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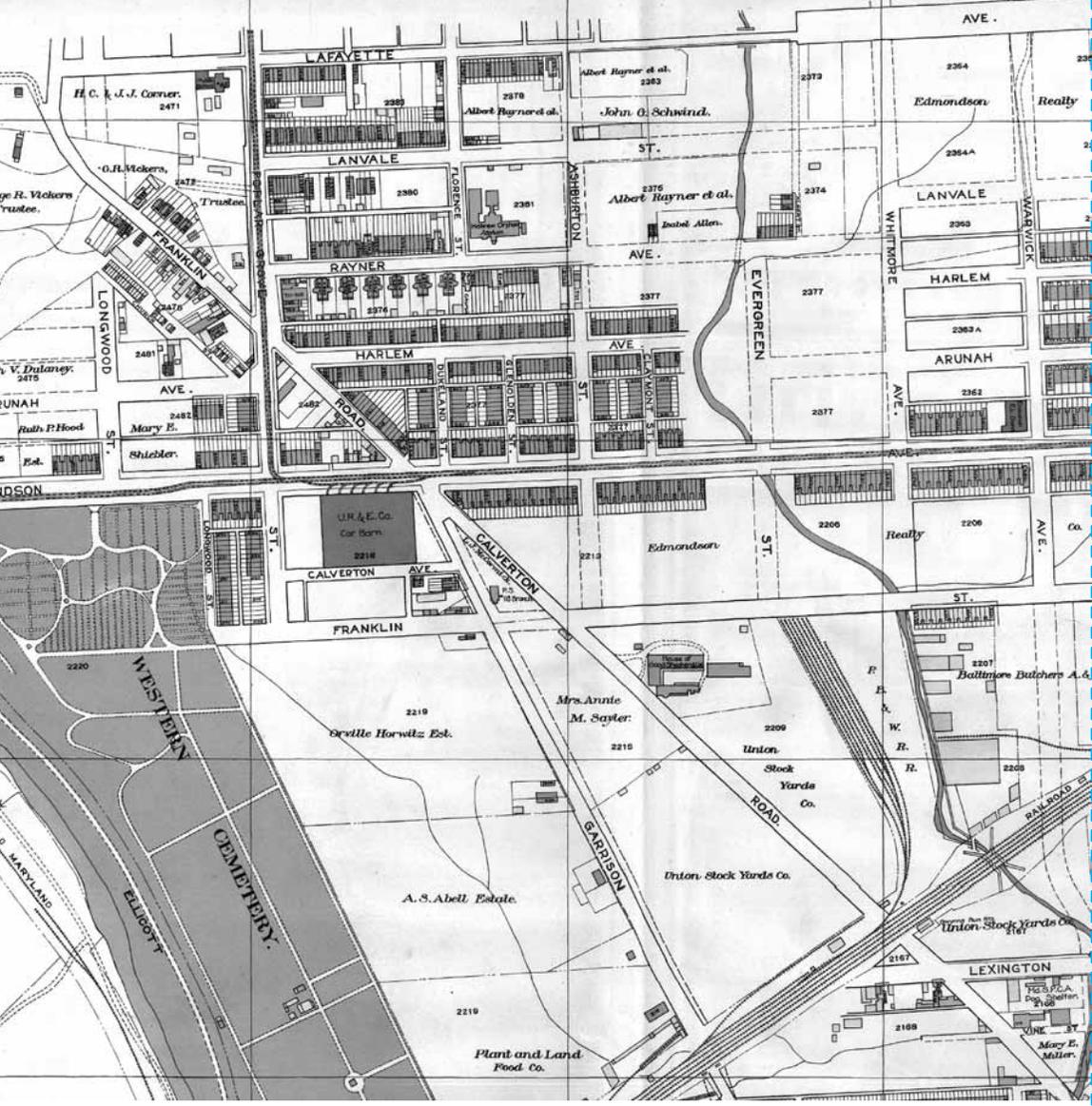
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Discover the history of

GREATER ROSEMONT

Baltimore Heritage





Greater Rosemont is a community of neighborhoods shaped by 200 years of shared history. Landmarks like the iconic Hebrew Orphan Asylum in Mosher, former Hauswald's Bakery on Edmondson Avenue, and the friendly porch-front rowhouses in Evergreen and Bridgeview/Greenlawn neighborhoods offer reminders of the past and inspiration for a brighter future. Residents today are building on Greater Rosemont's legacy of activism and leadership by ensuring that new investments in transit, schools, and housing promote the revitalization and preservation of their historic community.

