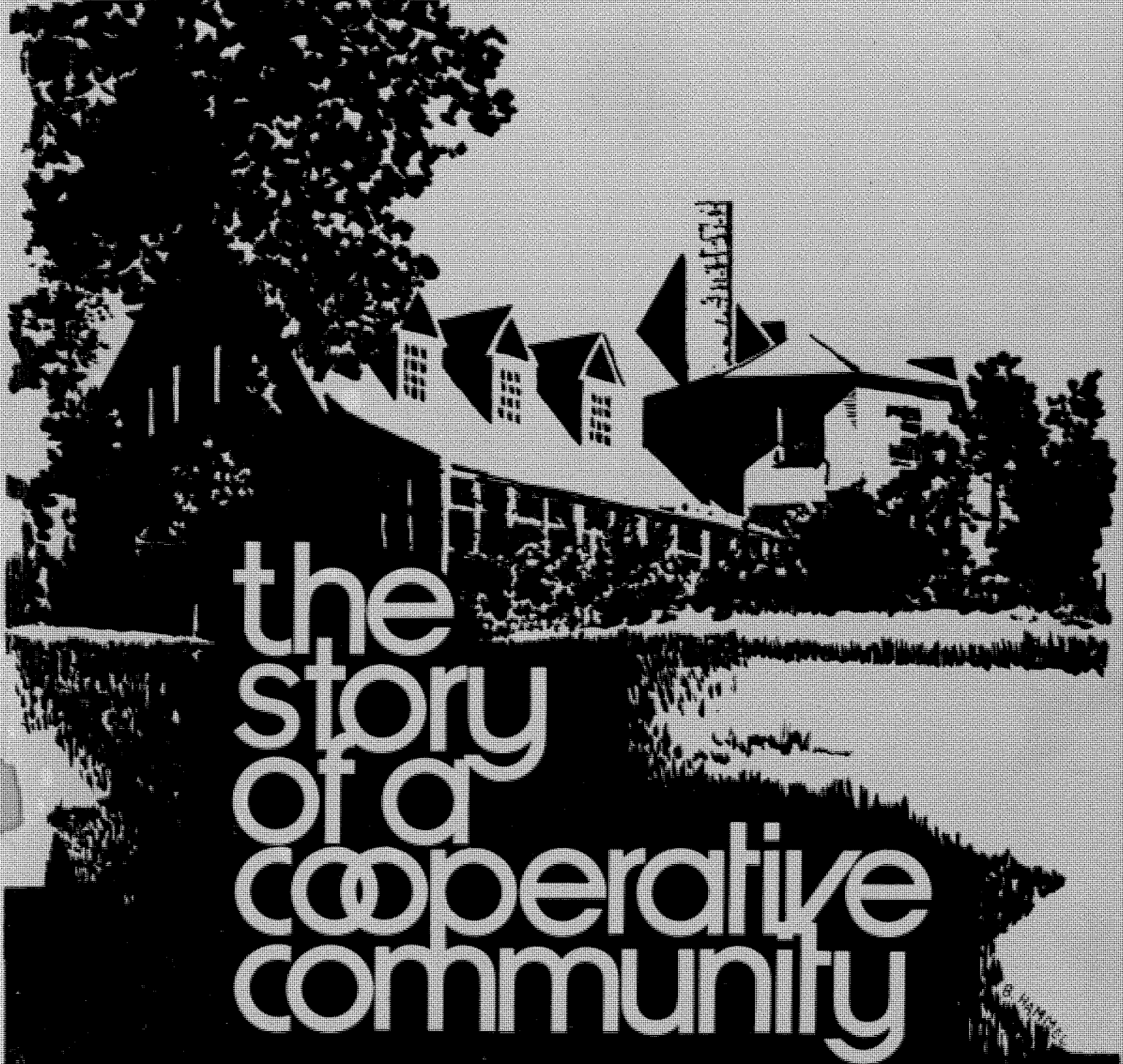


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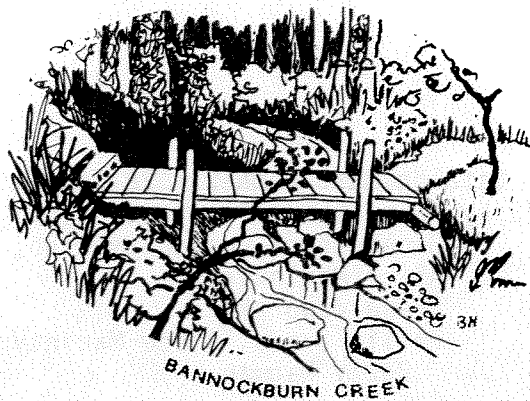
B. HARRIS

Cover: Bannockburn Clubhouse
Drawing on title page: Bannockburn Creek

by Barbara Hammel

BANNOCKBURN

The Story of a Cooperative Community



The Bannockburn Community Club, Inc.

Bethesda, Maryland

1978

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Dedication

To Mary Fox Herling, whose vision and hard work were essential in bringing this community into being and whose interest throughout the years has been unflagging.

To the many individuals who dreamt and thought about, worked for, and invested in this community from the time of its inception until the present to make it a desirable and interesting community to live in, and a vital part of Montgomery County, Maryland.

To the professional architects, planners, builders, and others who understood what our community could and should be and helped make it a reality.

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Foreword

I have felt so deeply about this beautiful, ideally conceived community that for many years I have hoped its history would be written. I accepted the responsibility for coordinating a history when I was urged to do so in 1976 by Israel Cohen, then president of the Bannockburn Community Club, and have had the fullest cooperation of Eugene Granof, outgoing president, and his board of directors.

The November 1976 issue of the Bannockburn Newsletter announced that a history of our community was to be written under the sponsorship of the community club and invited participation in its preparation. Further references appeared in subsequent newsletters, requesting submission of anecdotes, personal accounts, and pictures. During the summer of 1977, after conferring with dozens of Bannockburners, we developed a preliminary outline for the book and secured promises for contributions from those who had started our community activities and organizations or had a keen interest in them. As work progressed, we became aware of gaps in the material and secured additional contributors. Some of the material was volunteered. We were asked to publish the book at a minimal sales price.

I want especially to thank Irene Jaworski, who spent many, many hours researching and editing the articles and chasing down facts and dates in her effort to achieve accuracy and balance. She did far more than the term "editor" ordinarily implies.

In addition to the persons whose names appear on the back of the title page the following also assisted with this project: Pearl Stewart (assistant to the coordinator), Charles Stewart (liaison with printer), Venlo Wolfsohn (public relations), Joseph Maltz (distributor of the book), and Kenneth Hammel (headings printer).

It is with a deep feeling of satisfaction that I now present this book to the Bannockburn Community Club. It is my hope that it will interest present and future generations as a record of a community built and developed with cooperative effort and may serve as an inspiration to those who live in Bannockburn to carry on the cooperative tradition.

Alice MacIntyre
Coordinator

Bannockburn
Bethesda, Maryland
July 1, 1978

Preface

This book is the result of cooperative community effort. Contributions were received from over 60 persons, all but a few from current and former Bannockburn residents. This effort would most certainly not have taken place at this time without the inspiration, enthusiasm, and leadership of Alice MacIntyre.

The contributions naturally reflected a variety of styles and approaches, which have been preserved as much as possible. Manuscripts have, however, been edited to varying degrees, depending upon the extent of overlapping content and the need to clarify, amplify, or condense, or to correct faulty recollections or reconcile conflicting ones. The device of the editorial note has been used extensively to provide additional material at relevant places in the manuscripts.

Numerous as are the topics covered in this book, the complete history of our community could not be told in the space available, nor could mention be made of all the people who, over the years, have made various activities possible by their effort and commitment. We have tried to fill the name gap, at least partially, in Appendices III-VII. (First names throughout the history are used as they appear in the Bannockburn Directory or in official records.)

For pinning down dates and facts, documentary sources proved invaluable: the files of Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc., including communications sent to members and the four precious minute books covering the period from 1946 to 1967; the minutes of board and membership meetings of the Bannockburn Community Club (incomplete) and the Bannockburn Nursery School. Especially useful was an almost complete file of the Bannockburn Newsletter, assembled by Alice MacIntyre for the purposes of this history. County land and corporate records were examined, as well as records of the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (for names of current owners of houses in Bannockburn and for information on the age of the clubhouse). The staffs of these offices were most cooperative, as were those of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Rockville Library reference room, the Montgomery County Historical Society, and the U. S. Golf Association.

Special thanks go to the assistant editors and my husband.

Irene Jaworski
Editor



Bannockburn clubhouse before 1950
From the Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. archives

Mary Fox Herling

Over half a century ago H. L. Mencken said, "Faith may be defined briefly as an illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable." Another newspaperman, our own John Herling, speaking of his wife, said, "Bannockburn would never have existed had it not been for Mary's utter inability to accept reality." Even making allowances for the subjectivity of a loving husband, I agree that Bannockburn's existence is a monument to the faith Mary had -- faith in the dream of a planned cooperative community.

Those of us who served on the board of directors of Bannockburn Co-operators, Inc. (BCI) right after the completion of the pilot project had our noses rubbed in the realities. Contractors' costs were skyrocketing. Houses that had been expected to cost \$15,000 were going to cost nearly \$20,000. (Try to buy them today for \$75,000!) Members were dropping out because they couldn't afford to buy. The Corps of Engineers was being bureaucratic about access to MacArthur Boulevard. County road and building regulations, Veterans Administration housing loan problems, problems of all kinds, but most of them associated with money, made it look as if the cooperative would die before more than the pilot project was finished. And Mary Fox Herling, as executive director of BCI, was living with these problems night and day. But she "kept the faith."

It wasn't just faith that Mary had, but that was the essential ingredient. She had also a lot of experience and knowledge. Her interest in cooperative housing had led her to help organize a group of 26 homeowners in Greenwich Village into the Bleecker Gardens. That was in New York in 1929. Later, in 1941, she served with the National Housing Agency in Washington, where she was involved with unions in building homes for defense workers. Then at the War Production Board she was concerned with developing community facilities in the defense housing projects that were springing up. While serving as president of Group Housing Cooperative, Inc., she also became BCI's first president. She was its executive director from February 1948 to February 1957, when she was elected as a member of the board again.

So when you think about what a great community we live in, remember that we owe a great debt to Mary's faith in her vision. Never mind that that vision was very different from the ultimate Bannockburn. The point is: "Yes, Virginia, there is a Bannockburn."

Arthur J. McDowell*

* Member of BCI board from December 1949 to December 1951.

The Bannockburn Story*

What were the beginnings of Bannockburn, as we know it now? Back in 1944, in the depth of World War II, a group of individuals who participated in a variety of consumer cooperatives organized a Group Housing Cooperative. Their objective was to build homes and a community as well.

For a year and a half, they met with increasing regularity, first in seminars and then in larger gatherings at the Friends Meeting House on Florida Avenue to talk about hopes and plans. They invited architects and community leaders from various parts of the country to tell all they knew. Since construction was banned during the war, the interval -- until peace came -- had become a time for dreaming large dreams, to bring about the satisfaction of housing needs of consumers. Or as Will Shakespeare once remarked, "to give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name."

Over a period of time, small committees of exploration were dispatched to surrounding counties to find a suitable and available location, 75 acres or larger. On one of these forays, the Bannockburn Golf Club was discovered. (See Appendix I.) Along with a clubhouse, it was 124 acres of rolling land, with wooded and open spaces. Somewhere between hope and anxiety, there was one who said: "This is the place."

Through a combination of lucky events, it was learned that Bannockburn was to be sold at auction. Until the date of the auction, there was an interlude when interested members of the Group Housing Cooperative could visit the proposed site, quietly and with a seeming casual air, to avoid the danger of having the owners up the eventual price.

Enthusiasm grew. But now there was the little matter of raising the money. Came two weeks of intensive activity by personal solicitation, letters to members of cooperatives in the District. The program was outlined and the property was described. The response exceeded expectations. More than \$50,000 in cash and \$20,000 in pledges was raised and placed in the hands of a trustee who was to do the bidding. On a beautiful spring day -- April 6, 1946 -- right at the old clubhouse, the auctioneer's gavel fell and Bannockburn was born. The property was bought for \$193,000 with \$50,000 in cash. The owners were persuaded to take back a purchase money mortgage for the balance, with interest at 2 percent. The mortgage was paid off in three years.

It was Mary Goldwater, bearing the modest title of "consultant" to the Bannockburn project, who did a considerable part of the planning. An architect and planner herself, she contributed greatly to the success of the community's creation by her dedication and the generous sharing of her technical knowledge of the field and of the imaginative people in it. Her enthusiastic presence kept spirits high.

* Reprinted from the 1976 edition of the Bannockburn Directory, with a few changes.

The next step was to assemble a team of architects who were responsible, sympathetic and experienced. Finally, the project was placed in the hands of a team -- Burket, Neufeld and DeMars -- to develop the site plans and to see the project through. Bannockburn's beautiful slopes presented engineering problems. But they also gave promise for each house of interesting vistas and of a site design not possible on level lots.

To participate in the matter of design and housing needs, members filled out long questionnaires. What did they want in their home? What did they not want? What could they pay? (At that time, the average salaries of the members, mostly government workers, few of high degree, ran slightly above \$6,000.) Answers carefully analyzed and summarized were offered to the architects. Many of the suggestions were incorporated in the drawings of several types of homes.

As the Bannockburn plan took shape -- actually there were several plans -- it won the enthusiastic support of the nation's leading planners. This is how Hugh R. Pomeroy caught the vision of the founders: "It will produce a real community in which family life can take deep root, in which the finest in citizenship can flourish and find security... A most important consideration is the fact that the development will have integrity; it is not a raw fragment, ragged at the edges, raveling out in the adjacent neighborhood and feeding on the excellence of the environment."

The first 24 houses -- the "pilot project" with a variety of house types -- were constructed in 1949-50 at Wilson Lane and today's Braeburn Place. After many vicissitudes, the building of Bannockburn houses, about 275, was virtually completed in late 1960.

This first part of the story of Bannockburn's creation may tell you more "about penguins" than some might care to know. But these are really only some of the high spots. Ordeal by committee seemed never-ending. The struggle for excellence, for confidence and reassurance lasted a thousand and one nights, some joyous and some complete with nightmare.

More than thirty years have gone by since the idea of the Bannockburn community was launched. It has attracted people of different backgrounds with a diversity of interests and a common purpose. The families, some now of the second generation, have enriched the community because many of them are made up of individuals who look out, as well as in. New families moving into Bannockburn are similar in outlook to the first families.

Through its various activities -- a cooperative nursery school to which non-Bannockburners also bring their children, a cooperative swimming pool and the cooperatively owned clubhouse -- Bannockburn has generated a wide spectrum of interests.

Socially and politically, Bannockburn has brought a vibrant quality to this part of Montgomery County. In the early stages, even before the County was ready to build a school, the directors of the Bannockburn cooperative assigned nine acres of land on which the Bannockburn School now stands. Many in the community took a strong position in the move to desegregate the Glen Echo Amusement Park and broke down the racial barriers.

