

BRIEF HISTORY AND RECOLLECTIONS OF THE VILLAGE OF GLENCARLYN AND VICINITY

By MUNSON H. LANE *

The historical data included in the present resumé were derived from *Four Mile Run Land Grants* by the late Charles W. Stetson, formerly a resident of the Village of Glencarlyn, whose home and property, together with those of his son Francis Stetson are now occupied by the Northern Virginia Doctors Hospital.

The recollections are my own as I have lived in the Glencarlyn area most of my life. From 1898 to 1905 I lived in the house on the then Poplar Street later occupied by Mr. Charles Jarboe, located across the street from the home of the late Mr. and Mrs. Towne and a short distance from the home of the late H. C. Mitchell. In 1905 my father, Charles H. Lane, purchased the old Mary Carlin house and eleven acres from the Mary Carlin estate on the county road now known as the Carlyn Springs Road. The house, which is located above the old Washington and Old Dominion Railroad, has been remodeled several times but still stands, in the midst of a new subdivision. The original logs remain as part of the remodeled structure. By way of background a brief history of the area will be set forth.

HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Ball-Carlin Tract

Glencarlyn is part of the estate of William Carlin who derived title from John Ball in 1772, who in turn derived title from Lord Fairfax in 1742. William Carlin was contemporary with George Washington and was his tailor. A Tailor's Goose or iron once owned by William Carlin is now in my possession. The Goose was given to the late Mr. Plant, a former resident of the Glencarlyn area, by a descendent of the Carlin family, and was given by Mrs. Plant after the death of her husband to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Lane, who gave it to me at the time I left Glencarlyn to go to college.

Contemporary With the Ball-Carlin Tract Was the Torreyson Tract

Located and lying west generally of the Glencarlyn tract was the Torreyson tract derived partially from the Ball-Carlin tract and partially from the Munson Hill tract. The Munson Hill tract was part of the Thomas Pearson tract, Pearson being an original patentee. Part of this land was later owned by Mr. and Mrs. George Reeves, and a part of the tract is now in my possession. I have an original deed from the Munson family to Mr. and Mrs. William H. Torreyson, parents of Mrs. George Reeves, and the grandparents of my wife, Ruth Reeves Lane.

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Washington Forest Tract

Across a small creek known as Long Branch from the Ball-Carlin tract (later Glencarlyn) was the Washington Forest tract, once owned and surveyed by George Washington. One of the corners was marked by the Washington Oak, which was still standing in my boyhood and which I remember quite well as having a bench mark about three feet from the ground. The oak is gone and is replaced by a historical marker. Part of the old oak is in the Glencarlyn branch of the Arlington County Library. A picture of the Hall appears in Eleanor Lee Templeman's *Arlington Heritage*, page 64.

Mary Carlin Tract

Across the Four Mile Run from Glencarlyn was another tract acquired by William Carlin from the original Colville tract through the Earl of Tankerville, heir of Colville. Colville was a large land owner contemporary with George Washington. Part of this tract was conveyed to Mary and Ann Carlin, infant granddaughters of William Carlin. It was later divided between Ann and Mary. Mr. Plant acquired part of the Mary Carlin tract after her death. Another portion went to Joshua De Vaughan and his nieces Emma Reese and Mary Lowe. Uncle Josh, as we knew him, and his niece Emma looked after Mary Carlin in her later years. The Mary Carlin house was later sold to a Mr. Hamilton by the heirs of Charles H. Lane, and by Hamilton to the late Mr. and Mrs. Lester Boyles, and thence, from their heirs was conveyed to the present owners.

Carlin Springs

This was a picnic and resort area on the Carlin estate prior to the founding of the village of Glencarlyn. It was located near the Southern Railroad Station on the Carlin property and included a dancing pavilion, rustic bridges and other rustic buildings and furniture.¹ Part of these buildings still remained during my childhood days in Glencarlyn.

