxiously waiting to see the editor treat the Indianapolis chambermaid incident in the vigorous language that the case seems to demand. ...What would happen to one of the Post reporters if he refused to interview a person on account of his color? What does the editor imagine the Commissioner of Patents would do to the writer if he should refuse to examine the papers in a patent case, or grant an interview, on the ground that the inventor was a negro? So far from the affair’s showing any proper self-respect on the chambermaid’s part, the only natural inference is that as she felt insulted by being asked to make up Booker Washington’s bed, she would crawl around on all four for the privilege of making up the bed in which had reposed the august [noble] form of the Grand Duke of Thingumbob or his royal highness of Ruritania.<sup>45</sup>

#### Builder Charles H. Kelley and Construction of the Reynolds House

The Reynolds returned to Washington, D.C., in 1898, prompted by Edwin’s employment at the Patent Office and a desire to establish their home on the 2.57-acre wedding gift from the Sólyoms.<sup>46</sup> On July 15, 1899, the couple secured a \$1,600 mortgage from Harriet Reynolds to fund the construction of the subject house.<sup>47</sup> They hired their uncle Charles H. Kelley—an experienced builder from Putnam, Connecticut—who was married to Harriet Reynolds’ sister, Olive Collins.<sup>48</sup>

In Putnam, Kelley had trained as a master carpenter from a young age under Horace Hazzard, eventually co-founding the firm Hazzard & Kelley. He later joined French, McKenzie & Company, a major contracting firm with 700 workers, known for constructing the Olneyville Mills in Providence, Rhode Island. After returning to Putnam in 1876, Kelley started his own business and expanded into a wide range of building trades including carpentry, grading, masonry, and painting. He also offered architectural designs, plans, and cost estimates to his clients. Kelley was credited with constructing most of Putnam’s late nineteenth century commercial buildings, numerous homes in the surrounding area, and several churches. He passed away in 1903, shortly after the completion of the Reynolds House.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Jo Lampl and Kimberly Prothro Williams, *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation’s Capital* (Silver Spring, Maryland: Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, 1998), 38.

<sup>42</sup> E.C. Reynolds, “Chevy Chase Land Co.,” Chevy Chase Land Company, Washington, D.C., Subdivision & Suburban Communities, January 8, 1891, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site, Flickr.

<sup>43</sup> Lehigh University, *Epitome: Yearbook 1894* (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Lehigh University, 1894), 23, Internet Archive.

<sup>44</sup> “Resignation of Editor-In-Chief Reynolds,” *Journal of Patent Office Society* 8 (April 1926): 357, HeinOnline; “Retirement of E. C. Reynolds,” *Journal of Patent Office Society* 22 (April 1940): 311, HeinOnline; “Edwin C. Reynolds,” *Journal of Patent Office Society* 48 (February 1966): 129, HeinOnline.

<sup>45</sup> “Chambermaid’s Reward: Stimulus to Passing the Hat for Similar Action About Negroes,” *Washington Post*, May 25, 1903, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>46</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Louis Charles and Sarah Jane Solyom to Julia Vincenza Reynolds,” July 19, 1887, Liber JA 58, Folio 468-470, MDLandRec.

<sup>47</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, “Julia V. and Edwin C. Reynolds indebted to Harriet C. Reynolds,” August 1, 1899, Liber TD 9, Folio 138, MDLandRec.

<sup>48</sup> United States Federal Census, “Olive F. Collins,” (1850), Ancestry.com; United States Federal Census, “Olive F. Reynolds,” (1900), Ancestry.com; “Olive F. Collins Kelley,” FindAGrave.com; “Obituaries – Mrs. Chas. H. Kelley,” *Putnam Patriot*, March 6, 1925, Newspapers.com.

<sup>49</sup> “Putnam Builder: Death of Charles H. Kelley, a Well Known Contractor,” *Hartford Courant*, September 8, 1903, Newspapers.com.