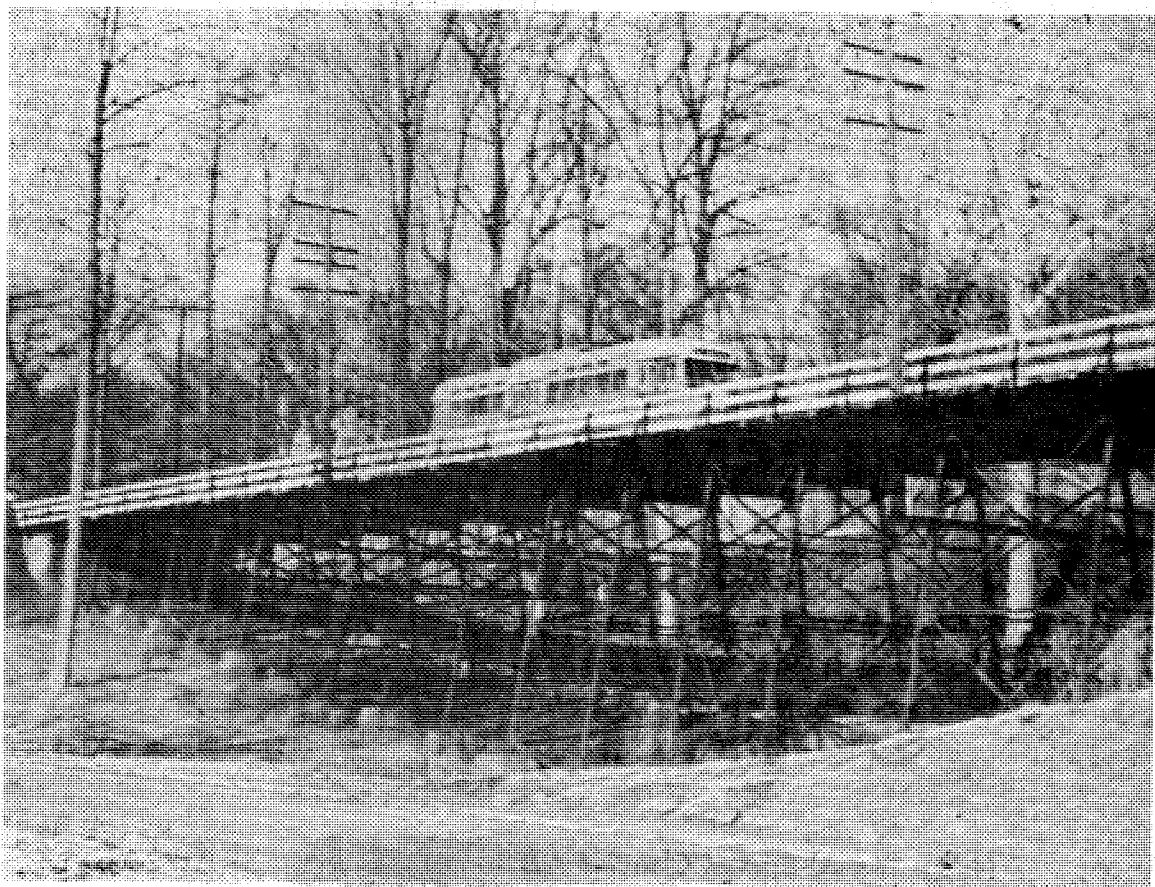
Every year the sense of community awareness has been heightened by the production of a spring play, which is often a combination of Gridiron Club candor and Hasty Pudding verve. It is usually a musical spoof. The writers, the directors, the actors -- nearly all are Bannockburners. To satisfy the demands of the widening audience, at least three performances are given.

One observer, a latter-day deTocqueville, looking in on Bannockburn, described the women of Bannockburn as "active, articulate, conscientious and concerned." They are the kind of women who "pounce on injustice with the ferocity due the crabgrass."

A characteristic of life in Bannockburn is a sense of permanence. For example, homeowners temporarily overseas often insist on getting the monthly newsletter which keeps them in touch with their home when away from it.

Something is missing, however, from the life of Bannockburn. It is the trolley car which could take us from Glen Echo to the Union Station, winding its way along the Potomac, through Georgetown and down Pennsylvania Avenue. It was a commuter's dream. At the foot of Bannockburn Drive and MacArthur Boulevard, old No. 20 would wait to take on its human load. That trolley car symbolized the luxury of the simple life unsullied by dependence on high-priced oil.

Mary and Jack Herling



Clickety-Clackety Sycamore Trestle Announced Trolley's Passing

Courtesy of The Sentinel Newspaper

A No. 20 is in the Trolley Car Museum, 1313 Bonifant Road, Layhill, Maryland. Call 384-9777 or 585-7062 if no answer to learn when the museum is open.

Planning the Community

During the period between the formation of Group Housing Cooperative (GHC)* and the purchase of the Bannockburn site, GHC members held seminars on community planning and cooperative housing, both for themselves and for the benefit of the public. Having had experience with credit unions, Group Health Association, and other consumer cooperatives, they were convinced that people could get together and build not only their own houses but a whole community which would meet the human needs of families over the span of their entire lifetimes. Such a community would provide a variety of dwellings -- big and small houses and apartments -- so that residents could easily shift within the community as families got larger and then smaller again when the children were grown.

Hitherto such "balanced" communities had been designed by planners or government officials, not by the people who were going to live in them. Although there were a few small housing cooperatives in existence, a complete, cooperatively built and managed "balanced" community had yet to be attempted.

Shortly after the beautiful tract had been secured, GHC buckled down to making the dream a reality. In June 1946, in true co-op fashion, members received an 8-page questionnaire soliciting their choices as to type of dwelling unit (and the reasons therefor), their desires for special features, the kinds of community facilities wanted (health, recreational, commercial, educational, etc.), the makeup of their families, and the level of financial commitment they could make.

In May and June of 1946 GHC sent letters to 16 architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright, inquiring whether they would be interested in designing Bannockburn and requesting submission of qualifications. About half were interested and were interviewed by the board. A negative response was received from Frank Lloyd Wright. Toward the end of June, Mary Goldwater, who had been serving as planning chairman, was hired as technical consultant on a part-time basis.

In July the GHC board chose Vernon DeMars to design the Bannockburn project and Rhees Burket and Joseph Neufeld to work with him. Vernon DeMars, a Californian, had served as the chief of the housing standards section of the technical division of the National Housing Agency before entering the Navy in 1944. Members of GHC had previously been attracted to his work through an article in the October 1943 issue of the Architectural Forum, which described a large housing project planned (but never built) by DeMars and his associates Carl Koch, Mary Goldwater, John Johansen, and Paul Stone. The community designed by this team consisted of a mix of detached and semidetached houses, row houses, apartment buildings, sites for an elementary school and a public library, a "fairly

* The prime mover of GHC was Ramsay Wood, a leader in the consumer cooperative movement.

complete commercial center," and broad areas of parkland. DeMars' ideas on housing had also appeared in his article "Look Homeward, Housing!" in the April 1946 issue of the Architectural Record. Rhees Burket was a local architect apparently chosen to help in negotiations with local authorities. Joseph Neufeld was a New York City architect with extensive experience in community planning in Europe and Palestine. These three men became associated for the express purpose of developing Bannockburn.

The Bannockburn Plans

By October 1946 the architects were ready to display two alternative plans to an enthusiastic audience of 300 GHC members, many of whom were by then members of Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI). Plan A could be carried out under existing zoning regulations, while Plan B, which was preferred and was more innovative, required changes in these regulations.

Plan A followed the conventional subdivision scheme. The beautiful, rugged terrain was far less sympathetic to such an approach, which necessitated more intensive use of the level border. Under this plan less open space would be preserved, and cheaper homes would be built on smaller lots, around the edges adjacent to the existing neighborhoods. More expensive homes on larger lots would have to be built on the rugged interior of the property.

Plan B called for a "balanced" community to house approximately 575 families. The plan proposed the mixing of different kinds of dwellings in one neighborhood: 180 detached houses, 37 semidetached houses, 38 "garden-type" multifamily dwellings, and three elevator apartment buildings to accommodate a total of 150 families. Because of the concentration of families in the apartments sufficient land would be set free to provide about 30 acres of interior park with recreational facilities, including a recreation center, a swimming pool, tennis courts, ball fields, etc., in addition to 5 acres reserved for a school. A shopping center, planned to cover about 2.7 acres, screened from adjacent residential property by hillsides and trees, would be provided in the interior of the project.

In Plan B the whole community was to be surrounded by a border strip varying in depth from 150 to 250 feet, to be occupied by single-family homes. Lot sizes in the border strip would correspond directly to those of already existing neighborhoods to maintain continuity. The interior would contain mixed dwelling types as well as community services.

Zoning Problems

Zoning at that time was restricted to detached houses on lots of not less than 5,000 square feet. In November BCI applied to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for rezoning of 75 acres (later reduced to 40 acres) in the interior of the tract from Residential A to Residential C (multifamily construction) while maintaining a gross density of five families per acre, which was fewer than the permitted six families. BCI also applied for rezoning from Residential A to Commercial D for the 2.7 acres allocated to the proposed shopping center.

On December 11, 1946 Fred Tuemmler, the commission's director of planning, issued his evaluation of Bannockburn's rezoning petitions. His statement showed

that the commission's staff was favorably disposed to the Bannockburn plan and recommended two alternative courses of action:

1. Conditional approval or approval in principle, until a final plan was submitted showing exactly where the apartment buildings and shopping center would be.
2. Deferment without prejudice, with consideration postponed until the Montgomery County portion of the Regional District had full opportunity to consider an amendment to the zoning ordinance "which would permit the undertaking of this kind of development in a planned community zone, as is proposed in the Prince Georges County regulations."

The staff remarks concluded:

The staff hopes that neither the Commission nor the District Council will take any action at this time which would postpone for a long time or perhaps deny to Montgomery County this opportunity to encourage and foster this high type of community development, which would have a salutary influence on land planning in all of the Regional District.

Adapted from a paper by Ellen Kotz *

Ed. Note: Thereafter a hearing was held in the County Building in Bethesda on December 18, 1946 before the Board of County Commissioners sitting as a District Council, in a room overflowing with residents from the communities adjoining the golf course. Bannockburn's attorney James W. Gill and Rhees Burket argued in favor of the rezoning applications, and outside experts testified as to the merits of the plan. Hugh Pomeroy, Planning Director of Westchester County, New York, appeared voluntarily to testify in favor of the Bannockburn plan. He called it "inspired" and representative of "the best planning principles that can be used in the design of a community...." He also pointed out that the State of New York had already changed its planning laws to include a provision "whereby a similar planned community development can be freed from the straightjacket of standardized zoning, and be affirmed as a whole...."

As the transcript of the hearing shows, opponents of rezoning stressed the crowding that might result, the danger of further apartment and commercial building, and the probability that the co-op would not be able to carry out the entire project. Petitions signed by about 400 residents of adjoining and nearby neighborhoods were presented, expressing fears of traffic

* Ellen Kotz grew up in Bannockburn and Merrimack Park and is now working for a doctorate in Environmental Design at the University of Oregon.

hazards and decreased land values. On December 31, 1946 the zoning application was denied.

In her article entitled "The Story of Bannockburn -- a Washington, D. C. Cooperative," published in the May 1949 issue of The Journal of Housing, Mary Fox Herling commented on this denial as follows:

Opposition. An excellent presentation of the plans was made to the county commissioners in an application for rezoning the property to permit multiple housing as well as the detached houses permitted under the existing residential zoning. An incensed and organized reaction came from the neighbors whose homes bordered the property. In spite of everything the co-op could do, rumors were circulated as to the undesirability of any cooperative, its social philosophy, its economic structure, etc., which found expression in opposition to rezoning for any multiple housing. This section of Montgomery County has been bitterly opposed to apartments. The combination of those persons genuinely opposed to apartments with those opposed to cooperatives and to the development of any nonprofit housing proved effective in securing a rejection of the zoning application."

At a special meeting held January 20, 1947, attended by more than 200 members, BCI decided to proceed with that part of the plan that did not require any zoning changes. The area selected for the pilot project--at MacArthur Boulevard and Wilson Lane--was the golf course's rough; development of this area would not interfere with the operation of the rest of the golf course, the rental of which during this period provided much-needed income. This area was also close to existing utility lines.

The members also voted to continue rezoning efforts and, if these proved unsuccessful, to build single-family homes. They did not know at the time that two more years would elapse before construction on the pilot project would actually start.

The First Two Years *

Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc.

Before Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI) came into existence as a separate entity, title to the Bannockburn tract had been acquired by Cooperators' Properties, Inc. (CPI), trustee of the subscription fund and purchaser of the tract. As noted in "The Bannockburn Story," money had to be raised in a hurry because, in order to participate in the bidding at the auction, the bidder had to be able to produce a check for \$50,000, if he was successful. When the date of the auction was announced, Louis Sissman, treasurer of Group Housing Cooperative, Inc. (GHC), and his wife Louise suggested that the required amount be raised by getting 50 persons to subscribe \$1,000 each. The Sissmans themselves subscribed \$1,000 to start the fund. An appeal by GHC to 4,000 Washington area cooperators resulted in 111 subscriptions by April 6, 1946, the date of the auction. Amounts subscribed ranged from \$200 to \$1,000. Subscriptions continued to be made during the remainder of the year. Because those who had subscribed by April 6 made the purchase of the tract possible, it seems fitting that their names should be known. (See Appendix II.)

CPI gave GHC an option to purchase the tract. At a special meeting on July 30, 1946, GHC members voted to assign the option to a new nonprofit co-op to be composed exclusively of future Bannockburn residents. Actual title to the property did not pass to BCI until December 16, 1946, several months after its incorporation.

BCI was incorporated in Maryland on August 5, 1946. The incorporators were those members of the GHC board who were also Bannockburn subscribers and expected to live in homes to be built on the Bannockburn site.

At its first meeting on August 13 this temporary board elected the following officers: Mary Fox Herling, president; Udo Rall, vice-president; Esther Swire, secretary; Louis Sissman, treasurer. The other directors were Jacob Karro, Irwin Silverman, and Morris Weisz. Herbert Wood, president of CPI, trustee for the Bannockburn subscription fund, was asked to serve as controller. At this point there were no other BCI members. Mary Goldwater later became the new co-op's technical consultant. (For list of BCI directors and officers see Appendix III.)

To become a member of BCI one had to join GHC, sign a membership application and subscription agreement with BCI, and be approved by a resident-selection committee and the board. All these forms and documents were developed by the subscribers to the purchase fund, who were then admitted to BCI membership before nonsubscribers.

Applicants who were accepted (few were turned down) were required to purchase five shares of the co-op's capital stock at \$1 per share and to make a total downpayment of \$500.

On October 15, 1946 BCI's temporary board adopted a set of bylaws designed to provide for operation of the co-op on the cooperative plan, each member-owner

* Based on BCI records.

investing toward the cost of his dwelling and his proportionate share of community facilities, with the right of perpetual occupancy. Subsequent monthly payments would cover a member-owner's proportionate share of maintenance, interest, taxes, and amortization.

The first membership meeting of BCI, held on November 15, 1946 at the Friends Meeting House on Florida Avenue in Washington, D. C., was devoted to discussing the bylaws. As noted previously, the membership voted in January to build the pilot project. At a February 24, 1947 meeting the members amended the bylaws and elected their first board of directors: Milton Chase, Daniel Cleary, Mary Fox Herling, Hugh B. Johnson, L. D. MacIntyre, Malcolm W. Maclay, Eli Marks, Udo Rall, Irwin Silverman, Louis Sissman, Morris Weisz. *

At this meeting, also, lots were drawn by Carol MacIntyre to determine the 162 members' priorities for the selection of sites and dwelling units. The names were drawn successively from four classes into which the members were grouped for the purpose of this drawing. The first three classes consisted of subscribers to the purchase fund according to the dates of their subscriptions. Nonsubscribing members made up the fourth class.

In April the board appointed an executive committee to act on its behalf in negotiating and approving plans and contracts. In order to pay the next instalment on the purchase money mortgage the co-op borrowed money from the members.