Founding of Glencarlyn in 1887

Part of the Ball-Carlin tract was purchased from the Carlin heirs by W. W. Curtis and S. S. Burdett, Washington lawyers and founders of the village of Glencarlyn. Mr. Curtis' wife was the former Jane Backus, whose brother was Dr. William H. Backus, founder of the Backus family who still live in the area. S. S. Burdett, or General Burdett as he was generally known, was a prominent lawyer in Washington, was at one time a member of Congress from Ohio, and later Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic. He also held the position of Commissioner of the General Land Office. He donated his library to Glencarlyn and was a heroic figure in a shipwreck involving the S. S. Ohio in Alaskan waters in 1909. He survived the shipwreck and died at his birthplace in England in 1914.

¹ Cf. Map of Carlin Springs area, *Arlington Historical Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1969), pp. 20-21.

PEOPLE OF GLENCARLYN—EARLY PURCHASERS

William M. King

One of the early purchasers of lots in Glencarlyn was William M. King, known as Major King, a veteran of the Civil War, whose daughter Mary King later became the wife of Dr. Welburn, a prominent pharmacist and physician in the area. Mrs. King was for some time postmistress in Glencarlyn and I remember the family very well.²

Solon W. Stocking

I do not remember Mr. Stocking personally, but my father knew him as a patent lawyer. His daughters Mary and Fanny lived in the area for a number of years.

William M. Backus

Dr. Backus has been previously mentioned as the brother-in-law of W. W. Curtis. The Backuses had four children—Curtis, Constance, Will, and Hadassah. Only Constance survives. Curtis and Will have many descendants in the area. I remember Dr. Backus kept a cow and I obtained milk from the Backuses for our family's use during the days when pasteurization was not known.

Laura E. Jones (Mrs. Walter Jones)

Mrs. Jones was active in community affairs during my childhood. She was organist at the Episcopal Chapel, was interested in young people and sponsored many social activities and get-togethers.

James M. Loughlin

I do not remember Mr. Loughlin but do remember his children.

Henry B. Hedrick

Mr. Hedrick was the father of the late Judge Hedrick. I did not know the father but did know Judge Hedrick both in his early days and in his later years.

Charles H. Mason

Mr. Mason was a patent attorney and his son, the late John Mason, followed in his footsteps.

OLD HOUSES IN GLENCARLYN AREA EXISTING PRIOR TO THE FOUNDING OF GLENCARLYN

These included (1) the Burdett and Carlin houses located near the present library; (2) the Mary Carlin home on Carlyn Springs Road; (3) the Carlin house located on Carlyn Springs Road on the site of the present Kenmore Junior High School. This was later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Gomer Jones and was demolished to make way for the junior high school; (4) the Reynolds house at a corner now marked by a traffic light on Carlyn Springs Road and identified by a large holly tree.

² Cf. Mary King Welburn, "Recollections of a Doctor's Wife," *Arlington Historical Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1965); and C. Forbes Simpson, "Arlington Area Postal Service," *Arlington Historical Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1967).

OTHER EARLY HOUSES

Several other early houses are referred to in Stetson's *Four Mile Run Land Grants*, and I recall most of these houses and their early occupants. The early street names will be used although these have been since changed:

Laurel Street: houses of Sims, Morrell, Harrison, Olcott, and Hedrick. The latter was burned and later rebuilt by Judge Hedrick.

Maple Street: houses occupied by the Loughlin family, the Burdett house, the Carlin house, and the B. T. Janney house.

Poplar Street: M. C. Mitchell. This was occupied by a hardware merchant and his wife and their granddaughters. Their father was killed in an early automobile accident. I myself lived on Poplar Street, as did Mr. and Mrs. Towne, previously mentioned.

