

The Woodridge Civic Association



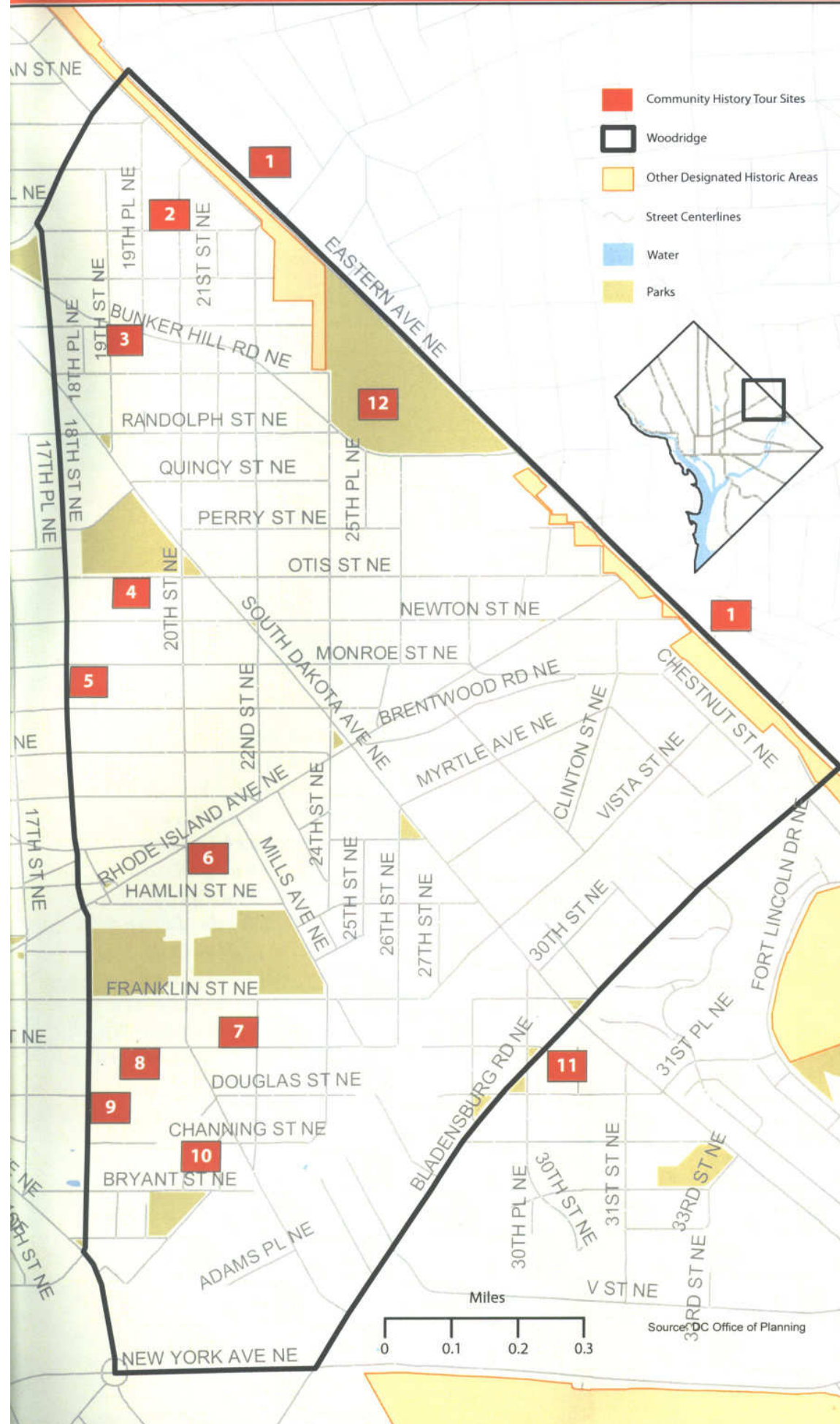
WOODRIDGE

COMMUNITY HISTORY TOUR

WASHINGTON, DC

*T*ucked behind tree-lined streets, the history of Woodridge shines through its houses and buildings. Woodridge is located in northeast Washington and is bordered by Bladensburg Road, 18th Street, Michigan Avenue and Eastern Avenue, with Rhode Island running through the middle into Maryland. An early railroad and later streetcar community, like its neighbor, Brookland, Woodridge has a rich, diverse history and architectural legacy. Woodridge is a community that has several layers of history and development from farmland with enslaved workers and railroad warehouses to a Catholic enclave and bungalow-lined streets. Trace the history of one of Washington, D.C.'s beautiful neighborhoods through its houses, schools and parks.