During the remainder of 1947 the weekly board meetings, the monthly and special membership meetings, and the meetings of several special and standing committees were devoted to such matters as raising and borrowing money, seeking and approving new members, determining the value of withdrawing members' equities, analyzing questionnaires returned by members, discussing and approving the architects' house plans, reviewing engineering plans, dealing with the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, interviewing contractors, studying building materials and equipment, and preparing and discussing financial reports. The architectural committee, with Ramsay Wood as chairman, played a key role in the development of house plans, acting as liaison between the co-op and the architects. The public relations committee, with L. D. MacIntyre as chairman, prepared a brochure entitled "Bannockburn: Your Home and Your Community."

In November the board members were reelected for 1-or 2-year terms, Marjory Weiss replacing Roberta Leib.

In February 1948 the members were required to invest another \$500 to pay off the remainder of the purchase money mortgage on the Bannockburn tract. Mary Herling resigned from the board and became BCI's salaried executive director. Udo Rall replaced her as president, and L. D. MacIntyre became vice-president. Later in that year Samuel Moerman joined the board and Stanley Ruttenberg replaced Eli Marks.

* The board elected the following officers: Herling, president; Rall, vice-president; Sissman, treasurer. On April 18, 1947 Maclay became BCI's secretary. In June 1947 Roberta Leib replaced Cleary.

Organizational Changes

In July 1948 the bylaws were amended to provide for ownership of houses and lots by individuals rather than by the co-op. BCI's attorneys had recommended this change as necessary for obtaining Federal Housing Administration (FHA) financing under section 203 of the National Housing Act and as helpful to the members who could then deduct their real estate taxes on their tax returns. The stock-purchase requirement was raised from 5 to 205 shares and the downpayment from \$500 to \$800. Owners wishing to sell were required to give the co-op an option to repurchase.

In November Paul Krueger, Charles Singleterry, and Leo Kolodny became board members, replacing Milton Chase, Roberta Leib, and Irwin Silverman. The board elected the following officers: Morris Weisz, president; L. D. MacIntyre, vice-president; Charles Singleterry, secretary; Samuel Moerman, treasurer.

The Building Program

The road to the pilot project was a rocky one. It was difficult to contract for houses that the members could afford. The architects' drawings were put out for bids in February 1948, but the bids turned out to be shockingly high, necessitating lengthy negotiations by the co-op with the architects and the low bidder. House designs were modified, three new, less expensive houses designed, and new bids taken. In August the board selected David Solomon, Inc. to build 24 houses as a pilot project, after detailed discussions had brought the bid down from \$506,000 to \$370,000. Ten house types with two to four bedrooms were available, priced from \$13,500 to \$26,700.

Another serious problem was the rise in mortgage interest rates. In March the prospective lender insisted upon FHA insurance. Because FHA did not permit second mortgages, very high downpayments were required of prospective purchasers. Applications made to FHA in March took 6 months to be processed and then had to be reviewed because the appraisals were lower than the costs. Firm commitments to insure, making building possible, came only 2 days before Christmas in 1948.

These delays and difficult circumstances caused some members to propose the dissolution of the co-op. But the board, the executive director, and a majority of the members wanted to proceed with the development of Bannockburn as rapidly as possible so that new members could take over the equities of withdrawing members and keep the co-op going. At this point 171 members wanted to remain and 88 wanted to withdraw.

Early in January 1949 arrangements were made for a \$183,000 construction loan from the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York, to be placed in escrow. On Saturday, January 15, ground-breaking ceremonies were held at the pilot project site, followed by a reception at the clubhouse. Dignitaries attending included Congressmen Henry Jackson and Wright Patman.

Irene Jaworski

WASHINGTON, D. C., JANUARY 16, 1949



HOUSING PROJECT GROUND-BREAKING—Turning the first shovelful of earth for the Bannockburn Housing Co-operative yesterday near MacArthur Boulevard and Wilson Lane are, left to right: Martha, 7, and Ann Singleterry, 9, whose father, Charles Singleterry, is secretary of the co-operative; Morris Weiss, president of the organization; Mayor Edward C. Fenderson of Glen Echo and Representative Farnham, Democrat, of Texas. —Star Staff Photo.

I hunted through a box of old photos and found this picture of the ground breaking ceremony. I was home in Arlington with 2 baby boys and didn't even go to the ceremony. We used Ann's and Martha's shovel for almost as long as we lived in Bannockburn, but don't have it now. I still have a souvenir of the occasion -- a shovel shaped cookie cutter which Charlie made me of tin -- which I used to cut out cookies which he took to add to refreshments for the occasion at the clubhouse.

I was sentimental about the Cabin John street car line -- I guess that's why I saved the picture. I happened to be on the Cabin John car returning from town when Jack Eisen of The Washington Post was aboard, I guess gathering material for the article he wrote for the Sunday paper of January 3, 1960 on the final run of the street car the day before.

Excerpted from Dorothy Singleterry's letter of June 4, 1978 from Naples, Florida. The Singleterrys lived at 7100 Wilson Lane from 1949 to 1970. Dorothy supplied the ground-breaking and trolley pictures. The shovel refers to the one used in the ground-breaking picture. The "2 baby boys" appear as teenagers in the swim team photo.

The Pilot Project

The Co-op Way

There were two types of people who formed Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI): (1) those who needed housing and were willing to pay a reasonable price and leave the problems of management and the creation of the organization to others; and (2) those who were activists and do-gooders -- people who were interested in political liberalism and housing and do-gooding in general. Some of the first type created problems because of lack of interest in management problems. Others presented no problems to us; they wanted nothing but to meet their need for housing. The second type wanted not only to obtain homes but to create something. In fact some of them, we suspected, were less interested in getting houses for themselves than in showing that people could meet their own housing needs.

The first problem we faced was what sort of community were we going to build. The original plans were for a true cooperative in the Rochdale sense: no individual ownership of land, all having shares in the whole community, which would own the houses. Also we wanted to build what we called a "planned community."

That plan failed for a number of reasons. First of all, we could not get the zoning to create that type of community because of the opposition of the neighborhoods surrounding the golf course. Second, the concept of a balanced community, cooperatively owned, was revolutionary at that time. Third, we found as the plan progressed that people really did not want to buy shares in a big multimillion-dollar project. They wanted to own their own homes for a variety of psychological, legal, and financial reasons. The idea of condominiums entailing less involvement in actual management had not yet been born. Therefore we compromised on the problem of joint ownership versus individual ownership fairly early in our plans: the houses would be individually owned, while certain land and facilities would be owned by the co-op.

Another problem we had was how to make decisions. It is clear today that our members were of at least two minds. At one extreme were members who were totally uninterested in the details of what we were doing or how we were doing it. The maximum involvement they wanted was just to put down their money for the house they wanted. At the other extreme were those who wanted 100 percent participation in even the most minor details of the decision-making process.

Neither of these extremes was desirable. Certainly we wanted people to have some interest in the organization, but to have members participate in every small decision was impossible. I mention the extremes because a major problem we had in managing the organization in the early stages was just how far toward that latter extreme could we permit membership participation to evolve.

Some of us felt that members should have an opportunity to review only major decisions. But in many of the monthly membership meetings in 1948 and 1949, and especially in the weekly board meetings and the additional, frequent

meetings of the executive committee, much time was taken up by the problems raised by individual members who rejected the idea of giving a small group of people the responsibility for running the day-to-day affairs of the organization.

Detailed discussions of house design were particularly time-consuming. Understandably, when a person is making the largest purchase of his lifetime -- a home -- he obviously wants a greater opportunity to review the various aspects of the decision. We felt that time was vital and we wanted to make decisions quickly. On the other hand, the members pointed out obvious errors that were being made during the design process, by the architects and the board, which might have increased costs; so they wanted to have their say even about small details. Such participation was costly in time and effort.

Pilot Project

When in late 1946 the co-op's request for rezoning was turned down, the membership voted to build 24 houses as a pilot project without losing the income from the operation of the golf course.

We had difficulty in getting the 24 families for the pilot project. People did not want to build houses unless they knew what the cost would be. Some of us who joined in the pilot project felt it had to begin even though we might sacrifice the possibility of getting better or cheaper houses later on. As president of the co-op at that time, I felt obliged to support its first venture. Finally we did get 24 families to sign a contract for a home in the pilot project for a fixed sum, which we estimated as best we could. The co-op, in turn, signed a nonfixed-total contract with the builder.

New problems arose during the construction of the pilot project. As the work progressed, the builder needed immediate decisions: whether to change the design to fit the lay of the land better, whether to install certain types of equipment which had recently become available, whether to substitute one type of building material for another, etc.

In addition, the members began feeling the need to raise their voices about the cost increases resulting from the economic situation. Nobody had anticipated such an increase in building costs as occurred during the building process. The 24 members of the pilot project, which included a fair number of board members, felt entitled to get their homes at the contracted price. The rest of the members felt they were financing a costly experiment, forgetting that they might later profit from the experience of the pilot project by getting better, less expensive housing. So we had two battles on our hands at the same time: one with the members of the pilot project, the other with the remaining members.

As to the members of the pilot project, the problem centered on whether a person, by simply paying for the additional cost, could have a change in the design. The trouble was that to the degree that he changed the design he also increased the cost of the other houses with the standard design, and we wanted to ascribe to him his share of that increased cost. I remember spending days in correspondence and argument about this sort of problem, which got worse as people wanted more extensive changes.

Almost daily negotiations took place between the officers of BCI and the members of the pilot project. Every weekend, pilot project members went out to see how the building was going on. Every Monday morning we were faced with a deluge of phone calls as to why one house was progressing more rapidly than another, or why one house appeared not to have something it should have had, or why another appeared to have something it should not have had. Other members also visited to check up on the progress of the project and to learn the reason for the extra costs reported to them.

Immediately prior to and during the building process we had problems with financing, which were quite serious, with delays due to weather, nonavailability of material, etc. As a result the cost of this project was considerably higher than anticipated.

Ed. Note: The BCI records show that the co-op lost \$49,500 on the pilot project.

Meanwhile the people who had not joined the pilot project were at a serious disadvantage in absorbing their share of the co-op's loss on the pilot project as well as the increased cost of housing as the year and one-half or so passed until their housing could be started. The net result was that the pilot project and the houses in the 7000 block of Braeburn Place and several on Owen Place were the only ones that were built by BCI.

Some members formed groups to purchase land from BCI so they could have private builders construct houses for them. Certainly the later construction caused less trouble for those in charge of building operations. They had learned something from the co-op's first venture.

The fact that we lost money on the pilot project created quite a lot of tension within the co-op. These tensions may have decreased over the years, but I remember them as being quite strong, especially on the part of those members who believed the officers had not taken enough care in keeping costs down.

After the completion of the houses one other type of problem came up: the relation of the individual to the co-op. Some of us on the board felt that, since the individual had contracted with us to build a house for him, once that transaction was completed, except for ordinary guarantees made by every builder, our relationship should end and BCI's responsibility should stop. Many of the members of the pilot project, however, felt that there was a continuing relationship beyond that of a normal house-builder and a consumer. I remember very distinctly being telephoned in the middle of the night one time by a member who complained that there was some seepage in his house and water was coming in! In view of the fact that it had rained for many days, it was not an unusual occurrence in many houses, whether built by us or not. Nevertheless we took some measure of responsibility because of the public relations aspects of the co-op's activity.

Reflections

Now let me evaluate the whole experience. I think the houses BCI built can be given a high rating for design and quality of construction. Could we

have built them at a lower cost? Undoubtedly. We could have done so if we had been more arbitrary and resisted more of the changes requested by the members. We could have reduced costs by cutting corners as other builders did. This we did not feel free to do because of the nature of our organization. Perhaps we might have cut costs if we had been more efficient. There is no doubt that some of our early engineering, planning, and design costs were excessive. If we had been thinking only in terms of money, we could have considerably reduced the design costs. But we were imbued with the desire to have designs of a distinctive, modern type, which we are now happy about.

With respect to our original objective -- not a condominium but a true cooperative -- we failed. We failed to convince our members to stick by the original idea of having all land and houses owned in common. But the absence of common ownership has fortunately not destroyed the spirit of cooperation. I think there is no doubt that Bannockburn has an exceptionally strong sense of community and that its origins contributed to this feeling.

The final question is, "What would we do if we were starting over again?" Although the type of relationships we had with our members seemed necessary because of the nature of our organization, I would recommend less member participation in the decision-making process. I would favor a contract with a member, who would agree to a specified price, with an escalator clause to take care of increased building costs, and who would then allow an elected group to get his house built without any more participation on his part than is customary in dealing with a builder.

Condensed from a tape by Morris Weisz *

An Old Confirmed Cooperator

When we were married in 1941, Arthur was already an old confirmed cooperator. At that time he did his grocery shopping in the co-op store on lower Wisconsin Avenue in Georgetown. As a transplanted Bannockburner now living in Georgetown, how I wish it were here now!

During the war, when he was in the South Pacific for 2 years, I used to send him copies of co-op bulletins, which contained news of all the area co-op activities. In a letter I received from him, I remember these prophetic words (in my memory they are in caps!) "JOIN GROUP HOUSING COOPERATIVE." The rest, of course, is history.

Roberta Leib

* Member of first BCI board and president from November 1948 to sometime between May and September of 1950. He continued to serve as a director until November 1951. He was again a director from November 1957 to May 1967.

Looking Back

As World War II ended there were both price controls and shortages of consumer goods of all kinds. Specifically there was an acute shortage of housing and of materials for housing construction. The Washington area Group Housing Cooperative was a natural and almost spontaneous development from the housing needs, hopes, and expectations of so many. Washington had expanded mightily during the war and did not thereafter contract. The agencies that had moved to other cities were reassembling in this area.

Group Housing thus was soon eager for action. A site search committee found the Bannockburn Golf Course. A large proportion of our membership, including my wife and me, drove out to Bannockburn one day to look it over. All of us were thrilled by the beauty of the landscape, the views from the higher areas, and the bubbling brook, or "burn" to a Scotsman -- though some were frankly concerned at the difficulty and likely cost of building on such terrain.

Amidst the enthusiasm there was disagreement about whether Group Housing should pursue an inner-city or a suburban development. With the final majority decision to go ahead with the purchase of the golf course, the minority group dropped out completely, but others soon joined. However, in retrospect, I think we were shortsighted. I think Group Housing should have tried simultaneously to move toward both a suburban and an inner-city cooperative housing development.

Soon after purchasing the land we hired a talented young architect experienced in fitting homes into California's hills. He prepared a beautiful overall community model, fitting individual homes, row houses, and apartments into Bannockburn's rugged contours. Stores and recreation facilities were planned around the clubhouse.

Then we had our first major setback. Our beautiful architectural model of a "balanced community" required rezoning, but our application was turned down. I feel we should have moved ahead with our single houses along the periphery first, established good relationships in the community with person-to-person explanation of our overall plan, and then applied for rezoning.

With our carefully planned cooperative community virtually destroyed before it was started, we had to readjust to a completely single-house project on a fee-simple ownership basis. This reduced our potential population level, increased our land cost per unit, and diminished the attractiveness of Bannockburn to older people and single persons, and indeed to some childless couples and those not interested in maintaining lawns and gardens.

The throes of house design and later realistic compromise by individuals are well-known. A cooperative seeking variety, good materials, and the cheapness of group action has multiple problems. Our architect developed eight housing designs with two, three, and four bedrooms, with full or partial basements or without basements. These were all individually approved by the board

and copies of home plans were distributed to all members. However, it became obvious that we could not go ahead and contract for the whole project at one time. So a pilot project of 24 houses was planned with the intention of expanding construction to other areas as soon as possible.

One important issue the board wrestled with at this point was that of union versus nonunion builders; practically all Washington area builders were nonunion. A number of members, including board members, made clear that their participation required contracting with a union contractor and this view prevailed. Mr. Solomon, an experienced union contractor from New York, agreed to handle the pilot project and to be in line for the anticipated further development. The architect, Solomon, and the board restudied the specific contours of the area and the cost and added three additional types of houses. Even then the costs were about double what we had originally anticipated, and the purchase of a home in those days required a substantial downpayment. After a while it became clear that there were hardly 24 in our whole membership of about 200 ready, able, and willing to go ahead with a contract with the co-op at the Solomon-contracted prices. The 24th member signed up was actually a brand new member.

