

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD**  
**APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

New Designation     X    

Property name The Scheele-Brown Farmhouse

*If any part of the **interior** is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address 2207 Foxhall Road NW

Square and lot number(s) Square 1341, Lot 855

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D

Date of construction 1865 Date of major alteration(s) 1903, 1942

Architect(s) Unknown Architectural style(s) Vernacular

Original use Farmhouse Present use Vacant, single-family residence

Property owner Atties O Street Limited Liability Corporation

Legal address of property owner 2207 Foxhall Road NW, Washington, D.C. 20007-1145

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) Historic Washington Architecture Inc.

*If the applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.*

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) 608 Rock Creek Church Rd., NW 202-904-8111

Name and title of authorized representative Kent Boese, President

Signature of representative  Date 9/12/13

Name and telephone of author of application Tim Dennee, 202-442-8847

Date received 9/16/13  
H.P.O. staff T10  
Case No. 13-22

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: The Scheele-Brown Farmhouse

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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### 2. Location

Street & number: 2207 Foxhall Road NW

City or town: Washington State: DC Zip code: 20007

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### 3. State Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_national \_\_\_statewide \_\_\_local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_A \_\_\_B \_\_\_C \_\_\_D

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Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

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State agency

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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Signature of commenting official:

Date

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Title :

State agency

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

Private:

☒☐

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

☒

Building

☐

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

## Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

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### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

#### Current Functions

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
VACANT

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### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

MID-19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY/vernacular, side-gable farmhouse

#### Materials:

STUCCO skin over WOOD siding and framing; WOOD trim, windows, doors and porch elements; WOOD weatherboard addition; parged BRICK foundation; ASPHALT shingle roof; BRICK chimneys; WOOD floors; PLASTER interior walls

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## Summary Description

The Scheele-Brown Farmhouse is located at 2207 Foxhall Road NW, presently also known as Lot 855 in Square 1341. The building is a two-story, three-bay-wide (nearly 32 feet) single-pile side-gable balloon-framed house with a rear ell, a full front porch, and an enclosed, rear, kitchen porch. With its rear wing, it is roughly L-shaped in plan. The main block is single-pile, i.e., one room (approximately seventeen feet) deep, with a center hall flanked by two rooms. The building's area is 1,680 gross square feet, with the main block nearly seventeen feet deep. It is stuccoed in a fawn color, with white-painted wood trim. It has a symmetrical façade with a central main entrance with sidelights. This entry, the flat-board frieze beneath the eaves, and the low-pitched roof are suggestive of Greek Revival influence, but the building is very much in the vernacular. The house has later small additions at rear, including a one-story sunroom, a small extension of the rear wing, and a second-story bathroom. The building stands about 55 feet east of Foxhall Road NW and faces west. Because it was moved in 1903, its foundation dates to that time, as does the front porch, with its Tuscan-order columns. While the chimneys were probably replaced in the move, they appear remarkably close to the form and placement depicted in an 1865 photo of the house under construction. The move and surrounding development have diminished the farmhouse's integrity, but the house remains on its original parcel and retains its original orientation.

The present lot measures 75 feet along Foxhall Road and 155 feet deep. It is largely landscaped, but there is a gravel driveway along the south side of the front yard and a brick lead walk to the front door. The only accessory structure is a corrugated metal shed in the northeast corner of the yard.

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## Narrative Description

The Scheele-Brown Farmhouse stands at 2207 Foxhall Road NW, on the east side of the road, about 55 feet from the roadway and facing west. Three bays wide, it sits on a parged brick foundation with no basement. The foundation dates to the 1903 removal of the house from its original site, a point about 150 feet north-northeast. The move was occasioned by the fact that the new owners of the parcel wished to construct a larger modern house on that spot, but retained and rented out the older one. Although closer to the road than the original site, the house was moved within the same parcel to a similarly level site, and retains the same westward orientation. The method of the move is not certain, but the relocation of smaller houses and outbuildings was common in the nineteenth century for reasons of economy. Before trucks were common, the motive power was typically provided by mules or horses.

The main block is two stories tall and has a relatively low-pitched roof (less than four in twelve), now clad with asphalt shingles. A historic photograph of the house under construction suggests that the roof had skip sheathing, and thus was probably originally covered with wood shingles. The roof is set low, with the eaves just higher than the second-floor windows, suggesting a second-floor ceiling height of no more than eight feet, and still lower at the rear portion of the building.

Across the front of the building is a full-width porch with a hipped roof, also clad with asphalt shingles, and supported by four nine-inch Tuscan columns and by the front wall of the house itself. The columns rest on brick piers, between which are wood-lattice apron panels. The framing, decking, ceiling and stairs of the porch are all of wood, with a traditionally low wood balustrade of widely spaced, square-section pickets, and cruder modern wood handrails on each side of the steps. The decking is of three-inch tongue-and-groove boards.

The rear wing consists of a low two-story bedroom-over-kitchen catslide-roofed ell, with a porch off the south side which was enclosed before 1938 with six-over-six double-hung wood windows over a white-painted, beadboard-clad knee wall. A wood apron screens the cavity beneath. With the house's ell offset to the north end of the main block, the building's footprint takes an L shape. This is accentuated by a one-story shed addition attached to the ell's rear elevation, set in from the north corner and clad in stucco and trim to match the main block. Its location and consistent materials suggest that it was added shortly after the house was moved; it was certainly there by 1938. It stands on piers, like a porch, with a cavity beneath that has been covered with an apron partly of corrugated metal and partly of wood. It does not otherwise look like a porch, however, suggesting that it may have been added as the house's first attached bathroom, and perhaps scullery, after the building was moved. An alternative is that it could have originated as a pantry, especially as the cavity beneath would expose water pipes to potential freezes, but it seems that it must serve as a bathroom today.<sup>1</sup> Abutting the rear (east) end of the kitchen porch and the south side of the shed addition is a one-story wood-framed sunroom, mostly glazed, added after 1962. A bathroom addition, likely added in late 1942 when the house was replumbed, stands atop the rear porch. It has eight-inch-exposure weatherboard siding.

The south end of the main block contains only a single window on each of the floors, one above the other, located near the front corner of the house to accommodate a chimney centered in the elevation. The north side, lacking the chimney, has a single second-floor window centered under the roof ridge. Directly below it on the first floor is a wider opening, containing double-ganged windows, probably an early twentieth-century alteration.<sup>2</sup> The north side of the ell continues the plane of that of the main block, and it has smaller single windows on each floor, set lower to account for the lower ceiling heights. Only a third of the rear wall of the main block is exposed, and it contains single windows on each floor, again aligned vertically, reflecting the house's primary three-bay division.

There is a single square-section interior end chimney of brick in the main block, and a similar one in the rear, kitchen wing, about the same size and locations as the 1865 originals, but with modern crowns and caps. All of the windows are wood and of six-over-six-light, double-hung configuration, except for two small rear windows—one in the second-story bathroom and the other on the south side of the second story of the ell—that are circa 1950s double-hungs of two-over-two configuration with horizontal muntins dividing the glazing. The sunroom addition has

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<sup>1</sup> The preparer of this nomination has not been inside the building, but real estate listings indicate that it has two bathrooms.

<sup>2</sup> This area is obscured in an 1865 photograph of the house under construction, but double-ganged windows and such large openings were typical of a later era.

its own sort of fenestration: single-light floor-to-ceiling windows integral to the scratch-built wood framing.

The house has a center hall flanked by the two front rooms. The main block is single-pile, with the stair located in the hall. The wing is accessed from the rear of the hall, and the kitchen also communicates with the north room, a dining room. The original mostly pine floors remain. The chimney fireboxes were rebuilt—and surrounded by new oak mantles—in the early twentieth century.

The house is skinned with stucco, and the trim is white-painted wood, with the exception of the front doors and the rear sunroom framing, which are all reddish brown. The rake boards have been wrapped with aluminum. The trim is mostly simple flat “one-by” boards, but the corner boards, window and door casings, and skirt boards have applied back band moldings that serve as a bounding edge to the applied stucco layer. Beneath the eaves and across the tops of the window casings in front and back of the main block is a plain frieze board. The shallow eaves hold typical modern aluminum gutters and rain leaders.

The main entrance is centered in the façade, sheltered by the porch roof. A typical Victorian four-panel wood door swings inward beneath a single-light transom and between two deeply set, three-light-over-one-panel sidelights. An old wood screen door partially obscures the main door behind it. Electrical and telephone supply lines run from poles at the street and are attached at the second story of the north side of the main block, led by exposed conduits to an exterior meter and to the rear of the house. A gas riser and meter appear at the foot of the north side.

The site is mostly lawn with several ornamental and shade trees and shrubs. Foundation beds and plantings surround the house. A gravel driveway runs perpendicular to Foxhall Road, along the south edge of the property, separating the house from the old Donaldson house, 2203 Foxhall. A brick-paved lead walk runs from and perpendicular to the driveway, along the front of the porch and to the entry steps.









*Current photographs of 2207 Foxhall Road. The rear and interior photographs are courtesy of a StreetEasy.com listing.*

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☒ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCE

**Period of Significance**

1865-1915

**Significant Dates**

1865-- the house is constructed

1875-- the Scheeles vacate the house and lease the farm to the Brown family

1881-- the Scheele house and farm are purchased by the Brown family

1887-- the Browns acquire adjacent property and increase the size of the farm

1888-- the Browns begin construction of a new residence

1902-- the Browns sell the parcel containing the house to their daughter-in-law

1903-- the Scheele-Brown Farmhouse is moved south-southwest of its original spot

1915-- the end of the property's association with the Browns' meat business

**Cultural Affiliation**

EUROPEAN

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

## Summary Statement of Significance

The Scheele-Brown Farmhouse, named for the first two families that occupied the building and the only residents who farmed the surrounding land while resident there, was constructed in the latter half of 1865. It is one of a few remaining farm dwellings standing in the District of Columbia. A simple side-gable vernacular house with traces of Greek Revival influence, it represents the modest farmhouses that typified the rural areas surrounding Washington City prior to the proliferation of suburban subdivisions after the 1870s. In addition to providing a dwelling for each owner of the farm, the building almost certainly served as a home to tenants and servants.

As there are no farms remaining in the District of Columbia and only a handful of agricultural outbuildings left, the Scheele-Brown house stands for its vanished small farm, and by extension, the others that have been lost. It also represents Washington's early meat industry, particularly the business of butchering, in which most of the farmers immediately north and west of Georgetown, including the Scheeles and the Browns, were engaged from the mid nineteenth century to the early twentieth. Such farms were the entrepôts for cattle purchased at and driven from the larger farms of Maryland and Virginia. They were processing centers to get meat, beef and mutton especially, from the hoof to the market, performing a crucial service to a rapidly increasing urban population after the Civil War. In addition to generating greater self-sufficiency and additional family income from raising diversified products, butchers' farms provided fodder and water for their cattle, space for stock pens and slaughterhouses, and a buffer between these slaughterhouses and neighbors.

Although agrarian Washington County was relatively sparsely populated, modest farmhouses were ubiquitous there, occupied by the small landholder and more numerous than the estates of the wealthy. Yet, because they were modest, such buildings were more commonly moved and demolished as the tide of suburbanization swept over fields, pastures and woodlots. The last District farms vanished in the 1950s, but large estate houses have been better preserved as homes or institutions.

For these reasons, the Scheele-Brown Farmhouse merits listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a period and type of construction—a modest nineteenth-century vernacular farmhouse—necessary for the operation of a farm and suited to the limited means of the average farm family. In that sense, it stands for all the similar homes and farms that have been lost.

The property also meets Criterion A, as not only related to diversified farming for local consumption, but particularly to butchering and the trade in beef and mutton, an industry that dominated the lands surrounding Georgetown from at least the second quarter of the nineteenth century until the first quarter of the twentieth. Few of the homes of prominent butchers remain today, even around Georgetown, the primary butchering area in the District from the 1840s until the 1880s.

The farmhouse's period of significance should be considered to extend from 1865, its construction date, to 1915, the date when Walter M. Brown, the last farmer-butcher occupant of

the property, moved away, and it lost its connection to the surrounding farm and to the meat industry. Shortly thereafter, the parcel was sold and became indistinguishable in use from later suburban residences, although it remained a four-acre lot until subdivided for house lots in 1961.

The house was moved in 1903 from a spot about 150 feet north-northeast of its present location. While that has affected the integrity of its setting, the move was within the same parcel, surrounded by the same farm and orchard, and the building retained its original orientation. The move meant, of course, a new foundation, a new porch, and probably new chimneys.



*The Scheele-Brown Farmhouse today.*



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## Narrative Statement of Significance

Like much of America, the District of Columbia was once covered with farms. The baroque Washington City plan devised by Pierre L'Enfant was imposed upon a landscape of wheat and tobacco farms, market and kitchen gardens, meadows and pastures, marsh and woods. Georgetown and a few hamlets were the only “urban” intrusions into a rural landscape. It was a landscape of slave-worked plantations, substantially smaller than estates farther south, and of small freeholds and tenant farms, and with many landless laborers. Initial areas of development in the federal city—around the Capitol and the Navy Yard, the White House and near Rock Creek—were separated by active farms and fallow meadows. Much of the trade of the preindustrial city was in agricultural products, especially as an urbanizing population needed sustenance.