Join us in exploring the history of the neighborhoods of Greater Rosemont through its landmarks and people. To find out more about people and places of West Baltimore's U.S. Route 40 Corridor visit baltimoreheritage.org/redline.

Excerpt from the Atlas of the City of Baltimore (1914) / Baltimore City Archives

1810-1888: Country Mansions by the Gwynns Falls

For most of the 1800s, the land from Fulton Avenue to the Gwynns Falls remained a rural district of Baltimore County. Country mansions like Poplar Grove, Dukeland, Woodley, and Calverton topped rolling hills where sheep and goats wandered. These mansions had the company of mills, coal yards, quarries, and noisy stockyards that operated just outside the city. The rushing water of the Gwynns Falls powered eleven mills before the Civil War, including the Windsor, Walbrook, Holly and Vickers mills, all located near Franklinton Road. Early residents included Mr. August Hecht, a gardener who planted a lush grove of trees around his small home, and General John Summerfield Berry, the Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates who also built a small Methodist chapel for his neighbors.

Calverton to Hebrew Orphan Asylum

Calverton, one of the earliest homes in Greater Rosemont, was built in 1815 for Baltimore banker Dennis Smith. After Smith lost the house to bankruptcy, the Baltimore City and County Almshouse occupied the building until 1866. Local banker William S. Rayner acquired the property and, in 1872, donated the former almshouse to the recently established Hebrew Orphan Asylum. Rayner himself was orphaned at a young age in his native Germany. Unfortunately, the original Calverton house burned to the ground in 1872. The house was quickly replaced with the grand brick landmark that still stands on Rayner Street. The building is well known today as the former West Baltimore General Hospital (1923-1945) and Lutheran Hospital of Maryland (1945-1989). Today, preservationists and neighborhood leaders are working to restore the long vacant structure.



Left: Calverton, c. 1872 / Maryland Historical Society

Right: Hebrew Orphan Asylum, 1923 / Jewish Museum of Maryland

Opposite: West Baltimore, 1869 / Library of Congress, g3844b.pm002540

Turnpikes and Railroads

In its early years, turnpikes and railroads connected the farms, mills and factories in the area of Greater Rosemont to the heart of the city. Franklinton Road was chartered in 1828 to build a route between the city and the small but bustling mill village of Franklinton. Western Cemetery opened in 1846 and became a scenic destination for early travelers and city dwellers looking to escape Baltimore's crowded streets for relaxation in a park-like setting. Just before the Civil War, railroad lines added new options for travellers. In 1852, the Western Maryland Railroad started work on a line between Baltimore and Hagerstown followed closely by the Baltimore & Potomac Railroad in 1858. A couple of frame houses on Franklinton Road and a handful of brick worker cottages on Lanvale Street are some of the few examples of structures that survived from this early period of turnpike and industry up through the present. Laying this groundwork of transportation routes proved to be instrumental in attracting development in the decades following the end of the Civil War.



WEST BALTIMORE MARC STATION THEN AND NOW

The story of the West Baltimore MARC Station began in 1858 when Charles County politicians established the Baltimore & Potomac Railroad to connect Southern Maryland farms to the growing city of Baltimore. Progress remained slow until 1867 when the Pennsylvania Railroad Company took over. In July 1872, the completion of the Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel (still located below Winchester and Wilson Streets) enabled the railroad to start service to Washington, DC. In 1983, MARC commuter trains started rolling along the same route and continue to connect West Baltimore to the larger Baltimore and Washington region today.