During and after the construction of the pilot project, further development lagged, the delay was devastating, and the co-op's assets were eaten up. To save their \$1,000 investment, some members purchased lots, which they later either built on or sold, but some were unable to buy lots and thus lost their investment.

Why weren't the co-op's grand visions fully realized? Here are a few of the reasons as I view them:

(1) The failure to obtain rezoning; (2) the increase in costs; (3) changed family circumstances; (4) a widespread feeling that after the postwar economic surge of price rise and inflation a major depression would occur (just wait, and if you still have a job you can build your house cheaper); and (5) not everybody liked the then modernistic California-style houses our architect had designed. Some preferred more traditional bungalow and Cape Cod designs.

I believe it is fair to say that pilot project members have been very happy with their homes and that, although there have inevitably been some changes in ownership, the stability of this small neighborhood has been remarkable. After 28 years, 15 of the 24 houses are still owned by the original owners.

Malcolm Maclay *

* Member Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. board from February 1947 to November 1949; secretary from April 1947 to November 1949.

The Area in 1949

After many months of group planning and discussion, the first families moved into Bannockburn's pilot project in the fall of 1949. A California architect, Vernon DeMars, had drawn up plans for contemporary houses which would blend into the rolling terrain of the Bannockburn golf course. He presented plans for houses of varying sizes, with and without basements, carports, and decks. Hillside lots provided the setting for houses with above-ground basements. Flat lots were used for houses with no basements. The functional houses were strategically placed to take full advantage of the wooded valley view. Most of the houses were built of redwood siding combined with either cinder block or brick. The houses were planned to be built into the hillsides, some with cantilevered decks, others with flat roofs. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which provided the financing for the houses, had misgivings about some of these "new" ideas. They insisted on requiring post supports under the decks before approving the homes for financing.

The houses, which were priced in the \$14,000 to \$26,000 range, seemed expensive to these residents. They had watched the prices rise while the planning was in progress, and some of them had feared that their dream houses would be priced out of their reach. For some of the new residents it was their first house and they looked forward to the escape from apartment living and the beginning of life in a cooperative community.

Everyone was anxious to get into his home as early as possible, so many families moved in before the final landscaping was finished. There was red clay everywhere and the fall rains kept it muddy, so most people had boards across the yards to their entrances until the grass was planted. Those with steep hillside lots had an erosion problem, and the fall of 1949 and spring of 1950 found these home owners hurriedly planting ground covers to keep their hillsides from washing away.

The drive out Massachusetts Avenue seemed like a drive to the country. Woodacres was a thriving community, but Glen Mar Park, Sumner, and Tulip Hill were still to appear on some architect's drawing board. Fairway Hills dated back to 1936, and Glen Echo had been incorporated as a town in 1904.

It was in Glen Echo that packages were mailed at a tiny, friendly post office that was located in a small building on Harvard Avenue next to Canada's tavern. The accommodating postmistress welcomed everyone and provided string and tape for packages when needed. A box of suckers was always there for the children. This friendly atmosphere is still a very pleasant feature of the post office.

Those who chose to use public transportation to Washington used the streetcar, which came to the end of Wilson Lane, then turned around and headed back. The streetcar was usually not crowded except when it was bringing a group to

the amusement park at Glen Echo. Regular riders found it a good opportunity to visit with their neighbors. If you happened to be taking the streetcar between five and six in the evening, you would see someone come out from the Glen Echo Post Office with a bag of mail. The streetcar motorman delivered it to the main post office near Union Station. Early the next morning he picked up the mailbag with incoming mail and brought it out to Glen Echo.

The ride along the Potomac was scenic, affording picturesque glimpses of the canal and the Potomac River. This was long before the George Washington Parkway on the Maryland side was built, and that choice land was peppered with many small, crudely built houses, which could be seen from the streetcar. These canal residents did not own the land but leased it from the Canal Company for \$5 per month. These houses disappeared when the land was taken over for the parkway. Today, if one walks along the path next to the Union Arch Bridge leading to Cabin John, he will still find the grass-covered streetcar ties for the turnaround and nearby the trestle over which the cars rumbled.

In 1949 and 1950 the closest shopping centers were at Spring Valley in the District and on Old Georgetown Road in Bethesda. Sometimes one combined shopping with a visit to the Bethesda Library, located at Moorland Lane near Arlington Road. If one needed something in a hurry there were three small country stores available. These accommodating small merchants would deliver groceries and would keep "accounts" if people wished to pay monthly. The Sycamore Store with its large pickle barrel was convenient if you were coming from town on MacArthur Boulevard. If you were in Cabin John there was Mr. Dickinson's grocery with the petunia boxes outside. This is now occupied by the Quick Food Shop. The District Grocery Store (DGS) in Glen Echo was operated by Dave Rappaport. It is said that if you were one of Dave's regular customers you could phone him when you were ready to come back from a vacation and he would deliver your order and put it in your refrigerator in readiness for your return.

For car repair the former Collison garage near the Army Map Service on MacArthur Boulevard was the place patronized by many residents, since his was the only garage between the D. C. line and Bannockburn. It was destroyed many years ago.

In those early days Thompson's Dairy and Sealtest delivered milk in this area. Some Bannockburners had their milkman so well trained that he could enter the house, pull out the old milk, put the new in the back, and replace the old for immediate use. If the lady of the house was in the habit of ordering eggs and butter, he could check on her supply and leave the proper amount even in her absence. It goes without saying that kitchen doors were pretty much unlocked in those days!

The children of elementary school age went to the Clara Barton School. They were transported by bus across the bridge, since that was considered too dangerous a place to walk. The older children were bussed to Leland Junior High School and Bethesda-Chevy Chase High.

The Potomac River and the canal provided iceskating opportunities in the very cold weather. As soon as the word spread that the ice was safe, families would scurry toward the Potomac with skates in hand. The hills on Braeburn

Place were great for sleds, and "snow days" gave children a golden opportunity to be on our hills instead of in the classroom.

The Glen Echo and Cabin John Fire Departments furnished protection for the community. In 1949 and for some years thereafter the Glen Echo Fire Department was housed at Vassar Circle (about half a mile away, in Glen Echo) so the siren was very audible in this community. When the new firehouse was built on Massachusetts Avenue the old building was vacated. A few years later it was purchased by the Baptist Church and, with some remodeling on the interior, became the church home for the present congregation.

The Glen Echo Amusement Park was a source of entertainment for the children. The Carrousel, the Ferris Wheel, the Laughing Lady (a robot who laughed uproariously when you passed her), the spooky rides through tunnels were all there. For the very courageous there was the roller coaster. Even if you did not ride on it the squeals of those who did could be heard throughout the Bannockburn community on summer evenings. There was a beautiful swimming pool there, too, with a fountain at its center and a giant slide which was an exciting way to enter the pool.

Our wooded view looked like a greeting card that first winter when the hillsides were covered with snow. For a short time the clubhouse was the only building that could be seen between the trees. One day in the summer of 1950 the bulldozers came and began to move the earth and trees on the hillsides across the creek to make way for the next group of Bannockburn houses. When the lights came on in these new homes we were on our way to becoming a larger community. The view had changed, but the presence of the new homes meant that the Bannockburn cooperative was growing and the dream was becoming a reality!

Dorothy Brethouwer Dutton

The Bannockburn Hermit

Soon after moving into the pilot project in November 1949 two young boys were merrily trampling about on the roof of a small shanty they had discovered in the woods on the hillside. The shanty was attached to the golf club's equipment shed. Suddenly they heard angry shouting, and a swarthy gray-headed, gray-bearded man emerged from beneath them. The man identified himself as a former maintenance worker on the golf course, who was living in the shanty. Inside the shed the boys could see a small wood stove.

Friendship never developed beyond hand waves of recognition, though the youngsters occasionally brought him food. The following spring the boys learned that the man had died a seemingly natural death. Thereafter he was known only as their "Bannockburn Hermit."

Elinor Maclay

The Co-op Struggles On*

Before the pilot project was completed, Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI) was beset by serious financial difficulties and had to borrow \$10,000 from the Greenbelt Consumer Services. The following statement in the minutes of the April 18, 1950 BCI board meeting described a crisis that was to recur more than once in the ensuing years:

The Board wishes to enter on the record the background discussion leading to its decision to negotiate an additional mortgage loan and further encumber the Co-op's land, as resolved above: the Co-op was faced with the alternatives of either immediately providing funds demanded by David Solomon, Inc. (as reported in previous minutes) to partially satisfy past requisitions, or to have operations on the Pilot Project stopped by Solomon, and the bonding company notified by the contractor that the Co-op was in default. It was the sense of the Board that such action would immediately result in the filing of mechanics liens, the foreclosure on mortgage loans, pressure by creditors and lenders, and rapid bankruptcy proceedings. Under such a distress liquidation, it was felt that any amount realized from the sale of Co-op land and property would be barely sufficient to satisfy mechanics liens and other creditors with prior claims over membership equities, and that it would be probable that membership equities would be completely wiped out, and the Co-op would dissolve. On the other hand, it was felt that any steps taken to enable a continuation of the Co-op's operations, either to build houses or to sell land in a normal market rather than under distress conditions, might make it possible for the Co-op to recover a large part of its capitalized costs, and therefore, its membership equities. This would directly benefit the membership, either by providing for recovery of equity as part of the purchase of property, or by eventual pay-off to present members, as the result of the sale of houses or land to new members or to non-members, which would provide funds for the liquidation of the equities of withdrawing members. Based on this line of reasoning, it was the unanimous opinion of the Board that any steps taken as a means of continuing the operations of the Co-op were to the immediate and long-range benefit of the Co-op and its members. Therefore, it was agreed that the above resolution /to borrow \$10,000 from Greenbelt Consumer Services/, and any similar actions of the Board (past or future) to provide working capital to the Co-op, were advantageous to Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc., and its membership.

While fending off bankruptcy with one hand, BCI continued its development program with the other. Early in 1950 the co-op contracted with David Solomon, Inc. for the construction of three Bannockburn-type houses in block 2 (Owen

* Based on BCI records.

Place) and seven in block 3 (7000 block of Braeburn Place). During 1950-51 Solomon built most of block 3, either for the co-op or for individual lot owners, with plans approved by BCI.

During 1950, also, a group of members got together to arrange for the construction of houses in block 4. (See "Block 4: Laverock Court-Wilson Lane.") That same year saw the birth of the Merrimack project in blocks 2, 6, 7, and 8 (Bannockburn Drive, both Halbert Roads, and Owen Place). (See "The Merrimack Homes.")

At the annual meeting in November, members were told that the sole hope of realizing any portion of the value of their equities lay in continuing the sale of lots. At that time the only way to retrieve \$143,600 worth of unallocated development costs was to add a proportionate amount to the cost of each lot to be sold in the future.

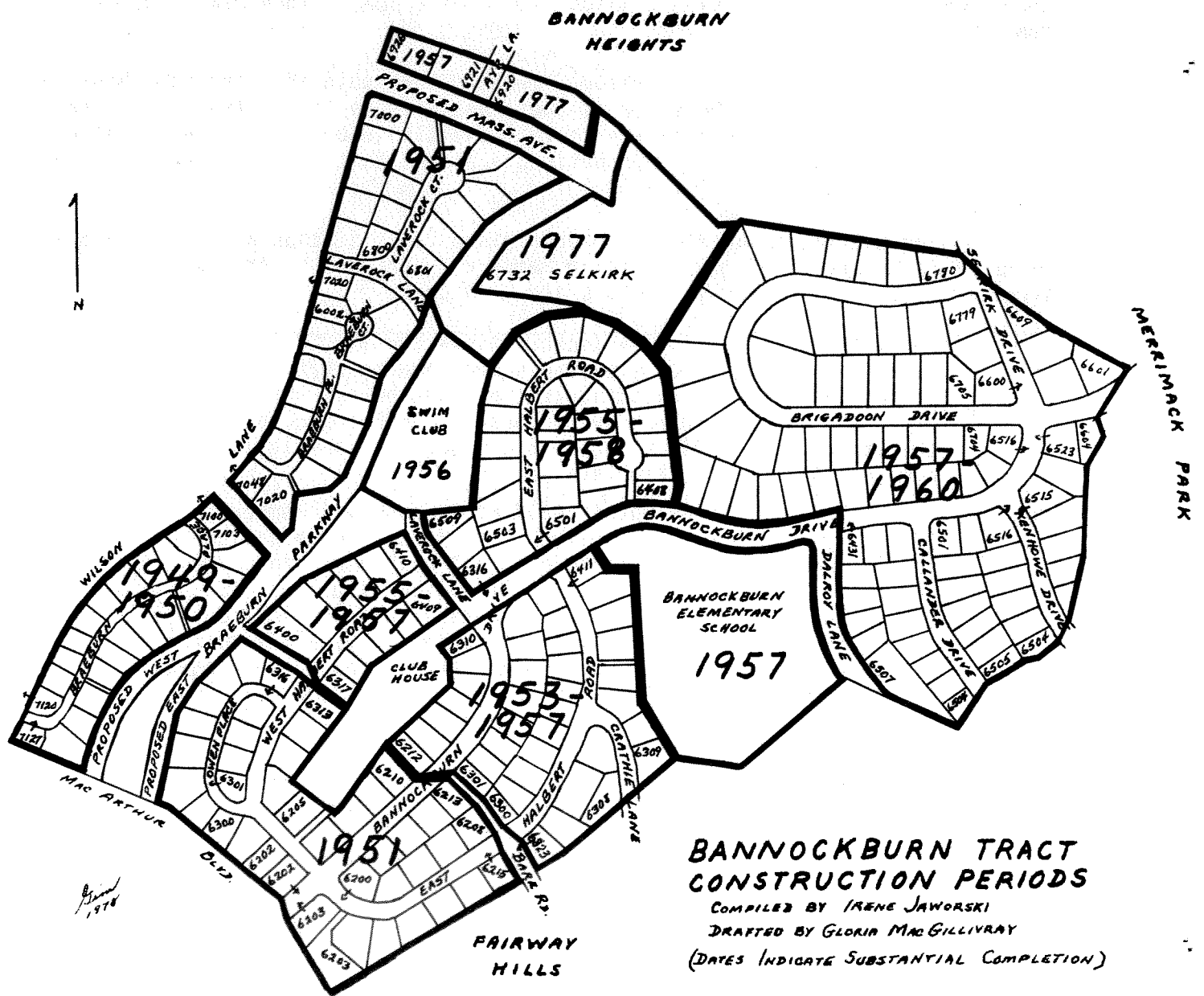
Further clarification of the co-op's financial situation at this time appears in "A Memorandum for Withdrawing Members," sent out by the executive director on January 11, 1951. This states, in part:

All members in joining Bannockburn invested \$1,005 (\$800 as part of a downpayment) with the understanding that additional sums would be forthcoming as they took houses which would repay the costs incurred by Bannockburn in bringing plans to the stage where members would obtain housing as well as to complete payment for the land....

However, since approximately half of Bannockburn members, for one or another valid reason, have found themselves unable to go through with their original plans, we find ourselves in an extremely difficult financial situation. Expenses incurred on behalf of all members (and the loss on the pilot project, which has equally to be borne by all members) are liabilities of the corporation, represented by mortgages, notes, and contractual obligations which must be met as they come due, and which can be met only as lots (with or without houses) are sold....

If the members who wish to withdraw do not make further investment through the purchase of a lot or a lot and house and do not find transferees who can do so in their stead, then Bannockburn will be confronted with the necessity of finding funds to meet obligations as they become due....

