

# THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY STORY

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## LIFE IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY AT THE TURN OF THE LAST CENTURY

by Eleanor M. V. Cook

As we move toward the end of this century and the beginning of the next, it is interesting to measure the changes a hundred years has brought. Life in our county at the turn of the last century was in many ways a simpler life, but it was a life without much we now take for granted - automobiles, electric lighting in homes, electrical appliances, airplanes, radios, movie theatres, air conditioning, plastics, antibiotics, television, microwave ovens, computers. What was it like to live then?

It is impossible to cover all aspects of day-to-day living, but to begin with, Montgomery County was still largely rural, with far fewer people. Most people lived on farms, surrounded by fields and woods, although towns, villages and hamlets dotted the countryside, and the commuter suburbs of Takoma Park, Woodside, Kensington and Garrett Park had been laid out along electric trolley and railroad lines. Our county population now is over 828,000; in 1900 it was 30,451. Of these 30,451 people, 1,889 lived in villages, 1,866 in towns and 26,696 in rural areas.<sup>1</sup>

A fairly typical village, Cedar Grove, five miles from Germantown, reported in 1900: "We have two churches, three stores, one undertaking establishment, a wheelwright and blacksmith shop, a butcher shop, a barber shop, a creamery, one school house in our village and one in the suburbs. We have two dress-makers, two telephone connections, and a postoffice."<sup>2</sup>

Yes, there were a few telephones. Telephones were in homes before electricity (which explains why those poles along our streets today are called "telephone poles," not "electric poles"). In Montgomery County, private telephone companies were organized by 1894 in Sandy Spring and Gaithersburg. These companies expanded to serve other communities and in December 1899 telephone poles were being put up to connect Linden with Woodside, Silver Spring and Washington.<sup>3</sup> Telephones did work differently then and the 1908 catalog of Sears, Roebuck & Co. shows a telephone with its hinged door open and, inside, a 5-magnet generator which had a small handle on the side to wind it up, and two batteries. All for a mere \$9.95.

With no electric appliances, dishes were washed and dried by hand. Hair dried by itself. Sewing machines were operated manually by rocking the foot treadle up and down, and Sears offered them from \$7.58 to \$14.45. Water was heated on stoves or, by some on washday, over an open fire. Most women used wash tubs and a scrub board to wash clothes, but Sears had three types of manually-operated washing machines. One, selling for \$6.38, had an inner tub of 14-inch staves, which was swung back and forth with a lever to swish clothes through the water. After washing and again after rinsing, laundry was fed through a clothes wringer (two rubber rollers turned by a crank) and some clothes starched. The laundry was then hung on a line to dry. Those who could afford it usually hired a washerwoman.

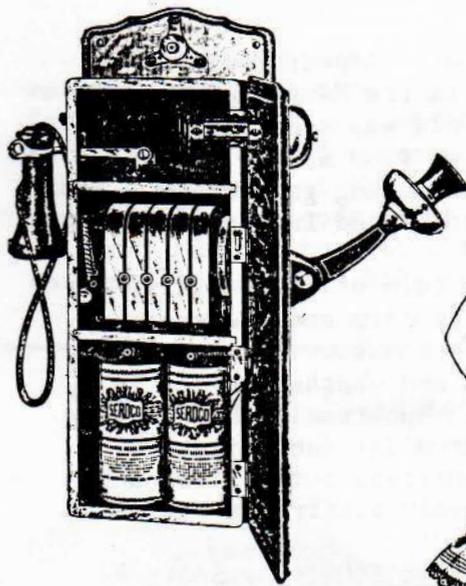
Cooking in those days required skill and experience. The six-hole steel cooking "ranges" sold by Sears for \$11.98 to \$29.87 used coal, coke, wood or corn cobs as fuel and had doors to put in wood and take out ashes, grates for the fire, and a reservoir to heat water. To test the temperature in an oven, the cook put in her hand, and then adjusted the fire and damper just right to maintain proper temperature. The stove would have been cozy in winter, but uncomfortable for summer cooking, baking and canning.