As the national capital grew, it would eventually crowd out farmland, but this evolution took a century and a half. In 1850, assuming the U.S. Census reports were exhaustive, there were 282 farms and truck gardens within the District of Columbia, comprising about 90 percent of its land area.<sup>3</sup> Washington City's Fifth Ward, which then included Capitol Hill, still contained more than 87 acres of farmland, but it was a distant second in cultivated area to the city's Sixth Ward along the Anacostia River.<sup>4</sup> Still, agriculture within the city was an economic afterthought compared to that in the surrounding Washington County, where it was nearly the exclusive activity.

Established by the Organic Act of 1801, Washington County was a municipality governed by a Levy Court of presidentially appointed justices of the peace. The county included all of the territory of the District of Columbia on the Maryland side of the Potomac, exclusive of Washington City and Georgetown. The Levy Court's principal responsibilities were the raising of revenues through property taxes and the expenditure of these revenues on the construction and maintenance of roads.<sup>5</sup> Some of these roads had originated before the District as Indian paths, post roads, and tobacco rolling roads that ran along the fall line or connected stream fords and river ferries. Others were convenient lanes within or between farms that were given over to, or taken for, public use.

County farms tended to be diversified, raising some livestock and growing animal feed alongside produce for the urban markets. Even farmers concentrating on a particular cash crop were mindful of their families' self-sufficiency. A farm might produce wheat, rye, corn, oats, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, apples, peaches, grapes, vegetables, butter, hay, and even grapes for sale. Most had a milk cow and a few hogs, principally for home use. Many had reserves of unimproved acreage set aside for future cultivation. These were often too uneven or too marshy to farm, but they could potentially be filled or cleared, and then sowed or planted as orchards. Such areas often included woods, whose trees limited soil erosion, served as windbreaks, and provided fuel and materials for construction and tool manufacture.

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<sup>3</sup> This figure is based upon adding up the acreages of the individual farms and comparing it with the total land area of the District at the time, which was a little smaller than today, because of subsequent filling along the rivers. Of course, farm acreage tended to be overestimated a bit, so it might be more accurate to call 90 percent the proportion of rural land to urbanized land, which seems to correspond pretty well to what one sees on the 1859 Boschke map.

<sup>4</sup> Farming continued in the Sixth Ward until at least the 1870s.

<sup>5</sup> The county developed a series of public schools, for white children, only in the 1850s.





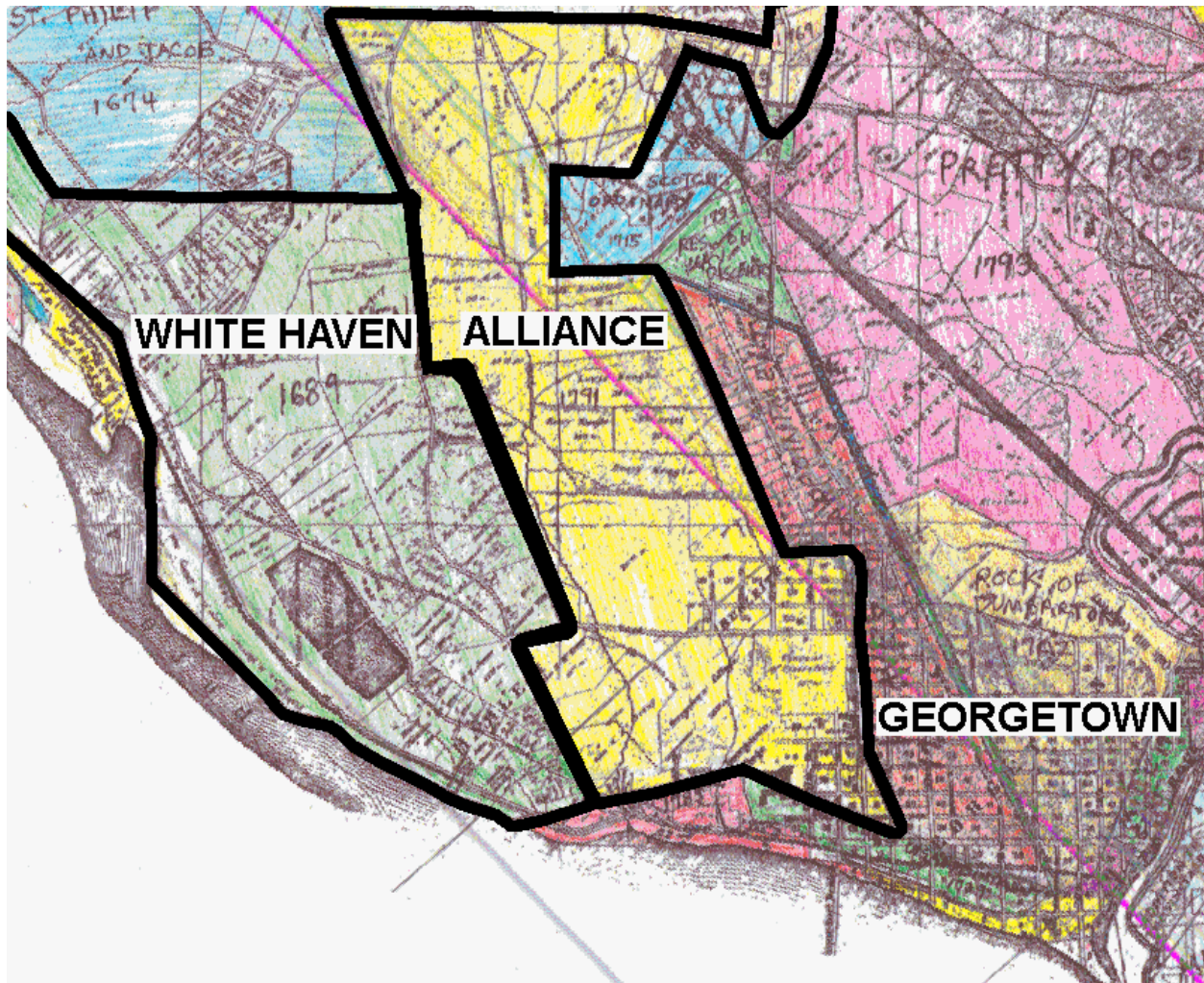
*The undeveloped character of the national capital in its early days occasioned gibes, especially from foreign observers and residents of established cities. This circa 1839 August Köllner drawing of a farm is titled simply “One mile from Washington City Hall.” Library of Congress.*

Washington County of the mid nineteenth century (population 3,320) was not as economically segregated as the area is today; wealth was not concentrated within the present northwestern quadrant, and the poorest slaves lived near their affluent masters. Northwest had some of the most extensive landholdings, but many of the grander country houses stood nearly due north of the Capitol, not far beyond the city’s boundary, and the largest pre-war slaveholder owned the most extensive farms in Southeast. There was also mobility of landowners between different parts of the county, and ownership across the boundary into Maryland.

Large and small farms were neighbors. Big farms may have possessed certain economies of scale, and they frequently had large forces of enslaved laborers. But even ostensibly rich owners of extensive tracts were frequently cash-poor and over-extended. The best measure of the qualities of a farm—its soil, its water sources and drainage, its topography, location and aspect, and the management abilities of its owner—was its assessed value per acre.



One of the largest farms at the western end of the county had been White Haven (or Whitehaven), a seventeenth-century patent, granted to William Hutchinson and Colonel John Addison in 1689. Originally consisting of 759 acres, it included today's Palisades neighborhood. Reduced by only a few dozen acres, the tract passed to Addison's son-in-law, the first William D.C. Murdock, in the eighteenth century, and much of it remained in the Murdock family until the late nineteenth.



*A detail of "Maryland Land Grants within the District of Columbia in or after 1800 and Their Date of Survey" compiled by Priscilla McNeil.*

At its eastern edge, Whitehaven met another large tract known as "Alliance." Henry Threlkeld and his son, John, reassembled much of the old "Salop" grant, culminating in the 1790s as a farm of about 1,000 acres including, according to Carlton Fletcher, "what is now Georgetown University, Visitation Convent and School, Duke Ellington High School, the Washington International School, Foxhall Village, Burleith, Hillandale, Wesley Heights, Whitehaven Park, Glover-Archbold Park, and much of Glover Park." Among other things, the Threlkelds raised Merino sheep there, and had extensive orchards. The property was worked by at least a couple

dozen slaves. Presumably on the strength of having amassed such wealth, John Threlkeld served as alderman and then mayor of Georgetown and a director of the Bank of Columbia. He was later appointed one of the justices of the Washington County Levy Court. But Threlkeld had taken a series of loans from the Bank of the United States and the Union Bank of Georgetown, possibly for capital investment or land speculation elsewhere. A financial panic in 1823 followed a four-year depression and brought a spate of bank collapses, widespread calling-in of loans and restriction of credit. Threlkeld's own bank failed in 1826, and he found himself in arrears on property taxes owed to the Corporation of Georgetown. Although huge, his Alliance estate, much of it of soil "thin and stony," could not produce enough ready cash to bail him out. So he sold a few parcels to raise funds, and then rolled some of his debts into a new loan from Clement Smith, director of the Farmers and Merchants Bank, putting up a third of the original extent of Alliance as collateral. Threlkeld defaulted, and the property was auctioned in 1827, with creditor Clement Smith the high bidder. By 1830, Smith began to sell off portions. That same year, John Threlkeld died in his boyhood home on the Georgetown Heights, "Berlieth" (or Burleith), with his property reduced to more or less where his father had begun.

The Murdock family was subject to its own financial pressures and began to sell off pieces of Whitehaven before midcentury. The Threlkelds' and Murdocks' misfortunes proved a boon to hungry newcomers who were not content to be tenants. The break-up of large estates unlocked land for small freeholders and reduced dependency on slave labor. Parts of both Alliance and Whitehaven were snapped up by German-American and Irish-American families of farmers and butchers. Especially with the establishment in the 1830s of Drover's Rest, a stockyard for cattle driven in from Virginia and Maryland, the northern and western approaches to Georgetown became processing centers for meat.

### **The Garritys**

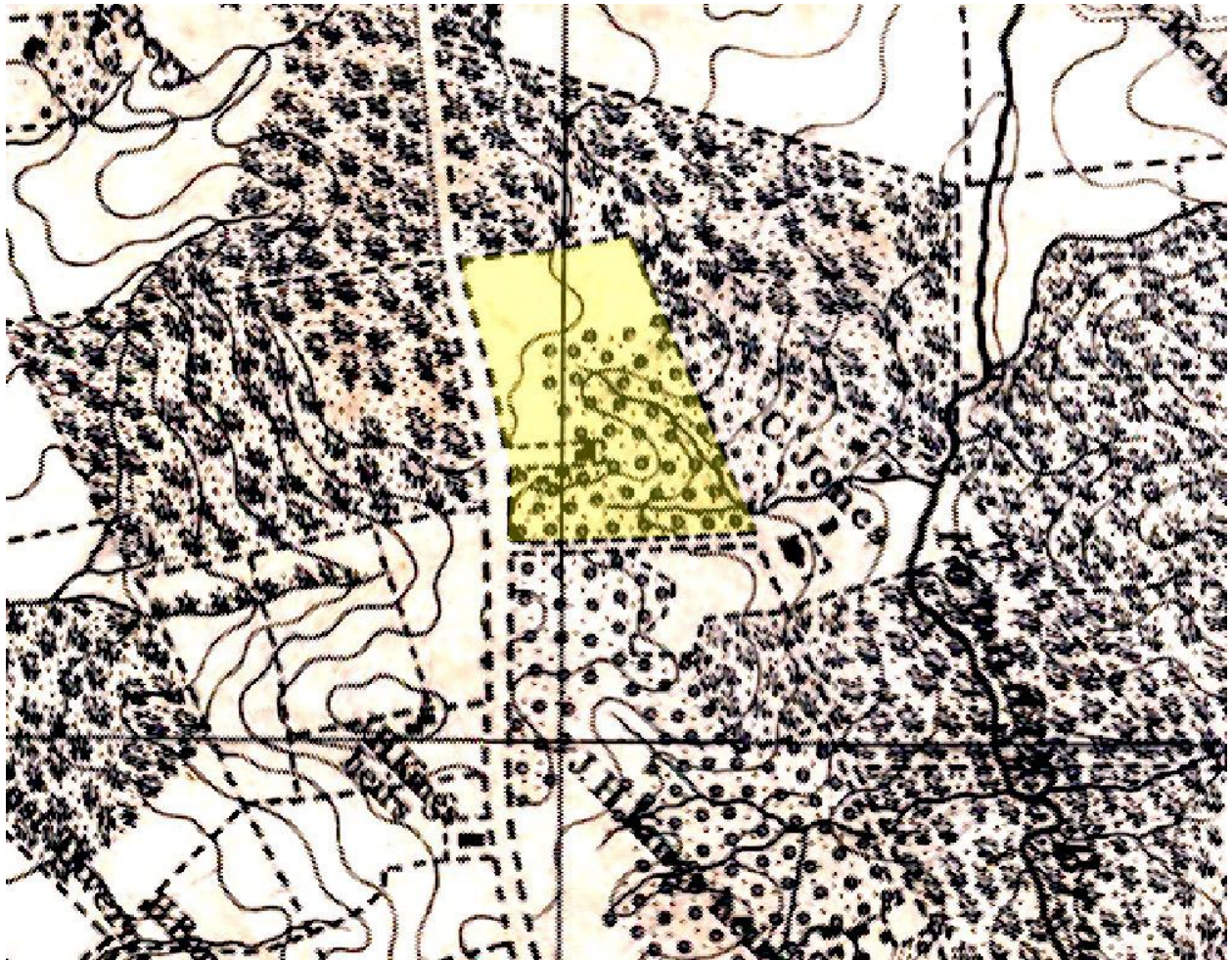
In 1831, creditors of the late John A. Murdock instituted an equity suit to recover more than \$500 of debt. Murdock's widow and son were in possession of his 68 acres along the east side "the ridge road" that connected Foxhall Road and the "New Cut Road" (also known as the Seventh Street Road and later as Reservoir Road) from Georgetown with the Loughborough Road and Tenleytown.<sup>6</sup> The estate was divided into four parcels and auctioned off. Banker Clement Smith, who had earlier acquired and sold much of the Alliance estate, purchased an 11.88-acre parcel for only \$15.25 an acre, the lowest price of the four tracts. The property lay at the eastern edge of the old Whitehaven tract, two miles by road from the commercial center of Georgetown, but shorter as the crow flies and literally overlooking the town. It had good

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<sup>6</sup> Ridge Road was initially a customary name reflective of the fact that the road ran along the high ground between the Foundry Branch and Maddox Branch valleys, a ridge that continues to Tenleytown. It was not until 1864 that the Washington County Levy Court made the name official. But there were two other roads in the eastern portion of the county that shared the name during the nineteenth century. Although this road continued the alignment of Foxhall Road, the latter name first applied only to the thoroughfare south of Reservoir Road, because it had originated as a lane through Henry Foxall's estate. It was not until 1932 that the District of Columbia commissioners renamed Ridge Road as Foxhall Road.



drainage, but the least level land of the available parcels. Smith likely rented out the property for the next seven years, but decided to auction it in 1838.