At this time, construction was taking place simultaneously in blocks 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 (Braeburn Place, Laverock Court, Owen Place, and the lower portions of Bannockburn Drive and both Halbert Roads). Despite all this hopeful-looking activity, however, the specter of bankruptcy still loomed over the co-op. In February 1951 the board authorized a study of how to liquidate the remainder of the Bannockburn property with a view to a 50 percent return on equity. At this time negotiations with R. H. Best to build from 5 to 30 houses fell through when the builder's bank insisted upon terms which were unacceptable to BCI. In April 1951 part of the valley was dedicated to the county as an extension of the proposed Braeburn Parkway, which still appears on current maps. ("The valley"



is the undeveloped woody and grassy area, containing the creek, which lies between the western and eastern portions of the community, from Selkirk Drive to MacArthur Boulevard.)

In June 1951 the board urged an aggressive campaign to sell the acreage and the clubhouse or at least to lease the clubhouse. Negotiations with the Montgomery County School Board took place regarding the purchase of 9 acres for a school site at \$3,000 per acre, plus half the cost of grading, storm sewers, curbs and gutters, and the paving of Bannockburn Drive and Dalroy Lane where they abutted the school site. (The county's offsite commitment was later limited to \$14,000.)

In September 1951 the executive director informed the members that half the 43 lots near the school site had been sold and that high building costs, credit regulations requiring high downpayments, and scarcity of loan funds had virtually stopped the possibility of any large-scale building program in the near future. A few houses were going to be built by individual lot-owners. One bright spot -- a big one -- was the purchase by the county of the 9-acre school site on September 13, 1951.

On December 21, 1951 BCI president Ernest Olson warned the members that unless the December 31 deadline for the \$7,000 mortgage payment was met, the co-op would be in default. (This mortgage was a second mortgage into which various creditors' claims had been consolidated.) A liquidation sale of the property would probably wipe out any chance for the recovery of investments by members who had not bought lots.

By the end of 1951 the developed areas of Bannockburn were: both Braeburn Places, Wilson Lane, Laverock Court, Owen Place, and the lower parts of Bannockburn Drive and of both Halbert Roads. Some lots had been sold beyond the Merri-mack houses and in the strip of land beyond the proposed extension of Massachusetts Avenue, just north of block 4.

In 1952 there was a lull in building operations. This was the year in which a new co-op was formed to build on 44 lots to the east and west of the clubhouse. (See "Green Park Cooperators, Inc.") The BCI board reported to the November annual meeting that, in view of a previous board decision that "Bannockburn should not engage directly in any further building on its own account," the new project "represents the best hope on our horizon at the moment." The examining committee reported that "realizable assets are considerably less than the total amount owed to creditors" and that "pressure by principal creditors has been relieved by a rearrangement of first and second mortgages." At this time BCI had 260 members, half of whom owned homes or lots in Bannockburn.

When the new co-op's intentions were thwarted the following year, efforts were intensified to sell the remaining lots and the acreage. The 6400 block of West Halbert Road, most of the 6300 block of Bannockburn Drive, the 6400 block of East Halbert Road, and the portion of Crathie Lane near East Halbert Road were developed during 1953-57 by Ernest Cook, Israel Cohen, and other builders.

Efforts during 1954 were devoted to selling more of BCI's 26 remaining, mortgaged lots, trying to find a buyer for the acreage, and putting off various creditors. Finally, in the fall, when BCI was again on the brink of financial

disaster, the acreage was sold. (See "The Development of Upper Bannockburn.") At this time the co-op still owned 11 lots, mostly in the 6500 block of East Halbert Road.

The Bannockburn Swimming Club purchased about 3 acres in the valley in April 1955. (See "Bannockburn Swimming Club, Inc.") The following year a number of residents living in the vicinity of the pool purchased in common about 2 acres of land abutting the club's property to the north. (The only valley land now owned by the co-op is to the south of the club's property.)

The very last unsold lot of the co-op's subdivided property was purchased in 1958 (6408 Bannockburn Drive, right next to the beginning of Upper Bannockburn).

And so the co-op survived -- and we have a Bannockburn community. Now all we have to worry about is how to keep the clubhouse going.

Irene Jaworski

REAL ESTATE
Announcements

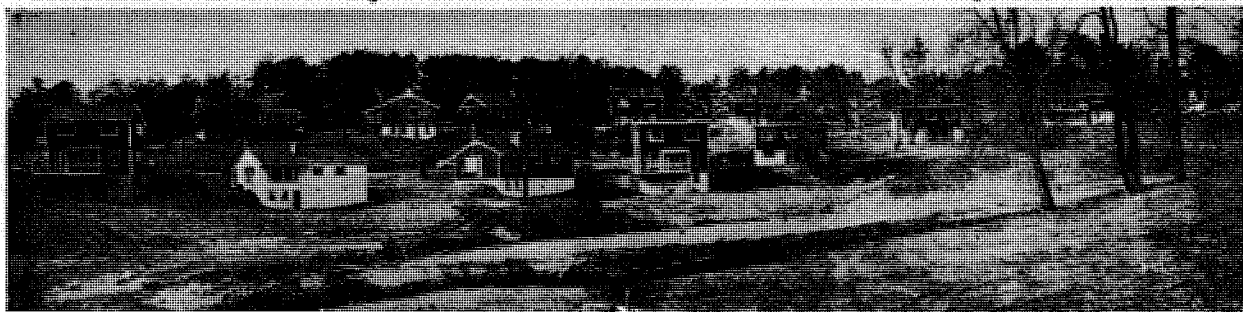
The Evening Star

REAL ESTATE
General News

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WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1960

Bannockburn Co-Op Will Build More Houses Despite Cost Rise



Washington Star Photo

The Pilot Project: 20-Year Celebration

On April 18, 1970 all families living in the original pilot project gathered at the home of Rosalyn and Irwin Tobin, the first family to occupy its home in the project. The occasion was to celebrate the symbolic burning of 20-year mortgages which became effective in 1950. It was a natural get-together for gaiety and reminiscences. Some of the families' grown children were present, thus adding to the interest of the evening.

Part of the fun was viewing pictures of the houses as they had appeared in 1949 and pictures of the families at that time.

Block 4. Laverock Court-Wilson Lane

Block 4 is in the northwest portion of the co-op tract, bounded by Wilson Lane on the west, Laverock Lane on the south, the proposed right-of-way for Massachusetts Avenue on the north, and the creek on the east. Block 4 was one of the sections of the co-op that was built upon by a group of co-op members instead of being developed by the co-op management. It was settled mainly in 1951 by 17 families who wanted to live in the community but did not want to pay the then seemingly high pilot project prices. Reluctantly, because it was strapped for funds, Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI) agreed to let this group hire its own contractor and build.

The nucleus of this subcommunity came from Buckingham, a garden development in Virginia. Irving Hoddes approached the BCI board with his development plan and obtained permission to organize the group. Hoddes and several other members negotiated directly with the Eastern Construction Corporation. BCI required that all 17 lots be purchased as part of the arrangement, and the cost of offsite development had to be paid whether the owners planned to build houses immediately or not. Members of the group were entitled to choose lots in the order of the co-op's priority lists. With one exception no changes were made in the standard pilot project house plans, but a brick exterior was substituted for redwood. The cost of the houses, including the lot, ranged between \$16,000 and \$19,000, an upper middle-class price in 1951. As it turned out, 13 lot owners' houses in block 4 were built by the Eastern Construction Corporation, while one was built by David Solomon and three somewhat later by Ernest Cook, who was to play an important role in the future development of the Bannockburn tract.

The area thus developed had been a rolling meadow covered with high grass. It had only one huge tree, which shaded what became the cul-de-sac at the end of Laverock Court and has since succumbed, probably to construction activity. Today, however, Laverock Court and the adjacent area have become a leafy bower through the landscaping talents of the homeowners around it, for while the first residents, arriving in monthly intervals, encountered a sea of mud, no telephones, no air-conditioning, and the persistence of other primitive conditions, like newcomers in other parts of the developing tract, block 4 residents threw themselves into landscaping and gardening activities. Bannockburn oldtimers remember with pleasure the profusion of Bob Branstead's prize-winning chrysanthemums.

Seven houses of block 4 are still occupied by their original owners. Of the 10 who left, two went no further afield than to new homes built in other parts of the co-op tract and two to homes in adjacent subdivisions, from which they keep in touch with old friends and participate in the community's activities.

Alfred Reifman

The Merrimack Homes

For me the story of the Merrimack homes begins on a Sunday afternoon in December of 1949 in our apartment in Fairlington, Virginia. The girls were out at neighbors' homes, the Sunday paper was more or less read, and it was raining -- factors calculated to get Charlotte and me involved in expressions of exasperation regarding the Bannockburn co-op. It was now over 4 years since we had joined Group Housing Cooperative after hearing Udo Rall on the loudspeaker at the Fairlington co-op grocery, 3 years since we had put up \$200 for the syndicate to buy the Bannockburn golf course, and over a year since we had committed \$1,000 for a Bannockburn house.

Despite the delay and frustration we were still convinced that the co-op way was the way to go in housing. We held to that conviction in spite of the fact that, as building costs kept going up, it became more and more apparent that we would not be able to afford one of the Bannockburn-designed houses. We stayed in the co-op even though we served on committees that seemed to get nowhere, and I, as a board member, was disillusioned with how things did or did not get done. Furthermore, zoning for a "planned community" was not in the cards, and there would probably be no central maintenance of plumbing or lawns.

On that Sunday afternoon I first called Arthur Gladstone, who had recently been elected to the Bannockburn board on a platform of getting houses for us. He explained all the reasons why we still didn't have them. The next thing we did was to invite the Orkins, the Pollacks, the Zwerdlings, and a few others -- all in the same spot we were in -- over to our house to discuss the situation. When we got together, a few thoughts emerged. Other friends and acquaintances, not tied to the co-op housing idea, were buying homes in the area and apparently were satisfied. But we did not want to give up on Bannockburn. For one thing, we had a desirable location in the hilly old golf course, and more important, we were looking forward to living in a cooperative community.

What, then, was the problem? The problem was that the co-op had established some principles that were to be followed in building the community. The overall aspect of the community, for example, was to be one of variety, not a series of identical homes. Other principles were that the consumers should hire their own architect, to get houses designed for living rather than speculation, with ample closets, good heating systems, adequate lots, and the consumers should also hire their own builder for homes built to last, with good workmanship and seasoned lumber. Not only did we agree with these principles, but we had helped formulate them. Now it looked as if they were pricing us out of the housing market.

The group listened to "testimonials" from the Orkins, who had seen a fairly well-designed Cambridge house in Virginia, and from the Chases, who had visited a Merrimack house in Langley Park that was selling for \$12,000 and looked pretty good. We discussed the horror stories about speculative builders and cheating of anxious home purchasers during the immediate postwar period and decided they were no longer true. Why couldn't we get a good local builder,

whose plans we liked, to build houses for us in Bannockburn?

We finally realized that we were prepared to abandon the co-op's principles. But how should we proceed to convince the Bannockburn board to do likewise? We agreed we had to approach it gingerly. We needed a green light from the board, but we wanted to work the details out ourselves. Accordingly, we petitioned the board as follows:

Several members of Bannockburn met recently to consider the problem of future building in Bannockburn, with a view to making it possible for them to retain their membership, and for them to be home owners there at a date not too far in the future....

The members present based their discussions on the assumption that a good portion of the membership, themselves included, want a \$15,000 house with three bedrooms and a basement. Type 10A is not satisfactory. However, there appear to be a number of attractive houses on the market now which would meet their requirements, and which might be built in Bannockburn. These include, with modifications in some cases of the basic house, the Cambridge, Pollinger, Merrimack, and other homes, some of which have already been purchased by Bannockburn members.

It was felt that, rather than continuing our previous practice of formulating a plan which would meet these requirements, and obtaining bids upon it, it might be more fruitful to negotiate with some of the builders or developers of homes already built which seem acceptable to our members, with a view to having them build the same or similar homes on our site.

It would appear desirable, because of the current press of activities on the Board, that a committee of members, including at least one Board member, be designated very soon to explore the possibilities of this approach.

The letter, dated January 9, 1950, was signed by the Chases, Orkins, Pollacks, Franks, Sissmans, Sonensheins, and Zwerdlings. In no time at all we got a response: the board was assigning Lou Schwartz and Jack Tourin to work with us. It turned out that they -- Schwartz and Tourin -- were delighted with the plan. They too had concluded that there was not much hope for them in Bannockburn without a new approach. They quickly took over the project and started negotiating with several builders.

It was a fortuitous coincidence that Becker and Racusin, the Merrimack builders, were ready for another project when they were approached by us. Of all the comparatively low-cost houses being built in the area, their design was especially well-suited to the community. In addition the Merrimack Construction Corporation turned out to be a pretty reputable and responsible firm.

The plan was that the co-op would sell improved lots to 19 members, who would sign individual contracts with Merrimack for their houses, and the co-op would contract for offsite work. (Eventually, there were 22 houses in the first Merrimack project.) After a special membership meeting in May of 1950

it was clear that we had that many families ready to sign up. The price was attractive -- about \$14,000 -- and the lots had already been laid out for the lower ends of Bannockburn Drive and East and West Halbert Roads and were close to utility lines. Schwartz and Tourin worked out a fair price for each lot, based on its cost, and we could choose according to our priority numbers.

Our first major problem was to get Merrimack to provide some options. Becker, the architect, was adamant. His design was tight in order to achieve his low-cost goals. Basements, second baths, and enlarged rooms were not included. Finally he agreed to some options: house length extended by 2 or 4 feet, extra half-bath, additional small storage room, side porch, and a couple of minor items. Although he thought basements might be possible for a few lots, we ended up with no basements.

After all the arrangements were worked out and the deal consummated, we were confronted with the potential impact of the Korean War on deliveries of major equipment. Merrimack informed us that they couldn't assure us of a reasonable completion time unless they could immediately purchase all major materials and equipment, especially furnaces, refrigerators, washing machines, and dryers. In the summer of 1950 we each agreed to put up our downpayment ahead of time, to be put into an escrow fund totaling \$50,000 to permit Merrimack to purchase supplies and equipment, all of which were stored in the clubhouse.

Subsequent events proved the wisdom of this move. The Korean War quickly caused widespread shortages of building materials and rapidly rising prices. Construction began in September. The Merrimack houses on Bannockburn Drive and East Halbert Road were completed in the spring of 1951 without any cost escalations. The project would probably have been abandoned had not the advance purchase plan been adopted.

A second group of 15 Merrimack houses was completed on West Halbert Road and Owen Place in the fall of the same year. A few houses in the second group had basements, to the chagrin of some of the 22 original occupants who had wanted basements too. By the time Merrimack got around to developing Merrimack Park, the original basic low-cost house had been substantially modified. In the process some models even lost the Merrimack "trade-mark" -- the large brick "outdoor-indoor" fireplace chimney.*

Of the original signers of the petition to the Bannockburn board, four purchased Merrimack houses. The Chases and the Pollacks are still living there, not sure how they survived in the limited space with three or four children, respectively, but now finding the house just right for two.

Over the years I've heard many favorable comments about the looks of the Merrimack houses in Bannockburn. Apparently, if the terrain is properly utilized, the lots big enough, and the architecture pleasant, it's O.K. to be repetitive.

Milton Chase

* The Merrimack Park subdivision was built in the late fifties in two sections, one of which abuts the northeast boundary of the Bannockburn tract.

The Orkins' morning-glories did it! It was a Sunday afternoon early in October 1958, and the flowers were so beautiful. My two brothers and I were driving around, just looking at houses in general. One brother, an architect, had intended to design a house for John, my other brother, and me.

