

residential and industrial centers. Now there were paved and graveled streets, electric lights, water systems, a police department, two fire departments, one bank, two schools, six churches, many stores and businesses, streetcar transportation, a fraternal building, and over 1,000 other structures. The towns had developed their people and leaders, and now after the sixty-six years of independent existence a new future within the City of Baltimore began on January 1, 1919.

One of the first benefits to be received from the city was a branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library which was erected from funds set aside by the late steel industrialist, Andrew Carnegie. Built of northern Italian Style architecture on the northeast corner of Patapsco Avenue and Third Street, the Brooklyn Branch #23 opened on October 15, 1921, with more than 9,000 volumes. In 1965, this building was replaced by a larger one on the same site. Another project which gained momentum from the annexation was the construction of the Curtis Creek Bridge connecting Pennington Avenue with Hawkins Point Road. A wooden bridge with a cantankerous drawspan was built around 1899 by the Cromwells, to replace the large raft that had ferried farmers' wagons across the Creek. Finally, on February 7, 1930, at a cost of \$700,000, a steel and concrete drawbridge opened. The completion that same year, of a Baltimore & Ohio Railroad trestle, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile upstream, opened the Marley Neck peninsula with its "shores" and two city owned parks, Fort Armistead and Fort Smallwood, to weekend vacationers.

During our first decade as part of the City, many street names were changed because of identical ones already in Baltimore. They are as follows:

Brooklyn

First St. to South Hanover St.
Stone House Cove Ave. to 12th. St.
Baltimore St. to Baltic Avenue
Maryland Avenue to Maude Avenue
Annapolis St. to Annabelle Avenue
Potomac St. to Pontiac Avenue
Washington St. to Washburn Avenue
Jefferson St. to Jeffrey Street
Jackson St. to Jack Street
Franklin St. to Frankle Street

Curtis Bay

Poplar St. to Popland St.
Olive St. to Olmstead St.
Elm St. to Elmtree St.
Cedar St. to Ceddox St.
Beach St. to Benhill St.
Fairview Ave. to Fairhaven Ave.
Prospect Ave. to Prudence St.

In 1931, a new gravitational water system was installed throughout the area, to replace the old 1914 pipes with a wider system of greater strength and capacity. On the highest point in the region near West Bay Avenue and Filbert Street, the city replaced the black steel water tank with a huge steel tower 120 feet in diameter and 59 feet high. A two foot thick brick overcoat made up of 28 shades of red and orange was laid around it. Along with a twin erected in Catonsville, the Curtis Bay Water Tower is said to be one of the most beautiful examples of brickwork in the nation, and is a local landmark. Following the new water mains, Patapsco Avenue and other Brooklyn streets received their first hard paving using asphalt. Hard road surfaces were extended down Pennington Avenue and throughout Curtis Bay three years later. The automobile had come to stay.

the Brooklyn Improvement Association, formed originally to protest a decision by the South Baltimore Harbor and Improvement Company not to extend their new water lines from Curtis Bay into Brooklyn, following the erection of a 50 foot high black steel water storage tank overlooking the bay. Four years later, through the efforts of the new association, the lines were brought into Brooklyn. Growth soon began to reach south of old Brooklyn when John K. Culver began development in the northern reaches of Brooklyn Park in March 1916.

The steady flourishing of life in Brooklyn-Curtis Bay, combined with the heavier traffic to the river front industrial belt was overtaxing the old wooden Light Street Bridge. The old route to Baltimore fell into disrepute when, on April 8, 1913, a downtown bound streetcar derailed and plunged into the murky Patapsco, killing a passenger. Two years later, a fire on the fifty-nine year old trestle sealed its fate. Throughout 1914-1916, work proceeded, under the direction of the State Roads Commission, to build a new span several hundred yards northwest of Long Bridge, across Middle Branch to Broening Park, connected to Brooklyn by a causeway across shrinking Ferry Branch. At a cost of 1½ million dollars, the new Hanover Street bridge was opened on January 21, 1917, when the private streetcar "Maryland" inaugurated service.

