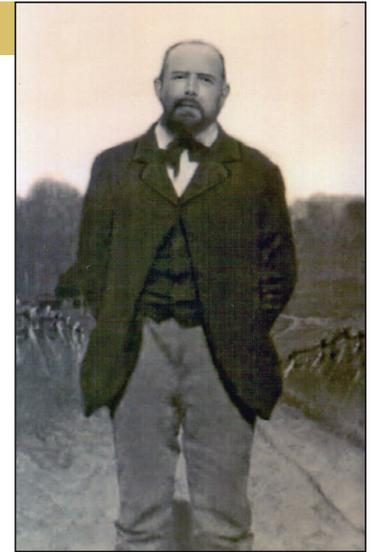


# Benjamin Smith House Foundations

While you are visiting the Croyden Creek Nature Center today, try to imagine what it may have been like living in this area over 100 years ago. This was part of a 500 acre farm (or plantation) called Glen View owned by Judge Richard Bowie. There were no cars, cellphones (or phones), and people, in general, grew their own food. It's likely the woods around you were fields used to grow food for humans or animals that, in turn, would feed people. The woods were harvested for building homes, heating homes and cooking. Life was very different then for the people who lived here.

Benjamin Franklin Smith, pictured at right, began his life enslaved on Glen View farm. Following his emancipation in the 1860s, he worked as a laborer on the farms that dotted Avery Road. Avery Road, which has also been known as Horner's Mill Road, at one time went through the property and connected directly with Norbeck Road. The remnant of Avery Road is a main pathway through these woods.



Benjamin Franklin Smith  
(ca.1849-1924)

Judge Richard Bowie, owner of Glen View farm, bequeathed one acre of land to Benjamin in the early 1880s. The foundation of the two story house and the hand-dug well are all that remain of the home where Benjamin lived and raised his family.

From the 1880 U.S. Census (*clipping at right*) you see that Benjamin, age 30, his wife Jane, children Maggie, Grant, Morris B., Simon and Elizabeth shared that house with Ann Brown, age 55. This Census incorrectly identified Ann as Benjamin's mother, when in fact she was Jane's mother. Researchers must be aware that Census information must be taken with "a grain of salt." The "Mu" in the second column stands for Mulatto. The next column is Male or Female and the next column is their age. Benjamin was a farm hand in 1880.

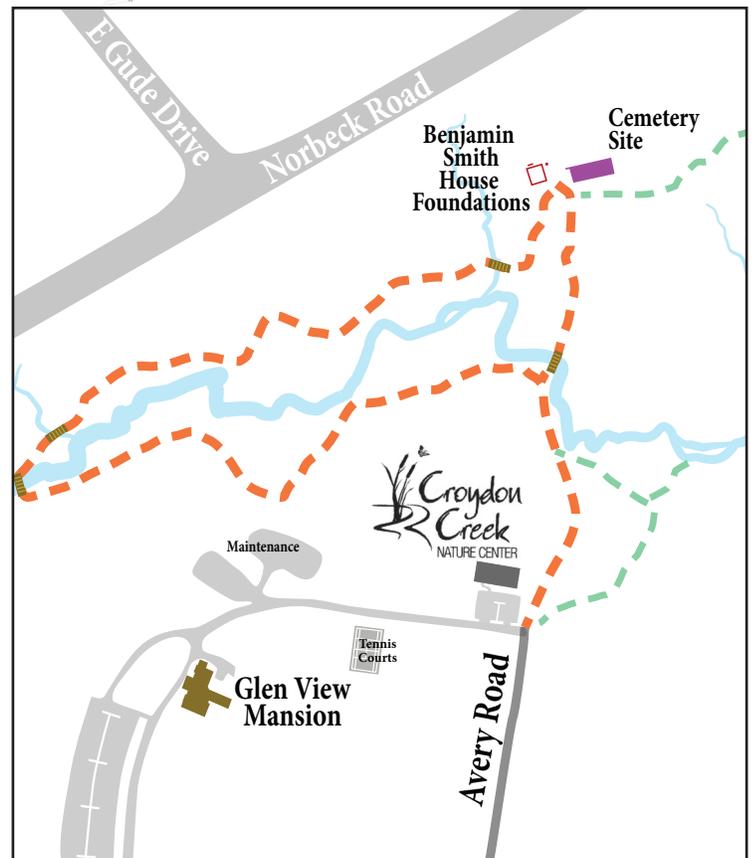
**1880 U.S. Census (clipping)**

Name	Sex	Age	Relationship	Where Born	Where Living
Smith Benjamin	Male	30	Wife		Farm hand
Jane	Female	25	Daughter		Keeping House
Maggie	Female	10	Son		At School
Grant W	Male	9	Son		At Home
Morris B.	Male	5	Son		At Home
Simon	Male	3	Daughter		At Home
Elizabeth	Female	1	Mother		At Home
Brown Ann	Female	55			

Correction: Mother-In-Law

East of the property across old Avery Road is the cemetery where Benjamin and members of his family are buried. The cemetery once held wooden crosses marking the graves of those buried there. Time and neglect have erased that image, but perhaps clues still exist. In recent years the cemetery has become a focus for several descendants who want to uncover more information about their family.

Benjamin is remembered today as one of the original founders of Clinton A.M.E. Zion Church in 1867. The church is located in the Lincoln Park Community of Rockville, and draws its congregants from Rockville and surrounding communities. Generations later, some of Benjamin Smith's descendants still live in the Rockville area.



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For more information about Benjamin Smith, contact his descendants at [ExploringOurStory@gmail.com](mailto:ExploringOurStory@gmail.com).