I saw the morning-glories and "OPEN" sign, and we all rushed in. We were immediately convinced that the house and the price were right. We signed up that very afternoon and left at dusk.

A few days later I was dismayed to find out that the house was one of many of the same design! We had acted on the impression that our house (the first of its kind on the left when you drive down Bannockburn Drive) was unique in construction. Over the years, however, that has turned out well, since there is so much variety in the landscaping of these Merrimack homes and the additions built onto them, that the similarity of design does not appear monotonous but rather gives a charming unity to the entire Merrimack part of Bannockburn.

Catherine Quinn



Irene Jaworski building wall, Bannockburn Drive, 1952

Green Park Cooperators, Inc.

When I was asked to prepare this bit of Bannockburn history, my immediate response was, "I never belonged to anything called Green Park." But there were the records. When I saw my name included in numerous sets of "minutes" and when I read memos I had written 25 years ago, I felt rather silly, on the one hand, but also pleased and grateful that the records of that interesting period had been kept and that the entire history of Bannockburn was being assembled for the edification of new Bannockburners and the "re-edification" of old ones.

As I read the files, what came through as important was not a series of facts that had slipped my mind but a reminder of the incredible difficulties that had been overcome, in one way or another, because of the dedicated selflessness and steadfastness of people like Mary Herling and because of the social-mindedness of the early Bannockburn settlers.

The Green Park dreams of 1952-53 never did materialize as such, but the project did lead to the development of another section of Bannockburn and brought into the community a number of its most active and concerned families.

The Green Park territory can be thought of basically as the lots surrounding the clubhouse -- between the Merrimack houses and the school site to the north. It included what is now Bannockburn Drive from 6300 through 6320; West Halbert from 6317 through 6410; East Halbert from 6302 through 6411; Laverock Lane, 6505-6509; and Crathie Lane, 6308-6313. It was on these 44 lots that Green Park Cooperators, Inc. had planned to build a subdivision under section 213 of the National Housing Act (the "cooperative section"). In early 1952 it seemed most hopeful and likely that, under this section 213, very favorable financing would be secured, with Federal Housing Administration (FHA) insurance on 4 percent mortgages for up to 40 years. It would have been a management-type housing cooperative -- the kind originally planned for with ownership of houses by the co-op and rights of perpetual occupancy by members.

There were scores of co-op minded families in the Washington area at the time who were attracted to "that Bannockburn community" at the end of that exciting trolley ride through the woods, and who might be able to scrape up about \$3,000 to get their own house -- and afford about \$100 a month for a 3- or 4-bedroom house.

Some of these had already purchased lots from Bannockburn; most had not. Would the lot owners be willing to sell their lots to the prospective co-op? On January 18, 1952 Mary Herling, coordinator of the project, sent the first of what would be a seemingly endless series of memoranda to lot owners and to prospective partners in the new co-op. In that first memo Mary sought 60-day options from lot owners who were willing to sell for their original purchase price "plus perhaps actual out-of-pocket costs for settlement and for taxes." The Bannockburn co-op itself owned a number of lots it was prepared to release for the new co-op, which was not under the jurisdiction of Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI).

Within the next months there were available 44 lots (at a total price of \$126,000), which were optioned to Wallace Campbell, representing the co-op to be incorporated if the plan went through.

Because of the inevitable, exasperating delays at the FHA bureaucratic levels and the difficulties in getting firm applications during a period of uncertainty, Mary Herling spent much time through most of 1952 requesting and obtaining renewals of the options offered by original lot owners. But on October 1, 1952, Mary was able to advise all Bannockburn members that "the proposed cooperative housing project for 44 homes to be built around the clubhouse, has been approved by FHA. This means that once a commitment for a loan has been obtained (and this is perhaps the most difficult part of the job) and 40 applications have been received, building can begin." As we shall see, in those words contained in the parenthesis, Mary was, unhappily, most prescient.

But in that happy October 1 memo it was reported that 27 applications had already come in; that of the 44 houses, 32 would have daylight basements; that prices of the houses (without land, which was going to be handled through leasehold arrangements) would range from \$14,250 to \$17,650 for houses of from five to eight rooms. There would be two types: rambler and Cape Cod.

Applicants for these homes were required to pay down \$50, which, if all went well, would be credited towards the purchase price, but if the project were not carried out in spite of all the diligent efforts, the \$50 would be a non-refundable contribution to defray costs of plans and specifications, application fees to FHA, etc.

That the situation was looking quite hopeful at the time can be gleaned from Mary's memo dated October 25, 1952 to all prospective members of the new co-op. They were invited to come to a meeting in the clubhouse on Sunday, November 2, to discuss the bylaws prepared by the group that had applied to FHA for the Certificate of Eligibility, consisting of Wallace Campbell, Jean Marburg, Kenneth Baker, Paul Banner, and Mary Herling. While the meeting was to start at 3 o'clock, members were urged to come at 11:30 to "help find stakes and identify lots," to "address envelopes," to "take turns watching children in the playground," and to "talk with any prospective applicants who may come out."

To this writer perhaps the most touching item in this whole story is that the October 25 memo also said: "Bring a picnic lunch for your family. I will supply coffee. If you want hot dogs, rolls, milk, or cokes, and will tell me the day before how many and how much you want, I'll be glad to buy them for you and you can reimburse me on Sunday." Mary didn't overlook a thing!

But the optimism of October soon turned to despair. The next month's elections led to a change in administration (Eisenhower had won over Stevenson) and a change in general attitudes about the future. Many of the original Green Park members failed to sign their formal application in December (following incorporation in November). Early in January there were only 10 committed applicant-members. By the end of January the number was 17, and a request was pending before the prospective financing company for a reduced 30-member cooperative. Once again original lot owners had to be asked for option extensions!

Early in April, at long last, it seemed that the pieces had been put together. There were now 23 firm Green Park members and the project would consist

of 25 houses. Stanley McGaughan was the architect and Ernest Cook the builder. There was much talk of grading and extras and basements and picture windows and new FHA filings and construction loans. A new co-op was ready to be built!

On June 5 Mary wrote joyously to all members about "the good news that FHA called yesterday to say that the Commitment to Insure the loan for Green Park Cooperators in the amount of \$337,200 will be ready for signing today. (It is ready!)" Members were finally being asked to send in their application deposits of at least \$200.

But by the end of June 1953 an ominous change had occurred. Before the expected closing could take place, a very tight money market had developed and there was no construction money in sight. At an emergency meeting of Green Park on June 18 the members even agreed to extra payments to increase the service fee for potential new sources of funds. But to no avail.

This latest "Perils of Pauline" chapter in the Green Park saga was again threatening the whole dream -- but not quite! In her memo to all Green Park members, dated June 29, 1953, a memo that must have caused her much anguish, Mary in effect told us all that after 18 months of all that effort the co-op was probably dead.

But in that same memo we were also advised that, while the co-op as such might be dead, our individual dreams about having a home in Bannockburn could still be realized! Refusing to take no for an answer, Mary had started to explore other possibilities in the event Green Park as such had to be abandoned. The builder, Ernest Cook, had indicated he could get loans from a Hyattsville company for individual houses under FHA, Veterans Administration (VA), or conventional financing. He was ready to build the same houses at the same price, on condition that at least 10 of the Green Park cooperators were interested. Their decisions had to be made, however, in 2 or 3 weeks. A special meeting was set for July 9 for the final judgment as to whether co-op financing and building were still possible.

The final paragraph of that June 29 memorandum sums up the whole situation:

It is not necessary to say how dreadful this news has been to all of us and what discouragement I personally feel about the project on which so much work has been invested and which promised so much for such a modest investment. However, there is nothing to do except to try to work out the miracle, and practical plans short of it. The meetings have been a revelation of what a really fine group of people have come together in this venture which makes it harder to face the present possibilities.

Because of a death in Mary's family the July 9 meeting had to be postponed until July 15. Before this meeting, attended by 17 Green Park members and chaired by Kenneth Baker, was the fateful decision "whether to release those members who did not wish to wait further, to continue to try to carry through the project, to abandon project completely, or to work out some other plan."

After anguished discussion, the group agreed unanimously to try until July 31 to obtain financing; after that date individual members who wished to

be released would have their money refunded except for their initial contribution prior to their formal application and the depositing of \$200. Another motion adopted unanimously authorized the temporary withholding of the \$200 deposits until a plan could be recommended for the liquidation of over \$4,000 in outstanding obligations. Seven of those present indicated they were ready to proceed with individual building by Ernest Cook.

Despite heroic efforts during the next two weeks, with hope lingering until the very last hours of July 31, no financing could be arranged. To all intents and purposes the Green Park co-op dream had evaporated.

The social-mindedness of those who had dreamt the dream was perhaps best illustrated by what happened next. A special committee, of which I was chairman, recommended to those whose \$200 payments were being held up that, even though each member had legal rights to those payments, we all had a moral obligation to share in the costs which had been incurred in good faith and with every expectation that those expenditures would have made possible our living in a Bannockburn co-op. Failure to resolve legitimate creditors' claims against us would reflect heavily on Bannockburn in particular and on the co-op movement generally. The escrow fund contained \$4,600 (23 @ \$200). It was proposed that each member voluntarily give up \$100 and thus make possible a 50 percent settlement. My memo to the members transmitting this recommendation reminded them of Mary Herling's heroic efforts. "It is," I wrote, "unnecessary to remind you of the tremendous efforts -- usually unrecognized and unrewarded -- which Mary threw into the project. It is she who has had to deal with our creditors all these months, pleading for patience with them, continuing to hold their interest and cooperation. It would be awful indeed if her reward for all of this should consist of permanent embarrassment and discomfort in her future dealings with these people. It is up to us to ease this burden."

The response was heartening indeed. Twenty members responded, seventeen agreeing at once to the \$100 contribution, the others "not opposed, but indefinite."

Thus Green Park was abandoned, though the corporation survived another, final annual meeting in November of 1953. But the essence of Green Park did come to fruition. Ernest Cook built on nearly all the lots that had been in the co-op plans -- and many more later on. Although only about one of four of the original planners ended up as buyers of homes in the Green Park area, the work had not been in vain. Forty families moved in over the next 4 years and were as friendly and co-op minded and socialminded as any co-op group ever was.

Green Park's experience was a switch on the old gag: the operation failed, but the patient lived on -- in 40 Bannockburn homes that Green Park had made possible.

Hyman Bookbinder

The Development of Upper Bannockburn

Forty-two acres of the Bannockburn tract, situated to the north and east of the Bannockburn school site, was never subdivided by the co-op. We called that land "the upper acreage." From the uppermost area (now near the Brigadoon Drive loop) one could enjoy a gorgeous view across the Potomac Valley southward into Virginia. That portion of Bannockburn also bears some of the tallest and oldest trees in the community -- oaks.

At the annual meeting of Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI) in November 1952 vice-president Israel L. Sonenshein spoke of problems hampering the development of the upper acreage. He mentioned the difficult grading of Bannockburn Drive up the steep hill and the fact that the upper land lay above the low-pressure water line in use at that time. The water-pressure problem was solved in 1956 when Merrimack Park was begun, and a high-pressure water line was brought to the edge of the upper acreage.

In the meantime first the second trust note and then, on September 30, 1954, the first trust note on the co-op's remaining land became due, and foreclosure proceedings were initiated. In this situation Ernest Cook, already known as a builder in the area, bought the 42 acres for \$70,000. He paid over \$54,000 in cash for the two notes, past due taxes and interest, and gave the co-op a 3-year trust note for \$15,500. He and Nathan Shapiro organized the Selkirk Corporation, which developed the acreage so purchased as the "Wilson Knoll" subdivision of 92 lots. This subdivision today covers Bannockburn Drive from 6410 to 6523, Dalroy Lane, Callander Drive, Kenhowe Drive from 6504 to 6516, Selkirk Drive from 6600 to 6609, and all of Brigadoon Drive, including 6601 and 6604.

The architectural firm of McGaughan and Johnson was engaged to plan three types of houses: a two-level rambler, which became the most popular house in Upper Bannockburn, a slightly larger rambler with a porch, and a split-level model of which only a few were built.

The sales brochure advertised "an uncluttered prestige community adjacent to Bannockburn Heights" and avoided any reference to Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. or even the former golf club. The school, then under construction, was referred to as the "Bannockburn Heights Elementary School." At the beginning of 1957 the Berlin, Welling, Wilkins, and Hans Hirsch families, all Bannockburn residents who needed larger houses, signed up with the Selkirk Corporation, and so did a score or so of families from the outside.

At that time the Merrimack Construction Corporation was completing the construction of Merrimack Park to the east and south of Upper Bannockburn. In February 1957 the Merrimack Recreation Association was launched to build a swimming pool on land adjacent to the upper acreage. Many of the future Upper Bannockburners joined as charter members.

The first families moved into their houses in September 1957, just when the Bannockburn school opened. One of our first experiences was to observe the Soviet "Sputnik" high in the sky from our newly acquired land.

Ed. Note: The Selkirk Corporation developed part of Brigadoon Drive and sold 12 lots to builders Merton Berman and Louis Badini and a few other lots to individuals for custom-built homes, several of which are notable for their unusual design. One house was designed by Marcel Breuer.

As the upper acreage was populated, the question arose as to which community we belonged to. Those of us who had lived in Bannockburn for years felt that we had moved within Bannockburn. Cook's creation of "Wilson Knoll" (later "Wilson Knolls") and his advertising, however, had not been conducive to making Bannockburners out of those who had moved in from the outside. Some people thought that, as members of the Merrimack Recreation Association, we might just as well join the Merrimack Civic Association; but those of us who were BCI members signed up the new residents as members of the Bannockburn Civic Association (BCA), whose jurisdiction encompassed the entire Bannockburn tract. The April 1957 Bannockburn Community Directory map had already shown all the new streets then under construction. A year later two of BCA's officers were from Upper Bannockburn. When we found golf balls while digging our gardens, we had ultimate proof that we belonged to Bannockburn. After a short time no one thought to question that the upper acreage was an integral part of the Bannockburn community.

Hans George Hirsch

In the summer of 1950 we saw and fell in love with the Merrimack rambler in Langley Park. The builders told us they had all been sold, but that they would be building in Bannockburn. We had close friends who were members of the Bannockburn co-op and who had invested money towards the purchase of a lot but in the meantime had purchased a home elsewhere and were no longer interested in building in Bannockburn. So we took over their membership and investment and purchased a lot in Bannockburn and then contracted to have the Merrimack rambler built on it. We moved into our home in November of 1951 and have loved the house and community ever since.

Mildred and Sam Silverman

The Area in 1977

Driving or walking around Bannockburn, the casual observer has the immediate impression of an established, mature suburban community of modest but well-built single-family homes. House styles are varied -- redwood and brick ramblers and split levels, brick and clapboard colonials and Cape Cods, a few modern or untraditional designs -- and the profile is generally low, suggesting that the residents have always been more concerned with privacy and the pursuit of their own affairs than with displays of affluence. Over the years houses representing the same style have in many cases been remodeled to meet the needs of growing families or to suit the personalities of their owners. Tradition has thus been pleasantly blended with individualism, and the present blend is likely to remain that way: vacant lots, if they exist at all, are nowhere in evidence.

Foliage abounds. Sometimes it appears that Bannockburners are determined to create a jungle-like environment made up of every known species adaptable to the Maryland climate. Gardens reflect years of thoughtful landscaping, and yards are screened from each other with vigorous hedges and flowering shrubs and trees. Fences are rare. The crabapples and oaks lining Bannockburn Drive are well developed and flourishing. Scattered stands of bamboo, planted by early residents, are now thick and roof-high. Tall trees -- oak, maple, tulip, and pine -- are generously distributed and still in good condition. Except for occasional stacks of windfall firewood and the fallen willows and debris clogging sections of the creek valley, there is little sign of the violent storms -- including the tail end of the Agnes hurricane in 1972 -- that have swept the area in recent years. In Bannockburn man and nature have grown together, working out a happy compromise. The result is a quiet haven, secluded from surrounding highways and neighboring communities.