The industrialization and population of northern Anne Arundel County increased dramatically with the coming of World War I. What have become known as the "car shop houses", on Grace, Graham and Morrison Courts, were constructed after the Armistice, by the Baltimore Car and Foundry Company (reorganized in 1907 from the old South Baltimore Car Wheel Company) for its employees. A subsidiary of the South Baltimore Harbor and Improvement Company, known as Curtis Bay Terrace, Incorporated, began to market lots in northern Curtis Bay in anticipation of the post war boom and the renewed talk of annexation by the City.

The question of annexation to Baltimore City was heatedly discussed many years prior to the actual event. Baltimore began to feel the symptoms of growing pains after the Census of 1910, which showed that with a population of 558,485 she was now displaced by Cleveland as the nation's sixth largest city. Furthermore, the possibility of falling into the eighth slot was imminent. The growth of the city was restricted by the reluctance of the General Assembly and neighboring counties to permit the annexation of outlying suburbs. A plan was proposed in 1914, to form four boroughs surrounding the city, each with its own government but linked in many common areas in a sort of confederation resembling the system used in New York City. By this plan, annexation controversy continued. The tax rate, the effect upon industrial development, value of city benefits, and public opinion were all paramount in the long debate.

The annexation of the Brooklyn-Curtis Bay area occurred at the same time that the city expanded in other directions. At the beginning of the General Assembly's 1918 session in January, a bill was introduced to allow Baltimore City to annex fifty-one square miles, of which 4½ were to be taken from Anne Arundel County, including Brooklyn-Curtis Bay. The new southern city lines were to extend from Washington

Boulevard southeast to Curtis Creek at Arundel Cove and then north-east to the Patapsco River at Hawkins point. The annexation bill was endorsed by the Republican Party's 1917 platform, and many Democrats were hostile. On January 9, 1918, the fight began when Anne Arundel delegates introduced a measure to create two boroughs, Canton and Guilford. On January 18, the anti-annexationists, headed by leaders of Curtis Bay industries, appeared at a hearing of the Judiciary Committee. Their prime objection was that annexation with its heavier emphasis on residential development would seriously affect any industrial expansion, and force plants to move farther away from port facilities. Of course, there was a considerable difference between the City and County tax rates. The discussion in the Legislature soon centered around the necessity of a referendum, but a decision by Attorney General Albert C. Ritchie, based upon a previous court decision, ruled that a referendum was not necessary.

Eventually, through a maze of legislative intrigue, the Act of Annexation was passed, and signed by Governor Emerson C. Harrington on March 29, 1918. Formal annexation was to take place on January 1, 1919. Included in the Act were these provisions:

1. Baltimore City was to pay to the counties a fair value for equipment and buildings taken.
2. County Commissioners were to furnish to city officials an assessment list of all persons and property.
3. The City was to complete any street or road projects already begun.
4. Rights of independent water companies were to continue. Property owned by these companies was to be purchased by the City before taking over any water service.
5. All elected officials were to continue in office until the expiration of their terms.
6. All suits and indictments were to be completed as though the Act were never passed.
7. All teachers, policemen and firemen were to be continued in their positions, if qualified. The City was to furnish any additional protection needed.

The estimated population of the total annexed area was about 75,000 and increased Baltimore's area from 32.05 to 78 square miles, and the population from 558,485 in 1910 to 733,826 in 1920. In the local schools of Brooklyn and Curtis Bay on January 5, 1919, over 1,880 children from Anne Arundel County were registered into the City public schools. The dreams of the early settlers and visionaries were now realized and their labors rewarded. From small villages, Brooklyn-Curtis Bay and Fairfield had grown into important

when the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad extended a line across Ferry Branch to Curtis Bay and later began construction for what has become the world's largest facility for the shipping of coal and ore. A station was erected four years later along the line in Brooklyn. A vastly increasing commerce and transportation. Finally, on May 28, 1892, the Baltimore and Curtis Bay Railway (an ancestor of the West Transit Administration), inaugurated streetcar service across the Long Bridge to Brooklyn with a fare of a nickel. Over the next two years, the streetcar line was extended first to Curtis Bay and then to Jack Flood's resort on Curtis Creek.

