

GUIDE TO PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES ON THE SUBURBANIZATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

FINDING AID

Takoma Park, Maryland

7500 Maple Ave

Takoma Park, MD 20912

Telephone: (301) 891-7267

Website: www.takomaparkmd.gov

Name of archive/collection/records: None.

Date Range of archive/collection/records: 1890–Present

Language of archive/collection/records: English

Background Information: In 1883, developer Benjamin Franklin Gilbert purchased his first tract of land in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. In building a "sylvan suburb of the National Capitol," he developed Takoma Park as one of first railroad-accessible suburbs in the D.C. area. At 350 feet in elevation, this new suburb was high enough to avoid the malaria and mosquitoes that plagued the nation's capital. Takoma Park was incorporated by the State of Maryland in 1890 and by 1913 had become the largest city in Montgomery County. In 1904, Takoma Park became home to the world headquarters of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which maintains a regional hospital, college and several churches and other local facilities in the city. The church relocated its headquarters to Silver Spring, Maryland in 1989.

Early residents included Benjamin Y. Morrison (1891–1966), a pioneer in horticulture and the first director of the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. A scientist, landscape architect, plant explorer, author, and lecturer, Morrison is known for his development of the Glen Dale Azaleas. Many of his hybrid azaleas can be found across the community, thus Takoma Park's reputation as "Azalea City."

In the 1960s, future Mayor and civil rights activist, Sam Abbott, led a campaign to halt construction of a federal highway through the community's historic north Takoma neighborhood and replace it with a Metrorail line. This controversy raised the profile of Takoma Park as it was becoming noted for political activism, with newspaper commentators describing it as "The People's Republic of Takoma Park" and "The Berkeley of the East."

Until 1997, the City straddled two counties with the eastern portion of Takoma Park located in Prince George's County and the western portion in Montgomery County. In November 1995, after much lobbying, a State-sponsored referendum was placed on the ballot with a majority of votes in favor of unification of Takoma Park in Montgomery County. Following subsequent approval by both County Councils and the Maryland General Assembly, the county lines were moved to place all land within the City into Montgomery County (including territory in Prince George's County newly annexed by the City) on July 1, 1997.

Summary and scope of archive/collection/records: Our collection consists of City Council meeting minutes from 1890 to present, City Council ordinances and resolutions, and City Newsletters from 1965 to present. We are in the process of digitizing all the materials with the goal of making them easily accessible. The minutes are currently available digitally.

Note: Historic Takoma, Inc., an independent entity in Takoma Park, has its own archives located at 7328 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Phone: (301) 270-2831; Website: www.historictakoma.org.

Special Collections: None.

Format of materials in archive/collection/records: Paper, Digital Records

Suburbanization Subject Terms within archive/collection/records: Government, Land Development, Libraries/Library Systems, Transportation: Railroad, Streetcar, Auto, Bus, Subway, Bike.

Access and Use: Appointments are highly recommended.

Open: Monday through Friday: 9:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.

Copies: \$.25 per page.

Cost of Admission: Free

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