Lyttonsville

Before there was a Linden, or a Woodside, or a Forest Glen — there was Lyttonsville. The community began January 3, 1853, when Leonard Johnson, a white landowner, gave a parcel of land to Samuel Lytton, a freed slave, for whom the community is named.

Lyttonsville in west Silver Spring, Maryland consists today of 68 acres bounded by Lanier Drive on the east, Brookville Road on the west, Talbot Avenue on the north and Lyttonsville Road on the south. This parcel of land can be traced back to 1689 when it was a part of a land grant made to William Joseph and known as Joseph's Park. The grant totaled 4,220 acres, part of which was sold to a family named Brent. In 1853, 185 acres were sold to John M. Johnson. In September 1862, Charles Montifax Keys purchased the Brent Family's portion, including five slave cabins. This property had the land patent name of "Dille's Addition to Linden." Over the years, the Keys family built a successful coal and fuel business known as E.C. Keys & Sons that had quite an influence in the community.

As other African Americans began settling in the area, one recalls that Samuel Lytton used to live up on top of a hill near where Claridge House Apartment building is now. Houses were scattered in no particular pattern all along Brookeville Road, down Garfield Avenue, back in "the Woods," and "over in the field," giving the little community a rural feel. Many of these houses were built by the inhabitants themselves. Many of the residents of Lyttonsville worked at the National Park Seminary, just to the north, or for E.C. Keys, or the telephone company.

When the B & O Railroad was built in 1873, Charles M. Keyes platted a development of 32 acres with 20 residential lots on the east side of the tracks—the first "railroad suburb" in Montgomery County. A railroad stop was created called "Linden." But Lyttonsville remained on the west side of the tracks. Because of the railroad stop, the whole area, including Lyttonsville, began to be called Linden, and the first school in the community was named Linden School. From the 1940s through the 1960s residents fought and won up-hill battles to save their community from industrial development.

While Lyttonsville was predominantly an African American community, there were several Caucasian families in the area as far back as many old-timers could remember. Today Lyttonsville has a highly diverse community.

Schools
Linden School began in 1896 in the Pilgrim Church. It stayed in the old church building after a new church was built in 1914. A new 2-room school was built in 1917. A portable classroom was added in 1932 due to increased enrollment. Enrollment in 1939 for grades 1-7 was 74. The school closed at the end of 1955 as a step in integration of the public schools and students were bused to other schools. Rosemary Hills Elementary School opened in 1970 and a Community School began after hours in the school building soon after.

Churches
The two churches that served Lyttonsville were **Pilgrim Baptist Church**, originally located on Brookeville Road in the heart of the community, now located at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Lanier Drive; and **Mt. Zion Methodist Church**, originally located at Georgia Avenue and Seminary Place, now located in Washington, DC as the Van Buren United Methodist Church.

Community
The community had several stores and a beer garden called "Ike's Blue Moon" on Brookville Road. It also had a baseball field where Rosemary Hills Primary and Community School is located today. The community baseball team was known as the Linden Black Socks. The small community has always been close-knit and had many social gatherings such as back-yard barbeques and picnics at the nearby Rock Creek Park. Many families have several generations who have lived here. Rosemary Hills Community Center opened in February 1984. It was replaced by a larger building in 2000 and was named Coffield Recreation center to honor life-long resident and civic activist Gwendolyn Coffield.

Urban Renewal
For many years, the houses were sub-standard. Until the 1960's, there was no running water or indoor plumbing in the homes. Water came from wells and nearby springs. There were no paved streets or streetlights, except for Brookville Road. The community, led by Lawrence Tyson and Gwendolyn Coffield, applied for urban renewal in 1967 and the County Council approved the budget in 1968 and set up a Project Area Committee (PAC). In 1979 and 1980 old houses were torn down and new ones built, but many of the residents were able to stay in the community. Friendly Gardens garden apartments were constructed in 1970 by Non-Profit Friends, Inc.

Talbot Avenue Bridge
In August 1996 the 78-year old Talbot Avenue bridge over the railroad tracks was closed by the County due to unsafe conditions. The bridge was the only crossing for the Lyttonsville and Rosemary Hills neighborhood to the commercial areas around Georgia Avenue and Brookeville Road. The communities joined together in protest over the closing, and the County decided to repair and modernize the bridge instead of closing it permanently.

Lyttonsville today is a beautiful lively community. To God we give the praise because He has guided and kept us intact as a neighborhood. We cherish all of our old neighbors and welcome all of the new ones.

And below, is a picture of Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, with a few tombstones visible in the church graveyard to the far right. Photo date is unknown, but the cars look like they are from the 1950s, maybe early 1960s. From photos collected by Susan Soderberg from the Lyttonsville Community for the museum exhibit assembled in 2008.

From: Eileen McGuckian <phileen3@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 5:18 PM
To: patriciatysnnn@aol.com
Cc: Youla, Sandra; cacoffield@aol.com
Subject: Cemeteries in Lyttonsville

Hello Pat, Miss Charlotte, and Sandra,

Thank you for this information about the two cemeteries in Lyttonsville. I would never have figured out the name changes and locational

inconsistencies without you!

I would like to add the Mt. Zion ME Church Cemetery to the Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory, and include the additional information about Pilgrim Baptist Church Cemetery to the current inventory entry.

I would love to see any photographs of the churches with their cemeteries that you may have. Hope Pat's father's files contains more information.