The Patapsco Land Company was reorganized in 1882 as the "South Baltimore Harbor and Improvement Company." The new corporation and a related firm - "The Curtis Bay Company of Anne Arundel County" had increasingly better luck and by the early part of the "Gay Nineties" industry began to flock to Curtis Bay, and to Fairfield, which had risen from Cromwell's Marsh. By this time, the name of Pennington got lost and "Curtis Bay" increasingly was applied to the town on the western shore of the cove. The name of the main thoroughfare became a monument to its grand memory. Also, in those early years, the general area was sometimes referred to as "South Baltimore", Anne Arundel County, Maryland."

The first business to set up shop in Curtis Bay was the South Baltimore Car Wheel Company, in 1887. Engaged in the manufacture of railroad cars and wheels, the "car shops" along Curtis Avenue were soon followed by the Baltimore Sugar Refinery which later burned, was rebuilt, and then dismantled and sold in 1897. Others following were the Monarch Engineering and Supply Company (smelting furnaces), National Supply Company (bolts and hardware fittings), and the Ryan-McDonald Manufacturing Company (railway construction supplies). One of the first corporations to locate in old Cromwell's Marsh was the Martin A. Wagner Company (canning and oyster packing) which began laying out the town of East Brooklyn. Following the first rush of industry to Curtis Bay came the workers and soon after the churches. Five congregations - Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist (now defunct), and Episcopal were organized between 1890 and 1891.

Some of the advantages of the new boom at Curtis Bay spread to Brooklyn where many of the new workers settled. Streets and avenues were reconstructed, graded and planted with rows of shade trees in 1904, to herald the increasing use of the "horseless carriages". A need for more space forced the surveying of ten new streets between the old grid of 1853: Arsan, Chart, Freeman, Cambria, Garrett, Talbott, Calvert, Horton, and Helmstetter, followed by several rows of new construction on the older avenues. The county built a new brick school in 1899, at Potomac and Fourth Streets; followed in 1905 by Curtis Bay's at Church Street and Fairview Avenue. Curtis Bay was first with its fire company in 1907, and Brooklyn dedicated a fire house at Potomac and Fifth Streets four years later. These companies gave increasing unity and spirit to the towns, especially when a Ladies Brass Band was organized in Brooklyn under the direction of John P. Helmer, the only such band in Maryland, and perhaps, the nation's first. These organizations were supplemented in 1910, by

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the city line includes adding a median strip. This massive building program has changed Hawkins Point and the Marley Neck peninsula almost beyond recognition, and further welds our community to the metropolitan area.

Part of this review of our past has dealt with the physical changes and improvements-schools, churches, roads, houses, factories, but a transformation has also occurred in the residents of this area, which has occurred in every other part of this 200 year old Nation. The insecurity and fear of many immigrants of various ethnic origins, attracted to our factories, has been replaced in their truly American descendants with a touch of pride in their heritage. From a marshy swamp bordering a deep river, to the farms and first cluster of homes to the industrial and residential part of a large American city - that could be said of many places, but this is our story, this is our home, our community, these are our friends and that makes all the difference in the world.



*Our Newest Bridge-Outer Harbor Crossing
Under Construction May 1976*

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY BRIDGE

Among some of the theories advanced for the source is one that holds that a Curtis could have settled somewhere in this region with no thought of making any legal claim. Another might be that he operated a farm for an absentee landlord. In any case, source of the name remains shrouded in mystery.