1888-1924: Streetcar Suburbs on Edmondson Avenue

In 1888, Baltimore City annexed a large area of land from Baltimore County, pushing the city-county line west to the Gwynns Falls. Electric streetcars began running on Edmondson Avenue by 1900 and, in 1910, the construction of a new bridge over the Gwynns Falls turned Edmondson Avenue into West Baltimore's main street. In this era of galloping growth, developers and contractors swiftly turned the vacant land between Fulton Avenue and the Falls (formerly the estate of Baltimore Sun founder A.S. Abell) into blocks of new porch-fronted rowhouses. The flood of new residents meant new parishioners at local churches and countless young children attending new school buildings.

New Schools for a New Neighborhood

As houses were developed and families moved into blocks and communities, Baltimore quickly built schools for children living in the West Baltimore "annex," as the area was known following the 1888 annexation from Baltimore County. These public schools began as segregated, all-white institutions. Area schools only opened for African American students in the early 1950s and segregated housing made progress on school desegregation difficult even after the Brown V. Board of Education decision in 1954. Some early schools have been demolished and replaced with newer buildings, while others are still standing thanks to developers who found creative new uses for the structures.

Roots & Branches Charter School

1807 Harlem Avenue
School No. 28 built in 1892,
replaced in 1976.

Alexander Hamilton Elementary School

800 Poplar Grove Street
School No. 65 built in 1898,
replaced in 1982.

Rosedale Apartments

1801 North Rosedale Street
School No. 63 built in 1925,
converted into apartments in 1996.

James Mosher Elementary School

2400 West Mosher Street
School No. 80 built in 1933, addition
built in 1955 for black School No. 144.

Father Charles Anthony Hall Middle School

901 Poplar Grove Street
Built for St. Edward's Catholic Church
in 1923.



HOUSE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (1892)

In 1892, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd established a home for young women at Calverton Road and Franklin Street. In 1941, the facility (then known as the Good Shepherd Home for Colored Girls and briefly home to jazz singer Billie Holiday) housed over 100 young women. Most of the women arrived by order of a juvenile court judge but others were sent by parents or came on their own. The home continued on Franklin Street until 1970 when it moved to its present location in Baltimore County.

House of the Good
Shepherd / Hughes
Company Glass Negatives
Collection, UMBC

Daylight Rowhouses in "Dukeland Park"

Located in today's Mosher neighborhood, Dukeland Park took its name from the country estate of John Summerfield Berry. Berry was a slave-holder, a General in the Maryland National Guard, and a prominent member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1905, W.L. Haworth formed the Dukeland Park Company with a plan to develop the estate into a suburban retreat with 200 "cottages." Similar to other early rowhouse suburbs, the development tried to combine the appeal of city and country, building rowhouses with porches and front yards, and advertising the proximity of the homes to the new streetcar line. Dukeland Park also maintained a strict policy of racial segregation, as *The Sun* reported: "No stores, no saloons and no colored people are allowed." Builder James Keelty purchased the property in 1913 and built hundreds of rowhouses including new "daylight" houses – where residents enjoyed a window in every room.



Excerpt from the
Atlas of the City of
Baltimore (1914) /
Baltimore City Archives

1924-1949: Factories & Pharmacies in the Community

As the neighborhoods in Greater Rosemont grew, resident groups advocated for improvements to roads and parks. Popular meeting places like Borchers' Hall at Harlem Avenue and Poplar Grove Street and Keating's Hall on North Avenue bustled with civic energy. While most residents still worked downtown, others found jobs at new factories like the American Ice Company (1911) by today's West Baltimore MARC Station, Hauswald's Bakery (1920) at 2822 Edmondson Avenue, and the Ward Bakery Company (1925) on Bentalou Street. Streetcar routes on Edmondson Avenue, Poplar Grove, North Avenue and Monroe Street fostered small shopping districts as rowhouses were converted into pharmacies, bakeries, and butcher shops often with apartments for shop-keepers located above their stores.