Do I understand that in the 1970s and 80s, graves and headstones were moved from both cemeteries to Maryland National Cemetery Park at
13300 Baltimore Avenue
Laurel
Prince George's County
Maryland USA
Postal Code: 20707
Phone: 301-419-3999

Do you know details about the move from both Lyttonsville cemeteries to Laurel? Were the disinterments and re-interments conducted by Snowden Funeral Home in Rockville or another funeral home?
Were they totally separate operations, or were the moves conducted around the same time?

Can you estimate the number of burials in each of these cemeteries?? Did the churches keep records or a plan of the burials? If so, where would these be found today?

And please add any other information that I didn't think to request from you....

With best wishes,
Eileen
301-468-7331

On Feb 28, 2017, at 1:06 AM, patriciatysnnn@aol.com wrote:

Hi, Ladies: Nice to meet you, Ms. Guckian.

The Mt. Zion Methodist, M.E. Church was located at the corner of Seminary Pl. and Georgia Avenue, where Staples and Domino's Pizza are located. Then, there was next to it a wide driveway. Next to the driveway was a parking area and next to that piece of land was the cemetery. The cemetery was located where the cleaners and CVS stand. This land of the church and the cemetery stood on higher ground. I have a photo of the height of the church on the site. Everything was graded level. I shall look in my father's files to see if I can find a date for you and anything else that might be of interest.

There was a parsonage on Seminary Place next door to the church. I think the driveway skirt is still there. The water tower was there, but only about a third the size that it is now.

What else do you wish to know?

Pat
301/588-1475 - home
202/577-6956 - cell

-----Original Message-----
From: Youla, Sandra <sandra.youla@montgomeryplanning.org>
To: Eileen McGuckian <phileen3@verizon.net>; Charlotte Coffield <cacoffield@aol.com>; patriciatysnnn <patriciatysnnn@aol.com>
Cc: Youla, Sandra <sandra.youla@montgomeryplanning.org>
Sent: Mon, Feb 27, 2017 1:56 pm
Subject: Re: Laboring Sons Cemetery in Frederick + Lyttonsville etc

Eileen, in response to your question per separate email dated 2.21.2017, yes, there were two cemeteries that I know of in the Lyttonsville area, and I have described them below. Also, I would like to introduce you by way of this email to Ms. Charlotte Coffield and Ms. Patricia Tyson, both long-time residents of Lyttonsville. I am sure they would be happy to provide additional information as well.

Charlotte and Pat, in case you have not yet met Ms. Eileen McGuckian, she is President of Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites and is also a long-time historian and historic preservation advocate in Montgomery County. She is working to improve cemetery preservation and protection in Maryland and particularly in Montgomery County. As you know, cemeteries are greatly in the news right now in Montgomery County.

Here's the information I have about Lyttonsville cemeteries --

Pilgrim Baptist Church Cemetery, once located in the side yard just next to and to the northeast of the church. The church stood at the northern corner of Garfield Avenue and Brookville Rd. This cemetery is #194 in the MC Cemetery Inventory, and it is wrongly located both on the Cemetery Inventory Map and in the GIS layer. During urban renewal in the 1970s/80s, the church relocated to its new structure in Lyttonsville at the corner of Pennsylvania Ave and Lanier Drive, and the cemetery was moved to "Maryland National Cemetery Park" in Mt. Laurel, Md, which may be what is now called Maryland National Memorial Park. Ms. Charlotte Coffield, a long

time Lyttonsville resident, has told me of the shock of learning that her parents' graves would have to be moved, and she notes that when they were re-interred at the cemetery in Mt. Laurel, the two graves appear, per headstones, not to be side by side -- instead there is another grave/headstone between her parents. She does not know if there really is another person's grave between her two parents or, instead, the headstones were wrongly placed.

Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church Cemetery was located next to and just north of the church, which stood at the corner of Seminary Place and Georgia Avenue. Parking for the Staples now covers the area where the cemetery was located. This cemetery is not on the MC Cemetery Inventory. Here is what Ms. Patricia Tyson, a long-time resident of Lyttonsville told me:

> *From: patriciatysnnn@aol.com <patriciatysnnn@aol.com>*
> *Sent: Monday, August 8, 2016 12:58 AM*
> *To: Youla, Sandra; cacoffield@aol.com*
> *Subject: Re: Mt. Zion MEC Cemetery Relocation site*
>
> *The Mt. Zion United Methodist Church's location at Maryland National is clearly marked and the head stones were bought for each family's plot. The are of the cemetery is identified as Van Buren--not Mt. Zion. Those graves moved from the old cemetery were Civil War graves, etc.--probably Caucasians--unknown to the colored members. Most of the members, who were colored, were buried in their home neighborhood cemeteries. I don't believe any of them were buried in the old Mt. Zion cemetery. The people buried at Maryland National died after the property in Montgomery Hills was sold. My grandmother died after the property was sold, but is buried in Barnesville were she was born. The cemetery sat behind the parking area--taken care of by the church, but not really efficiently identified. When the church moved, it changed it's name from Mt. Zion to Van Buren Street because of its location on that street. Later, it dropped the "Street" and became Van Buren UMC.*
>
> *As for Pilgrim Baptist, Charlotte may know about that one. I do know Martha Savoy has family members there and requested the cemetery put up the marker for their section, but it hasn't been done yet. Se also asked the church to et involved and have it done.*
>
> *I'll try to find this history for you when I return from out of town.*
>
> *Pat*

Hope this helps, and please keep in touch.

Sandra
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