Walnut Street: I recall the home of Laura Jones (Mrs. Walter Jones), later occupied at different times by the Pepper family, the Ramsdell family, the Chew family, and the Oliver King family. Also on Walnut Street was the Stockbridge house, later burned and rebuilt and occupied by the Perkins family. Mr. and Mrs. Stockbridge at one time had the Glencarlyn post office in their home. The Clarvoe house adjacent to the Stockbridge house was burned about 1903 at the same time the Stockbridge house was burned. The Backus home was also on Walnut Street.

Mr. Stetson mentions only the houses appearing on a plat in 1890. Others moved into the area during the next twenty years but the village remained small until recently. My father moved into the area about 1898 and built a house which still stands and which was at one time occupied by Charles Jarboe, which was across the street from Mr. and Mrs. Towne.

OTHER EARLY GLENCARLYN FAMILIES

THE TOWNE FAMILY—Lived on Maple Street near General Burdett. Fred Towne married Julia Graham, step-daughter of General Burdett.

THE CHEW FAMILY—Lived in the area for many years. The sons, Grayson, Gus, Freeland, William, and Bowie have all passed away.

THE PEPPER FAMILY—Included two daughters, Mabel and Lila.

THE RAMSDELL FAMILY—At one time occupied the Janney house and later the Oliver King house.

THE PARHAM FAMILY—Mr. and Mrs. Parham lived in Maple Street near the Glencarlyn woods. Mrs. Parham was the sister of Frank Lyon, the builder of Lyon Park and Lyon Village. The Parham children were Sidney and Margaret. Sidney Parham was at one time patent attorney for Corning Glass Company.

THE STUART HILDER FAMILY—Occupied the house earlier owned by Major King. Mr. Hilder died recently at the age of about 90, leaving numerous sons and daughters, most of whom are in the area.

THE STETSON FAMILY—Lived in the area which is now the Northern

Virginia Doctors' Hospital. The children were Francis, Elizabeth, and Virginia. Mr. Charles W. Stetson was the author of *Four Mile Run Land Grants* previously referred to, and another historical book *Washington and his Neighbors*. His son Francis is a lawyer and was for many years Professor of Law at Georgetown University.

THE GOMER JONES FAMILY—Occupied the Carlin house, now replaced by the Kenmore School.

THE WILLIAM H. F. CARLIN FAMILY—Occupied the old house until his death in 1901. I have a vague recollection of Mr. Carlin.

Descendents of the REYNOLDS FAMILY—Included Tilden Reynolds and Isaac Reynolds.

THE BENEZETTE FAMILY—Included Laura Rice (Howard), James Rice, Ellie Rice, and the Jarboe family.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE MARY CARLIN HOUSE

In 1905 my father purchased the Mary Carlin house and after some renovation we moved into it around 1906 and 1907. The old house as I remember it was a log structure with an old barn and shed. There was also a lean-to kitchen which was later demolished. Uncle Josh and Aunt Emma, who had been caretakers for Mary Carlin, stayed on a while and then Uncle Josh moved across the little stream to a portion of the Mary Carlin tract on which he built a house where he lived until his death several years later. He was a colored Baptist preacher and a very devout man. There was an old well near the Mary Carlin house with a bucket and a windlass by which the bucket was let down in the well. The well was on a path taken by school children from Glencarlynn to and from the trolley station at Veitch Summit and was often used by the children in passing. There was also an old spring on the Carlin place.

There were three old fireplaces, one in the basement and the other two in the large living room. These were originally the only source of heat. There were andirons and cooking equipment, including pots and kettles, which had obviously been used during the early days.

My father, Charles H. Lane, tore down the lean-to and built a more modern kitchen. Also other additions were made to the house. The doors had H & L hinges and an old lock with a huge key. Unfortunately some of these early and irreplaceable items were destroyed at a later date.

The Bon Air Baptist Church was started by my father and mother in the log house around 1914.

Neighbors

Among our neighbors at the Mary Carlin house were the Plant family, who occupied the former Ann Carlin house. Mr. Plant was a government architect who planned the remodeling of the Capitol building, and built a barn partly out of timbers from the old Capitol. Mr. Plant was originally from Minneapolis where he had been a prominent architect. Mrs.