Kelley designed the Reynolds a Queen Anne-styled dwelling, one of the dominant styles for domestic architecture in the late nineteenth century. The style was characterized by asymmetrical massing, steeply pitched and irregularly shaped roofs, wraparound front porches, towers, exuberant spindle work and gingerbread trim, avoidance of smooth wall surfaces, and bay windows. A front gable massing with or without a tower and shallow cross gables was one of its typical forms. The upper gable ends often featured wood shingles to add complexity to the wall surface. Typical windows included one-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows and multi-light accent windows. In *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia McAlester called the style's transition away from turned posts, spindle work, and gingerbread trim towards classical details and columns, Palladian windows, and restrained ornamentation as its "free classic" adaptation.<sup>50</sup> Kelley's original design included a conical roof at the eastern extent of the front porch, Palladian window in the facade's upper gable end, and ornamental trim.<sup>51</sup> Descendents of the family suggest that these elements were excluded for financial reasons.

### Reynolds Property and Little Falls Branch

In the early twentieth century, the *Evening Star* offered a description of the landscape of the area in an article focused on the Little Falls Branch:

Crossing it [the Little Falls Branch at River Road], you pass up a steep hill, clay and rock, and on the right is a large and very old house heavily screened with silver poplars all tangled with honeysuckle. This is the home of L. C. Solyom. The family cemetery with a number of white marble tombs rests on the crest of a gentle hill that rises above the branch. This is a farming country and you seem far from the city. Some of the farmers living in the neighborhood are J. H. Loughborough, E. C. Reynolds, William Shoemaker, Benjamin Perry, Boyd Perry, and John Willet.<sup>52</sup>

Prior to infrastructure improvements, the Little Falls Branch at the Reynolds House experienced heavy pollution as numerous sewers lines emptied into the branch and caused health and sanitation issues. As reported in the *Annual Report of the State Department of Health of Maryland* (1911):

The sewage-toilet and bathroom-from the six aforesaid places lodges and accumulates along the banks of the Little Falls Branch. During a freshet this effete [affected] material is carried to the lowlands, where it is deposited, wherein it dried and contaminates the surrounding atmosphere by reason of foul odors generated therefrom. The residents have informed me that the bad smell can be detected for a distance of several hundred yards. This is especially true in the summer season, at which time flies and mosquitos flourish in almost tropical profusion.

...Mr. E. C. Reynolds is also badly annoyed by these contaminations. In addition to the bad smell, which undoubtedly is prejudicial to the health and happiness of the persons living in this section, human fecal material clings to the feet of men and farm animals, and is thus disseminated about the premises and even in the home. Other persons, besides Mrs. Loughborough and Mr. Reynolds, residing in the infested area have proclaimed this condition of affairs an intolerable nuisance and a menace to the public health.<sup>53</sup>

Reynolds provided the State Board of Health recommendations data and abatement measures for Little Falls Branch.

### Expansion of the Reynolds Property, Division of the Solyom Estate, and Surrounding Suburban Development

The Reynolds House predates the subdivision of its immediate surroundings. In 1901, Aquilla Eld subdivided "The Hills," followed by Henry W. Offutt's "Friendship Heights" in 1902. Later that decade, Stephen B. Perry subdivided "West Friendship Heights" in 1908, which was officially recorded in 1909.<sup>54</sup> This subdivision included the precursor of

<sup>50</sup> Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 264.

<sup>51</sup> Montgomery Parks, "Finding of Eligibility Form – Reynolds House," (2009).

<sup>52</sup> "When Water From Little Falls Branch Flowed Into The Aqueduct," *Evening Star*, April 6, 1913, Newspapers.com.

<sup>53</sup> State Department of Health, *Annual Report of the State Department of Health of Maryland for the Year Ending December 31, 1911* (Baltimore, Maryland: Geo. W. King Printing Co., 1913), 159-161.

<sup>54</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, "The Hills" (1901), Plat 44, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>; Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, "Friendship Heights" (1902), Plat 45, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>; Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, "West Friendship Heights" (1908), Plat 93, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>.

Willard Avenue—initially named Friendship Avenue—and consisted of ten lots approximately 20,000 square feet, equally split on either side of road.<sup>55</sup> Willard Avenue itself was platted in 1909.<sup>56</sup> Notably, Edwin C. Reynolds was the surveyor of record for the West Friendship Heights subdivision, and between 1908 and 1913, Julia Reynolds purchased Lots 3-5 adjoining their property to expand their land.<sup>57</sup> Together, Willard Avenue's development and the acquisition of these lots reconfigured the Reynolds property's circulation network, giving the family access from the new road.