AMERICAN ICE COMPANY

2100 West Franklin Street

Constructed in 1911, the American Ice Company's striking brick facade, powerhouse and smokestack are powerful reminders of the industrial development of Baltimore. In the early 1900s, modern "manufactured" ice replaced natural ice harvested from frozen rivers and lakes in the northeast. The American Ice Company used horse carts and trucks to deliver blocks of ice to residents around West Baltimore. After over 90 years of active use, a 2004 fire left the factory damaged but still intact and waiting for rehabilitation and reuse.

American Ice Company, 1938 / Baltimore Museum of Industry, BGE 11708



Neighborhood movie houses designed by local architects flourished in Greater Rosemont and across the city between the 1910s and 1940s. While many small theaters closed their doors in the 1950s and 1960s, the buildings found new uses as churches and local businesses.

The Walbrook Theater

3100 W. North Avenue

Opened in 1916 with seating for 1,400 people. Closed in 1966, the theater is now the New Beginning Highway Church of Christ.

The Windsor Theatre

3113 W. North Avenue

Opened in 1941, closed in 1956, and is now used as North Avenue Beauty Supply.

The Hilton Theatre

3117 W. North Avenue

Opened in 1911, closed in 1917 and turned into a garage. It reopened as a movie theatre in 1941 then closed again in 1951.

The Astor Theater

613 Poplar Grove Street

Opened in 1932 as the Poplar Theatre and closed in 1964.

The Bridge Theatre

2100 Edmondson Avenue

Opened in 1930 on the site of the two older theaters. Closed in 1968, the theater is now home to the Life Celebration Center Church.



Poster from Astor Theater, 1935 / Suzy Soshinsky



THE ANDREW LUDWIG PHARMACY

For 35 years, Dr. Andrew F. Ludwig (1881-1964) operated a pharmacy on Edmondson Avenue at Poplar Grove Street across from the Astor Theater. Ludwig served as a president of the Maryland Pharmaceutical Association in the mid-1930s and worked up until his retirement in 1956.

Andrew F. Ludwig Pharmacy, Edmondson Avenue / UMBC Hughes Co. Collections

1949-1968: Greater Rosemont Opens to African Americans

Soon after the end of WWII, black families began moving west of Fulton Avenue into Greater Rosemont for the first time. Successful legal campaigns made deed restrictions based on race illegal in 1948 and required the desegregation of public schools in 1954. Some realtors – known as “blockbusters” – fueled fear and uncertainty among white residents during this transition. Blockbusters encouraged white owners to sell quickly and then profited by selling homes to black buyers at inflated prices. One resident remembered the neighborhood’s change from white to black observing, “it wasn’t integration... it was an evacuation.” Despite these challenges, changes in Greater Rosemont in the 1950s and 1960s opened new opportunities for African Americans seeking good homes, quiet neighborhoods and handsome churches.

Reverend N.B. Carrington (1893-1979)

Change in Greater Rosemont also meant change for many of Baltimore’s African American churches and their congregations. Reverend Napoleon Bonaparte Carrington and Union Memorial United Methodist Church moved to Harlem Avenue in 1953. Carrington started work as a pastor in the early 1920s and as a press operator for *The Afro* in 1933. He was soon promoted to head pressman at the paper and often extended his religious service to his co-workers for marriages and baptisms. In the 1950s, Rev. Carrington served as minister of the Union Memorial Methodist Church and led the church to buy a new building from the Harlem Park Methodist Episcopal Church. Under his leadership, the congregation grew from less than 100 members to over 600 by 1961 and paid off its mortgage in only eight years. Long past Carrington’s retirement in 1966 and death in 1979, the church still remains an anchor in the Evergreen neighborhood.

“I married, baptized and buried many of them down there – matter of fact they call me the AFRO’s chaplain.”

Reverend N.B. Carrington, August 1967.