Bannockburn shared with other communities in Montgomery County a sudden surge in real estate values after 1971. In 1977 the modest homes in Bannockburn could no longer be considered "moderately" priced. Although the value of homes had increased fairly consistently over the years, in the early 1970's they "took off," mainly as a result of the slowdown in new building caused by a moratorium on new sewer connections in the county and by a shortage of housing credit. The effects on the community are difficult to gauge. Bannockburn continues to attract the same kind of family as before, and houses find ready buyers. There may be a few more renters than a decade ago. Perhaps the most obvious effect of high real estate values is that it is much harder for a young professional family to buy a home here. Higher real estate values also affect residents who have growing families or changing needs: since the price of a new home is high everywhere in the county and even the metropolitan area, and since it's hard to leave such a congenial neighborhood, there is one obvious recourse: remodel the existing home rather than buy a new one. There has been a lot of carpentry and bricklaying going on in Bannockburn in the last 5 years.

Bannockburn retains to a fair degree the cooperative spirit that first motivated its establishment, as well as the deep concern for social welfare

characteristic of the early residents. Both qualities managed to survive the early trials, problems, and passing conflicts of many years ago. However, a greater effort -- sometimes a struggle -- seems to be necessary now to foster this spirit in the face of basic social changes in the community. The sense of cooperativeness and community no longer springs so naturally from the needs of young families who are all about the same age; who are all drawn together to oversee the development of their children; who seek most religious and cultural activities in the company of their neighbors; and who all share much the same life and daily needs. In 1977 there is a wide range of households: a few families with children in elementary school; others with children in junior high school, high school, and college; still others whose children have grown and established homes elsewhere; retired families; some newlyweds; a few singles living alone or with others. Recreational opportunities -- and distractions -- are well developed and accessible outside the community and in front of the television set. It seems that a greater number of wives are working, either part-time or full-time. In sum, Bannockburn has matured and changed.

And yet it is impossible to compare Bannockburn with neighboring suburban communities without realizing how firmly the original cooperative spirit is still entrenched. A feeling for family privacy coexists happily with a feeling for community cooperation. There are certain ritual occasions (the Halloween Party, the Newcomers' Party, and especially the Spring Show) on which one can rely to reaffirm community ties; and the clubhouse and the Bannockburn and Merri-mack Park swimming pools serve as social gathering places missing in most other suburbs.

Bannockburn remains truly unique in the entire vicinity in having its own community facility -- the clubhouse -- a social bulwark. Somehow, despite its obvious aging, it still presents a stately, solid appearance as one drives up the short road to its small parking lot. It is difficult to conceive of Bannockburn without the clubhouse. Because of this, some of the best minds and the hardest workers in the community have been struggling in recent years to keep it going. Some of the most serious structural problems have been taken care of, and there have been periodic campaigns to "prettify" the interior, exterior, and landscaping. In some ways it exemplifies the quandary of a community in change: it is no longer the site of the community's major social life, it is increasingly expensive to maintain (especially with today's high energy costs), yet it is a symbol of Bannockburn as a community at a time when most suburbs lack or are losing any community spirit, and it remains the only facility available for certain kinds of community activities. (For more about the clubhouse see "The Bannockburn Clubhouse.")

Transportation

Although the current zoning map still shows proposed extensions of Braeburn Parkway, Massachusetts Avenue, and Broxburn Drive, it is unlikely that these roads will ever be built. There seems to be no present need for them.

For Bannockburners the roads of more immediate interest are MacArthur Boulevard, Wilson Lane, and Goldsboro Road, now heavily traveled during commuter hours and on weekends. In recent years MacArthur Boulevard, which is controlled by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, has been upgraded and resurfaced, mainly to protect the underlying Washington Aqueduct from traffic; adjoining storm drains and shoulders have been improved, the right of way

replanted, and at Glen Echo an ingenious maze of service lanes has been introduced to solve the traffic flow problems around the shopping center and the intersection with Goldsboro Road. Wilson Lane, controlled by the State and classed as an arterial highway, has also been resurfaced but otherwise little changed; while we hear occasional rumors that it may be realigned and widened, the State has no such plans on the drawing board at the present time. Bannockburners should not forget, however, that the existing right of way on Wilson Lane would permit such alterations.

A new addition to local transportation is the hard-surfaced bike path which parallels MacArthur Boulevard, on the river side, from Brookmont to the Old Angler's Inn at Cropley. Despite some bad spots, where it crosses heavily used intersections or merges with MacArthur, this path has proven a boon to hikers, bikers, joggers, and casual strollers alike. Its local utility has been much enhanced, moreover, by its having been accommodated into the reconstruction of the old Union Arch Bridge over Cabin John Creek (once a pedestrian hazard comparable only to running the gauntlet) and by a secondary, loose-surfaced path leading off just short of the Union Arch Bridge and joining the canal towpath by means of a wooden footbridge over the canal.

Additions to local transportation were offset by a major and keenly felt loss: the service provided by the Cabin John Trolley Line was terminated in 1960. By 1977 all that remained of this historical and convenient line was the trackless right of way, here and there converted to a green strip, its trestles rotting behind the trees, its terminal loop lost in a patch of woods at the foot of Wilson Lane. The trolley was inadequately replaced by a small bus, affectionately known as the Cabin John Cannonball, which backfired its way along MacArthur Boulevard from Sibley Hospital to the Quick Food Shop in Cabin John. But this too was discontinued, and now the only available public transportation is the Metro bus connecting Glen Echo with the District via Goldsboro Road and Massachusetts Avenue.

Shopping Facilities

Once on the far edge of Washington's suburban development, Bannockburn now has ready access to three major highway arteries: River Road (now a four-lane divided highway), the George Washington Memorial Parkway, paralleling the C & O Canal, and the Beltway (Route 495). These partly reflect the tremendous growth of Washington's suburbs. Depending on one's needs and outlook, the impact has both good and bad elements. By private car from Bannockburn it is now 15 minutes to the major shopping center at Tysons Corner in Virginia; roughly half an hour via a special scenic highway to the impressive Dulles Airport for international flights; only 5 minutes to the District Line and barely 20 minutes to the heart of downtown Washington; local shopping centers are between 5 and 20 minutes away. On the negative side, these new highways are largely responsible for the heavy commuter and weekend traffic that flows along MacArthur Boulevard and Wilson Lane; Bannockburn's dense foliage barely screens the community from the traffic pollution generated along River Road and the beltway bypasses. And the existence of these routes means that travel is easier only if you have a car. For Bannockburners public transportation still means a single route to the middle of town. Even Washington's new subway will be some distance away, and only modest relief has been provided once a week by a county bus, operated principally for elderly residents, to a local shopping center.

If you do have a car, shopping opportunities are plentiful and comprehensive. The "mall-to-mall" shopping centers include the series of malls along the congested Rockville Pike, the new White Flint, which opened in 1977, Montgomery Mall, nearby Little Falls Mall and Westwood Shopping Center, the vast Tysons Corner in Virginia, and the complex of stores at Friendship Heights. Bethesda itself offers some facilities not available elsewhere in the vicinity, including several small restaurants, some of them very good. The growing demand for healthful produce has led to the opening of several commercial outlets in the Bethesda area -- one of them a cooperative store -- which offer foods without chemical additives. To combat the high cost of fresh fruit and vegetables, a number of Bannockburn families participate in buyers' cooperatives to take advantage of buying at wholesale prices at the big city produce warehouses downtown.

It is most convenient to have within walking distance a local shopping center at Glen Echo, which includes Sam's recently enlarged and well-stocked hardware store, Doc's pharmacy, a dry cleaner's, a hair dresser's, and a High's dairy store. The little neighborhood grocery store in Glen Echo was acquired by Tanios ("Tony") Tannouse upon the retirement of the previous owners. Tony and his family have settled on Kenhowe Drive in Merrimack Park, and his business has been enlarged to include a catering service which features, in addition to standard items, a variety of international favorites.

For the past 2 years another Tony has brought produce, cider, cheeses, preserves, and other delectables to Bannockburn in his pickup truck, which he parks at the intersection of MacArthur Boulevard and Wilson Lane.

Schools and Libraries

Among the desirable features of Bannockburn for young families is the school system. The rapid growth of the early Maryland suburbs like Bannockburn, combined with the post-World War II baby boom, led to a rapid expansion in the local public school system. Subsequently, as these communities matured, enrollments began to fall rather precipitously, beginning in the late 1960's and affecting the elementary grades first. For Bannockburners this increase and ebbing has had several effects. First, schools were built closer to home. At the high school level, Bethesda-Chevy Chase and Walter Johnson yielded their area students to the new Walt Whitman High School, which opened in 1962. Their loss was Whitman's gain: from its inception Whitman's students gained a national reputation for scholastic and cultural accomplishment, among their other achievements capturing an inordinate number of national merit scholarships. Bannockburn youths have figured prominently in the school's activities and prizes. Pyle Junior High School also opened in 1962.

An elementary school (see "Origin of Bannockburn Elementary") was built within Bannockburn in 1957 for the education of its youngsters and those of neighboring communities. For much of the school's history, from 1959 to her retirement in 1971, Margaret Jones (who died in 1977) served as principal. For part of this period, the school participated in a self-initiated, experimental desegregation program. (See "The Bannockburn Open School Program.")

By 1977 several lower county elementary schools had been forced to close because of declining enrollments. Bannockburn managed to survive, although its own enrollment has fallen from 446 students in 1970 to 350 in 1977. As a newer

facility Bannockburn Elementary found itself returning a favor to its older sister in Cabin John: the Clara Barton School, once attended by children of early Bannockburn residents, was closed as a public school, and Cabin John children now come to Bannockburn Elementary. The Clara Barton School building is still used; it houses a day-care center, a 4-year-old nursery group, a thrift store operated for the visually handicapped, some county offices, and it is now the new home of the Cabin John Post Office. Enrollments at Pyle and Whitman have also declined, and Bannockburn's own cooperative nursery school, which still occupies the ground floor rooms of the clubhouse, sustains itself by enrolling youngsters from outside the community. (See "Bannockburn Nursery School, Inc.")

While the schools have become more accessible, the public libraries unfortunately remain some distance away. The area is served by two libraries: one on Massachusetts Avenue next to Western Junior High School and the second in Bethesda. The former, Little Falls Library, opened in 1960. The Bethesda Library on Arlington Road, a large attractive building, which opened in 1975, replaced the smaller facility of the same name previously located a couple of blocks away. In addition the county library system offers special services to shut-ins and the blind.

Area Attractions

A nearby cultural facility is Glen Echo Park. Initially created as a cultural and social center, by the time Bannockburn was established it was a famous amusement park.* Over the past 15 years the park has seen some dramatic changes. In the early 1960's it was sold by its previous owners to the U. S. Government, and for a time it lay idle -- a sad, decaying shell. Later it was transferred to the U. S. Park Service, through whose efforts, along with those of dedicated local citizens and their congressmen, it has since been accorded the status of a National Historical Park. Under the aegis of the Park Service, and with the constant support and voluntary work of local citizens and professional groups, the park has been converted into an area-wide arts and crafts center with a year-round program of exhibits, theatrical and musical performances, skill and craft instruction activities, and special events. The old roller coaster has been dismantled and replaced with yurt-shaped craft shops; the stone tower has been restored and the adjoining buildings refurbished for woodworking; the "Cuddle-Up" is now an outdoor theatre; the Spanish Ballroom, where such "big name bands" as Tommy Dorsey's used to play in Glen Echo's earlier heyday, is used for exhibits and public gatherings: the Glen Echo Fire Department still holds its annual fundraising Bingo game there; stalls along the old Midway have become components of Adventure Theatre (a professional children's theatre group) or classrooms for the instructional programs; the old swimming pool's office and locker-room area serve as craft shops, and its sunning area next to the Spanish Ballroom has been converted into an imaginative children's playground to the constant delight of its new clients; the central office building now houses the headquarters of District 2, U. S. Park Police. An automotive repair course run

* Those who are interested in the history of the Glen Echo Amusement Park and the earlier Chautauqua Assembly that occupied the park site will enjoy reading Glen Echo Chautauqua on the Potomac by Benjamin Levy, Division of History, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, June 15, 1967.

by women for women is among the more popular innovative programs. While some elements of the old amusement park complex are still not fully used or restored, there is an overall sense of purposeful revival gradually replacing the earlier abandonment and neglect. The centerpiece of this new hustle and bustle is the old carrousel. Saved from sale to a wealthy Californian by the nickels and dimes of devoted children and their parents and a large anonymous gift, and now completely rejuvenated, the carrousel is still thumping merrily away -- the eternal heart of the old and new Glen Echo Park.

A short way up MacArthur Boulevard from the park is the Glen Echo Post Office. Chartered in 1904, the post office has earned a wide and well-deserved reputation as a "small town" post office. The postmaster and her assistants know most local patrons by name, and everyone is treated as a friend or neighbor. Personal attention is the keynote here: the staff always seems to have time to explain complicated regulations and services and to retie packages on the spot instead of rejecting them. The inside of the post office is always attractively decorated to fit the season or a given holiday.

Bannockburn is fortunate in being within walking distance of the Potomac River and its associated C & O Canal. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal has survived technological obsolescence, public neglect, and the ravages of major floods to become an outstanding natural, historical, and recreational area. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas's famous hike from Cumberland to Georgetown generated new public interest in the canal and provided the impetus for its elevation first to the status of National Historical Monument and later, in January 1971, to that of a National Historical Park. These actions have given the canal a new lease on life. Although much remains to be done along its 184-mile length, the lower section -- from Seneca to Georgetown -- has been largely restored and is well maintained. Bannockburn is close to access points at Sycamore Store, Lock 7 in Glen Echo, and Lock 8 in Cabin John. Today the canal and its towpath are in constant and increasing use by hikers, bikers, joggers, campers, canoers, kayakers, and -- when winters are like those of the late 1970's -- skaters, too.

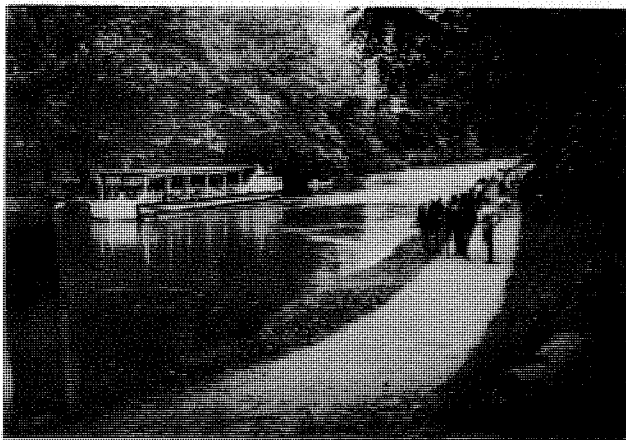
Like the canal the Potomac River has been the subject of mounting public concern. Ecologists and outdoorsmen want to preserve its wild natural character, while planners and engineers, thinking about Washington's future water supply, want to harness its waters. Schemes for construction of major dams across the main body of the river -- for example, at Seneca -- appear to have been abandoned in favor of smaller dams along the upstream tributaries. Two lines of public interest suggest some hope of eventually preserving the river as it is and providing it with safeguards against the destructive impacts of land development, industrial pollution, and uncoordinated water supply plans. First, the stretch of the Potomac adjoining Montgomery County and a strip of land extending one mile inland have been recommended by the county as critical areas to be given special consideration by the Maryland Department of State Planning. Second, local and national groups have been lobbying for several years for passage of a bill which would lay the groundwork for more effective interjurisdictional planning in the Potomac River Basin. In addition Congressman Gilbert Gude's 1975 trip down the Potomac -- by boat, canoe, and foot -- has done much to focus local and national attention on the potentialities and problems of this historic national river.