A refrigerator, from \$14.35 to \$18.20, was simply a two-door ice chest, insulated, with wood exterior. It had two compartments, both lined with galvanized steel, the top one for ice, the bottom one with shelves for food. It kept food cool, but ice cream would have quickly melted. Ice was cut from ponds and creeks in winter and stored in ice houses for use in refrigerators, ice cream freezers and for cooling milk, but people did not put ice in drinks as we do now. The possibility of debris having been in the water as it froze - even a bug now and then - discouraged the idea.

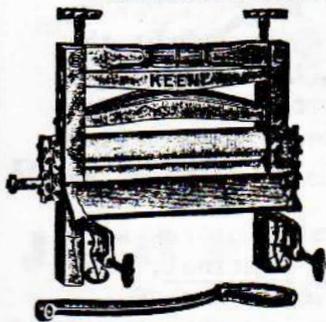
In view of the clothes women wore at the time, anything cool must have been most welcome in summer. Dresses were down to the ankles, high-necked, long-sleeved, with a petticoat underneath. Under these, from armpit to below the waist, was a corset, laced snugly and held stiff by long flexible steels, and an undergarment, possibly a combination of fine cotton corset cover and drawers, or a one- or two-piece knit "union suit" that was long and wool in winter, shorter and cotton in summer.

Men, for the most part, wore wool suits and always hats, but there were some corduroy pants and, for summer outings and tennis, khaki pants. Shirts had long sleeves and, except for work shirts, neckbands and wristbands for attaching collars and cuffs. Linen collars and cuffs, cost 7 cents, could be washed separately from the shirt and when frayed could be replaced instead of buying a new shirt. There were also workmen's clothes, bib overalls and working pants, including blue denim pants much like today's blue jeans. Men's knit "underwear" was long and, at that time, two-piece.

Prices were very low compared with ours now - in 1899 and 1900 Rockville Bakery and Confectionary regularly advertised bread for 4 cents a loaf - yet wages were low also. The average yearly salary of a teacher in Montgomery County was \$328.90, mostly in one-room schools, and it was quite an advance when by 1900 the Rockville school was assigned a fifth teacher and the principal's salary increased to \$750 a year.<sup>4</sup> That same year manufacturing workers in United States averaged \$435 a year (\$8.37 a week); unskilled workers were paid 10 cents an hour, about \$5.50 a week. Working



**\$2.37** FOR THIS IMPROVED KEENE  
WOOD FRAME WRINGER,  
GUARANTEED FOR ONE YEAR.



**98¢** COMBINATION CORSET  
COVER AND DRAWERS

**A THOROUGH CLEANSING WASHER**



Items and Illustration from Sears, Roebuck & Co. Catalog, 1908

for the federal government, as many did in our county, appears to have been more lucrative. In 1905 a 40-year-old clerk in the Navy Department in Washington was paid \$900. In 1908 his 15-year-old son received an appointment as messenger boy in the Patent Office at \$360 a year. There were, of course, those with much higher incomes, including government officials and wealthy businessmen, landowners, doctors and lawyers.<sup>5</sup>

Steam power was used for some things at the turn of the century, but horses were still the primary source of power on the farm and the everyday mode of transportation, for riding or for pulling a runabout, buggy, surrey or carriage. Automobiles were few and far between and whether anyone in Montgomery County actually owned one is debatable. Apparently there were some in Washington and one Sunday in May of 1900 at Sligo (now Silver Spring), "the roads were crowded with carriages, buggies, automobiles and bicycles, with people visiting and viewing this lovely country."<sup>6</sup>