As the next two centuries went by, the area became dotted with farms, and small private piers sprung out along the Patapsco and the Bay with names like India Dock, Wagner's Dock, Tyson's Wharf, Baltimore Dock, and Chesapeake Dock, from which local families sailed their produce and crops up to Baltimore Town. It was recorded in 1782, that Charles Carroll of Carrollton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence for Maryland, visited the head of Curtis Creek to secure logs for the construction of Baltimore's first shipping wharves in the Inner Harbor. Later, in the mid 19th century, this area became the site of "Freetown", thought to be the first settlement of free blacks in America. An early unusual landmark to dot this area was Fort Carroll, constructed in the Patapsco River off Hawkins Point in 1848 under the supervision of the young Colonel Robert E. Lee of the Army Corps of Engineers. With a hexagonal site of 3.4 acres, 10 foot thick and 40 foot high walls, and 350 guns mounted in three tiers, the Fort was remarkably similar to Charleston's more famous Fort Sumter. Work was later suspended because of uncontrollable settling and the Fort remains an incomplete ruin today, in the shadow of the new Outer Harbor crossing.

A portent of the changes to come occurred on April 26, 1853, when the General Assembly of Maryland incorporated the "Patapsco Company" and authorized it to deal in real estate in northern Anne Arundel County. Formed by some Baltimore businessmen and local land owners, the Company began by laying out the beginnings of what is now called Brooklyn along the sloping shores of Ferry Branch which was almost a mile wide in those days. Tradition has it that a new company employee, R. W. Templeman, came into the office and found a map of the newly surveyed community and suggested the name "Brooklyn" after its New York counterpart. Originally, Brooklyn was laid out with the north-south streets numbered First through Seventh and those going east-west were named as follows (starting from the north): Water Street, Chesapeake Street, Baltimore Street, Maryland Avenue, Annapolis Street, Patapsco Avenue, Potomac Street, Washington Street, Jefferson Street, Jackson Street, and Franklin Street. A "Public Square" was located from Second to Fourth and from Maryland to Patapsco. Focal point of the new town was the old Walnut Spring Hotel, built in 1841, on the bank of Ferry Branch in a grove of oaks, sycamores and walnuts, (southeast corner of present day Patapsco Avenue and South Hanover Street). It served variously as a hotel, boarding house, residence of the owner of Acton's Park (a notorious gambling house and summer resort), a hangout for politicians and the headquarters for a diamond back terrapin farm on the river flats behind it. Taking its name from a huge ancient walnut tree, nine feet in diameter, which stood on the property until 1916, the hotel was especially famous for its unique band stand in the tree branches which the sixteen musicians reached by a staircase. From their leafy perch, they played the tunes of the day for the dancers on a circular floor beneath. From below the tree's

