

Kings Park West History

The first residents of KPW may have arrived 12,000 years ago. Projectile points dating back thousands of years have been found west of Ox Rd. less than a thirty minute walk from KPW. The first Europeans in Fairfax were Captain John Smith and his crew. In 1608, they observed Indian settlements at the mouth of Pohick Creek on the Potomac River. By 1685, William Fitzhugh had acquired title to more than 24,000 acres in Fairfax. A portion of the western boundary of Fitzhugh's estate, *Ravensworth*, appears on the map in the center of this directory. It is a straight southeast-northwest line forming the rear property lines of several homes on Richardson Dr.

In 1742, when Fairfax County was established, Lewis Ellzey, owner of a large parcel of land just west of Lake Royal, became one of the first justices of the county court and was appointed county sheriff. During the Civil War, Clara Barton, who later founded the American Red Cross, tended battle casualties at St. Mary's Church in Fairfax Station, and Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart raided Burke Station in 1862.

During the first half of this century, Fairfax remained a quiet, rural backwater, dotted with farms and forests. One long-time resident recalls that in 1908, the Kings Park West area was populated mainly by farmers and Irish railroad workers. The train had three stations at that time: Fairfax, Sideburn, and Burke. People from Maryland and Washington, D.C. could catch a train at Union Station to visit their Fairfax relatives.

Small farms and forests filled the area between Twinbrook and Sideburn Roads. Stands of Virginia Pine had overgrown some of the abandoned farm fields. A Twinbrook Road resident recalled working at one of his father's pulp mills on the east side of Sideburn Road, just south of Commonwealth Court. The pine was milled, moved to Burke, and loaded on trains. For entertainment, there were dances at Ashford School and the annual Labor Day celebration, still held today, at St. Mary's. Occasional train derailments caused a bit of excitement.

By mid-century, however, the population boom in the Washington area had expanded beyond Arlington and Alexandria, and housing developments sprang up along major thoroughfares in Fairfax County. Kings Park, on Braddock Road was the "end of the line" during the early 1960's, but developers already had their eyes on the central part of the County, south of Fairfax City. On February 20, 1967, a Deed of Dedication was filed for Section 1, Kings Park West, the first of thirty-two sections of single family houses and townhouses.

In those days, Guinea Road was very narrow and hilly, and it was not aligned with Commonwealth. A quick "S" turn was required to enter KPW. During the spring and summer of 1967, prospective home buyers had to go to West Springfield Village, another community built by the developer, to see models of the KPW homes.

In early 1968, the first occupants moved into homes on Commonwealth Boulevard and Thackery Court. The last homes in Kings Park West were completed in 1986.