With all this the Potomac appears to have changed little over the years, except possibly to become somewhat more silted and polluted in the wake of increasing development in its watershed. Canoers will note a few new structures along the palisades, but the river's rocky, heavily wooded banks and islands and its dramatic gorge and rapids below Great Falls still excite even the old-timers: "How can such a wilderness be located so close to the Nation's Capital?" Occasionally the river goes on a rampage as it did during Hurricane Agnes, turning to a brown, boiling tide, toppling trees, gouging holes in the canal. But when it subsides, the canoers, kayakers, rockclimbers and hikers return to their favorite channels, cliffs, and trails.

Bannockburn is indeed fortunate to have such easy access to both urban and natural delights.

Mildred and Herbert Vreeland

Ed. Note: Life in Bannockburn has not always been as felicitous as this account suggests. Sporadic delinquency and vandalism have intruded upon our haven, and an occasional divisive issue has arisen. We have tried to face our common problems as a community, and we have generally managed to reconcile our internal differences by talking things over.



Chesapeake & Ohio Canal
Summer
Courtesy of Holgate Young



Chesapeake & Ohio Canal
Winter
Courtesy of Holgate Young

Bannockburn Street Names

While it is tempting to imagine that some hardy Scottish pioneers, pushing past the fall line on the Potomac to escape the authority of the English colonists, founded a settlement and named it for their most famous victory over their traditional enemy, Scots appear to have had no direct connection with the Bannockburn area. The link with Scotland is indirect: golf. Around the turn of the century, when the game was becoming fashionable and golf clubs were springing up across the land, many were given names with a Scottish origin or flavor. The Bannockburn Golf Club was called after Bannockburn, Scotland, famed for the defeat of the English army by Robert the Bruce in 1314, leading to independence for Scotland. The name "Bannockburn" is believed to have been chosen because of the flat stones in the Scottish creek (burn), which resembled bannocks (oatmeal cakes).

When, somewhat later, streets began to be laid out and houses built on the fringes of the golf course, it was only natural that they should be given Scottish names: Crathie, Elgin, Selkirk, Ayr, and Laverock. All these are place-names in Scotland except the last. Why someone chose to name it after a bird -- "laverock" is Scots for "lark" -- remains a mystery. Certainly there cannot in those days have been any accepted criteria for street names, like ease of spelling or pronunciation, or Laverock would never have passed muster. It has never meant anything to most people, it causes endless problems for visitors trying to reach it by cab, and even the county authorities, desperate to give it some meaning, once put up a street sign called "Lavarock." The pronunciation of some of the other older names has also changed as they became Americanized. Crathie, named after the village in Aberdeenshire where the royal family attend church when they are in residence at Balmoral Castle, has had its central vowel lengthened. The 'g' in Elgin has been softened.

The development of Bannockburn as one of those few cooperative housing projects which appeared across the country just after World War II is reflected in its street names. To the Scottish flavor was added a new association, with the cooperative movement. In the co-op's archives an editor found a list of names suggested by various members. Elinor MacLay's list contained the names Halbert and Owen. These names were heartily approved by Mary Herling, who thought it would be most fitting to name two of the newly laid out streets, appropriately located in the center of the community, after these prominent personalities in the cooperative movement.

Owen Place is named after Robert Owen, the 19th century British industrialist, social philosopher, and reformer. Owen was a man of strong moral convictions but no religious creed. He became convinced, from his experience as the owner-manager of a model textile mill in New Lanark, Scotland -- whose sturdy buildings can still be seen in the beautiful valley of the Clyde near its falls -- of the need for social control of industry in order to protect the workers from oppression and poverty. The "company store" at New Lanark became the model for cooperative stores organized in the 1820's by Owen's followers. These showed

that cooperative trading could work. They were the forerunners of the Rochdale Pioneers' Cooperative Society and, through it, of the consumers' cooperative movement. He also founded several cooperative communities, including New Harmony in Indiana.

Halbert Road takes its name from Leroy Halbert, a middlewestern Congregational minister turned social worker. Halbert was concerned about the problems of the "inner city" long before the word was coined. In Kansas City, before the First World War, he organized one of the first departments of public welfare in the country. He was active in prison parole policies, public recreation, and race relations, and when the depression came he headed emergency relief work in the District of Columbia. Beginning in 1936 he organized consumer cooperatives in the Washington area, and when they united under the Potomac Cooperative Federation, he became its first president. He also was a charter member in the 1950's of Rapidan Camps, Inc., now a thriving cooperative family camp near Criglersville, Virginia. Halbert was one of the spiritual fathers of the Ban-nockburn community. When he died in 1958 his family placed the stone chessboard at the end of the "hook of Halbert" as a memorial to him and to his association with the local cooperative movement. (Unfortunately the memorial suffered from vandalism. Plans are being discussed for moving the chessboard to the clubhouse area.)

The remaining names all have a Scottish flavor. Callander is a Scottish place name, and Dalroy may be a corruption of Dalry in Ayrshire. Ken (head) howe (hollow) and Brae (slope of hill) burn (stream) are aptly named.

Ed. Note: L. D. MacIntyre, a member of the board in 1947-49 and long interested in the origin and meaning of Scottish names, recalls suggesting the name Braeburn because some of the houses faced the slope of the hill running down to the stream. At the time he was not aware of the street named Braeburn Parkway. A motion accepting this name was passed at a meeting of the board on Sept. 8, 1949.

Brigadoon Drive is in a class by itself. After the high ground had been sold to another developer and the right-of-way for Massachusetts Avenue removed, the street plan was revised to form a large U with both sides running into Selkirk Drive. One of the developers asked me to suggest a name for the new street, and the family spent a weekend trying out Scottish place-names on one another. We searched both the Highlands and Lowlands for examples which would be easy to spell and to pronounce and would not sound either too cute or too esoteric. On Sunday night we presented our list. Not for months did we find out that realism is no match for musical comedy.

Alexander Stevenson

Ed. Note: Wilson Lane appears as an unnamed, private road on a county map dated 1865, running through property owned by Michael Wilson. The Montgomery County Historical Society says that the road was later dedicated as a public road and presumably named after some member of this local Wilson family.

Bannockburn Civic Association

The need for a separate organization to represent the Bannockburn community before governmental and civic bodies on civic matters such as zoning, roads, schools, sidewalks, transportation, etc. was first recognized by Jack Tourin. He proposed the establishment of a civic association which would represent all Bannockburn residents, whether or not they were members of Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI).

In April 1952 a meeting was held to organize such an association. Jack Tourin was designated as temporary chairman of the proposed Bannockburn Civic Association (BCA). Subsequently a committee was appointed to draft a proposed constitution and bylaws, with particular instructions to avoid duplicating functions performed by BCI.

The proposed constitution and bylaws were presented to the board of directors of BCI for review and acceptance. At a meeting held on July 7, 1952 the BCI board expressed its position on the formation of the proposed association as follows:

It is the sense of the Board that the Board welcomes the move to establish a Civic Association... There is much useful work to be done in subject areas common to such associations. Characteristically they highlight external relations with governmental and civic organizations, especially in communities where other organizations handle internal activities. We believe it to be in the interest of the community for the Association to emphasize external activities at the outset and to avoid any possibility of duplication with the activities of the BCI....

A meeting was held on October 18, 1952 to adopt a constitution and bylaws and to elect a nominating committee to propose a slate of officers. The first elected officers of BCA were: Jack Tourin, president; Henry Vicinus, first vice-president; Charlotte Chase, second vice-president; Betty Wagman, treasurer; Kathrine Murra, recording secretary; and Mildred Silverman, corresponding secretary. (For list of BCA officers see Appendix IV.)

By the spring of 1953 BCA had over 100 members (individual, not family), about half of whom served on 1 or more of 8 committees. There was much to be done at that time, and enthusiasm and energy ran high.

At first BCA's territorial boundaries were Wilson Lane, MacArthur Boulevard, Fairway Hills, and the proposed extension of Massachusetts Avenue. In April 1959 the constitution was amended to describe the jurisdiction as follows: "The area within the subdivisions known as Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. and Wilson Knolls, as well as properties facing on Crathie Lane shall constitute the territory of the Association."

In June 1953 BCA was officially approved for membership in the Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF), which at that time was composed of 75 similar associations. BCA has three delegates to the federation and three alternates and has continued its membership to the present. BCA also continues to participate in the work of the Potomac Valley League of Maryland (PVL), which was formed in 1962 to preserve the residential character of the area and to protect its scenic beauty. One of its founders was William Green, who has been our representative to the PVL since its inception. In addition every 4 years BCA proposes a candidate for membership on the Conduit Road Fire Board, which oversees the work of the Glen Echo and Cabin John fire houses. (The road we know as MacArthur Boulevard, named in honor of General MacArthur, was previously called Conduit Road because under its winding surface lies the Washington Aqueduct.)

In its early days the Bannockburn community was an enclave in an antagonistic and generally conservative area, where broadly exclusive racial covenants had been in effect for many years. Furthermore, the co-op's rezoning attempt in 1946 had met with strong opposition from adjoining communities. Bannockburn's early settlers were, consequently, looked upon as interlopers and received aloof, cold-shoulder treatment from some area residents. But, as BCA's officers began to work with those of the neighboring communities and served on committees of the MCCF, attitudes began to change. Our neighbors, and others in county organizations, soon learned that residents of Bannockburn were dedicated, sincere, and concerned citizens with a willingness to work hard for causes and objectives of such mutual concern as the improvement of the school system and the preservation of the residential nature of the area.

BCA is, of course, supported by membership dues. At first these were collected monthly, at \$.50 per person. Various dues structures developed over the years, and now a family membership costs \$10 for 3 years. Most of the money collected is spent on the publication of the Bannockburn Newsletter and the Bannockburn Directory. (See the sections on these topics.)

Over the years BCA has dealt with a variety of matters, some critical, others of minor importance but still useful to the community.

In the 1950's the most important problems BCA faced were the controversy about sidewalks, the difficulty of getting an elementary school built in Bannockburn (described in "Origin of Bannockburn Elementary"), and the threat of a major highway through our neighborhood. With respect to the installation of sidewalks (in the Merrimack house area -- Bannockburn Drive and both Halbert Roads), the role of BCA was to determine community sentiment in order to express residents' views fairly at a county council hearing in November 1953. The majority wanted sidewalks as a safeguard for the small children who would be walking to the Bannockburn Elementary School, then included in the school budget. In December the council authorized the installation of sidewalks.

The most dire threat to the Bannockburn community surfaced late in 1956 when plans were announced to extend the all-purpose Route 240 expressway (now I-270) along the Potomac River from the proposed Cabin John Bridge to the District of Columbia line. The Maryland Roads Commission and District of Columbia officials had already agreed on this location with little fanfare and no publicity. This location would have closely paralleled the Maryland side of the proposed George

Washington Memorial Parkway, as well as MacArthur Boulevard. The proposed location of the expressway would have cut through Fairway Hills and lower Bannockburn. It would have completely obliterated the lower portions of Bannockburn Drive and both Halbert Roads as well as Owen Place. Bannockburn homes adjacent to the highway would have been assaulted by the noise and pollution of heavy traffic.

Milton Chase, chairman of BCA's roads committee, met with a number of representatives of communities that would be adversely affected. All of the communities represented agreed to take united action in opposition to this location for Route 240.

Discussions with the Maryland Roads Commission proved fruitless. However, subsequent discussions with Senators Beall and Butler and Congressman Hyde made an impression. They were all very sensitive to our argument that it would be callous to break up already established communities and hazardous for children to have to cross a busy expressway to go to school. They were also sensitive to our contention that the need for an expressway to parallel a parkway was questionable and would, indeed, be a waste of taxpayers' money.

On January 14, 1957 nine area associations and communities sent a telegram to Maryland and D. C. officials protesting the proposed location for extending Route 240. It dealt not only with the unnecessary cost of the project but also protested strongly the roads commission's policy of secrecy on planning for new roads and its denial, to the people and citizens who would be directly affected and vitally concerned about the impact of the proposed action, of the right to be heard and consulted.

The Maryland senators and congressman were impressed with the seriousness and validity of the statements of the protesting civic organizations and communities involved. Shortly after they received the telegram they met with members of the roads commission and supported the communities' position. The battle was over. The roads commission took the position that it was now unalterably opposed to building a riverside expressway to bring Route 240 into the District.

Ed. Note: During the 1960's BCA passed resolutions endorsing legislation furthering civil rights, as noted in the section on "Social Concerns." It joined other Bannockburn organizations in opposing construction of "Bannockburn Hamlet." It took an active interest in the campaign against airplane noise, which is, as we all know, a continuing struggle. (These two subjects are discussed in subsequent sections.) Another continuing struggle, which became particularly acute in the sixties, has been the resistance to commercial encroachment. (This effort, accomplished mainly through membership in the PVL, is discussed in "Area Zoning History.")

Attention in the 1970's turned to matters of safety and convenience. The BCA supported other area citizens' groups in getting a hiker-biker path along MacArthur Boulevard but did not play a major role in this effort. In 1976, in a statement to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, BCA

successfully opposed the proposed extension of Ayr Lane as a potential cause of flooding in Laverock Court. In 1978 BCA succeeded in improving the safety of both drivers and bus passengers on Goldsboro Road. A No Parking sign was placed on the shoulder of the curve near the Park Building, and the Metro bus now stops at the gas station, a much safer and more comfortable location.

The activities of BCA, as well as those of other community organizations, represent a microcosm of "democracy in action," providing a mechanism to let county officials know where we stand on issues affecting our community, as well as our views on other issues of a broader scope.

The "voice of the people" is most effective when it is based on facts and reason rather than on rumor and emotion. Such effectiveness requires time and hard work. Fortunately, Bannockburn is a community of dedicated citizens who have contributed, or are now contributing, in one way or another, to making Bannockburn a concerned community as well as a delightful place in which to live.

Sidney Orkin

Sliding Home Free

At the end of a wintry day in 1949, one of Mary Herling's assistants (Frances Fradin) gazed outside. A heavy snowfall had covered the mud, the excavations, the stacked building materials -- everything! All was still, beautifully pristine beneath a white blanket. The snow surface had thawed under the warm sun; now it was ice-clad and slippery.

Wondering how to get home to her family, Frances finally scrounged a large pasteboard refrigerator carton and dragged it outside. Buttoned-up, galoshed, she squatted in the carton, chose a smooth path toward Wilson Lane, and shoved off downhill. Her carton-sled gathered speed and skimmed safely past all sorts of obstructions, until it stalled in a thicket near MacArthur Boulevard.

A Honey of a Story

The clubhouse, too, had its amusing (!) moments. In the summer of 1950, during a particularly hot spell following a thunderstorm, someone noted that the office ceiling plaster was bulging. And cracking. And dripping.

The office staff deduced that roof shingles had been torn off by the storm and that water, accumulated in the crawl space, was now leaking through the ceiling. But this liquid looked rusty, amber-colored. Everyone was curious. Someone held out a finger, caught part of the gooky stream and tasted it. First he gaped: then he grinned.

"Honey!" he exclaimed.

Carpenters had to rip out a section of the ceiling. They found a great honeycomb in the crawl space. Deposited by bees for years, the sweet mass's sheer weight finally cracked the ceiling and oozed out during the hot weather.

(Excerpted from Potomac Potpourri, by Morris Fradin, a proposed book of historic persons, places, and perspectives from Georgetown to Seneca.)