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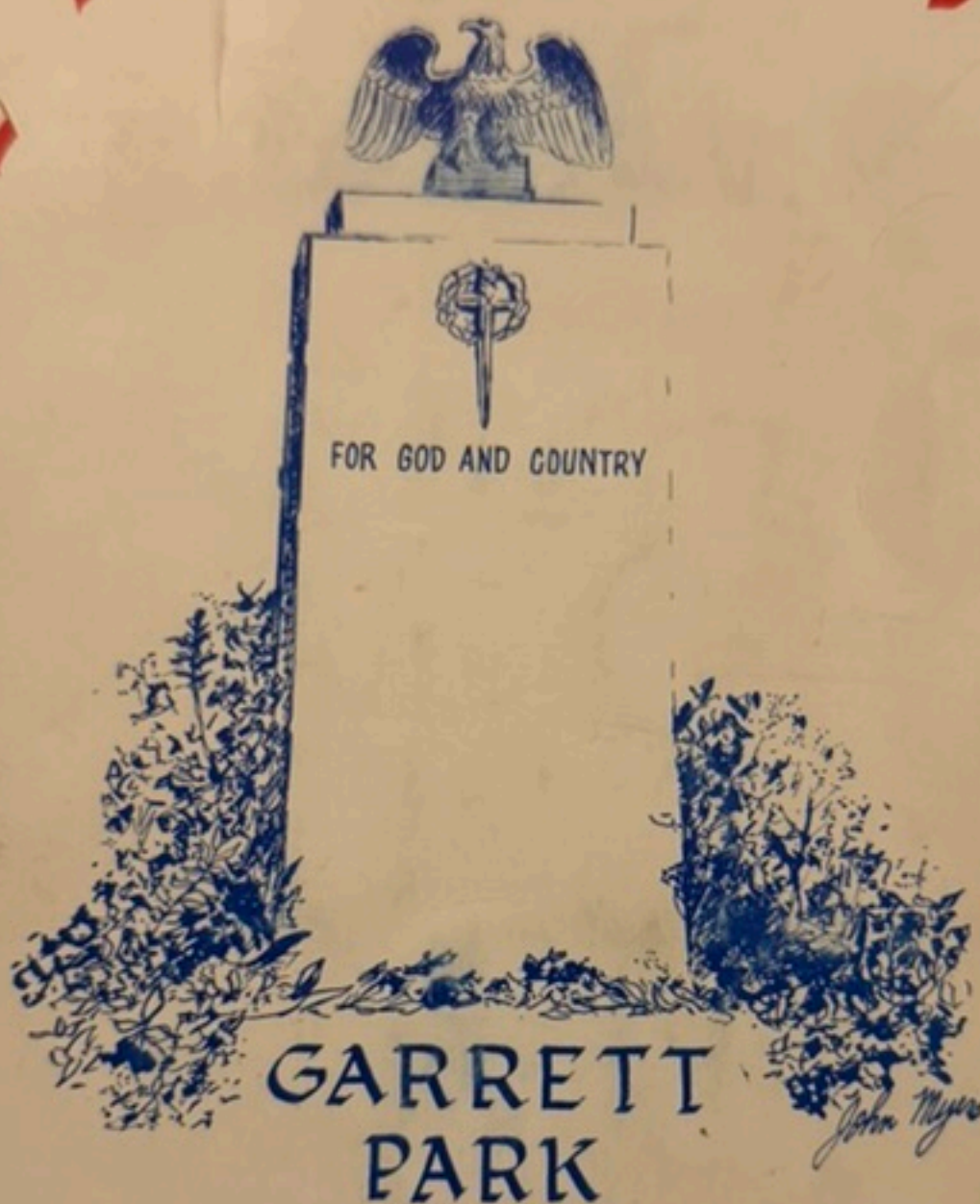
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A HISTORY OF BROOKLYN CURTIS BAY



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A HISTORY OF BROOKLYN-CURTIS BAY

Silhouetted against mother earth, a plane flying at 10,000 feet on a clear day could easily define a large U-shaped peninsula jutting into the Patapsco River in the southern portion of the City of Baltimore. This is the area known as "Brooklyn-Curtis Bay", bounded on the north and east by the Patapsco River and its Middle Branch and on the south and west by the Baltimore City Limits of 1919 - an area of about 4½ square miles and an approximate population of 23,000. Its individual communities and neighborhoods consist of Brooklyn, Curtis Bay, Fairfield, Wagner's Point (or East Brooklyn), and Hawkins Point. Just across the city line in Anne Arundel County are the communities of Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Heights, Arundel Gardens, Arundel Village, and Roland Terrace whose beginnings are shared with us now in the city. The Patapsco River is the most striking water feature of the region with its Middle Branch and the tributary (formerly known as Ferry Branch), flowing up from Elkridge to merge just south of present day South Baltimore General Hospital. And, of course, there are Furnace and Marley Creeks which unite to form Curtis Creek and its cove, Curtis Bay, around which the story of our area has flowed and evolved. The bay is an oval water body 1½ miles in diameter ranging from 6 to 34 feet in depth, enough draw for most modern vessels to nestle close to piers without dredging - a feature which stamped its economic and commercial importance. Adjoining Curtis Bay are the inlets of Stone House Cove, Cabin Branch, Arundel Cove, and Thomas Cove. The land along the river and the bay is flat and swampy, once known as Cromwell's Marsh and today forms the industrial backbone of the Port of Baltimore. Further inland the ground rises quickly to the hilly plateau now occupied by Bay-Brook Park about 140 feet above sea level, affording a magnificent view of the entire region, the river and the downtown skyline four miles distant.