THE BOUNDARIES



OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST

- George Santmyer House, prolific Washington architect, 2832 Brentwood Road
- Judge Luke Moore Home, 2nd African-American US Marshal and later Judge in the D.C. Superior Court, 1831 Upshur Street, NE
- Civil War Forts: Saratoga – between Jackson and Irving near 20th, and Thayer - between Irving and Hamlin between 20th and South Dakota.
- Langdon Lodge No. 26 IOOF at 2022 Rhode Island, NE and East Gate Lodge No. 34, FAAM at 2029 Rhode Island Avenue, NE

SOURCES

This brochure was created using oral histories, public repositories: Sumner School Archives, DC Historic Preservation Office, Library of Congress, and the National Park Service, and the following selected sources:

- www.boundarystones.org
- "A History of Northeastern Presbyterian Church, the First 20 Years: 1975 to 1995" (1996)
- Archie Edwards Blues Foundation
- "Public School Building Survey, Phase II, District of Columbia", Historical Society of Washington for DC Historic Preservation Office
- Elio Gasperetti, "From Queen's Chapel to Saint Francis de Sales Church, 1722-1992" (1992)
- Sandra Fitzpatrick and Maria R. Goodwin, The Guide to Black Washington, rev. ed. (New York: Hippocrene, 1999)

HISTORIC SITES

1. Boundary Stones of Washington

*NE 5 4609 Eastern Avenue, nr Varnum
NE 6 3601 Eastern Avenue, nr Monroe*

In 1791 and 1792, Andrew Ellicott and his surveying team placed 40 boundary stones around the perimeter of the District of Columbia, one at each mile of the original diamond shape. Under the guidance of Benjamin Banneker, the first stone, the south corner stone, was laid at Jones Point on April 15, 1791. Over the years several stones have been repositioned, removed, lost, or buried during construction projects. There are still 38 boundary stones in or near the original locations. Two boundary stones are located in Woodridge along Eastern Avenue, one of three boundary streets between Washington, D.C. and the state of Maryland. The stones are on the DC Inventory of Historic Places and are National Historic Landmarks.



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2. Northeastern Presbyterian Church

2112 Varnum Street, NE

In November 1909, the Sherwood Presbyterian Church, named for the newest subdivision in Woodridge, was established with 45 members. It is one of the oldest surviving church congregations in Woodridge. In 1949, after years of growth, the congregation purchased a 2-acre triangular lot facing Varnum Street and



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Eastern Avenue, in the amount of \$47,000. The structure was built in 2 stages. A new educational building was occupied at 22nd and Varnum Streets, and on June 7, 1953, the sanctuary was dedicated. On January 5, 1975, Northeastern Presbyterian Church was merged with Sherwood Presbyterian Church and Tabor Presbyterian Church.

3. Archie Edwards Barber Shop



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2007 Bunker Hill Road, NE

Archie Edwards (1918-1998) was a bluesman, teacher, barber, and storyteller. After leaving the military, Edwards settled in Washington. In 1959, he bought his barbershop on Bunker Hill and began his work to teach people about Piedmont Blues and keep the tradition alive. The shop became a regular hangout for many local down-home musicians, including his musical hero, Mississippi John Hurt. Edwards also played solo gigs at local clubs and at festivals around the country, including the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Edwards was a fixture in the community while playing, singing, and spreading the message of the blues tradition until his death. Like many traditional blues artists, Archie Edwards was under-recorded with only two albums released. The site is on the African American Heritage Trail.