UNION MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2500 Harlem Avenue
Built in 1906 for the Harlem Park Methodist Episcopal Church, the congregation of Union Memorial Methodist Church purchased the building in 1953 for \$210,000. Inside the Gothic Revival landmark is a sanctuary for 800 people, classrooms and a hall still used today for community meetings.

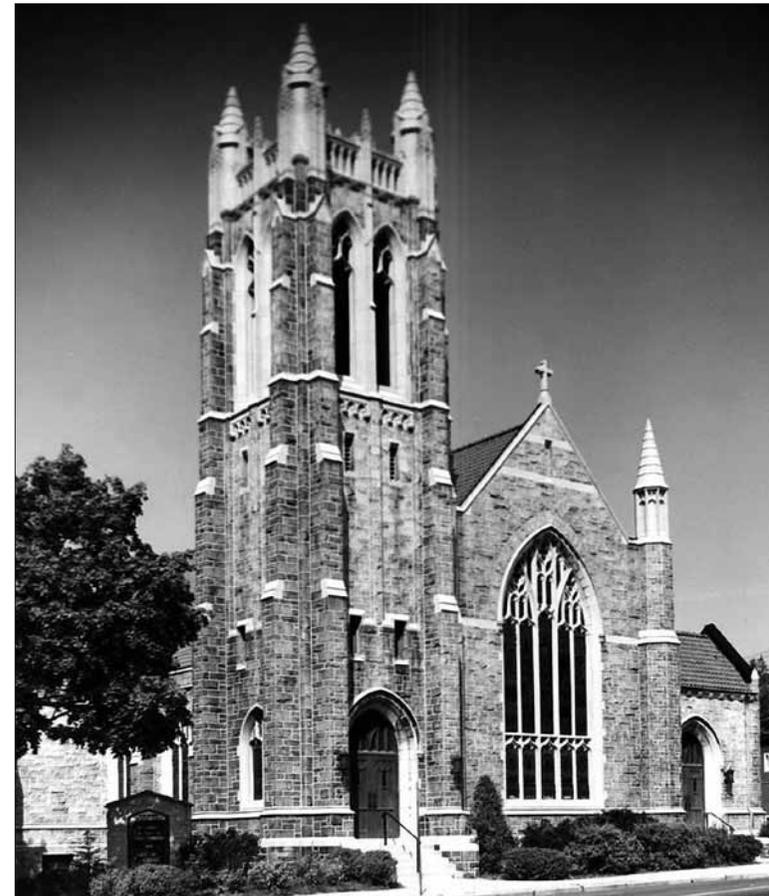
Opposite: Union Memorial United Methodist Church, 1960s / Union Memorial UMC Archives



“What with the local yokels forsaking the ghettos and moving into swankier mansions, it takes a special edition of the directory to locate your best friends these days.”

Afro-American
newspaper columnist
Lula Jones Garrett, 1958

Edmondson Avenue, 1941 /
J.M. Joyce/Kevin Mueller



TIMELINE OF CHURCHES WHITE AND BLACK

As African Americans moved into Greater Rosemont in the 1950s, many white congregations followed their parishioners to the suburbs and sold their buildings to black congregations moving west out of downtown.

1954: Union Memorial United Methodist Church bought Harlem Park Methodist Episcopal Church

1954: Rehoboth Church of God in Christ Jesus Apostolic bought Summerfield Church

1956: Whitestone Baptist Church bought St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church

1957: Perkins Square Baptist Church bought Emmanuel English Evangelical Lutheran Church

1958: St. Mark’s Institutional Baptist Church bought the Immanuel Reformed Church