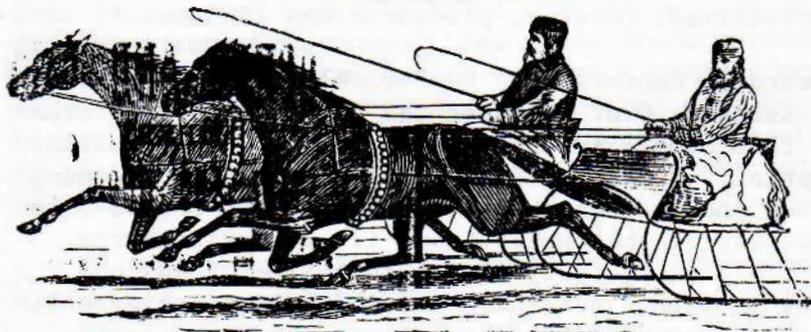
Interest in the automobile ran high. In August 1900, the Sentinel reported: "The automobile is being used quite extensively by many of the larger retail emporiums in large cities for the delivery of packages." A Washington merchant had acquired an automobile adapted to this use, and "this wonderful vehicle, which is now being used and admired throughout the county, will be on exhibition at the Agricultural Fair." A later report said that the automobile "will be a novelty to many and as it will be long before they come into general use in the country, no one should miss seeing this much talked of vehicle."<sup>7</sup>

Newspapers give us considerable insight into the lives, interests and happenings of the time. The four-page Montgomery County Sentinel, was published weekly by "R. G. Fields" (Rebecca G. Fields, widow of Matthew Fields, its original publisher). It was a Democratic newspaper and made no claim to being non-partisan. Before the November election in 1899, the paper exhorted, "Hunt up every young Democrat in your District and get him to register to vote." The paper was very critical of President McKinley and the Republicans who thought our country should have a colonial empire like those of England and France. In December 1898 the Spanish-American War had ended in a peace treaty by which Spain gave Cuba its independence and ceded Puerto Rico, Guam and, for a payment of \$20 million, the Philippine Islands to the United States. The Filipinos, who had thought they were to receive their independence, broke out in armed revolt against United States' rule and a long and bloody insurrection followed. Concerning our war with the Filipinos, an editorial in September 1899 said: "In spite of the millions expended, the loss of life among the troops, we have made no progress ... We have been engaged nearly a year in the McKinley War ... The returning volunteers are scattering the news that the war was a great mistake ... It is not a war ordered by Congress or cheered by the people ..."<sup>8</sup>

The paper's first page had a few columns on the right containing a short story and short fillers on topics ranging from "The Chinese Chopstick" and "Slaves in Ancient Greece" to an anthropologist's announcement that "large, voluminous ears are the most marked characteristic of the criminal." The remaining pages had editorials, legal notices, an agricultural column with advice for farmers, local news, occasionally foreign or national news, and many, many advertisements. The advertisements on the facing page, from the paper's January 26, 1900, issue, are typical of their day.

The advertisements that were found on every page of the Sentinel varied greatly in size and content. Many of the largest advertisements were for Washington stores, which offered a good selection of wheeled vehicles, such as buggies and wagons, as well as farming equipment, fertilizer and other items to meet the needs of farmers. Lansburgh & Bro., "the oldest established dry goods store in Washington," was on 7th Street and sold not only dry goods but other things - jewelry, perfume, suits, furs, tea gowns, children's clothing, baby carriages, table linens, curtains, doll babies.

## Support Home Enterprise! 1882.



Best Made Saddles, Bridles & Harness.

## JOHN H. NICHOLLS, GAITHERSBURG, MD.,

HAVING ENLARGED HIS FACILITIES FOR THE MANUFACTURE of all Goods in his line is now prepared to offer to the citizens of Montgomery county, and the public generally, a full line of

Saddles, Harness, Collars, Lap-Robes, Whips, Sleigh-Bells and in fact everything in the Saddlery trade. All kinds of BROAD GEARS IN STOCK. Also a full line of the best hand-made BUTT AND BREAST CHAINS, SPREADERS, TRACES, &c., kept constantly on hand.

Let any desiring anything in my line embrace the present opportunity of supplying themselves at figures to suit the times. BEST FREDERICK LEATHER USED. SATISFACTION GUARANTEED in all cases.