Following the death of Sarah Solyom in 1901, Louis Solyom continued to subdivide his original 8-acre estate to provide housing opportunities for their children. In 1911, he conveyed 1.92 acres to his daughter, Mary Josephine Churchill, after her marriage to George Morton Churchill.<sup>58</sup> The couple constructed the extant house at 5001 River Road the following year, which continues to be owned by their descendants. Before his death in 1913, Louis and his son Herbert Louis Solyom, who had not yet received a portion of the property, agreed on a section of land to be conveyed to him. As directed in Louis' will, the estate transferred 2.5 acres to Herbert Solyom in 1914, where he and his wife, Stella, constructed the extant Dutch Colonial Revival house at 4925 River Road.<sup>59</sup> Lastly, Louis Solyom instructed his estate that Bettie C. Eichholtz, who had lived with the Solyom family since at least 1880, be allowed to reside in a no-longer-extant-house at the southwest corner of the estate until her death and to receive \$1,000 for repayment of a loan.<sup>60</sup> According to newspaper accounts, Louis and Sarah Solyom's house was demolished in the 1930s.<sup>61</sup>

The children of Louis Solyom further divided their lands to allow for housing opportunities for their children. In 1929, Edwin C. and Sarah Reynolds conveyed Lot 5 to their son, Edwin L. Reynolds, six months before his marriage to June Cooper.<sup>62</sup> It is likely that Edwin and June constructed the bungalow that stills stands at 5326 Willard Avenue at that time, but real estate records suggest an earlier date of construction.<sup>63</sup> Herbert and Stella Solyom divided their property in 1939 and conveyed a .7-acre lot as a wedding gift to their daughter, Phyllis Vincenza, when she married Hadd Stewart Lane.<sup>64</sup> The couple commissioned architect Thomas Allen Pope and constructed the Modern-styled split-level home in 1939.<sup>65</sup> The house was purchased by Montgomery Parks and, as part of the planned park development, later demolished ca. 2010 to incorporate the property into Willard Avenue Park.

Outside of the Solyom family compound, development on Willard Avenue in West Friendship Heights remained sparse in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Perry family retained their homestead (built ca. 1903) on Lot 7. In the 1910s, Jacob and Fannie Horn constructed a craftsman-styled bungalow on Lot 1, located at the northwest corner of Willard Avenue and River Road. As part of the planned park development, this house was demolished in 2024 by Montgomery Parks to improve the entrance to Willard Avenue Park. The present built environment of Willard Avenue emerged following the resubdivision of Lots 8-10 by Westgate, Incorporated, in 1938, and Lots 2, 6-7 by Hartsell O. Bowman in 1941 that led to the construction of many of the existing homes.<sup>66</sup>

The characteristics of Friendship Heights underwent significant change in the mid-twentieth century. The expansion of commercial zoning permitted the establishment of the Woodward and Lothrop Department Store in 1950 at Wisconsin and Western avenues, introducing a major retail anchor into a predominately residential suburb. Coupled with a growing

<sup>55</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, "West Friendship Heights" (1908), Plat 93, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>.

<sup>56</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, "Plat of Road at Friendship Heights" (1910), Plat 119, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>.

<sup>57</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Stephen B. and Virginia F. Perry to Julia Vincenze Reynolds," August 12, 1908, Liber JLB 200, Folio 91-92, MDLandRec; Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Stephen B. and Virginia F. Perry to Julia Vincenze Reynolds," July 1, 1911, Liber JLB 222, Folio 244-245, MDLandRec; Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Stephen B. and Virginia F. Perry to Julia Vincenze Reynolds," June 10, 1913, Liber JLB 236, Folio 235-237, MDLandRec.

<sup>58</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Louis C. Solyom to Mary Josephine Solyom Churchill," May 5, 1911, Liber JLB 218, Folio 486-487, MDLandRec.

<sup>59</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Julia V. and Edwin C. Reynolds, and Mary J. and George C. Churchill to Herbert L. Solyom," April 21, 1914, Liber JLB 242, Folio 490-491, MDLandRec; Maryland Register of Wills, 1629-1999, Montgomery County, "Louis C. Solyom," October 15, 1907, Liber, HCA 14, Folio 183-184, FamilySearch.