*A detail of the 1859 Albert Boschke map of the District of Columbia shows the Garrity family's nearly twelve acres planted mostly as orchard.*

The farmstead had a rolling topography, beginning at the high ground of the aptly named public road and falling off in swales to the east toward Foundry Branch, a creek named for its outlet at the former Foxall foundry west of Georgetown. Relatively flat areas near the road provided suitable building sites for a home and outbuildings. According to a later sale advertisement, these spots were “handsomely situated, having a commanding view of Washington and Georgetown, the Potomac river, Analostan Island, the swelling hills of Virginia, and the course of the rivulets from the unbroken plains.” A wedge-shaped parcel to the rear, owned by Navy captain R. Clarendon Jones by the mid 1850s, cut off the little farm from direct access to the stream. Jones’s lane or drive formed the southern boundary of the property, dividing it from the John H. King farm, “Valley View.”

Patrick and Catherine Garrity, new immigrants from Ireland, purchased the property for \$300, a healthy profit to Smith.<sup>7</sup> The Garritys had settled in Georgetown with two small children sometime between 1830 and 1833. The parents were illiterate, and Patrick likely worked as an agricultural laborer or tenant farmer before putting aside enough money for at least a down-payment on his farm. At the time of their move to Ridge Road, the family numbered seven—more than two tenths of one percent of the sparse county population of about 3,000. Their property was likely underdeveloped at the time, perhaps mostly woods. It is not known if a house already stood on the parcel, but the Garritys’ “small frame house” was already described as “old” in 1865, perhaps not unusual after 30 years for a weather-beaten, frame farmhouse covered with whitewashed, possibly pit-sawn planks. Patrick undertook the clearance of the land and planted most of the farmstead in fruit trees. The rest was fields of wheat, Indian corn, hay for the animals and, not surprisingly, “Irish” potatoes.<sup>8</sup>



*The Garrity house photographed by William Morris Smith in 1865. The building is sided with broad planks, and the roof is clad with wood shingles. It apparently faced south, taking advantage of the views to the river. The massive chimney indicates that the kitchen was in the tallest, shed-roofed wing at left. The home expanded with the family; the Boschke map suggests that the nearest shed addition was the last, constructed after about 1857-1859. The building was demolished in the 1880s. Library of Congress.*

At less than twelve acres, the Garrity farm was small. Although there are no detailed figures available on farm size in the District for 1838, the federal census of a dozen years later recorded

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<sup>7</sup> In period records, their surname is variously spelled Garity, Garaty, Garety, Garetty, Garretty, Gaharty, Gaherty and Gaharity.

<sup>8</sup> Cultivation of the potato originated in South America, but it had become a staple in Europe and the principal crop of Ireland. As the Garritys had come from Ireland in the early 1830s, they may have cultivated back home the Irish Lumper potato, which was ubiquitous for its hardiness in poor soil—until the blight of the 1840s.

each property. In 1850, the median acreage of cultivated land was 39 acres.<sup>9</sup> But many farms also had considerable reserves of unimproved land that included woods or marsh or meadow. In fact, including such lands, the median farm measured fully 59 acres. Early on, the Garritys acquired by lease an added fifteen acres of unimproved land, and these were likely the woods to the north of their initial purchase. Patrick Garrity probably intended to commence clearing and cultivating it, but he died in 1846 or 1847, leaving behind a pregnant wife and six children.<sup>10</sup>

The oldest Garrity children were now teenagers, and Catherine took over management of the farm with their help. The family found itself in straitened circumstances. Catherine managed to purchase a house lot in Georgetown in 1853, but to pay for it, she apparently sold or terminated the lease on nine of the fifteen unimproved acres. By the eve of the Civil War, the farm's value had increased, but only as a consequence of the rising value of real estate in general. The production of the Garritys' orchard had fallen off since a decade earlier, as had the potato and vegetable crops. Wheat cultivation had been given up for a smaller patch of beans. The family had only about half the livestock as in 1850, having recently slaughtered some of their pigs for cash. The bright spot was a tripling of the yield of hay, a relatively low-value product, but one in great demand as war came. The family had also undertaken some kind of cottage industry, selling \$50 worth of unnamed "manufactured products" in 1859-1860, and they likely cut and sold wood for fuel to supplement their income.

The war may have been good for business, but it was likely hard on the Garritys' land. In 1862, troops and probably African-American laborers constructed Battery Parrott immediately west of the Ridge Road to defend against a river crossing or an artillery attack from Arlington Heights. The battery stood on a knoll on the farm of widow Ellen King, across the road from the Garrity farm, one of the highest points south of Tenleytown. Initially manned by the First Maine Heavy Artillery, Battery Parrott served as an army signal station from March 1864. Ridge Road, repaired and re-graded in 1857-1858, was trampled by thousands of troops, horses, wagons and gun carriages over four years. There is no record of the army cutting trees from the Garritys' land, and the military authorities tried to prevent depredations by their troops, but it seems that little could frustrate the soldiers' demand for firewood, the most convenient source of which was the nearest fence. Near war's end, the Garritys' fence line along Ridge Road was described as "tolerably good, but... the back part [of the farm] it has no fence of any account."

The rest of the property had also seen wear and tear, and much may have gone to seed. The house was "old," and the outbuildings were said to be "very inferior." The overall condition was "very poor now; but being a small place, easily improved [and close to the cities], it would bring a good price," about \$200 an acre.

The cash value of the property had become an issue, as the Garritys now had to sell. The little farm had provided a meager enough living for a single family, but it could not support the families of the grown children. In fact, by 1865, only one child was still a minor, and three of the oldest had already moved away from Washington. Without their labor and that of the late Patrick, the farm had become more difficult to manage, and it seemed advantageous to convert it

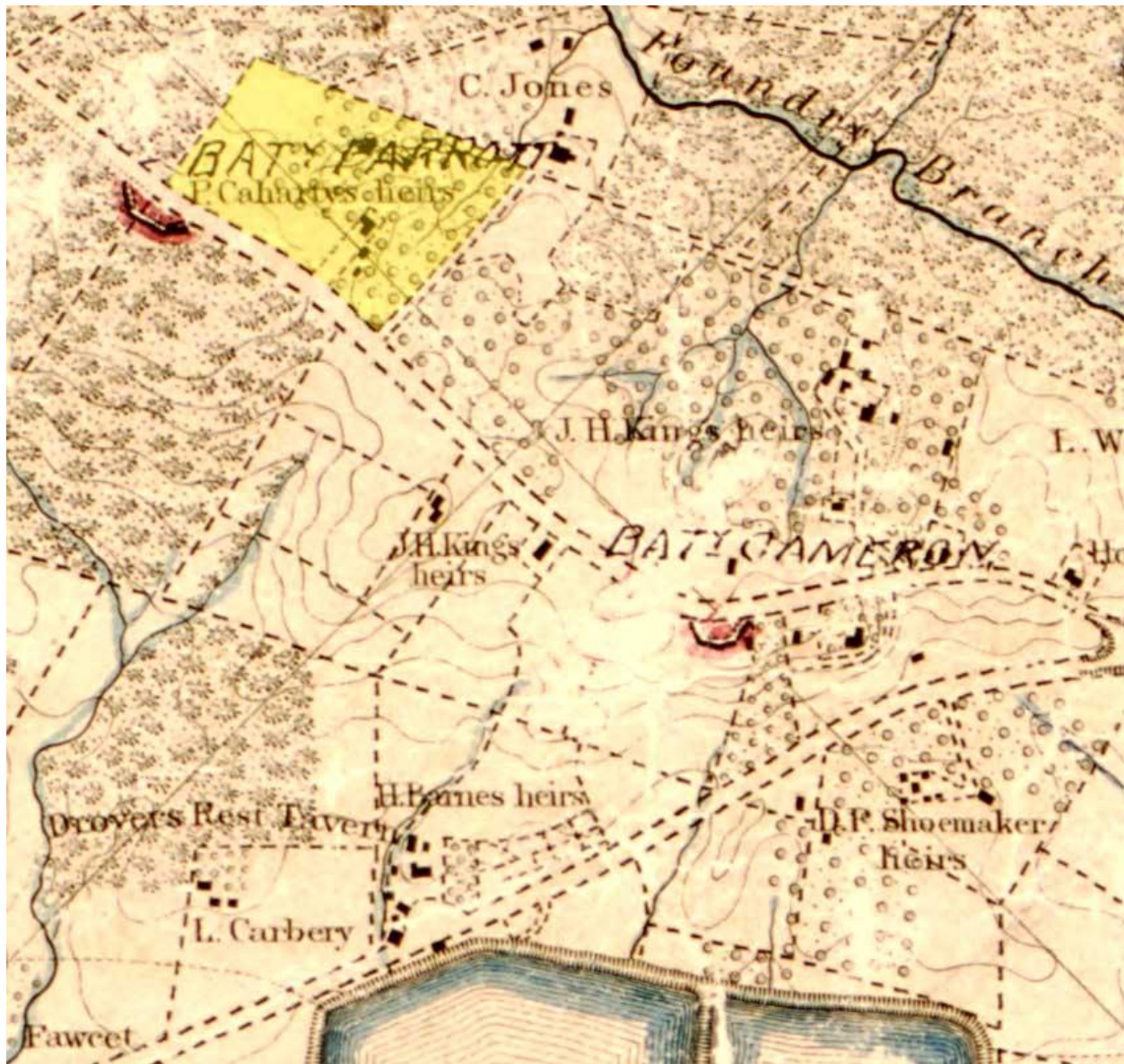
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<sup>9</sup> Because of the remaining huge tracts, the average size was significantly larger, at 60 acres.

<sup>10</sup> In an equity suit to divide his estate nearly two decades later, Patrick Garrity was said to have died in 1846, but his youngest daughter was born at least a year after that time.



to cash. But Patrick Garrity had died without leaving a will, meaning that his wife and children all possessed partial claims, with the size of each to be determined. And the property was too small to be of much monetary value or practical use simply split among the family members.



*A detail of the 1865 Barnard map of the defenses of Washington depicts Battery Parrott opposite the farm of “P. Caharty’s heirs.” J.G. Barnard’s Map of the Environs of Washington was based on Boschke’s of eight years earlier, and this version better shows the Garritys’ outbuildings just south of the fenced enclosure around the house. The larger structure adjacent to the fence was almost certainly a barn for the family’s horses, milk cow and cart, as well as for hay storage. The other is probably a corn crib. Library of Congress.*

As the youngest Garrity child, Chantelle, was still a minor and unable to consent to a contract, the family members could not each simply agree to a portion of the proceeds of the sale. An

equity cause was instituted, and a guardian *ad litem* was appointed for Chantelle. The court took testimony on the value of the property, appointed a trustee to auction it off, and apportioned widow Catherine Garrity only a tenth of the estate “for her dower interest... [as she] is advanced in life,” with the remainder divided between the children.

The farm was auctioned June 15, 1865, ten months after the suit was initiated. The winning bidder was James L. Carbery, with an offer of \$3,425. The amount was more than the court-appointed auditor had expected, but the end of the war a month earlier may have encouraged optimism for both real estate and agriculture. While the conflict brought about a real depression in land values in the South—buoyed somewhat by carpetbaggers and immigrants—the proximity of a large, urban market was obviously attractive. Carbery, with a farm near Conduit Road, did not mean to take possession of the farm himself; he assigned his bid to friend Augustus D. Scheele. Scheele paid the trustee \$2,075 up front and promised to pay the balance when the court ratified the sale. Catherine Garrity and three of her daughters moved to a new home on their Georgetown lot, 160 Fayette Street, later known as 1817 35<sup>th</sup> Street NW and now the site of Hardy Middle School.

### **The Scheeles and the Meat Business**

Augustus Daniel Scheele<sup>11</sup> was the third son of a German immigrant of the same name. The senior Augustus Daniel was born in Lower Saxony in 1780 and generally went by his middle name. Emigrating about 1800, he arrived in Georgetown by 1804. He was a blacksmith by trade and served in the District of Columbia militia during the War of 1812. In 1828, the 48-year-old Daniel married Margaret, the 21-year-old daughter of market gardener and small-time distiller Peter Colter, a resident of the “Wilberforce” subdivision east of High Street (Wisconsin Avenue) opposite Holy Rood Cemetery.