Address all orders to  
jan 15-nov 3-tf

JOHN H. NICHOLLS,  
Gaithersburg, Md

H. W. TALBOTT. C. W. PRETTYMAN.

## TALBOTT & PRETTYMAN, ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND.

The undersigned, having this day formed a partnership for the practice of law in this county, under the firm-name of Talbott & Prettyman, are prepared to give prompt attention to any business entrusted to us.

HATTERSLY W. TALBOTT,  
CHARLES W. PRETTYMAN.

March 1, 1893.

[mar 3-tf

## FRANK HIGGINS, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW, ROCKVILLE, Md.

## Alabastine, FOR TINTING WALLS.

12 Beautiful Delicate Colors.

EASILY APPLIED.

Durable and Economical.

Far superior to old methods of Wall Tinting. Dries hard and walls can be washed.

At VINSON'S DRUG STORE  
june 7-tf

## EDWARD C. PETER, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,

ROCKVILLE, MD.

june 3-tf

## POWERFUL POLYNICE.

Johns Hopkins University,  
Baltimore, 5th April, 1897.

The experiments made here at the hospital with the Polynice Oil, witnessed by me, having been very successful, I hereby recommend it in all cases of rheumatism.

(Signed) DR. E. L. ROGERS.

## Polynice Oil.

50c per bottle. Sent upon receipt of price, in stamps.

## DR. ALEXANDRE,

Specialist from Paris.

1218 G Street N. W.,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Refuse all bottles that do not bear the above name and address.  
nox 25-tf

## W. REUBEN PUMPHREY,



## UNDERTAKER,

On Montgomery Avenue, opposite the  
Corcoran Hotel.

ROCKVILLE, MD.

THE subscriber would respectfully inform his old customers and the public generally that he has fitted up a SPECIAL ROOM for the reception of bodies, when so desired, and is now prepared to attend to all calls in his line of business, on short notice and reasonable terms.

Trimmings and Ornaments of all kinds for Burial Cases, kept constantly on hand and everything furnished in as good styles as in the cities, and at much lower prices.

BURIAL ROBES, of different styles, kept constantly on hand.

## THREE FINE HEARSES,

one of them white, for the burial of children. PATENT ICE CASKETS, Embalming Fluid, and other modern appliances for the preservation of bodies in warm weather.

READY-MADE COFFINS, of all sizes and of various styles, including full and half glass tops, constantly on hand. Personal attention given at funerals, and satisfaction guaranteed in all cases. A call is respectfully solicited.

jan 11-tf

W. R. PUMPHREY

## CABINET-MAKING

W. Reuben Pumphrey, an undertaker in Rockville, advertised frequently, as did D. H. Bouic, Rockville, who sold Shredded Wheat biscuits, and Grape-Nuts, described as "a food for the brain and nerve centres." Vinsons Drug Store, in front of the courthouse in Rockville, offered "Vinsons emulsion of cod liver oil with hypophosphites for cough, colds, consumption [tuberculosis], debility, dyspepsia and nervous prostration."

By far the most numerous advertisements were for patent medicines and testimonials alleging cures from them, such as this one: "I was taken with typhoid fever that ran into pneumonia. My lungs became hardened. I was so weak I expected to soon die of consumption when I heard of Dr. King's New Discovery. One bottle gave great relief. I continued to use it and now am well and strong." Unfortunately, patent medicines often contained alcohol or opium and its derivatives, codeine, paregoric and laudanum.<sup>9</sup>

At the turn of the century, doctors were better able to diagnose but could not cure the killer diseases. Over and over the Sentinel noted deaths from typhoid fever, many of them people in their 20s, and there were deaths from scarlet fever, "consumption," complications of measles, blood poisoning and croup. In October of 1900 the residence of John Fisher near Poolesville was quarantined "owing to members of the family being ill with diphtheria. Four have already died and others are very ill." At that time, about one in ten white children and one in five black children died by the age of one, yet those who missed the diseases might live a long time. "Mrs. Katherine Bottlemay, probably the oldest resident of this county, died Monday at her home near Clopper, age 98 years. Old age was the cause of death."<sup>10</sup>