<sup>60</sup> Maryland Register of Wills, 1629-1999, Montgomery County, "Louis C. Solyom," October 15, 1907, Liber, HCA 14, Folio 183-184, FamilySearch.

<sup>61</sup> "Daughter Visiting Ex-Premier of France and Mme. Chauteemps," *Evening Star*, March 28, 1948, Newspapers.com.

<sup>62</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Julia V. and Edwin C. Reynolds to Edwin L. Reynolds," February 12, 1929, Liber PBR 478, Folio 25-26, MDLandRec.

<sup>63</sup> The Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation lists a construction date of 1923. For more information, see <http://www.sdat.dat.maryland.gov>.

<sup>64</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Herbert Louis and Stella M. Solyom to Phyllis V. Solyom," February 20, 1939, Liber CKW 728, Folio 15-16, MDLandRec.

<sup>65</sup> Montgomery Parks, "Finding of Eligibility Form – Lane House," (2009).

<sup>66</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, "Subdivision of Lots 8, 9, and 10 West Friendship" (1938), Plat 989, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>; Montgomery County Circuit Court, Subdivision Plats, "Subdivision of Lots 2, 7, and Part of 6 West Friendship" (1941), Plat 1436, <http://www.plats.msa.maryland.gov>.

population, its success spurred a rise in rezoning applications for commercial, office, and multi-family residential development. Examples include the Government Employee Insurance Company (GEICO) Headquarters that opened in 1959 and The Irene, a high-rise, 524-unit, multi-family apartment building in 1964. That same year, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission adopted the *Master Plan for West Chevy Chase and Vicinity* that recommended a Commercial Office Zone for the entire GEICO parcel and a C-2 Zone for the remainder of the Central Business District. Friendship Heights' rapid transformation continued after its identification as a future Metrorail stop in the early 1960s. By 1969, the *Washington Post* estimated that only 30 homes remained in the area, and predicted that most would be demolished in five years.

### **Reynolds House in the mid-to-late Twentieth Century and Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park**

Edwin C. and Julia Reynolds remained at the subject house for the rest of their lives. Julia passed away in 1948, followed by Edwin in 1966.<sup>67</sup> Their daughter, Hazel Reynolds, inherited the home and retained ownership until her death in 1987. Robert Wooden, whose grandmother was Julia Reynolds' sister, inherited the property, and in 1993, submitted a zoning map amendment application seeking to rezone the property from R-60 (Residential, One-Family) to RT-10 (Residential, Townhouse). The Planning Board ultimately denied the request.<sup>68</sup>

Following on the recommendation of earlier Master Plans, Montgomery Parks acquired land between 1977 and 1995 to establish Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park. This effort required the purchase of multiple parcels owned by descendants of the Sólyom family. In 1995, the Planning Board approved the acquisition of a 1.07-acre property owned by Robert Wooden—including the Reynolds House—using Acquisition Revolving Funds.<sup>69</sup> Montgomery Parks subsequently added the Reynolds House to its rental portfolio, with plans for demolition at a later date.

<sup>67</sup> "Mrs. Julia V. Reynolds," *Times Herald*, January 16, 1948, Newspapers.com; "Edwin Reynolds Patent Office Retired Aide Dead at 95," *Washington Post*, January 11, 1966, Proquest.

<sup>68</sup> Montgomery County Planning Board, "Planning Board Recommendation on Zoning Map Amendment Application No. G-705," September 14, 1993, Montgomery Planning Archives.

<sup>69</sup> Montgomery County Planning Board, "Agenda for Regular Meeting of the Montgomery County Planning Board, February 23, 1995," Montgomery Planning Archives.

---

## Section 9. Bibliographic References

---

Ancestry.com [numerous].

*Evening Star* [numerous].

Montgomery County Land Records, <http://www.mdlandrec.net>.

*Washington Post* [numerous].

---

## Section 10. Geographical Data

---

acreage of surveyed property: .93

acreage of historical setting:

quadrangle name: Washington West

quadrangle scale: 7.5 minute

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary incorporates the parcels conveyed to Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning from descendants of the Reynolds family

---

## Section 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title: John Liebertz

organization: Montgomery Planning

date: May 8, 2026

street & number: 2425 Reedie Drive, 3rd Floor

phone:

city/town: Wheaton

state: MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Department of Planning  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023

410-697-9591