



At Hawthorne and Upland Roads in Roland Park. At this intersection Mme. Jeanne Eret, Baltimore couturiere, built the first house in Roland Park

A Half Century Of Roland Park

By KATHERINE SCARBOROUGH

LEAFY, winding, home-fringed and familiar, Beechdale, Overhill, Deepdene and Ridgewood roads need no introduction after half a century, for with others equally picturesque they spell the name of a residential area which this year celebrates its fiftieth anniversary—Roland Park.

Along their rolling borders, up hill and down dale, now stand the more than 1,200 houses which have risen since its founding, and the changes which have been rendered here seem almost as great as those which have overtaken other parts of this restless sphere.

It was English capital which supplied the original impetus for the Roland Park Company's development in 1901. English capital which bought up the great country estates which were partitioned to make the forerunner of Guilford, Homeland and Northwood, and English capital which withdrew, when returns were slow in coming, to invest in the newly discovered Kimberley diamond mines of South Africa as likely to yield bigger dividends.

In 1903 the British interests were replaced by a Baltimore syndicate composed of Edward H. Bouton, who had been general manager from the outset, George Miller and Robert J. W. Hamill. The original purchase comprised most of the Roland Park of today that lies north of Cold Spring lane. The largest parcel in the tract was Oakland, owned by Mrs. Emily Harper Pennington and the former home of Robert Goodloe Harper, who was regarded as one of the more brilliant men in the Baltimore of his day and who married a daughter of Charles Carroll of Carrollton.

Original Mansion Burned
The mansion built by the Signer on the estate for his daughter and her husband, who served in the War of 1812 and as United States Senator from Maryland, burned during the 1870's. The house first occupied by the late Charles H. Grasty

and now belonging to B. Howell Griswold, Jr., at Edgewale and Harvest roads, is built on the original foundations except for the wing added by Mr. Griswold. The grounds of the Baltimore Country Club also lie in this tract.

Woodlawn, the old Hiram Woods estate, formed the next largest parcel, and smaller acreages took in the lands of Vauxhall, Poplar Hill and Hepburn, the latter of which belonged to the Maynards, whose name still is identified with one of the roads in Roland Park. Together these lands were assessed at \$170,000. On the east were the little villages of Evergreen and Tuxedo. Cross Keys lay to the west, with its tollgate and ancient tavern, where the stages used to change horses.

Most of this land was rugged and remote. Great stretches of woodland were filled with laurel, tall gray beeches with lacy branches, hickories, chestnut trees and oaks, some of which, like the one shading the lawn adjoining a house at Hawthorne and Upland roads, had reached a great age and size.

An Inaccessible Area

But it was all so inaccessible. And transportation was vital. So Roland avenue was transformed from a country road into which vehicles sank to the hubs in early spring into a broad thoroughfare with a double line of trees down the center. (The trees since then have been replaced by hedges.) About the same time an electric line, involving construction of the Guilford avenue elevated, was built for direct access from town.

Frederick Law Olmsted, the great landscape architect, was summoned from Boston to lay out the roads. Ignoring precedent, Mr. Olmsted, who knew the rules well enough to discard them,

laid out "streets and roads which followed the natural contours of the land, preserving and heightening the picturesque succession of hill and valley, open space and forest."

A Slow Start

Experts on city planning today commend the Roland Park Company's restraint in refraining from selling lots until it had laid out its streets and completed sidewalks, provided for electric lighting and a supply of pure water from artesian wells. Back in the early nineties, however, it looked for a time as if the only harvest of this planning and, indeed, of the whole project would be Dead Sea fruit.

Only a handful of Baltimoreans availed themselves of the opportunity to take a free ride on the trolley which left the front of the Masonic Temple on Charles street on the afternoon of June 7, 1892, and went out to inspect the property in which a million dollars had been invested. None of those who went seems to have signed immediately on the dotted line, either, for it was not until 1893 that the first house was built for Mme. Jeanne Eret, one of the city's leading couturiers, who went out to brave life in the wilds with never a neighbor to nod to and no one within miles to answer a call for help in the dead of night.

Even after the ice had been broken it was some time before anyone screwed up courage enough to follow Madame's example. The Roland Park Company, which had organized solely to develop and sell land, decided to build a few houses and succeeded in selling them. More went up and, at the same time, a per-

sistent advertising campaign dilated on the park's "winding roads, its quiet and peaceful atmosphere, its trees—Yes, madam, the trees are worth all that is asked for the ground"—and other sylvan attributes of the new district.

Baltimoreans Cautious

In other parts of the country the trek to the suburbs was well under way in the early nineties but Baltimoreans clung stubbornly to the belief that the city was the proper place in which to live for most of the year, with a sortie to the country during the summer.

By the time Plat 2, on the west side of Roland avenue, was ready for development, however, Baltimore's conservatism had been breached. Clymer Whyte, then on the board of governors of the Bachelors' Cotillon, moved out in 1901. Business and professional men found that, after all, they could live in the country and get to their offices by 9 o'clock. Besides, "the fresh air was good for the children."

Community spirit materialized but slowly. A community center, with an assembly hall for meetings and church services, in the block of half-timbered buildings in which Roland Park's business district is housed, met with a tepid reception. The magnet finally proved to be the Country Club, which was organized in 1898, absorbing the Roland Park Golf Club formed two years before.

Coincidentally with the formation of the Roland Park Golf Club a group of women united for more serious objectives. "Good of the community and social and intellectual intercourse" were the avowed purposes of the

Women's Club of Roland Park. From the outset land in Roland Park, Guilford, Homeland and Northwood has been subject to restrictions and architectural control and suburban developers in many parts of the country have looked to the project at Roland Park for guidance and inspiration. Its influence also extended to Poland where Mr. Bouton was retained as a housing adviser by the Polish Government. Shaker Village, Cleveland; River Oaks, Houston; Meadowbrook at Birmingham are communities whose developers followed Roland Park practices to a large extent, particularly as to lines of street design and restrictions. In Roland Park, these restrictions, which prevent nuisances and which, as some of the early advertisements expressed it, enable each householder to "know that no undesirable house will

be built . . . in the neighborhood," were at first incorporated in the deed to each piece of property.

Later on, in Guilford and elsewhere, the entire tract was restricted at the outset. Plans for all houses were subject to approval at first by the development company and later by a board of architects which, in turn, has been replaced by a single architect. The man who proposes to place an Italian villa near a group of early American or English half-timbered houses is gently but firmly persuaded either to change his mind or bring his dream to earth in some part of the district where it won't prove a nightmare.

Roland Park, according to John H. Scarff, a Baltimore architect who has looked into the matter, apparently takes its name from one Roland Thornberry, an Englishman who took up a considerable amount of land in the early days of Baltimore country and who gave his name to Roland run. Lake Roland and hence, ultimately, to the suburb.

Jammed Washington Faces Decentralization

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of the Budget and if the Senate does pass it, it will be effective beginning next July 1, which is the beginning of the Government's fiscal year. About two years ago when a considerable number of Bureau of Internal Revenue employees were transferred to other cities permanently they were compelled to pay their own moving expenses.

Overcrowding in Washington is not caused solely by civil service employees, although they are the greatest single factor in this regard.

ings as museums, the Capitol and the House and Senate office buildings. But they do include warehouses, where considerable space is unavailable for office work.

It is expected that the space problem will be some what relieved in the next few months by construction of six new temporary buildings which will provide 700,000 square feet of space. But officials do not see any appreciable relief in these buildings because of the continued influx of workers for defense and



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