Advances in surgical anesthesia, coupled with Lister's antiseptic principles and Pasteur's germ theory, made surgery less dangerous, but still a century removed from modern knowledge and practices. We find this item in August 1899: "Herbert, son of Mr. James Beall, who has been critically ill with appendicitis, is recovering after a difficult and dangerous operation successfully performed by Drs. Charles and Upton Nourse, Dr. T. N. Kelly and Dr. Haddox." The following April, however, "William T. Herbert of Travilah died as the result of a surgical operation."<sup>11</sup> There were no hospitals in Montgomery County at the time and news items mention the sick and injured being taken to hospitals in Washington, Georgetown and Baltimore.

Church was very important and local and country news columns in the Sentinel always began with announcements about church services. The social items that followed usually had quite a flowery style: "Mrs. James Windsor and daughters gave an 'at home' and afternoon tea in honor of Rev. W. H. Stone and wife on Tuesday from 5 to 8 o'clock. Quite a large number of guests were present and received cordial welcomes from the ladies of the household. Mrs. Windsor was becomingly dressed in black satin and lace, Miss Windsor in pink organdie silk and Miss Alice looked quite charming in pale green and white chiffon with gold passementerie trimmings..."<sup>12</sup>

Obituaries, also flowery, praised character and hard work: "Nathan Page, one of the oldest and most respected citizens of the Gaithersburg community, passed away from the activities and sorrows of the earth ... He was one of those men willing to render assistance to those in need ... He began life with but a few of this world's goods, but with a determined will and honest purpose and blessed with a strong constitution he toiled

until he gathered about him enough of this world's goods to enable him to pass his last years at least easy, if not in luxury ..." <sup>13</sup>

Happenings of general interest reported at the turn of the century included a blizzard, confusion over when the century ended, and political events:

February 17, 1899. "For the past ten days this section of the country has experienced the coldest weather and greatest fall of snow in the memory of the oldest inhabitants ... as low as 20 degrees below zero ... A fine sleighing snow last week was followed on Saturday, Sunday and Monday by the worst blizzard ever ... After the storm had subsided, it was found that all the streets of the town [Rockville] and roads leading in all directions into the country were blockaded with three feet of snow on the level and drifts of such huge proportions as to render travel impossible ... Town authorities made arrangements to have a roadway cut through the streets, which was finally accomplished by the aid of a heavy snow plow drawn by four horses ... The country roads being blocked in every direction, large bodies of men turned out and with shovels removed the drifts so as to make them passable for teams."

December 1, 1899. "Scientists will have their way this time and will close the century December 31, 1900."

October 19, 1900. "Honorable William Jennings Bryan, our candidate for President, will be in Rockville Tuesday next and will address the people at the Railroad Station at 9 o'clock a.m." October 26, 1900. "People came from the District of Columbia on special trains ... [Bryan's] voice was clear and ringing as a clarion."

November 9, 1900. The Republicans won the election, although Montgomery County voted Democratic by a margin of 334. Total votes cast in the county for presidential and vice presidential candidates were:

Democratic	William Jennings Bryan and Adlai E. Stevenson	3677
Republican	William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt	3343

Many of the accidents reported by the Sentinel, quite unlike ours, involved runaway horses and horses frightened by the electric trolley cars. Other accidents were of the type still happening today. An 8-year-old found a revolver in a bureau drawer and accidentally killed himself. Two young men, John Lewis and his friend James Hall, were "skylarking" when Lewis noticed an old pistol "which he did not suppose was loaded and, playfully pointing it at Hall, he pulled the trigger." <sup>14</sup>

There were a few deaths and "possibly fatal" injuries as a result of fights and brawls, but at that time other murders were rare - one reported in the Sentinel in 1899 and three in 1900. The first murder took place during a robbery. Louis Rosenstein and his wife Dora, who owned a small store about two miles north of Boyds, were found horribly beaten and their life savings, \$600, was missing. Both died within a few days. The crime occurred in May 1899 and two suspects, one of whom had served three terms in the House of Correction and Penitentiary, were arrested and indicted. No time was wasted in "bringing them to justice." They were tried separately, both found guilty and in August were hanged. <sup>15</sup>