The Scheeles likely lived with the Colters in Wilberforce and there had three sons, two of whom lived to adulthood. Augustus Daniel was their youngest, born in 1835. He and brother Andrew Frederick trained as butchers, probably apprenticed to one or more of the German-American families of meat dealers in Georgetown Heights—the Weavers, Homillers or Kenglas—and they may have begun their careers bringing meat to the Georgetown market house.

Augustus Scheele married Maryland-born Mary Hilliary, a second-generation Irish-American, in the late 1850s. The couple purchased a little house lot in early 1860, located on the west side of today’s Wisconsin Avenue, next to butcher William Homiller. They erected a two-story frame house, painted “drab” or fawn-colored with white trim and green shutters. But the Civil War had been good to suppliers of staples like meat, as long as they were not too harmed themselves by inflation of labor costs and other inputs. By war’s end, the Scheeles were ready to buy their own farm.

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<sup>11</sup> As evidenced by a memorandum book of his still in the possession of his descendants, “Scheele” was the proper spelling of his surname. As a German, he presumably pronounced it SHEE-luh, as suggested by some misspellings, but SHEE-lee was adopted early on by neighbors and is used by the family today. The name appears in nineteenth-century documents as Scheele, Sheele, Sheale, Sheeley, Shele, Shela, Shely, Shealy, Schealy, Schiely, Scheill, Shielly, Shiely, Schyly and Shirley.

Four weeks after the auction of the Ridge Road farm, Augustus and Mary Scheele sold their house above Georgetown and delivered to the Garritys' trustee the balance of the price. The court confirmed the sale, which was recorded in September, and by then, the Scheeles' new home was under construction.



*The Scheeles' house under construction about September 1865. It has been framed and mostly sided, with the roof sheathing just being added, and the windows and porches yet to come. Scaffolding still stands in front and back. The roof is shallower than that of the older Garrity house, which remained behind and to the south of the new house for at least a decade. The smaller chimneys indicate the adoption of cooking and heating stoves. The house has the same catslide roof on the rear wing today, and chimneys and windows in the same locations. This is a detail of a photograph taken from behind Battery Parrott by William Morris Smith, one of Alexander Gardner's men. Library of Congress.*

The new house was a modest frame, likely similar to the Scheeles' Georgetown one. Three bays wide and two stories tall, it was L-shaped, with a rear kitchen wing under a catslide roof. Two chimneys, one rising at the parlor and the other from the kitchen, probably vented cooking and heating stoves. A remarkable image taken by William Morris Smith, one of the professional photographic chroniclers of the war, captured the Scheele house under construction, already framed out, but not wholly roofed over and still lacking its porches and windows. Although it is hard to make out finer details in the image, the house's walls are clad with milled planks, likely intended as exterior weatherboards rather than as sheathing. Today, the exterior walls are stuccoed, which was not rare at that time, but was far less common than painted siding, so it is likely a later cladding. Still, it may be more than a coincidence that the present color scheme, fawn with white trim, closely matches that of the Scheeles' earlier Wisconsin Avenue home, a possible clue that the same hues were applied to the new farmhouse. The color scheme suggests

the influence of early to mid-Victorian architectural taste, as would the use of stucco, and both treatments would have contrasted with the rougher, whitewashed Garrity house of the late 1830s, which remained standing until at least 1875, and perhaps until the late 1880s.

The Scheeles turned a quick buck on the 1866 sale of the southwest corner of their parcel to William Donaldson for an undisclosed sum. With a 35-foot frontage on the Ridge (Foxhall) Road, the lot ran 155 feet east along Captain Jones's lane, today's W Street. Sometime between 1868 and 1872, William and Elizabeth Donaldson built a home, which is the core of 2203 Foxhall Road.<sup>12</sup> Little is known about Donaldson, but it appears that he, like August Scheele, was a butcher, with a stall at Washington City's Center (or Centre) Market by 1870.

By that date, and despite the sale of the Donaldson lot, the value of the farm had probably increased significantly. In 1868, the parcel was valued by the county at \$2,300, not including the two houses, outbuildings and fences, which added another \$1,200. This total was only about what Augustus had paid, before he had built his house. This is likely because the assessed value of agricultural land for tax purposes typically lagged the market value; the Garritys' assessment for their land had been only \$575 until the Scheeles bought it for several times that figure. On the other hand, perhaps Augustus had overpaid. But for a high estimate, the federal census of 1870 reported a value of \$8,000, a grossly inflated figure when compared with the values of much larger farms. This was surely a mistake or copying error, but the Scheele farm must have appreciated, as it had been previously evaluated as easily improved, and Augustus had done so, and not only with the house and new outbuildings. If the census figures are reliable, the number of District farms had been slowly decreasing since 1850, while remaining about the same size. By 1870, early suburbanization and the withdrawal of land for federal government and military purposes was beginning to diminish the size of the average farm. But the population growth of Washington during and after the war was increasing its land value.

When the Scheeles moved into their new home they had a single child, the one-year-old Alice Margaret. They would have two more daughters, Clara (born 1867) and Mabel Ardella (born 1874), while in residence. The children probably attended the one-room schoolhouse built about 1855 along Tunlaw Road, the section that is now the portion of New Mexico Avenue at the eastern edge of the Horace Mann Elementary School lot. But their business and social interests lay in Georgetown, at least initially. It was two miles by road to the market house there, but the nearest boundary of the corporation was half that distance. The closest farms on the west side of Wisconsin and the Tunlaw Road extended to Foundry Branch, down the hill from the Scheele farm. From their home, the Scheeles could view the buildings of the college, and they had to go into town for their mail and any necessities. Augustus was also an officer of the local chapter of the Improved Order of Red Men fraternal society.

Augustus kept the Garritys' orchard and hay and potato fields, but abandoned the cultivation of corn and possibly beans, adding a small patch of sweet potatoes. The family also brought in a lot of revenue with the production of butter and the sale of vegetables from their market garden.

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<sup>12</sup> The frame, side-gabled Donaldson house has been more dramatically altered than the Scheele house, today partly obscured by side and rear additions and a brick façade. Although William Donaldson was a butcher, the lot was never associated with a farm.



As small as their farm was, and with only little children in the household, the Scheeles needed help, especially because it was not their crops that became the principal business of the farm, but cattle butchering. The 1870 census indicates that the household included Eliza Chew, an eighteen-year-old African-American house servant, and her probable father or grandfather, Robert Chew, a 73-year-old farm hand. It is possible that Augustus periodically hired additional help, as there was some seasonality to the meat business, and more so for the other cycles of farm life. Given that the Scheele house was not very large, it seems likely that the Chews resided in the old Garrity house, whose wings may have served as a summer kitchen and agricultural outbuildings.

We have no description of the location and appearance of Augustus Scheele's slaughterhouse, but it must have had an adjacent cattle pen accessible from the road, and it likely stood in one of the swales that drained the farm—and the effluent from butchering—toward Foundry Branch. Slaughterhouses were a common appurtenance of large farms, essentially any that killed livestock regularly enough to justify the expense of a specialized space. They are often mentioned among the outbuildings in newspaper advertisements for the sale of District agricultural land. Slaughterhouses were often found near or attached to barns. Most were frame, but the more prosperous estates had brick ones. They would frequently have a brick floor for easier cleaning, as is the case with a slaughterhouse recently discovered by archaeological investigation at the south end of Old Town Alexandria. Until butchering reached an industrial scale in the late nineteenth century, slaughterhouses remained quite small, but exact dimensions are hard to come by. A sale at war's end of some surplus Army structures near Chain Bridge included a 20- by 24-foot slaughterhouse, but that had likely accommodated a greater scale of activity than the average farm or commercial facility. As a clue to the production of commercial slaughterhouses, we have at least one estimate of such an operation in 1875, located at 13<sup>th</sup> and K Streets SE: "some ten or twelve beeves and some twenty-five smaller animals are killed every week..."

There had been commercial butchers as long as there had been urban areas in the District of Columbia, and there had undoubtedly been farm butcheries that sold their surplus still earlier. An 1873 newspaper article claimed that the District contained 95 slaughterhouses, "all around the outskirts of the city, from the Eastern branch to Rock Creek, and even to the Potomac river." With his apprenticeship in the early 1850s, Augustus Scheele had joined a large fraternity of butchers living beyond the corporate boundaries of Georgetown. Augustus and his brother Andrew were unusual within the group in that they were the first generation of their family in the trade. Georgetown was surely home to butchers from the time of its incorporation, but the most established clan in the trade at the time of Augustus Scheele's career was the Kenglas. Sources differ on whether Lewis Kengla was an immigrant from Germany or the son of an immigrant.<sup>13</sup> He arrived in Georgetown from Pennsylvania by way of Frederick, Maryland at the turn of the nineteenth century, and had set up a meat stand at the Georgetown market by about 1806. His three sons, Lewis Christopher, Henry and Jacob followed their father into the meat trade, as did Lewis Christopher's sons Jacob ("Drover and Cattle Dealer"), Joseph, William and George. The Kenglas acquired a sizeable chunk of the Alliance tract, and their farms dominated upper Wisconsin Avenue and the Tunlaw Road. For a time, they were neighbors of Augustus Scheele's butcher brother, Andrew Frederick.

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<sup>13</sup> The German surname was probably Künle(r), with his first name originally spelled Louis.

Michael Weaver's (*né* Weber) story resembled Lewis Kengla's, and the men could have been acquainted in Frederick, where Michael was purportedly born. A little younger than Kengla, Weaver probably arrived in Georgetown after the War of 1812 and settled in the Wilberforce subdivision. When he passed away in 1872 at the age of 86, he was the oldest butcher in the District of Columbia. Sons Henry and Joseph also entered the meat trade, and it was Henry's 1848 marriage to the widow Mary Ann Barnes that placed him in control of the Barnes cattle corral at Drovers' Rest.

The Pennsylvania-born Michael Homiller may have been carrying on his own family's tradition when he opened a shop in Georgetown in the early 1820s. His three sons, William, Jacob and Charles, and then Charles's sons, Armistead and Michael, followed in the footsteps of the patriarch as master butchers. Of course, there were many others in and around Georgetown and elsewhere in the District. The Georgetown-area families tended to intermarry, to partner in business, and to buy property from each other. William Homiller's brother-in-law, Joseph Duvall, was his business partner. The Homillers also married into the Poore family, the Poores into the Kengla family, and the Kenglas into the Homillers and the Yeabowers. George Kengla, Joseph Weaver and John Kelley established a Georgetown soap factory, using as the main ingredient tallow, a by-product of butchering. And Andrew Frederick Scheele sold his Wisconsin Avenue farm to the Weavers.<sup>14</sup>

The location of so many butchers north and west of Georgetown was no accident. The town presented a considerable market for meat, and it was adjacent to the larger Washington City. As early as 1870, a quarter of the retail butchers at Washington City's Center Market (Pennsylvania Avenue between 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets NW) were from the vicinity of Georgetown. In 1820, the town enacted an ordinance banning new slaughterhouses south and east of today's 36<sup>th</sup> Street and Whitehaven Parkway, pushing butchers north and west. But the principal factor was that the town was located near the supply of cattle. The District's primary wholesale cattle depot, Drovers' Rest, lay just upriver of Georgetown, adjacent to the Distributing Reservoir and at the intersection of today's Reservoir Road and MacArthur Boulevard. It drew from Virginia and Maryland cattle farms. Apparently established in the 1830s by Horatio Barnes, it soon included cattle corrals and slaughter yards, as well as a hotel and tavern for drovers and buyers.<sup>15</sup> In 1855, the *Evening Star* informed readers that, "It may not be generally known that most, if not all of the beef consumed in this city, is purchased at Drovers' Rest, on the hoof; therefore it must be regarded as an important mart."

The lists of butchers in the decennial censuses of manufactures show the extent to which Washingtonians were eating mutton, as well as beef and pork. Yet sheep were nearly invisible in the agricultural census schedules for the District, and local farms sustained far too few steers to feed the population, let alone support so many butcher shops, stands and slaughterhouses. Assuming good soil, good weather and good vegetation, a farm might support a steer per acre, perhaps a little more. Supplementation with hay or oats, as most farms could provide, would make it possible to raise more (or provide a cushion in case of drought), but at a cost. A hayfield

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<sup>14</sup> Andrew's descendants included the proprietors of the long-lived Scheele's Market in Georgetown.