1959: John Wesley Methodist Church bought Walbrook Methodist Church

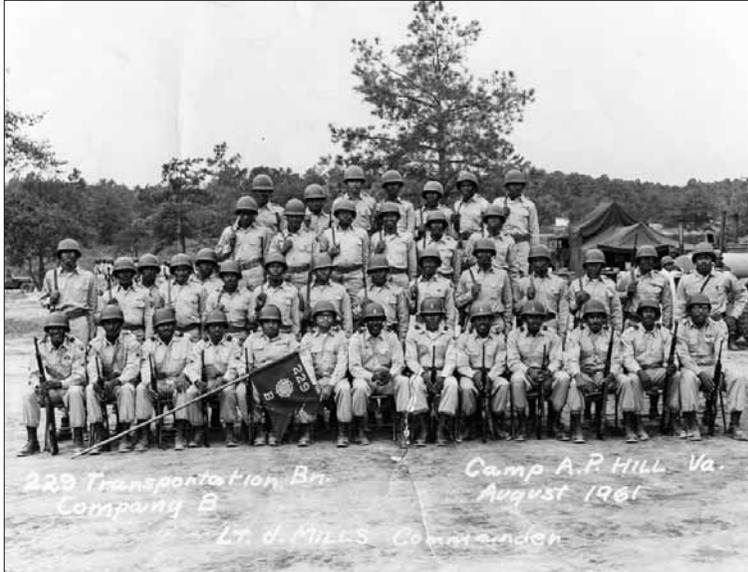
1949-1968: Fighting for a New Community

African American community groups and institutions led by local residents grew throughout the 1950s. Coppin State Teachers College moved to North Avenue in 1952 and Carver Vocational High School moved into a new building on Presstman Street in 1955. Local children and families scrubbed marble steps to try to win acclaim in the Afro newspaper's Clean Block competition. Home-owners near Whitmore and Harlem Avenues established the Evergreen Protective Association in 1951 to "promote good neighborhood relations." The Rosemont Neighborhood Improvement Association began in 1954 and the Greenlawn Neighborhood Association in the early 1960s. A vibrant social and civic life gave a generation of Baltimoreans fond memories of growing up in Greater Rosemont.

MELVIN CADE NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY

2620 Winchester Street
The Melvin Cade National Guard Armory moved to its current location in 1960. The new building immediately became a civic and social center for West Baltimore, hosting dance parties, lectures, and neighborhood meetings throughout the 1960s and 1970s. After the death of Melvin H. Cade, commanding officer of the 229th Battalion of the Maryland National Guard, in 1964, the Guard renamed the building in his honor. Baltimore City listed the Armory on its historic landmark list in 2009.

229th Transportation Battalion Company B,
Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia,
August 1961 / Melvin H. Cade Armory



The 2500 Block of Harlem Avenue

In 1967, the *Baltimore Afro-American* captured a snapshot of Greater Rosemont with a profile on the 2500 block of Harlem Avenue calling it "a typical slice of Baltimore":

"The 2500 block of Harlem Avenue is a microcosm of middle-class Baltimore... The row homes are separated from the tree-lined streets by carefully tended shrubbery and small neatly trimmed plots of lawn..."

Warren Peck, at 2507, is an arts and crafts teacher for the Department of Education.... He has lived in the area since 1952 when he was discharged from the Army [as a World War II and Korean War veteran].... He worked as a Pullman porter for several years before he was drafted into the army, and later returned to the railroad. "There was good money in those days," Mr. Peck maintains. As a matter of fact, it was primarily money saved up from his railroad work that enabled him to buy the home in 1952, he said. He paid \$11,500 for the house when the neighborhood was undergoing a racial change...

Mr. Peck is one of 11 teachers living in the 2500 block of Harlem Ave. Among the residents are at least two ministers, a nurse, two proprietors of beauty salons, three Social Security Administration employees, and a number of retired persons."



LIFE AT 2638 EDMONDSON AVENUE

Betty McCaskill grew up on Edmondson Avenue in the 1960s and filled countless albums with snapshots she took with her Brownie Camera capturing life in Greater Rosemont. In the early fall of 1967, Betty posed standing with her friends Gwendolyn Robbins (left) who lived nearby at 608 Ashburton Street and Laverne Scott (right) who lived at 2707 Ellicott Drive. All three attended school together at Edmondson High School where Betty graduated in 1965.