The murder in April 1900 seems to have resulted from a quarrel between two Washington men at Cabin John Bridge. Aloysius Johnson was seen being chased by another man, heard to exclaim that he did not want to fight, but his pursuer was faster. Johnson was killed by a blow to his head with a blackjack, a small, leather-covered weapon, weighted at one end, with a short, flexible strap at the other end. It was quite deadly.<sup>16</sup>

Then in July, there was what we might call a "rage crime." John Artemus Young was apparently intoxicated when he walked to William Windsor's store in Clarksburg and ignored a Deputy's request to leave. After a while, James Hawkins, who was sitting on the store porch, said with an oath, "You ought to be whipped away from here." When Young retaliated with several oaths, Hawkins said he would kill him and began hitting him on the head with a hickory stick or cane. While Young was on the ground unconscious, Hawkins jumped on him, kicked him with both feet and would have jumped on his head but for the intervention of bystanders. Young, who apparently came to and staggered away, was later found dead in a barn loft.<sup>17</sup>

The fourth of the murders, in November 1900, was a juvenile crime, but unusual by any standard. Eliza Parker, "colored," left her home near Hunting Hill to go to the store and locked her three small children in the house, including 9-year-old Edward W. Barnes. While she was gone, Bernard Washington, a colored boy about 17 years old, came and began throwing clods of dirt through a stovepipe hole in the side of the house to annoy the children inside. He was standing on a stove outside the house when Edward thrust a musket through the hole and fired, hitting Bernard in the head and killing him instantly. "A gentleman who resides at Hunting Hill said that Washington was suspected of stealing several articles from the Parkers' home and that the Parker woman had told her son to shoot him if he attempted to enter the house during her absence and that he did attempt to enter and the mother's directions were carried out." Edward was arrested, indicted for murder, and in December was bound out by the Orphans Court to Sheriff Williams, to remain with Williams until the age of 21.<sup>18</sup>

There were, of course, some lesser crimes: an unsuccessful attempt to break into a bank vault in Sandy Spring, horses reported stolen. In January of 1900 sneak thieves were raiding pantries and kitchens in Poolesville, taking eatables and a few dishes and cooking utensils. Chicken thieves stole 40 chickens and 4 turkeys from coops near Chevy Chase; later, James Moore, a dealer near Gaithersburg, lost 100 fine fowls. Sentences for theft were by no means light: 10 years in the Maryland Penitentiary for stealing a horse; 6 months in the House of Corrections for chicken larceny.<sup>19</sup>

Crimes, however, were a small factor in county life. The economy was strong at the turn of the century and people had more disposable income than they did earlier, so more were able to attend the special events that came. There was a Wild West show in 1899, a circus in 1900, and every year the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair was well-attended and extensively reported. "Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World" was in Washington in the spring of 1899 and railroads offered low round-trip fares from Montgomery County. The show reflected the people's increased interest in things international: "There will be seen for the first time in America a number of Filipinos and Hawaiians, the new American citizens, in all their savage picturesqueness. You will have a chance to

compare them with the American Indian, U.S. Cavalrymen and artillerymen, German cuirassiers, Cossacks from Russia, the Queen's own Lancers, Mexicans, South American Gauchos ... Buffalo Bill Cody appears at every performance." When Signor Santelle's "largest and most famous 25-cent shows on earth" came to Rockville in the fall of 1900, there were to be "aerial acts without number, sensational bareback riders, a post-graduate class of clowns, educated ponies" and "a grand free spectacular street parade."<sup>20</sup>

On a day-to-day basis, the people themselves provided activities and entertainment. There were many clubs, with different purposes: the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.); Anti-Saloon League (mostly men); the Grange (for farmers); Rockville Epworth League; Christian Endeavor Society; Knights of Pythias; Ladies Home Interest Club at Linden; Progressive Old Men's Club at Travilah; Rockville Rod and Gun Club; Muddy Branch Fishing Club; Poolesville Y.M.C.A.; the Plant, Fruit and Flower Guild; Brookeville Lodge I.O.O.F.; and, to aid the needy, the Burden Bearers Circle of The King's Daughters and the Brookeville Ladies Aid Society.