How did Curtis Bay receive its name? The name "Curtis" seems to have been a part of this locality since before land was granted, or royal taxes imposed; certainly before any recorded local history began. It is known that on June 29, 1663, twenty-nine years after the "Ark" and the "Dove" landed, the first Maryland colonists at St. Mary's, 200 acres of land north of Arundel Cove, on which part of the U. S. Coast Guard Yard is now located, was "patented" to one Paul Kinsey, who named his estate "Curtis's Neck". Kinsey was the first colonist to take title to any property in northern Anne Arundel County. Witnessing the document for legality was a friend, George Yates, and the stream which marked the western limits of Kinsey's rectangular estate was described as "Broad Creek". Sixteen years later, on July 18, 1679, Yates acquired an adjoining lot of 250 acres, which he named "Denchworth". In this patent, Arundel Cove is described as the "Cove of Curtis's Creek" and thus "Broad Creek" had taken on its present name; indeed that "Curtis" was becoming by this time the general designation of the section. There has been other speculation about the source of the name "Curtis" and frankly, no one really knows. But according to the records, no individual named Curtis took title to land in this area before the name itself was in general usage.

FAIRFIELD

The hamlet of Fairfield, like that of Curtis Bay, has a name that was never officially given and goes back in time almost three hundred years. It was in 1670, that John Cromwell was given a land grant of three hundred acres on the north side of Curtis Creek. This was followed by other grants up to six thousand acres in the general area. "plantation Fairfield" remained in Cromwell hands until early in the nineteenth century when Nicholas John Crisp purchased the property. The Anne Arundel County map of 1878 shows the area divided between the four Crisp sons. This lush farm land lay unpolluted and rich in succulent seafood, harvested by anyone willing to walk to the water's edge, and the asparagus, cantaloupes, tomatoes and other vegetables were famous far and wide for their delicacy. But the big change was in the offing, and when in 1882 the Baltimore and Ohio extended a line to Brooklyn and Curtis Bay, it was through the green fields of Fairfield that the iron horse made its way.

By 1893, Fairfield was a lovely village of 260 people, and had commercial ventures employing 2,100 people. Tiny poplars lined the few main streets and the Fairfield Journal of that year carried this notation. "perhaps no place around Baltimore is better off than Fairfield, it is easily accessible by steam railroad, trolley car, boat or easy surrey driving". Excursions were held, and one family from Baltimore, Mr. and Mrs. William Potts, described the hamlet as the prettiest, healthiest, and most delightfully located suburb south of Baltimore. They moved to Fairfield and built a home on Remley Street in 1887.

Water travel was provided to both Fells Point and the Ferry Bar area, or residents could walk to the Long Bridge, as many did, and cross over free. Fairfield continued to grow, but as it grew, its pastoral aspects declined. With the coming of World War II, the great Fairfield Shipbuilding Company expanded and hired thousands of employees. The long yearned for streetcar line was constructed and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad expanded its activities with more right of way, more track, more turbulence of noise.

By 1950, Fairfield was in a fast decline from the standpoint of being a viable village. The Ellsworth Anderson farm, actually run by William Haines, Gischel, Tucker and Arnold farms had given way to either industry, or the Arundel Sand and Gravel Company, and the entire area in general had changed from rich farm land area to a tank farm area, housing great processing and storage plants, which were geared to industry.