Betty Berry /
Personal Collection

1968-Present: Challenges & Change in Greater Rosemont

Like many neighborhoods in Baltimore, Greater Rosemont has faced stiff challenges over the last forty years, including job loss, vacant housing, and lasting damage from a highway project that threatened to cut through the community. Neighborhood leaders Mary B. Adams and Mary Rosemond (among many others) faced these challenges with determination. In recent years, strong assets such as the proximity to downtown and a stock of handsome houses have helped to keep long-time residents in the area and attract new ones. Expanded public transportation with the proposed Red Line light rail project offers the promise of continued revitalization and new opportunities for celebrating the community's rich history.

Fighting the East-West Expressway

As residents in Greater Rosemont repaired the damage from the 1968 riots, they also mounted a prolonged campaign against the East-West Expressway that was slated to run along Franklin Street and Edmondson Avenue.

Mary Rosemond (1926-2011) was a stalwart community leader against the highway. She moved to Rosedale Street in the mid-1950s and soon learned about the city's plan for the East-West Expressway that would cut through her new neighborhood. Ms. Rosemond knew the damage a highway could bring. A Florida highway project led to the demolition of her own childhood neighborhood in Jacksonville. Ms. Rosemond joined the activists with the Movement Against Destruction (MAD) to fight the highway. Although part of the road had been built already and hundreds of families displaced, the group succeeded in stopping construction at what is now the West Baltimore MARC station. With plans for further highway construction eventually abandoned, community leaders focused on rebuilding the vitality that has led so many people to call Greater Rosemont home.



National Guard at Bentalou Street and Edmondson Avenue, April 1968 / Paul Dimler/Kevin Mueller

Councilwoman Mary B. Adams

Born and raised in Baltimore, Mary B. Adams graduated from Morgan State in 1950 and settled in Greater Rosemont where she became president of the Greenlawn Neighborhood Association in the early 1960s. Adams led efforts like the "Beautiful Baltimore Committee" raising funds to spruce up yards around the neighborhood. From 1970 to 1976, she hosted a weekly radio program, "Neighborhood Clinic: Making Baltimore a Better Place to Live" trying to share her expertise with others. Her passion led her to elected office when she won election to the Baltimore City Council in 1971 and to the Maryland House of Delegates in 1983.

Bloomingdale Oval Restored as Leon Day Field

The Bloomingdale Oval along the Gwynns Falls Trail was a highlight of the Olmsted Brothers' plan for the city's parks and open space. Unfortunately, Hurricane Agnes devastated the facilities at the meadow in 1972 and the park languished. Community residents led by activist Betty Hawkins came together in the late 1990s, with support from the Trust for Public Land and the Parks & People Foundation, to restore the oval and honor Greater Rosemont resident Leon Day. Leon Day was a near legendary pitcher who started playing professionally with the Baltimore Black Sox for the Negro National League in 1934 and returned to Baltimore to play for the Elite Giants in 1949 and 1950. His teammate Monte Irvin later recalled, "If we had one game to win, we wanted Leon to pitch." Leon Day Park reopened in 2000 and remains a much-loved corner of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park.

RIOTS AND REBIRTH

In April 1968, in response to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, a series of civil disturbances left six people dead, dozens injured, and hundreds of public and private properties burned or damaged. Many community leaders saw the riots as a sign of the urgent need to improve housing and employment opportunities for African Americans in Baltimore – issues that remain a challenge for Greater Rosemont in the present.



Mary B. Adams and Victorine Q. Adams campaign flyer, 1982 / University of Maryland Carey Law School



Above: Photograph of North Avenue and Rosedale Street at Walbrook Junction, 1955 / Digital Maryland, Baltimore Recommended Capital Improvement Program, bcr002

Front Cover: Photograph of a Baltimore Transit streetcar on Poplar Grove Street at Edmondson Avenue by Edward S. Miller, May 14, 1952 / Digital Maryland, Baltimore Transit Company and Potomac Edison Slides, btpe0073

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*Find more landmarks in our West Baltimore tour
brochures highlighting Red Line station areas from
Popleton to Edmondson Village:*

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