Literary clubs, which included the Dawsonville Literary Society, Jefferson Literary Club and Ladies Literary Club of Darnestown, met a need for those interested in books and learning. There were private academies and seminaries, but public education was minimal. In 1896 the county had only two high schools, one at Rockville and one at Comus, a high school being defined as "any school having at least two grades above the sixth."<sup>21</sup>

Each meeting of the M.I. Club of Darnestown (perhaps an abbreviation for "Mutual Interest") had a designated topic, such as "Reigning Queens of Europe." At one meeting, when the topic was "Husbands," a paper was read, followed by a general talk about husbands, women's rights and matrimony. Then, after refreshments, "All departed for their homes glad that the M.I. Club afforded them the opportunity for such pleasant and profitable social intercourse." Clubs and churches frequently sponsored events to raise money and half a dozen strawberry and ice cream festivals were held each spring when the strawberries were ripe. Oyster suppers were popular. Members of the Waverly Club presented the drama "A Scrap of Paper" at Norman Hall in Gaithersburg for the benefit of their library fund. An evening gramophone entertainment to be held at Avery School House was promised to be "a rare treat as the horn used is one of the best from Washington."<sup>22</sup>

There were annual events and in 1899 the United Daughters of the Confederacy of Maryland and Virginia held their annual encampment at Glen Echo. "Addresses will be delivered by prominent men, including Union veterans, as well as representatives of the Confederacy ... Luncheon is to consist of beef, bacon, hardtack and coffee, served in tin cups or tin plates." An item from Poolesville in April 1899 noted that "Saturday was a gala day in this village. In the afternoon there was a parade of the colored 'Society of Love and Charity,' headed by a brass band, after which they repaired to a nearby woods for the annual picnic ..." In 1900 the annual picnic of St. Mary's Church, Barnesville, included "a real old-time cake walk at 10 o'clock followed by songs and sketches, many by a minstrel troupe from Washington ... games and races ... good music and dancing."<sup>23</sup>

A cake walk was a promenade, or walk, in which those performing the most complex and unusual steps won cakes as prizes. Sometimes in couples,

they were accompanied by "music rendered on the piano." On May 5, 1899, a "grand old-fashioned cake walk" was held in the Town Hall in Rockville for the benefit of the newly-organized Rockville Base Ball Club.<sup>24</sup>

In April of 1899, base ball enthusiasts of Rockville had met and organized a team, with Mr. R. H. Stokes as President and W. F. Rabbitt as Manager, which was to play "all the strong amateur teams of Washington City and Maryland." Games were often played at the Fair Grounds, with opponents such as Maryland Agricultural College, the Headquarters United States Marine Corps, and, from Washington, the Eastern Athletic Club, the Y.M.C.A., and Government Printing Office teams. Poolesville, Gaithersburg and Sandy Spring also had base ball teams. Although base ball seems to have been more popular, the Rockville Academy did have a foot ball team and at one game at the Fair Grounds against the Little Rocks of Washington it was reported that "each team averages 130 pounds."<sup>25</sup>

There were a great many other activities organized. One night in July of 1900, for instance, quite a large party of young people went on a river party. "It was a most perfect moonlight night and much enjoyed by all." The next month, a number of fox hunters "assembled near Rockville about 4 o'clock one afternoon and from that time until midnight succeeded in starting three foxes." In the fall, the Epworth Leaguers chartered an



House Built in Rockville ca. 1898  
John England House at Washington Street and Montgomery Avenue

electric trolley and with friends went to Georgetown and then to Glen Echo, where they stopped for two hours. A few weeks later they sponsored another trolley ride, this time to the Congressional Library in Washington, "where two interesting and instructive hours were spent." At Edwards Ferry in November "some of our young inhabitants went chestnut hunting in the Sugar Loaf with success and having had a jolly time."