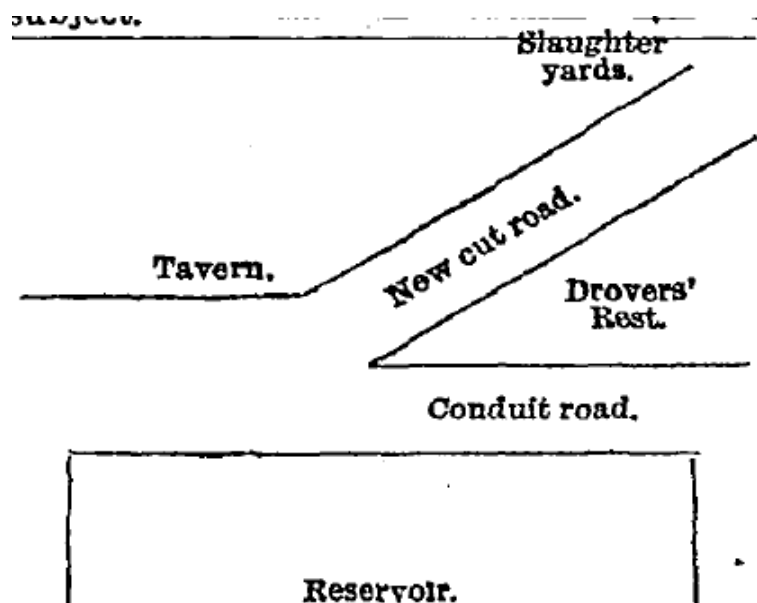
<sup>15</sup> There was a circa 1840s "Farmers and Drovers' Rest" in the southwest quadrant of Washington City to market cattle brought across Long Bridge. But it was removed earlier than Drovers' Rest because of development in that neighborhood. There was also a smaller livestock trade at Washington City's Center Market after the war, and Lewis Means had a small drove yard at Tenleytown before relocating to Benning Station about 1880.



itself removed scarce land from daily pasturage or from cultivation for grain or produce. As a consequence, nearly all the cows counted in the agricultural census on relatively small District farms were exploited for milk and butter production, with the occasional calf slaughtered for food.

The beef and mutton consumed in the District mostly arrived from Northern Virginia and Montgomery County, Maryland. Much of the livestock trotted over the Potomac on Chain Bridge, goaded by their Virginia drovers. This was a scene reminiscent of cattle drives in movie Westerns, but at a smaller scale. The sixth Chain Bridge, familiar from Civil War photographs, washed away in the flood of 1870 and was replaced with a light steel-truss bridge in 1872-1874. Years later, the first keeper of the replacement bridge recalled “the ‘drove days’ when the cattle were brought to town, unusually heavy because they had been watered at Pimmet’s [sic] Run, and only 20 were allowed to cross at a time.” Most sales from Drovers’ Rest occurred at auction on a particular day of the week (Wednesdays for a time, later changed to Fridays). As few as 100 head might change hands in a week, and perhaps 800 at the maximum, but usually in the range of 200 to 600 head. The butchers would then have their purchases herded back to their slaughterhouses. They responded to residents’ complaints of cattle roaming the streets—and trampling whatever lay along them—by promising to confine the drives to the wee hours of the morning. According to the newspapers, they committed thereafter to “employ [drovers] at the rate of one man for every five cattle,” where some butchers had previously hired “a few boys and irresponsible men to do driving because it could be done cheaply.”

*A schematic map of Drovers’ Rest, at Reservoir (“New cut”) Road and MacArthur Boulevard (“Conduit road”), published in the Washington Post in 1890. The section of the 1865 Barnard map provided on page 20 above shows more detail of the area at that earlier date.*



With the arrival of several railroad lines, Washington developed another major cattle depot along Benning Road, in the northeastern portion of the county. It was encouraged by the wartime closure of the river crossings and the washing-out of Chain Bridge in 1870. The railroad was initially a boon to meat dealers and consumers alike, as more cattle could be delivered

inexpensively. But it proved inconveniently distant to butchers around Georgetown and would ultimately steal business and undercut the prices offered by local cattle farms.

During this period, butchering became more specialized, with slaughterhouses increasingly handling hogs *or* cows and sheep. The reasons were practical: swine could not be herded distances and needed less space and less specialized fodder, so pork butchers could remain in the city. The smaller animals could be transported by wagon from a wholesale market such as “Clark’s depot,” which operated next to the Baltimore & Ohio railroad depot in the early 1870s.

Augustus Scheele was not among the largest or most successful of the butchers; he was probably of the middling sort, not necessarily a leader of the informal, local industry lobby, but respected enough to judge the election of directors of the new Northern Liberties Market (5<sup>th</sup> and K Streets NW) in 1878. Like his neighbors, he probably had a presence at the Georgetown Market before the “market war” of the mid to late 1860s. After the completion of a new market house in 1864 (the present landmark building), the Georgetown butchers purchased the temporary structure that had been used for the market during construction. They intended to remain in the latter building and requested of the Common Council a license extending the boundaries of the market to include their space. The councilmembers refused. The nature of the dispute appears to have been more than economic or an expression of dissatisfaction with the new building. Carlton Fletcher suggests that there were hard feelings between the conservative Democrat butchers—led by Lewis, Henry and Jacob Kengla, Joseph Weaver and William Homiller—and the town’s new Republican government. The corporation issued licenses, but whoever controlled the market houses could effectively limit access to the town’s meat trade. Consequently, many of the meat dealers relocated across Rock Creek, beyond Georgetown’s boundaries and inside Washington City. The butchers did not return to their own Georgetown market house, the “Butchers’ Market,” until the Organic Act of 1871 united the entire District under a single government and dissolved the Georgetown Common Council.

If the meat dealers had not already established a presence in the Washington markets, they did so now. The city directories contain no entries for Augustus Scheele prior to 1871, but by the end of 1870, he had stalls at both the Western Market (21<sup>st</sup> and K Streets NW) and Center Market. A year later, he withdrew to just his space at Center Market.

Their farm and meat business offered independence for the Scheeles, but an independence perhaps more theoretical than real, bought and maintained only with hard work, and subject to the vagaries of the weather and the economy. An 1873 financial panic was triggered by the collapse of Jay Cooke & Company and other banks that had traded in overvalued railroad equities. A deeper cause of the subsequent depression was a restrictive monetary policy instituted by the federal government, which had moved to a gold standard, no longer backing dollars with silver as well. The depression lasted 65 months, until 1879. While many Americans suffered directly from bank and stock losses, many more were hit by the contraction of the money supply and the consequent tightening of credit. Even when banks did not call in loans, debtors struggled beneath the burden of payments that consumed an ever greater proportion of revenues. And farmers were nearly always debtors.



*Washington's Center Market in the 1890s. Library of Congress.*

The specifics of the Scheele family's debts are unknown at this remote date, but it is clear that they had run into some financial embarrassment by the mid 1870s. The Scheele businesses, or at least finances, may have been closely entwined, as brother Andrew Frederick Scheele was simultaneously experiencing his own difficulties, leading to the sale of his Wisconsin Avenue house, farm and slaughterhouse. Augustus was in arrears on his own farm's property taxes from 1876, not paying them off until the land was sold in 1881. He had taken a mortgage to secure a debt in 1874, and defaulted almost immediately. In fact, the property was to be auctioned in June 1875 to satisfy the debt. But the sale was narrowly averted, and either the trustee or Scheele himself instead leased the farm to the 25-year-old Walter Brown, a fellow butcher not long past journeyman.

An advertisement for the aborted auction provides the most detailed picture of the farm's improvements during the Scheele tenure. The property included the "comfortable and nearly new" main dwelling, with a "fine well of water at the door"; the "small House and grounds adjoining... on the south" (i.e., the Garrity house); a barn; a corn crib; and "all necessary outbuildings," including, of course, the slaughterhouse.

The Scheeles moved to Foggy Bottom—where their fourth child, the third Augustus Daniel Scheele, was born—and they would thereafter lead a peripatetic life, residing in a succession of apparently rented homes and taking in boarders to earn more income.

Ironically, Augustus's financial problems resulted in, or at least coincided with, an expansion of his retail business. Freed of the burden of operating the farm and in need of replacement revenue, he added a second stall to his space at Center Market and rented another stall at the new Northern Liberties Market for perhaps a decade. But Augustus disappears from the Washington city directories in 1885, suggesting that an illness may have kept him from business during the final year of his life. He died in 1886. His wife, Mary, passed away around 1890.



*A cow on a farm near Georgetown, circa 1910. Terence Vincent Powderly Papers, American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives, the Catholic University of America.*

### **The Browns**

The 76-year-old Joshua D. Brown may have been trying to set up his son in life when he purchased the Scheele farm in 1881. Brown was born in Maryland, married Ann Stone at Baltimore in 1833, and acquired his first farm at Howard in Anne Arundel County, where fourth child Walter was born in April 1850. The family moved to another farm near Elk Ridge Landing, Howard County in the 1850s, and finally, after the war, to Laurel, Prince George's County. Despite a lifetime in the Old Line State, and still owning the Laurel farm, oddly, Brown is described as a resident of the District in the deed from the Scheeles' trustee. This error is surely due to the fact that his son was already farming the Scheele land, and Joshua periodically stayed with him.

Walter Brown<sup>16</sup> had been living with his parents into his mid twenties, but he married the 24-year-old Mary Ellen Ford in 1875, and the young couple had to make a home and a living for themselves. It was then that Walter leased the Scheele farm and took up residence in the Ridge Road house. He soon rented another 24 acres—either Captain Jones’s farm to the southeast, or a portion of John H. King’s former “Valley View” estate to the south—and had under cultivation twenty acres of hay, three of corn, and one each of oats, rye and potatoes. Forty apple trees and 75 peach trees produced 220 bushels of fruit for sale in 1879, supplementing the revenue from a sizeable market garden, dairy products, and eggs. A handful of hogs and chickens were largely for home use. The farm was large enough that the Browns had to hire laborers (a total of five man-weeks in 1879), probably helping mainly with picking, mowing, reaping and threshing in summer and fall. By 1880, the Brown household included two house servants and three boarders: 68-year-old German-American widower John Hunchberger, 21-year-old D.C. native Frank Willson, and the 24-year-old Swiss-American William Loeffler, all butchers and not farm laborers. The five could have resided in the Garrity home, which probably functioned as a summer kitchen and bunkhouse.

As the presence of these butchers would indicate, the products of the farm were sidelines to the Browns’ main business: meat. Walter Brown had learned butchering at the knee of his father, and unlike his older brother, Oliver, pursued it as a lifelong profession. The little Scheele farm was probably attractive for having a modest slaughterhouse. It was also favorably situated to permit entry into the fraternity of butchers serving Washington; butcher neighbors included William Donaldson, Robert Smith, Morton Lowry, Charles Merkel, Leonard Killian, John R. Dale, Frank Elliott, etc. In April 1881, when the Scheeles’ debts forced them to give up their land for good, the Browns snapped it up. Although the Scheeles had obviously improved the property, Joshua Brown purchased it from the trustee for only \$2,600—less than Augustus had paid—assuming a mortgage for about 37 percent of the price. The large down payment may have come from Joshua’s sale of his own farm, as the 1880 census suggests that his household—his wife, Ann, and their son Oliver’s family—was now resident in the village of Laurel and that he had retired.

Nine days after Joshua’s purchase, Joshua and wife Ann sold the farm to Mary Ellen Brown, Walter’s wife, for \$3,000. The thirteen-percent profit is likely explained by the younger couple being already in debt to Walter’s parents while setting up the leased farm. More unusual is the fact that Walter was not named in the deed, in an era during which wives, not husbands, were frequently omitted from property documents. It may be an indication that Mary Ellen brought more wealth to the marriage; her parents’ Chautauqua County, New York farm had been valued somewhat higher than the Browns’ Maryland one, and the Fords had possessed considerably more personal property.<sup>17</sup> Mary Ellen may have been bankrolling Walter’s businesses.

By the time Mary Ellen and Walter acquired the Scheele farm outright, they had had two children, Walter Milton and Mattie, both born in the Scheele house, in September 1875 and

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<sup>16</sup> Most sources offer no middle name or initial for Walter Brown, but one advertisement for his business, published after his death, gives his middle initial as “T”. That is the reason why his son, Walter Milton Brown, is no “junior.”

<sup>17</sup> Joshua Brown’s farm in 1860, for instance, was a modest affair, 25 improved acres valued at \$1,400, including all tools and livestock (a horse and a mule). It produced 50 bushels of potatoes, 30 bushels of buckwheat and seven tons of hay the previous year.

November 1877, respectively. Mary Ellen was pregnant with their third child, Edwin Lovell, and a fourth, Gertrude Fay, would follow in late 1888. The children were largely cared for by a middle-aged, Virginia-born, African-American nurse, Rosa Kelley. She likely tended to Joshua Brown, too, as he lay dying at the house in late 1882. A teenaged black servant, Kate Barnes, cooked for the family in the early 1880s. That the Browns had house servants and hired farm and slaughterhouse laborers is an early indication of the growth of Walter's meat business and of the family's eventual affluence.

Five years after the purchase of the Scheele farm, the Browns acquired 22 adjacent acres, Captain R. Clarendon Jones's old farm, part of the still-older "Alliance" tract, and today a considerable portion of Glover-Archbold Park. The Browns may have already been farming the land under lease, and they soon demolished the modest house there. The resulting combined parcel was larger than the shrinking median farm size in the District. The Brown property now stretched across Foundry Branch, wrapping around the Valley View estate of Dr. Daniel Boone Clarke (formerly owned by John H. King) and bounding parcels owned by Henry Kengla and Georgetown College. The purchase brought more cultivable land and direct access to the water course. It also added a woodlot, "a cluster of pines [along Foundry Branch] near the southern edge of the Brown clearing..., a great resort for blackbirds." But perhaps the greatest advantage was the ability to construct a new slaughterhouse, much farther from the family home. Although it is only known from an alteration permit of three decades later (for a poured-concrete floor and a raised roof), Walter Brown's slaughterhouse was described as near "New Cut Road," i.e., Reservoir Road. Although hundreds of yards away, Reservoir was the nearest cross road; the slaughterhouse was likely accessible from the footpath that ran up Foundry Branch, as well as from Captain Jones's former lane, which ran along the south side of the Donaldson lot and later became W Street.