How unfortunate, that the most lovely of the hamlets is today the least attractive, long neglected and overlooked by the city fathers. Surrounded by Curtis Bay, Brooklyn, Wagner's Point and Cromwell marshes, there was no place to go, but it had its "day in the sun" before succumbing to the railroad, and the energy needs of oil.

The advent of World War II brought the Brooklyn-Curtis Bay area its greatest growth. With massive defense contracts being let for the building of the famous "Liberty" and "Victory" cargo ships, and other tools for the war effort, workers swarmed into southern Baltimore. Throughout 1940--1943, the Federal Works Administration, and private contractors spurred by government loans and subsidies, built on almost every available lot a tract of land - closing the gap of open fields that had separated the two communities. These houses included the Brooklyn Homes and Fairfield Homes projects, various blocks in northern Curtis Bay, Brooklyn Heights, and along newly constructed Potomac Street which parallels South Hanover Street on the west. During these years, a radical transformation came over the neighborhoods as the city caught up and embraced them. Following "V-J Day", many of the workers remained, or were replaced by others, looking for civilian jobs.

In the post war period our region has become increasingly an integral part of the city of Baltimore, but has also maintained the strong ties with and interest in, Anne Arundel County in which many of our younger citizens and their new families have taken up residence. Over the years, many new public facilities have been erected and some older ones replaced. Focal point of our community has been our recreation centers and schools. Brooklyn's "Rek" in Garrett Park opened in 1951, replacing a temporary housing in the old Brooklyn police station on Hanover Street. Curtis Bay's Recreation Center followed in July, 1955, after a widespread effort by civic groups such as the new Curtis Bay Improvement Association and the Community Service Club. It featured a wading pool and a reconstructed playground, popular with generations of children over many hot summers. Credit also goes to the Bay's organizations for the 1964 construction of a new Curtis Bay Elementary School on West Bay Avenue. The razing of war time temporary "barracks" housing for the new school climaxed a long effort for the development of hilltop Bay-Brook Park, dedicated in June, 1971. The area includes a recreation center, playing fields, pool, and schools to serve the additional needs of both Brooklyn and Curtis Bay.

Larger population also meant more cars. The old Baltimore-Annapolis Road was widened and rebuilt into today's Governor Ritchie Highway just before the war. A big change for Brooklyn came when the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel was constructed in 1955-1957, and the connecting Thruway was routed up along old Ferry Branch and across the north western corner of Brooklyn to Fairfield. Patapsco Avenue was extended west across the marshy Branch, in the early 60's, to connect with Washington Boulevard and eliminate the old bottleneck at Hanover Street. Curtis Bay got a pattern of "one-way" traffic change" at the intersection of Pennington, Curtis and Patapsco Avenues in 1963. Later in America's Bicentennial Year, construction of the Baltimore Beltway will be completed with the opening of the Outer Harbor Crossing facility, bridging the Patapsco from Sowers Point to opening of Sollers Point in Dundalk. Included in the project have been two new bridges over Curtis Creek; one for the Beltway and one for Pennington Avenue to replace the 1930 Curtis Creek Bridge. A rerouting of Ordnance Road to the southwest makes room for the new expressway extending from Governor Ritchie Highway and the reconstruction of Hawkins Point and Fort Smallwood Roads to

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roots flowed a spring which was never known to go dry, even in periods of great drought. During periods of water shortages in old Baltimore, residents tramped across Long Bridge with buckets, bottles and all sorts of containers to get the precious water.

Brooklyn's development was given its first big boost in 1856, when the Crisp and Cromwell families cooperated to construct the Light Street bridge in South Baltimore to Acton's Park (present site of John H. Geis lumber mill) in Brooklyn. Stretching over 4,750 feet and built of white pine cut from Cromwell's Woods along Belle Grove Road, the bridge was also known as Long Bridge or Brooklyn Bridge. In the middle of the causeway was a draw-span to permit ship passage, and several wharfs extended out from various sections. Charging a toll of five cents to walk across, twenty-five cents for a one horse team and fifty cents for a two horse team, the crossing enabled northern county farmers to get their produce to city markets more quickly, eliminating a long drive down to Harman's Bridge near Linthicum Heights across the river to Baltimore County and thence north to the city. Early farmers however, considered the toll exorbitant and often boycotted the bridge and took the long way around, or in winter, skated their crops across.