People did considerable visiting at the time, staying days or weeks with family and friends. In return, people visited here, especially in summer when it was so hot in cities. Railroads offered train excursions, with special fares, to Hagerstown, even Niagara Falls. Those with the means went farther: Mrs. William Thompson of Silver Spring went to California and Mexico; Dr. Stuart B. Muncaster and his niece Miss Rosalie Muncaster of Rockville went to New York City and from there sailed to Europe.

Holidays were celebrated, but the Fourth of July celebration in Washington Grove in 1899 consisted of two patriotic speeches, a poem, a reading of the Declaration of Independence, and music provided by the Germantown Band. On Thanksgiving Day, the principal diversion was usually the family dinner, but in 1900 there was a gala gathering of more than twenty guests at "the handsome residence of Mrs. A. M. Offutt near Rockville." The house must have been new, as the Sentinel had reported in May that Mrs. Offutt was erecting a very fine dwelling of sixteen rooms. On Thanksgiving, "The rooms and corridors were most beautifully decorated with potted plants and palms and as the guests assembled in the parlor and drawing room, Father Gaynor gave a most beautiful and intelligent address on Thanksgiving ... Dinner was served in courses from 1:00 to 3:00 o'clock ... The spacious dining room was most tastefully decorated with cut flowers, ferns and evergreens. To make the day more enjoyable, suggestion of a drive to Great Falls was made ... On arrival home, we were summoned by the clang of a bell to a most sumptuous supper."

You can almost imagine being there amid the potted palms, enjoying the multi-course dinner, but, as we have seen, life at the turn of the last century was not all potted palms and elegant gatherings. Everyday life has changed greatly in the last hundred years, and for many of the changes we can consider ourselves most fortunate.

#### NOTES

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3. Jane C. Sween, "Montgomery County: Two Centuries of Change" (1994), p. 111. Sentinel, December 1, 1899.
4. William Taylor Thom, "The Negroes of Sandy Spring, Maryland: A Social Study" (1901), p. 46. E. Guy Jewell, "From One Room to Open Space: A History of Montgomery County Schools from 1732 to 1965," p. 131.
5. Thomas J. Schlereth, "Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915" (Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), p. 78. Family files of E. M. V. Cook concerning Arthur Thaddeus Cook and Raymond Fraise Cook. Sentinel, January 6, 1899.

6. Sentinel, May 4, 1900.
  7. Sentinel, August 18, 1899; September 1, 1899.
  8. Sentinel, September 29, 1899; September 8, 1899.
  9. Sentinel, June 9, 1899. Schlereth, op.cit., p. 284.
  10. Sentinel, February 9, October 5, October 19, February 16, 1900.
  11. Schlereth, op.cit., pp. 273, 285-287. Sentinel, August 18, 1899;  
April 27, 1900.
  12. Sentinel, April 14, 1899.      13. Sentinel, March 3, 1899.
  14. Sentinel, September 7, 1900; January 5, 1900.
  15. Sentinel, May 19 to August 25, 1899.
  16. Sentinel, April 20, 1900.      17. Sentinel, July 6, 1900
  18. Sentinel, November 9, December 14, 1900.
  19. Sentinel, October 12, 1900; January 26, 1900; November 17, 1899;  
August 24, 1900; November 24, 1899.
  20. Sentinel, April 7, 1899; October 12, 1900.
  21. Jewell, op.cit., p. 138,
  22. Sentinel, September 22, 1899; April 14, 1899; May 25, 1900.
  23. Sentinel, June 2, 1899; August 24, 1900; July 13, 1900.
  24. Sentinel, April 18, 1899; May 25, 1900.
  25. Sentinel, April 28, August 4, 1899; August 10, 1900; October 13, 1899.
  26. Sentinel, July 20, August 10, September 7, October 5, November 16,  
1900.
  27. Sentinel, April 13, 1900; September 22, 1899.
  28. Sentinel, May 4, 1900; December 7, 1900.
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