Plant was a Greenleaf and there were many joking comments about a Plant marrying a Greenleaf. Their children were Leland, Margaret (Backus), John, at one time a manufacturer of gloves, James, and Susan. Susan is the only present survivor. Margaret, John, and James have surviving children. Margaret married Will Backus and they have descendents in the area.

The Seaton Family

Mr. Charles H. Seaton was an expert in the Department of Agriculture. He purchased a part of the old Carlin tract which was not included in the Glencarlyn village. Their children were Dorothy (Garner), Jerome, and Helen. Jerome graduated from Penn State and taught soils at Purdue University for many years. Only Helen survives.

The Reeves Family

The Reeves farm included part of the Ball-Carlin tract and part of the Thomas Pearson tract, the land having been inherited by Mrs. Reeves (nee Lucy Torreyson) from her father. Mr. Reeves later acquired additional land from the McIllhenny family. The Reeves children included George T., who has a real estate and insurance business in Falls Church, Ruth Elizabeth, who is now Mrs. Munson H. Lane, Sr., and Nelson, who operated a dairy farm until 1954 and who still lives on the old place.

Other Families

Other families were the McNulty family, and the Ballard family, who also live on part of the Carlin tract.

TRANSPORTATION

During the early years transportation was probably better in the Glencarlyn area than it is now, and included the following:

(1) Southern Railroad to the old 6th & B Street Station in Washington, a location now occupied by the National Gallery of Art. I recall the gold star on the floor of the station marking the place of assassination of President Garfield.

(2) The Washington and Old Dominion Railway. This superseded the Southern Railway and had terminals in Georgetown, Alexandria, and Bluemont.

(3) The Fairfax-Vienna line. This had terminals at Rosslyn and 12th and Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington. The closest access from Glencarlyn was Veitch Station about two miles from the village.

EDUCATION

A one room school was located in the Glencarlyn woods for the children of Glencarlyn and Barcroft. Among the teachers were Miss Few, Miss Mountjoy, Miss Olcott, Miss Perkins, and Miss Coe. The children delighted in playing games in the Glencarlyn woods during the noon hour.³

Tuition for the Washington elementary and high schools was free for government employees and was reduced for those who were not govern-

ment employees but paid taxes on Washington property. Many Arlington children got their education, especially at the secondary level, in District schools.

The children had no difficulty in going from the one room school to the Washington schools and thence to some of the best colleges in the country. Among the colleges attended by youth from Glencarlyn were Harvard, Princeton, Penn State, Cornell, Hamilton, George Washington, etc.

RECREATION

There was a theater train in the early days for those who wished to go to Washington for entertainment. There was also an Audobon Society sponsored by Senator Henderson, who owned the adjacent Henderson woods, now Arlington Forest. There were festivals and monthly get-togethers with refreshments, including home made ice cream, home made cakes, and home made candy (fudge). There were folk games sponsored by Mrs. Walter Jones (Laura) and Mrs. Oliver King. Japanese lanterns furnished the illumination for these occasions.

COLORED FAMILIES

There was a very friendly relation between the white and colored families during those days. Among the colored families were Charles and Mary Ball, who lived at Bailey's Cross Roads and had a stall in the Center Market in Washington. Both helped the Glencarlyn families in domestic and yard work. There was also Uncle Josh, the Baptist preacher, who with his niece Emma Reese looked after Mary Carlin until her death.

Others were Aunt Amanda Tabler, Grant Warner, Belle Warner, Marshall Murray, and many others.

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These are only a few random recollections from an era now past which are much more closely related to the era of George Washington and his neighbors than it is to the conditions of the present day.

³ Cf. C. B. Rose, Jr.; "Public Schools in Arlington District of Alexandria County, Virginia, 1870-1905," *Arlington Historical Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1965).