4. William Howard Taft Junior High School

1800 Perry Street, NE

Named after a US President who also served as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Taft was built to replace the Brookland and Woodridge Junior High Schools. Construction began in 1932 and the building officially opened on September 18, 1933. Built in the Colonial Revival/Neo-Classical style, the structure consists of 3 sections - a main portion and 2 wings.



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On September 8, 1959, an addition was built. During the 1920s land was acquired for the recreational center field located at South Dakota Avenue and Otis Street NE. The field continues to be a focal point for community activities including inter-school sports competitions.

5. John Burroughs Elementary School

18th and Monroe Streets, NE

Burroughs Elementary School was named after an American essayist and naturalist who was also a teacher and an official of the US Treasury Department. Erected in 1922, Burroughs is significant for its unique plan derived from Pacific Coast schools, a style never repeated again in subsequent District school building design. The entire building was one-story high and covered more acreage than the average school in the District. The first addition to the school was completed in 1927. When completed, superintendent Frank W. Ballou pronounced it the most expensive 8-room primary school in the District.

6. Saint Francis de Sales Catholic Church

2003 Rhode Island Avenue, NE

St. Francis de Sales Church is the church of the parish with the oldest continuing Catholic congregation in the District. It is the direct successor of Queen's Chapel, thought to be the District's first Catholic place of worship. The Queen family opened the first chapel in a room in its family home in 1722. Thereafter, at least three successive chapel buildings were constructed in the area of Evarts and Queens's Chapel Road (or 20th Street). All burned, the last one during the Civil War. Parishioners continued to worship thereafter in various places until 1908 when they erected a fourth church on the old foundation. A new name was given - Church of St. Francis de Sales. In 1928, a new church building and rectory were built on Rhode Island Avenue for greater accessibility and future growth. The architectural firm of Murphy and Olmsted designed the restrained Romanesque Revival edifice. The school was built almost twenty years later.



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7. Old Engine Company 26 (Chemical Company No. 3)

2715 22nd Street, NE

Chemical Company No.

3 was erected in 1908 as a result of a petition by the Northeastern Citizens' Suburban Association for better fire protection service for the mainly frame houses in the new Langdon neighborhood. Because the service area was at

that time beyond the city's hydrant and callbox system, the station was a chemical company and housed apparatus that carried tanks of chemical fire suppressant. It was later renamed to accommodate Engine Company 26. Following a restructuring of the fire department, in 1940 Engine Company 26 moved out. Designed by A.B. Mullett & Sons, this building is the most domestic of D.C.'s firehouse designs, essentially a half-timbered, sixteenth-century, English manor house, with obvious modifications for accommodating fire equipment. At three stories and with a sizeable footprint, it was the most imposing building in the neighborhood at the time and a very conspicuous governmental presence in the developing suburb – one that undoubtedly encouraged further development by allaying fears of devastating fires. It is on the DC Inventory of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.



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8. Langdon Elementary School

1900 Everts Street, NE

Langdon is associated with the Ira Baker family, which developed the surrounding community and donated land for the school in 1928. The current school is located on the site of the old Queens Chapel Road

School, which was originally erected in 1865, but later demolished and replaced because of complaints that it was a firetrap. In September, 1928, Municipal Architect Albert Harris described the design of the school as the first of a new style school building, consisting of 2-story structures connected by a corridor on the cross axis, at the end of which an auditorium/gymnasium was placed. This design was in response to concern that grade schools should have no more than one flight of stairs.



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9. National Lutheran Home for the Aged (Washington Center for Aging Services)

2601 18th Street, NE

The National Lutheran Home for the Aged began as a bequest in 1890 from Mrs. Sarah Utermehle, a devout Lutheran, who wanted a home established for care of the elderly. The gift, originally part of the Queen's Chapel Farm, was 27 acres. Initially the home was to be called Utermehle Home for the Aged after her husband,

George W., who had willed her the property. The facility was to be constructed as a series of cottages. The first building was dedicated in 1894. By 1913, however, it had become the National Lutheran Home and the cottages were replaced by the large brick edifice seen today.

