

FAIRFIELD (BALTIMORE)

126.3/126.4/126.5

Fairfield-Fairfield Homes-Wagner's Point, Maryland 21202

ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION
Charles L. Benton, Jr. Building
417 E. Fayette Street, Suite 1037
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

The Fairfield name was conferred by the descendants of John Cromwell of Anne Arundel County, named after the wife of one of his grandsons. It is acknowledged that John and William Cromwell attained rights to this land from George Yate in 1670 and entitled it "Plantation Fairfield." It was also known by the designation of "Cromwell's Marsh" for the flat and swampy ground along the water. The property is alleged to have been conveyed to Nicholas John Crisp in the early nineteenth century. This land was purportedly divided among Crisp's four sons, which covers what is now Fairfield and Wagner's Point. This property was very fertile for farming and was also a prized fishing spot.

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The Fairfield community is generally recognized to include Old Fairfield and Fairfield Homes, which together comprise approximately 60 acres. Wagner's Point, traditionally called East Brooklyn, is a very small working class community. Development commenced in the area in the late 1800's in the form of blue collar homes for industrial workers. The Fairfield residential community dates from the 1880's when homes were built for approximately 2100 employees of nine area factories. Wagner's Point, situated below Fairfield on Curtis Bay, was first developed in the 1890's. At that time a six-block area of row homes was constructed for workers employed at Martin Wagner's canning and oyster packing company. His was one of the first industries to locate in old Cromwell's Marsh.

note
Frank Gilbert
Sum
1/14/79
says area
developed
in 100
years ago
1870's??

↳ Mostly Polish residents. Built Catholic Church & school
btwn. 4th & Leo Streets. Financed by Mr. Wagner.
Land to the north and east of Fairfield became occupied during the first twenty years of this century. The Union Shipbuilding Company was the first major employer to move to the northern shore of the peninsula and was owned by black entrepreneurs. Shell Eastern Petroleum and Maryland Shipbuilding and Drydock Company both were established in the area during those days and remain to this day. The Ellis Oil company was the first industry to spring up in East Brooklyn

- ½ dozen oil refinery co's in Wagners Pt. in 1910
- 1965 fire at Continental Oil Co. - ousted many refiners.

(1906) but was absorbed by the U.S. Asphalt and Refinery Company shortly thereafter. The latter firm was responsible for the founding of the Chesapeake and Curtis Bay Railroad Company to serve area industries. #8462

Oil, chemical, shipbuilding, metal, and timber industries spread rapidly after 1900. Warehouses, oil tanks, storage yards and piers predominated the landscaped. By the 1918 annexation there were roughly 2000 employed in area industries. The 1940's ushered in a new wave of development with the expansion of Maryland Shipbuilding and Drydock and the Federal Government's decision to build the East Coast's largest shipyard in Fairfield. Bethlehem Shipbuilding Company operated it until the end of World War II. Over 500 vessels were crafted and launched over that time.

1940's - oil storage tanks built, replacing truck farms of beans, peas & melons.
The expansion of shipyards and munitions plants during the war years provided employment and drew thousands of people to the Fairfield peninsula. Most of these persons were black, and they came in critical need of shelter. To fill this need, the Federal Government assembled Fairfield Homes, which supplemented the private housing stock with three new developments. Following the Second World War, the complex was converted to public housing use, although other wartime housing was gradually demolished. Almost two-thirds of the dwelling units existing in both Fairfield Homes and Old Fairfield are owned by the Baltimore Public Housing Authority.

1942: F. Homes built - the area of pre-WW II homes became known as Old Fairfield

The chronology of the growth of the Fairfield-East Brooklyn peninsula is quite comparable with that of Brooklyn-Curtis Bay. The same events which spurred development and expansion in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay did so in Fairfield. Transportation lines have been pivotal to its growth including the B&O Railroad extension to Fairfield in 1882 and B&O's concrete bridge from Fairfield to Curtis Bay in 1931. The completion of the Harbor Tunnel Thruway (1957) and the Outer Harbor Crossing

(1976) have further enhanced the peninsula's position as a major transhipment and storage point.

Other additions:

Wagner's Point:

Wagner's Packing Plant burned down - 1912. Rebuilt as a box plant. Then moved to Fairfield.

Wagner's son sold most of the Wagner's Point land to industrial concerns.

Today - row houses.

Fairfield

- Remley Street - extends from Carbon Ave to Chesapeake Ave - namesake of Harry A. Remley - president of Commission for Opening Streets (for new streets) -
- Frankfurt Street - formerly "First Street". Mr. F. - one of founders of the Baltimore Dredging & Contracting Co., from which various companies emerged. Later - consolidation → Arundel Corporation.