At the start, growth was very slow for we find that in 1866, there were but forty houses, mostly due to the high bridge tolls and the lack of local employment except for that on the farms or by walking up to the city every day. Some of the early families who lived in the village or nearby countryside were the Crisps, Stolls, Gischels, Mewshaws, Cromwells, Hammonds, Hawkins, Farrings, Merritts, Crogans, Reddishes, Ballmans, Henkels, Warfields, and many others. The Patapsco Company attempted to stimulate business by selling sizable lots in Brooklyn for \$100, and as an added inducement, with each purchase, a lot in the local cemetery was thrown in. The graveyard later became known as "Bonus Land Cemetery" (formerly located near Sixth Street and Townsend Avenue). The beginnings of the Brooklyn Union Church (later United Methodist) in 1868, as the area's first house of worship, gave stability and increasing permanence to the new town.

In 1874, the Patapsco Company reorganized as the "Patapsco Land Company of Baltimore City" and began increasing the development efforts for its vast property, including a pitch to industry and business. Recognizing the valuable industrial and economic importance of the cove, Curtis Bay, to area shipping, they set forth their redrawn plans in a pamphlet entitled "Curtis Bay, Its Superior Advantages and Admirable Location as The Only Deep Water Harbor Contiguous To the City of Baltimore" - and that title pretty well describes their theme. Grandiose, but slightly premature designs were made to construct on the west shore of the bay, a large industrial metropolis to be named the "City of Pennington" after two of the directors. New York had its Brooklyn, Minneapolis had St. Paul, San Francisco had Oakland and now it was to be Baltimore and Pennington.

The long stagnation in the northern county area was to be broken by three events which began with the State's 1878 purchase of the Light Street Bridge and the lifting of tolls. The second came in 1882,

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN POE



Mr. Poe has seen 55 years of Curtis Bay history since his marriage June 22, 1921 to Miss Ernestine Raber of 4015 Pennington Avenue. They purchased this property from the Raber family, and have lived there since then.

During the ensuing half century, Mr. Poe's home and his Curtis Bay community have undergone great changes. Mr. Poe has purchased adjoining property to his home, and made extensive alterations to the residence, resulting in the Poe home becoming the showplace of Curtis Bay. Several times Mr. Poe's home and grounds received the Evening Sun Award, sponsored by the Women's Civic League. In 1974, Mayor Schaefer awarded him the Order of the Red Rose, because of the outstanding beauty of the flowers and shrubbery on the grounds, making Baltimore City a more attractive place in which to live. This citation was accompanied by a personal letter from the Mayor to Mr. and Mrs. Poe.

Mr. Poe is very active in church and civic activities, which now occupy most of his time. At the present time, he is President of the Curtis Bay Improvement Association, President of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chairman of the Southern District Police Community Relations Council, member of the Commission on Aging and Retirement Education, member of the Harbor Pollution Commission, member of the City Council Sanitation Commission, member and advisor of the Curtis Bay Senior Citizen Group, Treasurer of the Crippled Children's and Adults Hospital Auxiliary, life member of the Masonic Lodge of Glen Burnie, and Honorary Chairman of the Brooklyn, Curtis Bay Bicentennial Historic Committee.

Through the years, Mr. Poe's many civic interests have allowed him to work closely with City, State and Federal authorities and local industrial leaders, advising and assisting with many community problems.

Mr. Poe has led a busy life, and thanks God for giving him the talent, and helping him to use it in the service of His people. He also enjoyed the health to arrange tours and travel through all fifty states. He advises young people to use their gifts from God to help them grow old with the satisfaction of a life well spent.