10. Ionia R. Whipper Home

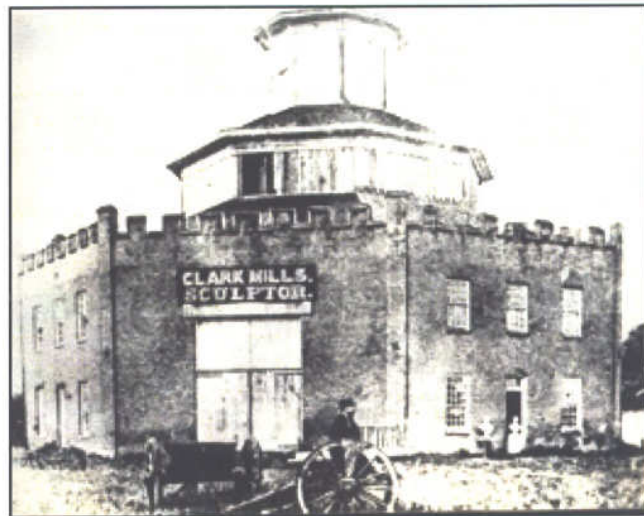
2000 Channing Street, NE

Originally called the Ionia Whipper Home for Unwed Colored Mothers, the institution was named for its founder, obstetrician Ionia Rollin Whipper (ca. 1874-1953). Born in South Carolina, Whipper and her two siblings were brought to Washington in 1881 by

their mother, Frances Rollins Whipper. Ionia Whipper, following in the footsteps of her mother who was one of the earliest female doctors in the country, graduated from Howard University Medical School in 1903. A leader in health care services, especially midwifery, she was appalled by the treatment received by unwed teenage mothers. She began offering caring and holistic services, first in her home in 1931, and then in Woodridge in 1951. For over 40 years, the Whipper Home was the only maternity facility in Washington for young women of color. In 1978, it became a shelter for young women regardless of race, color. The building is on the African American Heritage Trail.



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11. Clark Mills Foundry Site

Bladensburg Road nr 28th, NE

Thomas Crawford sculpture, "Statue of Freedom" that sits atop the United States Capitol was cast in bronze at this site. Clark Mills (1815-1883), a self-taught sculptor himself, is considered a pioneer in the casting of bronze statues. His work, the statue of Andrew Jackson (1853) in Lafayette Square is the first equestrian statue cast in the United States. In 1860, Mills and his crew, which included several enslaved men of color, cast "Freedom" in five main parts at this foundry. Philip Reid (Reed) served as foreman for the casting and later for the installation of "Freedom" on the Capitol Dome in 1863 though Reid was not free himself until 1864. Mills Avenue once lead directly to the foundry. The foundry no longer exists - only the site remains.

12. Barnard Hill (Rock Creek Park)

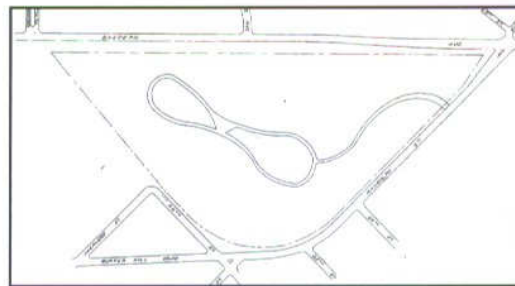
Bunker Hill Road & Eastern Avenue, NE

Barnard Hill may have served as a battery in the Civil War. As Reservation 528, it became part of the federal government's effort in 1931 to establish a "Fort Circle Drive" around the city that would connect the Civil War Defenses of Washington, D.C.



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together. The suggestion for such a drive was first discussed at the beginning of the 20th century. Parcels were acquired throughout the 1930s and 1940s, but development after World War II negated the possibility of such a drive. Instead these parcels were used as open spaces for the "Fort Circle Parks". Today Barnard Hill is a community park for residents.



National Park Service

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Woodridge Civic Association History Committee Members

David C. Gilbert, Committee Chair
Carol Fleming, Historian & Treasurer
Jerome C. Gray, Historian
Anthony Hood, Association President
Patsy M. Fletcher, DCHPO, Advisor

Brochure design by Megan Gilbert

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