The Browns soon commenced even more substantial improvements at the northern edge of the farm, on an eminence and at the farthest possible distance from the slaughterhouse. In May 1888, they obtained a building permit for the construction of a new home. To stand two stories tall on a stone foundation and under a mansard roof, the frame house measured 42 feet wide and 60 deep, with an almost-square main block and a rear kitchen wing. The permit did not identify an architect or builder, and the mansard suggests that its probable Second-Empire architecture may not have been positively *au courant*, but the construction was estimated at \$8,000, probably as much as the entire farm had cost the family. If not a mansion by today's standards, it was certainly a substantial house, reached by a semicircular driveway off the Ridge Road, and with a large carriage house standing behind the garden. The Browns named the house, or rather the whole estate, Lovell Crest, after Mary Ellen's mother's family. Unfortunately, it is unknown exactly when it was completed—and when the Browns moved from the former Scheele house—because extant tax records for the county do not cover the years 1882 to 1892, and none of the maps of the late 1880s and early 1890s depict the new house. It is known, however, that the family was ensconced in the new Lovell Crest by mid 1893.<sup>18</sup>

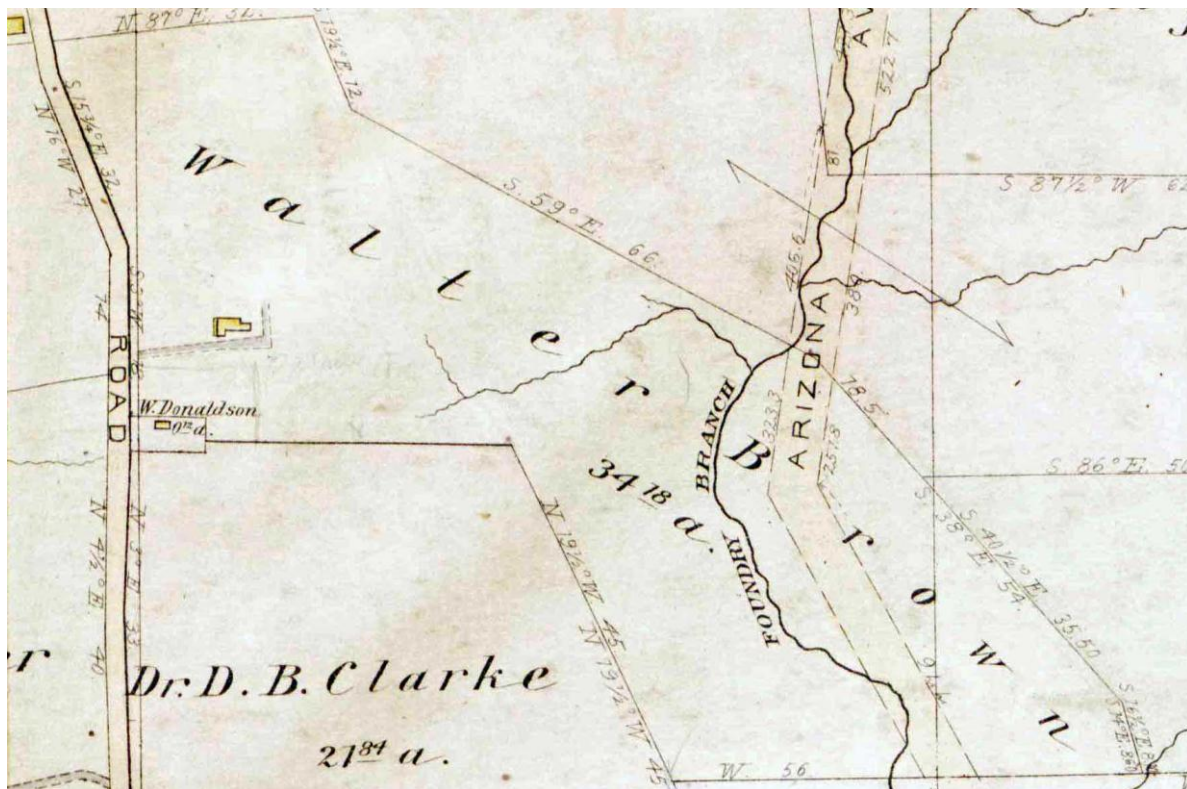
The new house, and the social pretension implied by a named estate, signaled the arrival of the Browns. Although their wealth was still modest, and a butcher would never be admitted to high society, the family appeared in the newspaper society columns for the county. Even before they

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<sup>18</sup> In 1918, Mary Ellen Brown attested that she and her husband had built the house "about thirty years ago."



moved from the Scheele house, Walter and Mary Ellen celebrated their ninth wedding anniversary by inviting 400 guests; as no home could have accommodated so many, the party must have had the character of an autumn evening picnic. Mattie Brown's surprise "sweet sixteen" party in 1893 received a brief write-up, and Mrs. Brown's leadership role in the local Woman's Christian Temperance Union chapter received numerous mentions, including a luncheon she hosted in the home for Mary Harris Armour, the W.C.T.U. president. Although Walter Brown was probably no member of the Chevy Chase Hounds, he permitted their foxhunts to traverse his land. He did take a personal interest in hunting, however, probably of upland game birds, as he raised setters on the property. Walter also took a natural interest in the



*A detail of the 1894 Hopkins atlas shows the extent of Walter Brown's farm after 1886, although he was likely farming most of it by the late 1870s. It better reflects the appearance of the property before the Browns built a new house at its northern edge, as that structure is not shown. Historic maps of the county are erratic in their depiction of structures. Sometimes quite accurate with building footprints, at others they are generalized or out-of-date depictions. They overlook most outbuildings. An 1881 map excludes the William Donaldson house, for instance, although tax records indicate that it stood by 1872, and it appears on the 1878 Hopkins atlas. The 1887 Hopkins atlas just shows dot-like rectangles, with the Scheele-Brown house too close to the Donaldsons'. It is possible that the new Brown house, styled "Lovell Crest," was not completed until 1892-1893, although it received its building permit in 1888. Hopkins's depiction of only the L-shaped Scheele-Brown house may reflect a lag in the preparation of the atlas, or its dependence for building footprints on the 1892 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey maps, which, in turn, may have been years in preparation, or simply drawn from their own 1888 series.*

physical condition of Ridge Road, sometimes complaining to the District of Columbia Commissioners about its drainage, or carrying petitions for better county roads in general. He was soon head of the Committee on Roads and Highways for the West Washington Citizens' Association, ultimately agitating for lighting on Ridge and the opening of W Street from Conduit Road to Ridge Road, in partial fulfillment of the Highway Plan.<sup>19</sup> In the wake of the Panic of 1893, the Brown house was the meeting place for area residents worried about protecting their property as Coxey's Army of unemployed men approached Washington to demand more government spending on public-works jobs and freedom from the gold standard.<sup>20</sup>

And the Browns now had plenty of property to worry about. Their 1893 property tax assessment valued the improvements—including the new house and stable, the slaughterhouse and the other outbuildings—at \$5,700<sup>21</sup>, and more than 32 acres of land at \$300 an acre.



*A detail from the 1903 Baist real estate atlas showing the Browns' new house at the northern edge of the farm, plus their carriage house and a barn, all north of the former Scheele house. Unfortunately, such maps seem to be the only extant images of the circa 1888 house, as it was demolished in the 1930s, probably even before being captured in aerial photos.*

<sup>19</sup> Note that he did not campaign for the continuation of W Street east to Georgetown—through the Brown farm.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Brown also once rescued a teenaged girl from the 60-foot-deep well of the next-door Donaldson house. She had apparently attempted suicide and then thought better of it. He heard her screams when passing by.

<sup>21</sup> Which may be compared to the \$1,000 worth of improvements during the Scheele tenure, or to the \$100 valuation of the Donaldson house next door.

As their household both prospered and grew, the Browns continued to augment their staff. Although we do not have the 1890 census records, those for 1900 show John Veal, a young black farm laborer among the household, and William Owens and Willie Coleman, also African Americans, were servants of some sort by 1910. It is possible that they or other farm laborers lived in the former Scheele house, once vacated by the Browns. The old home surely had some tenant, and the Garrity house seems to have been razed by the time the new house was finished. Mrs. Brown had a succession of cooks and housekeepers, advertising for them when necessary. And the family employed a coachman, George Stanton, until both coach and coachman were replaced by an automobile in the 1910s.

The larger workforce was engaged in the family business, the meat shop that paid for the operation of the estate. The slaughterhouse remained on the farm into the twentieth century, with the occasional cow or lamb straying from the property and wandering into Georgetown. And for decades, the retail store was located in one or more stalls at Center Market. Walter Brown raised sons Walter and Edwin to be butchers. Except for the younger Walter's brief attempt to strike out on his own, they worked for and with their father, in a business that came to be known as Walter Brown & Sons. But not just the sons were involved. The 1910 census identifies 22-year-old daughter Gertrude as secretary for the meat shop.<sup>22</sup> And there were other helpers and journeymen who migrated through the business, including the sixteen-year-old Preston Jones and Sophia Rinker, a clerk and cashier at Center Market. A boy named Albert Sakers was working for Walter Brown in 1891 when crushed by an elevator at the market. Ralph T. Weaver, one of the extensive Weaver clan of butchers, later worked for the firm before starting his own competing business in the market hall.

Although there were many such competing meat dealers, Walter Brown made his reputation providing quality and service. The company delivered, which was not unusual in itself, but it adopted the automobile early, to bring sides of beef and sheep from the slaughterhouse to market and to deliver paper-wrapped cuts to the kitchens of its more affluent customers. In June 1909, the meat dealer obtained a permit to operate its new, motorized Hart-Kraft delivery wagon. Three years later, the Browns replaced it or expanded the fleet with the purchase of a half-ton truck.

A couple of newspaper items indicate the prominence of Walter Brown in the meat trade at the turn of the century. He had among his customers the family of the British ambassador, Julian Pauncefote. Pauncefote is best remembered by Americans for having negotiated a treaty that acknowledged the right of the United States to construct a canal across Central America. He had just been elevated to a baronetcy when the Lady Pauncefote hired a new household cook. This cook soon visited Walter Brown's shop with a "demand for 10 per cent commission on the supplies" she would purchase for the household, or "she would take the trade away." Brown apparently took the latter option, as Lord Pauncefote sent for the butcher a few days later "to

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<sup>22</sup> Excluded from mention in relation to the meat business is Mary Ellen Brown, Walter's wife. Direct involvement in that sort of commerce would not square with her apparent aspirations to a higher place in society, but it is difficult to believe that Mrs. Brown was not involved with the business and farm, especially in the early days; extant legal records suggest that she was a strong, and strong-willed, individual who, among other things, made loans to other family members.





*Above: A 1926 National Photo Company image of a Walter Brown & Sons meat truck. Library of Congress.*

*Below: This Washington Herald advertisement of 1910 was not characteristic of Walter Brown & Sons in that it offered a sale. "Cheap" did not describe the quality of the firm's products, such as prime rib. The ad is a reminder of the degree to which mutton has disappeared from the average American's diet in the past century.*



inquire why the roasts he was supplying had become so tasteless.” Brown made clear that the latest cuts were not his. With the situation explained “and with the advent of a new cook [hired from New York,] the difficulty was remedied.” This anecdote was one among several related in a 1903 *Washington Times* exposé of such kickbacks to household staff. Brown repeated it seven years later in testimony before a Senate select committee investigating high prices of meat and other farm products.

This was still an era of “trusts,” that is, industry monopolies, oligopolies and cartels, and some senators suspected that the uniformly high meat prices in 1910 Washington smacked of collusion among butchers. Walter Brown spoke for many of the local meat dealers. “Mr. Brown, who was the first witness, testified that he bought most of the meat he sold as live cattle from farms in this section of the country, killed the cattle in his own abattoir, and prepared the meat for sale.” He explained that, with the exception of pork, meats were still about the same price as of five years earlier. He continued that local producers could not further lower their prices, because of the cost of inputs. As it was, the efficiency of rail transport and the economies of scale of the big Midwest meat packers meant that they could undercut local meat dealers, and then raise prices as their competitors were driven out of the market. Chicago’s Armour & Company had even set up a branch next to Center Market.

The railroad wrought additional changes. A new Baltimore and Potomac Railroad line and a spur off Baltimore & Ohio’s Washington Branch<sup>23</sup> arrived in the northeast section of the District in the 1870s and quickly shifted the main wholesale stockyard to Benning Station, north of Benning Road. Increasing volume and lower prices of beef and sheep arriving by rail put the Georgetown-adjacent butchers at a disadvantage. To drive cattle from Benning Station was difficult and expensive, not to mention discouraged by residents along the routes, and an abattoir was developed next to the new stockyards.<sup>24</sup> During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, newspapers and the District government both encouraged the Georgetown butchers to establish their own common abattoir, to remove the scattered nuisances and improve upon the inefficiency of so many slaughterhouses. The District also instituted an inspection regime and zoning that restricted their locations. The Washington Aqueduct expressed an interest in purchasing Drovers’ Rest, because the cattle yards polluted the adjacent reservoir. But although a large abattoir would ultimately be established in Georgetown, it would not be sanitary interests that would put an end to slaughterhouses north and west of Georgetown. Rather, it was the twin pressures of the industrialization of the industry and encroaching suburbanization.

