

METRO PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Sudbrook Park Marking 75th Anniversary

By John Blitz

Sudbrook Park in Pikesville, believed to be the first planned community in the State, is celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary this year.

The park today bears little resemblance to the initial plans and concept of a summer colony for Baltimore's wealthy.

Many of the stately old homes still stand, but have long since been winterized. Other landmarks such as the Western Maryland Railway Station, the grandiose hotel, tennis courts and golf course have long since succumbed to time.

On High Ground

Located on a high piece of ground in a heavily wooded area, the park provided an ideal location for wealthy Baltimore families to spend summers away from the city heat.

In 1886, after the land had been purchased from James Howard McHenry, a celebrated engineer, F. L. Olstead, drew up the planned community.

The Western Maryland Railway Station was improved and nearby a large frame hotel was built. It was designed to become the hub of activities.

Prices Of Lots

Lots in the park sold for \$800 to \$1,500. The first ten lots were brought by the Sudbrook Company, which constructed summer cottages which sold from \$3,000 to \$6,000, depending on the number of rooms each contained. Some were rented to handle the overflow from the hotel.

The majority of the homes were not constructed for winter use, but all had open fireplaces. A few had hot air heating systems.

By 1900 Sudbrook Park was well established. Each of the lots had a house and the hotel, under the management of Mrs. Julia Thompson, was thriving.

Daily Trains

During the summer the Western Maryland railway ran nine passenger trains each way daily hauling the fathers back and forth from their jobs.

There was always plenty to do at the park. An eighteen-hole golf course was opened and tennis courts were popular. A riding academy kept many of the youngsters on horseback during the day.

On weekends, the hotel was the scene of a Saturday night dance.

A man named Melvin J. Bernum operated a horse drawn jitney bus to downtown Pikesville from the park. He charged a nickel a ride. This service connected with the electrical trolley in Pikesville, and for a dime you could ride all the way to Baltimore.

The first decade of the Twentieth Century proved to be the peak of the social life in Sudbrook. Roland Park at the time was being developed as a year-round suburban community, and many of the park's wealthier families moved away.

In the 1920's the hotel was renovated in a last desperate effort to make it go. By 1930 the hotel had been torn down.

The golf course had long since gone to seed. In the late 1940's the golf course was used to construct brick homes in the park.

Today Sudbrook Park is a permanent community with many fine old homes along its curving, shaded streets. Some of Pikesville's older families reside there now, happily recalling the golden era of Sudbrook Park.