Residential Burleith—the onetime estate of the Threlkelds—was platted in 1887, and Harlem, west of Foxhall Road and south of Reservoir Road, was subdivided before 1881. It was “Palisades of the Potomac” subdivisions No. 1 and No. 2, however, that brought the end of Drovers’ Rest when they were platted in 1890. The butcher-farmers of the vicinity sold off appreciating land as the products of their farms became less profitable. They were not necessary passive beneficiaries either; in the 1880s, butchers Joseph Weaver, Jacob Kengla and B.F. Hunt invested in a new Georgetown and Tenallytown Rail Road Company whose streetcars passed their Georgetown Heights farms. Still, the change was gradual; the Browns retained their farm well into the twentieth century and improved their slaughterhouse as late as 1908.

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<sup>23</sup> Known originally as the Washington and Point Lookout Branch.

<sup>24</sup> In 1895, for instance, the driving of cattle across Benning’s bridge was limited to nighttime.



***A typical-looking mid-1920s meat stall at Center Market. It may have been reflective of the period in another sense. Doing business as the New York Beef Company, it suggests both greater specialization in meat products and the increasing “import” of bulk meat from other regions. Library of Congress.***

The first subdivision of the Brown land occurred in November 1902, when Walter and Mary Ellen sold a four-acre parcel to their new daughter-in-law. In 1899, their eldest son, Walter, had married Edith Louise Kengla, the eighteen-year-old orphan of George M. and Addie Kengla. George Kengla was the grandson of Louis (or Lewis), the supposed immigrant from Luxemburg. The Kengla men were nearly all farmers and meat dealers, the largest landowners around Georgetown in the late nineteenth century, and among the leaders of the butchers in the Georgetown “market war” of the 1860s. George and Charles Kengla (Edith’s father and uncle) were partners in the 1870s and 1880s and shared a parcel of land on the Tunlaw Road. George had a stall at the Georgetown Butchers’ Market for several years, and joined forces with brother Charles, Joseph T. Weaver, and John T. Kelly to manufacture soap on the Georgetown waterfront. George and Addie Kengla both died in the early 1890s, however, and Edith and her brother and sister inherited their parents’ estate, as well as shares of their grandfather’s.

Upon their wedding, Walter and Edith Brown took up residence in a semidetached home belonging to Edith on Wisconsin above Georgetown. But city directories suggest that they



resided on Ridge Road before 1903, long enough for the second of their four children to have been born in the Scheele-Brown house. Edith's purchase of the parcel on Ridge adjacent to the Donaldson lot included the old house and more than four surrounding acres. It seems unusual that the Browns' son did not receive an ownership interest, but it may have been for the same reason that Mary Ellen Brown had at first been sole owner of the former Scheele farm: Edith Kengla Brown brought more wealth to the marriage. Apparently, the senior Walter Brown had a large mortgage payment coming due at the end of 1902 and needed cash. According to Edith, her father-in-law "induced [her] to buy the property at an exorbitant price... [The land] is in a hollow, and was the least desirable portion of the tract... [A]side from the portion on which the house stands, which comprises only a fair-sized suburban lot... [it] is practically incapable of use."



*Edith Brown's four-acre parcel, and the old Scheele house prior to its move. The Garrity house may have formerly stood at the outside corner of the L-shaped driveway.*

Whatever wealth the younger Walter might eventually earn or inherit from his parents, he was then making only \$25 a week. Edith had more resources, and it appears that Walter had an inclination to spend them. The price of what came to be known as Parcel 19/6 was \$6,500, and in less than a year, Walter had persuaded his wife to relocate the old house about 150 feet southwest, nearer the road and next to the Donaldson residence, in order to build on its site a larger, modern one. Including the cost of moving the farmhouse and the construction of a carriage house (later expanded as a garage/fuel shed), the total bill was about \$12,000. The two-story frame residence measured 38 feet wide and 28 feet deep and stood on a brick and stone foundation and under a slate-clad pyramidal roof surmounted by a room-sized belvedere. It consisted of ten rooms plus a bathroom, presumably a full basement, and full-width front and rear porches. The house was designed by prominent local architect Frederick B. Pyle, responsible for, among other commissions, the Equitable Savings and Loan Building and the addition to the Hecht Company Building.<sup>25</sup> The house was not a mansion exactly; the money poured into it was presumably expressed in the finishes, fixtures and systems, such as the hot-water heating system. The improvements made up the greater part of the value of the property.

<sup>25</sup> The Hecht building was in the works at the same time as new Brown house.

The old house was improved as well, with a new front porch and an addition to the kitchen that could have served as a pantry or as the house's first indoor bathroom. The chimneys were probably replaced as well. The building would not have been long vacant. By 1910, the Browns had live-in servants, the eighteen-year-old Rosetta Jackson and the 24-year-old Mr. Slaughter, both African-American. They also had a boarder, Richard Badey. In 1914-1915, Richard Sunderland, who worked with Walter M. Brown in the meat business, boarded at the property and accompanied him to work each day.

Although the topography of this corner of the farm made it difficult to cultivate, Walter planted an orchard on the east-facing slopes. A handful of fruit trees could never be more than a small sideline, of course, and with the backing of his wife, Walter initially sought to set up his own meat business. Yet, in 1906, he joined his father and younger brother in the eponymous Walter Brown & Sons at Center Market, where he would earn \$40 to \$50 a week. Unfortunately, he grew a bit too attached to a clerk there, Sophia Rinker, with whom he had an affair and would ultimately marry. This relationship, as well as his spendthrift ways, resulted in the divorce of the Browns in 1918. But Edith had asked him to leave three years earlier, and unable to remain next



*A 1938 aerial photograph of the vicinity of the Scheele-Brown House. Foxhall (formerly Ridge) Road appears in the upper left and center. At left is the Georgian Revival mansion that Elinor Morse Ryan built on the "Valley View" estate inherited from her great-grandfather, Daniel B. Clarke. The residence was demolished in 2001. The next building is the former Donaldson house, and right next door, the Scheele-Brown house. Edith Brown's home and garage are near the center of the photo, and the modernist Cafritz mansion (today's Field School) stands at the far right, 2301 Foxhall Road. The latter had recently replaced the Browns' circa 1888 "Lovell Crest." The Field School parking lot now extends to approximately where the Edith Brown house stood. In this picture, one can see remnants of the orchard planted by Walter M. Brown surrounded by the native trees that grew up in the swales at the back of the Scheele-Brown property.*

door to her in-laws, she moved into the city and purchased a house at 1473 Monroe Street NW. Over the years, she acquired a few other small, residential properties with her legacy, but she took a position as a clerk in the War Department to make ends meet.

With the departure of Edith's husband, Walter M. Brown, 1915 was the last year that the Ridge Road property was associated with the meat business and with the surrounding farm and nearby slaughterhouse. Although Edith Brown's residence and the older Scheele-Brown house were subsequently rented out, possibly to farm laborers, there is no further connection documented.



*A 1951 aerial photograph of Edith Brown's 1903 house, top, the Scheele-Brown house, center, and the Donaldson house, bottom. Courtesy of Historic Aerials by NETR Online. The image is not distinct enough to ascertain whether the second-floor bathroom addition had been added by that time, or whether it dates to the Shugrue family tenure, post 1961.*

With the deaths of Walter Brown and his younger son, Edwin, in 1910 and 1911, the eldest child, Walter Milton Brown, became president of the newly incorporated meat business. While he still leaned on his mother for financing, he moved to near Forest Glen, Maryland and raised a second family—until inheriting, with his sister Gertrude, their parents' estate. His new wife, the former cashier, Sophie Rinker, became treasurer of Walter Brown & Sons, and Gertrude Brown served as secretary. Walter died in 1937, a little more than a decade after the business went strictly wholesale and moved out of Center Market.

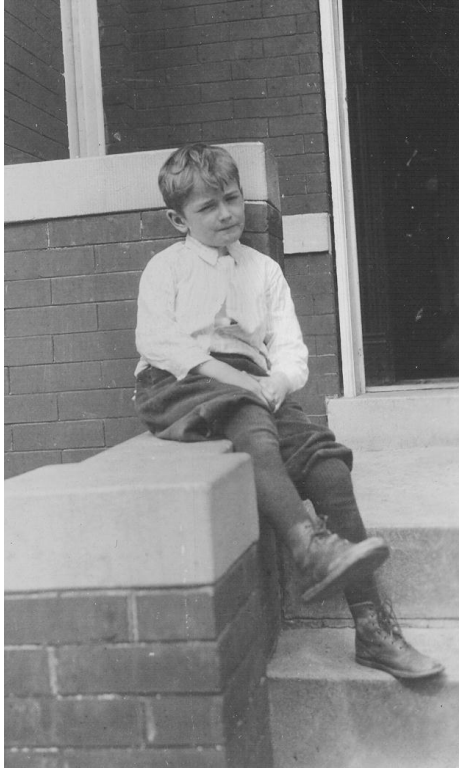
### **After the Browns**

The departure of Edith and Walter Brown from their home was followed by their 1918 divorce. Edith almost immediately sold the property, and thereafter, aside from its unusually large size, it was little distinguishable from the suburban homes that were encroaching on the surrounding farmland.

Edith Brown's lot, Parcel 19/6, was first purchased by Jessie Fremont Greer Magee, a 57-year-old District native. She probably acquired it as an investment, as she lived with her husband James, an interior decorator, and their two daughters on B Street NE. After James died in the 1920s, Jessie moved to Edith Brown's 1903 house (which became 2209 Foxhall Road), and resided there with daughter Lottie Pearl Magee until her death in the late 1950s. The family apparently believed in togetherness, as daughter Avice and her husband, Karl Greene, lived next door in the Scheele-Brown house for a time, before moving to the old Donaldson home, where they remained until the Second World War. For a time, the Greenes had shared the Scheele-Brown house with the former Ella B. Greer Scheele, Lottie Magee's sister. Ella had married Georgetown grocer David B. Scheele (coincidentally, a nephew of Augustus Scheele) at the end of 1895 but was also widowed in the late 1920s.

Aerial photographs of 1938 indicate that the Scheele-Brown farmhouse had changed little since its move 35 years earlier, or even much since its construction. The one-story bump-out appears at the rear of the kitchen wing. The kitchen porch had already been enclosed by this time. Remnants of the Browns' orchard remained, hemmed in by the native trees that grew up the swales at the rear of the property.

The next-door Donaldson house had already seen several additions, but the most dramatic physical change to the immediate physical setting was the continuation of W Street east of Ridge Road. Platted in the Highway Plan of the 1890s, it was initially intended to cut through to Georgetown. Mary Ellen Brown consented to extensions of both W and 44<sup>th</sup> Streets through her farm in 1925, just before her death. Only a single block of W was constructed, however, and not until the 1940s, connecting to the north-south 44<sup>th</sup> Street, before the latter was partly closed with the establishment of Glover-Archbold Park. The widening of what had been a farm lane trimmed the southern edge from Jessie Magee's property and the old Donaldson lot. Another



*Left: Walter Joseph "Eddie" Brown, the youngest child of Edith Louise and Walter Milton Brown and the last Brown born on Foxhall Road. Seen here on the stoop of Edith's post-1915 home, he is nearly six years old. Photograph courtesy of Spencer Browne.*

*Below: The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Despite being estranged from his father, Milton Lovell Brown, the eldest child of Walter M. and Edith Louise Kengla Brown, became the fourth generation of butcher Browns. This 1946 newspaper file photo, of Milton with a deceased elk, is courtesy of Spencer Browne.*



nearly invisible, yet significant change was the official renaming of Ridge Road as the northern continuation of Foxhall Road in 1932.

By that time, agriculture had disappeared from this corner of the District, and the road had become suburban, albeit characterized by larger-than-average homes. Near where Battery Parrott had stood, Anna Thomson Dodge, widow of car manufacturer Horace Dodge, had Julian



*A close-up of the Scheele-Brown house and the Donaldson house in the 1938 aerial view. The kitchen porch had already been enclosed, and a shed addition already stood behind the rear wing. The upstairs bathroom addition had not yet, however, been constructed. The resolution of the photo, the lack of color, and the degree of reflected light makes it difficult to read detail, including the character of the siding material.*

Abele design a classical limestone mansion, Marly, completed in 1931. At Valley View, immediately south of what would become W Street, Elinor Morse Ryan commissioned William Lawrence Bottomley to create a large, Georgian Revival residence in 1936. Two years later, Morris Cafritz finished an Art Deco mansion as a gift to his wife, Gwendolyn, demolishing Walter and Mary Ellen Brown's house in order to take advantage of the vista from that spot. Documenting the physical state of the District of Columbia at mid century, avocational photographer John P. Wymer noted that "Along Foxhall Road residences are especially pretentious, some of them being virtually small estates." This trend continued until at least the 1963 construction of the Philip Johnson-designed Kreeger residence, 2401 Foxhall Road. But even as it was finished, the march of higher-end "tract" housing continued, and eventually, the mansions would be taken over by institutional uses or demolished altogether.



Complicated series of transactions in the 1920s and 1940s temporarily shifted title to the comparatively modest Parcel 19/6 and its old houses, but the property apparently remained held within the family and ended in the sole possession of Lottie Magee after the deaths of her mother and aunt. At the end of 1961, Lottie, now 71 years old, decided to sell off the rear of her tract to real estate speculator James W. Truver. Truver immediately flipped the property to a development firm doing business variously as Dolphin Investment Corporation, Andes Investment Corporation, Amazon Investment Corporation and Everest Investment Corporation (A.L. Wheeler, president, and Irving G. Rudd, secretary). The land had already been subdivided, on behalf of the Statewide Investment Corporation and American Investment Corporation, into twelve house lots lining W Street and a new cul-de-sac, Foxboro Place. Most of these were built upon and sold by the end of 1964.

Also in 1961, Lottie Magee sold 2207 Foxhall Road to James M. and Sylvia Kaplan Shugrue, a couple who had rented the house from at least 1958.<sup>26</sup> James Shugrue was an assistant to the Architect of the Capitol and the descendant of a longtime dairy-farming family in the Palisades.<sup>27</sup>

Sylvia Shugrue had a passion for, and a masters in, fine arts. But she primarily applied her creativity to the development of innovative science curricula for elementary students, especially relating to astronomy and horticulture, both as a teacher in D.C. schools and as a member of the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). One of her first assignments, in 1958, had been to set up a program of instruction for children resident at Saint Elizabeths Hospital. After nearly 40 years in Washington classrooms, a term as the NSTA president, and her husband's death, Sylvia retired in 1977. She remained in her home, which still evidences her interest in gardening, until her death in 2012 at nearly 99 years of age. Not only had she been a recipient of the NSTA's most prestigious Robert H. Carlton Award for National Leadership in the Field of Science Education, but the organization now annually presents a "Sylvia Shugrue Award for Elementary School Teachers" to an instructor who creates and makes use of exemplary, interdisciplinary, inquiry-based lesson plans.

The Shugrues had not much altered the interior or exterior of the Scheele-Brown house. The principal change was the addition of a one-story sunroom at the rear of the kitchen porch. The rear, second-story, bathroom addition was likely constructed during World War II, when housing demand was particularly acute, and Ella Scheele is known to have had plumbing work done.

Nine months after her death, Mrs. Shugrue's estate sold her lot to a developer, Atties O Street Limited Liability Corporation. Even prior to the conveyance, a sign was posted on the property offering it for resale with a new, larger home designed and to be built by the developer for an ultimate buyer. Although the lot is sizeable, it is too small to be easily subdivided to accommodate two substantial, detached houses, suggesting that an application for a permit to raze the Scheele-Brown Farmhouse is in store.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> As confirmed by a newspaper item that illustrates the not quite fully suburbanized character of the block before the creation of Foxboro Place: that year Mr. Shugrue caught a copperhead snake in the yard.

<sup>27</sup> It was this purchase by the Shugrues that appears to have led to the more recent neighborhood tradition that 2207 Foxhall was *the* Shugrue house, meaning one of the Palisades-area farmhouses owned by the Shugrue family in the nineteenth century. The house most notably identified with the Shugrues, the Michael Shugrue house, was located on the property where Our Lady of Victory Church now stands, 4835 MacArthur Boulevard.

<sup>28</sup> At the time of writing, the property appears to have been removed from the market.

The demolition of the farmhouse would signal a kind of end to the once-rural character of Georgetown Heights. The homes, barns, stock pens, slaughterhouses and farms of the butchers, prominent and not, have vanished, swept up in the platting of new streets and residential subdivisions, as well as in the relocation of government installations and educational institutions.<sup>29</sup> The Weaver family may have kicked off the trend on upper Wisconsin Avenue with the construction on their properties of several homes for their several generations. The Jacob Kengla home was demolished in 1911 for the extension of Massachusetts Avenue. Henry Kengla's and Charles Homiller's farms became the Glover Park neighborhood. B.F. Hunt's villa "Mount Alto," on Red Hill, was razed for a girls' school in 1916. Observatory Circle cut too near the slaughterhouses of Theodore Barnes and Robert Weaver. The intensity of residential, commercial and institutional development in the area may have even destroyed most archaeological evidence of such farmsteads, not to mention the rural setting and feeling.<sup>30</sup> The Scheele-Brown Farmhouse is, therefore, an anomaly recalling the area's remote history.

Foxhall Road was spared longer because it lay further west, on a much less direct route between Georgetown, Tenleytown and Maryland. Farms were more slowly broken up as real estate and industrial millionaires acquired them as personal estates. But by the twentieth century, farmers' thrift in keeping, repurposing, and even moving houses when necessary, was giving way to an ethic of land clearance by owners for whom thrift was not a central value. And their estates have not been untouched by progress; hemmed in by suburban subdivisions, they have largely become institutional uses, with the Field School in the former Cafritz mansion; the Belgian ambassador's residence at "Marly," and "Valley View" demolished for more houses. The former farm of butcher Leonard Killian eventually became the Mount Vernon College (now the Mount Vernon Campus of the George Washington University).

## **The conclusion**

The interplay of local conditions and macroeconomic forces had caused agriculture in the District of Columbia to evolve over the decades. Regional and even international demand for foodstuffs, falling tobacco prices, and soil unsuited for growing the best-quality tobacco brought the conversion of farmland to principally grain production in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, with the explosion of wheat and corn cultivation on larger farms of the north and west, and ultimately the nation's prairie and plains, District farms became less integrated with the national economy. As less-perishable goods could be shipped in bulk by canal, river and railroad, local farms further diversified in the interest of furnishing fresh produce and dairy products to a next-door urban market. Eventually, refrigerated rail cars would make possible even the transport of perishables. D.C.'s small farms lacked scale economies, and their land

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<sup>29</sup> There are a few, modest, boxy, houses near the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Tunlaw Road, but these appear to date to the early twentieth century, when residential development was intensifying along the streetcar route founded by a syndicate of Georgetowners, including prominent butchers.

<sup>30</sup> There has been no archaeological investigation of the Scheele-Brown Farmhouse. Of course, the house's present site is at least 150 feet from the original one—and the original site was probably disturbed by the construction of the Field School parking lot. Evidence of the earlier Garrity house would have been spared by the parking lot grading, but as it stood a little way to the east of Scheele house, as well as south, its remains are unlikely to be on the present lot. Still, there could be remnants of outbuildings or other historic or prehistoric resources in the vicinity.

values were rapidly rising when put to alternative uses, such as residential. Orchards and vegetable and dairy farms were soon to be found only in Maryland and Virginia.

The Great Depression probably prolonged farming in the District of Columbia for a few years, but agriculture would ultimately disappear in the 1950s. Although Conrad Springer kept up his



*A new housing development at the former Valley View estate as seen from Foxhall Road; the proliferation of mansions on Foxhall.*

eleven acres in Forest Hills until 1947, and there was a model dairy farm at the Soldiers' Home until about the same time, the last refuge of agriculture was in the far southeast quadrant.

Saint Elizabeths Hospital sold its dairy herd in the 1950s. At the same time, the Wahler family gave up its dairy farm on the east side of Wheeler Road, which had been in operation since the 1850s. Washington's final farm was likely that of the Linder family, 52 acres along Oxon Run between Wheeler Road and 4<sup>th</sup> Street SE. The Linders had arrived from Bavaria during the Civil War and initially raised vegetables, potatoes and apples. Proximity to the stream permitted them to create mucklands for celery in the early twentieth century. Toward mid century they concentrated on beets, cantaloupes, cabbage and kale. A 1949 aerial survey of the District demonstrates that the remainder of rural land not already lost to development had become succession woodlands, much of it incorporated into the National Park Service's portfolio.

A recent survey by the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office suggests that there are only about 35 farmhouses left in the former Washington County, including a couple that were probably tenant houses. Not all retain their historic integrity. Adding in all agricultural

outbuildings, extant country estates, and pre-1895 dwellings not obviously erected as part of suburban subdivisions, the total only doubles.<sup>31</sup>

This figure is clearly a small subset of an unknown total of farmhouses that stood in the District of Columbia through its history. Estimating that number is difficult, and only part of the problem is definitional. Everyone would surely agree that farmer's house that does not stand on a farm is not a farmhouse. But is every house that *does* stand on a farm a farmhouse by definition? What about houses on plots that were commercially cultivated but cannot be considered large enough to be true farms? Is appearance or function the deciding factor? The homes of tenant farmers should certainly be included, but what about those of farm laborers on the place? And what if a house located on one farm is rented to laborers from another, or to a family not directly employed in agriculture? And what about slave cabins, given that rural slaves were crucial to the cultivation of many District farms before 1862? Such quarters are almost entirely overlooked on maps and in tax records. It could be argued that, because of their particular use and construction, these rural structures constitute a separate building type from what we imagine as a farmhouse. At the other end of the socioeconomic scale are the large, country estate houses that may have only been secondarily for the purpose of superintending commercial agriculture on the surrounding land.

Another way to get at numbers is to look at property tax assessments at one moment in time. Those for Washington County in 1855 suggest that there were then at least 400 houses on farms of at least four acres' area.<sup>32</sup> This figure excludes houses on parcels on lots of less than four acres (even if the owner also had some livestock), because there is some threshold below which a tract would not be a true farm even if producing food commercially.<sup>33</sup> These constituted as much as twelve percent of the residences. It also does not count farmhouses remaining within the corporation limits of Washington and Georgetown. The tax records also generally leave out slave quarters, except to the extent that they may be occasionally accounted for under unspecified "improvements," because of their low monetary value. It appears that some other low-value farmhouses were excluded in the same manner. This makes it harder to count farms that had no houses—and there seems to have been a substantial number, but fewer than the large farms that contained multiple houses, up to five or six.<sup>34</sup>

The 1855 assessments took place well before the explosion of suburbs. In 1870, after the establishment of the Uniontown, Hillside and Kendall Green subdivisions, the federal census of

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<sup>31</sup> The survey's central methodology was to compare the 1894 Hopkins atlas—produced contemporaneously with the District's Highway Plan—against recent aerial photos. Of course, this made it difficult to spot buildings that have been moved. It is expected that more rural resources will come to light, as houses and outbuildings were commonly moved by farmers, and homes were also relocated and reoriented when the city street grid was extended into the former Washington County.

<sup>32</sup> This is probably a significant underestimate, as two homes only were tallied each of many times an entry merely says "houses." Some number had to be guessed at for those farms that had thousands of dollars of improvements but no number of houses stated. It was assumed one house for every \$1,500 of improvements, although this may also be an underestimate. Of course, there were some large houses that were valued at higher than that.

<sup>33</sup> Admittedly an arbitrary standard; it should be recalled, that the agricultural censuses counted essentially any properties that raised agricultural products commercially.

<sup>34</sup> Some farms straddled the District boundary with Maryland, and their owners lived on the Maryland side of the line.

the county counted more than 11,000 residents in more than 1,800 dwellings/families.<sup>35</sup> A large proportion of these lived in early suburbs, of course, or at charitable institutions, or in small settlements and lots independent of farms. Still, this leaves thousands of residents, at a household-size average of nearly six persons, whose livelihoods depended on the land and who needed roofs over their heads.

Any “guesstimates” as to numbers of farmhouses at any one time are only snapshots, accounting for an accumulation of buildings over previous years, but not for those lost before, or built after that moment. Local agriculture was still vigorous in the years after the Civil War, the population was growing, and the pace of construction and replacement of older homes increased. The number of farms was increasing, but their size shrinking. If we take a broad definition of the farmhouse—simply as houses located on and related to commercial farms no matter the size—and include those that lay both inside and outside the county, from before the establishment of the District until the mid twentieth century, the number probably approaches one thousand.

The most notable characteristic of the remaining farmhouses then, is their scarcity. Without extensive information about each of the District’s former farms, the houses that remain provide the primary physical evidence of their character. Each stands for dozens of similar buildings that have vanished.

The Scheele-Brown Farmhouse is significant enough to merit designation for its own history, namely its association of two families of butchers, their meat businesses, and their farms and orchards from 1865 to 1875 and 1875 to 1915. Further, the property’s history illustrates in microcosm the economic advance of Americans, from the precarious existence of the immigrant, represented by the Garritys; to the children of immigrants, exemplified by the Scheeles, able to aspire to a middle-class standard of living but still vulnerable to macroeconomic forces; and finally, to the Browns, established in the country for generations, gradually amassing wealth, ultimately rising in both economic and social stature, and now part of the employer class.

Ultimately, extant Washington, D.C. farmhouses are so few that the house is important as representative of a type and class of building, whether standing for all farmhouses in the District, or only modest farmhouses; farmhouses of butchers or farmhouses of those overlapping geographic areas of Georgetown Heights, Whitehaven, or “West Washington.”

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<sup>35</sup> The numbers of families and dwellings were not identical, but close.



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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

\_\_\_\_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
\_\_\_\_ previously listed in the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ designated a National Historic Landmark  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

x State Historic Preservation Office

x Federal agency

Name of repository: National Archives and Records Administration

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## **10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property:** 0.27 acre

### **Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Latitude: 38° 55' 10.0482"

Longitude: -77° 5' 18.2792"

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

Lot 855 in Square 1341 of the District of Columbia, described as follows: Beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 860 in Square on the easterly line of Foxhall Road, and running thence easterly along the north line of said Lot 860 155 feet; thence northerly 75 feet parallel to the easterly line of Foxhall Road; thence westerly parallel to the northern line of said Lot 860 155 feet; then southerly along said easterly line of Foxhall Road 75 feet, to the place of beginning. Part of the former Assessment and Taxation Lot 854, and part of the larger, former Parcel 19/6, and of a former tract of land called "Whitehaven."

### **Boundary Justification**

The boundaries are the current legal metes and bounds for the lot under and associated with the house. Surrounding lots, although once associated with the house and its former farm, are now under other ownership and contain unrelated, later buildings. The present shape and extent of the lot dates to the subdivision of Edith Brown's former Parcel 19/6 by Lottie Magee's sale of several lots in 1961.

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## **11. Form Prepared By**

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