

Significant Dates in Takoma Park's First 100 Years

1883 - Nov. 24. Benjamin Franklin Gilbert received title to the approximately 100-acre Grammar Farm astride the MD-DC line, along the path of the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks. The cost of the land was \$6,500, and the train fare to Washington was \$.05. The boundary of the tract ran from what is now the intersection of Piney Branch and Blair Roads, NW, southeast on Blair to Willow St. NW, northeast along Willow to Valley View Ave. in MD, due west to include Chestnut, and south to Blair.¹ At the suggestion of a friend, Ida Summy, Gilbert named his acquisition "Takoma" after the Indian name, "Tacoma", meaning "high up - - near heaven." Gilbert spelled the name with a "k" to distinguish it from Tacoma, Washington. He added "Park" to the name a few years later to emphasize the sylvan nature of the property.²

1884 - The first house was completed at 201 Tulip Avenue. The house was owned by Amanda and Isaac Thomas. Mr. Thomas was the City's first storekeeper and postmaster.³

1885 - Sept. 29. The first child was born in Takoma Park. He was William Wentworth Dudley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred E. Dudley. B. F. Gilbert collaborated with Fred Dudley and his brother to build many of the early houses in Takoma Park.⁴

1886 - The population was 150 residents. The first school was organized; Miss Prentiss was the first teacher. Dec. 6 -- the Takoma Park Post Office was established.⁵ The Takoma Train Station was constructed after being designed by B&O Railroad architects Baldwin and Pennington. In addition to serving commuters, the station was used as a community meeting place in the town's earliest days.⁶

1887 - The first Sunday school was organized by Henry Garrett.⁷

1888 - A log cabin was built at Carroll and Laurel Aves.⁸ Sept. - The first public school (PS #8) opened on Tulip Ave. at the site of the current Takoma Park Presbyterian Church's Fellowship Hall.⁹ Two general stores were constructed near the train station. A drug store, a carriage factory, coal and wood yards, and a

¹Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 133.

²Ibid, pg. 6.

³Ibid, pg. 120.

⁴Takoma Fair, 1923, pg. xx.

⁵The Takoma Park Booster, 1938, pg. xx.

⁶Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 17.

⁷The Takoma Park Booster, 1938, pages 5-7.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 65.

blacksmith shop were in operation. Takoma Hall was completed on Cedar St.¹⁰

1889 - The first church was built at Maple and Tulip Aves. on land donated by B. F. Gilbert. It was called the Union Chapel.¹¹¹²

1890 - The Town of Takoma Park was incorporated. Dr. Alfred. V. Parsons opened an office for practice of medicine.¹³ The first Takoma Park police officer was hired. his name was Fred W. Longley.¹⁴

1891 - The first fraternal organization was started. It was the Takoma Lodge No. 24 I. O. O. F.¹⁵

1892 - Arc lights were used for street lighting. The Trinity Episcopal Church was completed and the first church building was occupied.¹⁶

1893 - April. Street car service to Washington was inaugurated. Sept. 17 -- The Takoma Park Presbyterian Church was organized. Shortly afterward the deed to the Union Chapel was transferred to this church. Dec. 29 -- Takoma Park had its first great disaster: fire destroyed the post office, the Watkins Hotel, and a store.¹⁷¹⁸ The North Takoma Hotel, built by B. F. Gilbert, was completed at the current site of the

¹⁰ Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 6.

¹¹ The Takoma Park Booster, 1938, pages 5-7.

¹² Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 39.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, pg. 66.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 18.

Montgomery College campus (Takoma and Fenton Aves.)¹⁹

1894 - A Volunteer Fire Department was formed. George L. Favorite was the first Fire Chief.²⁰

1895 - May 8. Charter was granted to Takoma Lodge No. 29 F. A. A. M. Wilbur G. Platt was the first Master.²¹

1898 - Authority was granted by the State Legislature for the town to issue bonds for construction of water and sewer systems.²²

1899 - March 4. Congress passed an appropriation bill for the construction of a four-room elementary school building in Takoma, DC. The log cabin at Laurel/Carroll Aves. was used as a fire engine house.²³

1900 - Nov. 29. Water was turned into mains of the new water system.²⁴ The Glen Sligo Hotel was built by Boston entrepreneur Alva M. Criswell at the current site of Heather and Elm Aves., overlooking Sligo Creek.²⁵

1901 - May 15. The Takoma Park Elementary School building on Piney Branch Road and Dahlia St. NW. was completed.^{26,27} Originally one story, a second story was added some years later. The structure served the community until the mid-1970s, when it was demolished.²⁸

1902 - The Glen Sligo Hotel was bought by Baltimore "gambling interests."²⁹

1904 - The town authorized the laying of the first cement sidewalks. B. F. Gilbert persuaded Ellen G. White to locate the Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters in Takoma Park.^{30,31} and established the Washington Training College,

¹⁹ Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pgs. 6 & 19.

²⁰ The Takoma Park Booster, 1938, pgs. 5-7.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 18.

²⁶ The Takoma Park Booster, 1938, pgs. 5-7.

²⁷ Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 67.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 18.

³⁰ The Takoma Park Booster, 1938, pgs. 5-7.

³¹ Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 39.

now known as the Columbia Union College.³² Construction work on the main building of the Washington Sanitarium was begun.³³

1907 - June. The Washington Sanitarium was formally opened. Dr. D. H. Kress was the first Superintendent.³⁴ The Seventh-day Adventists built a school at 8 Columbia Ave. This structure was later purchased by the City and used as the City Hall until a new building on Maple Ave. was completed in 1972.³⁵

1908 - Bliss Electrical School bought the North Takoma Hotel. Fire destroyed the renovated school later that year. The school was re-built on the same site.³⁶

1911 - The Carnegie Library of Washington was built with money donated by Andrew Carnegie.³⁷

1912 - The Cedar St. railroad underpass was built.³⁸

1913 - B. F. Gilbert's house on the NW corner of Tulip and Cedar Aves. (now 7204 Cedar) burned to the ground.³⁹ The first Seventh-day Adventist church was built at the SE corner of Willow and Carroll Aves.⁴⁰

1920 - The Glen Sligo Hotel was torn down.⁴¹

1923 - The new Takoma Park Presbyterian Church was constructed at Maple and Tulip Aves.⁴² The Takoma Theatre at Fourth and Butternut Sts. NW was built.⁴³

1927 - The Suburban Trust Bank at Willow and Carroll Aves. was constructed.⁴⁴

1928 - The Takoma Park Fire Station on Carroll Avenue was completed, using stones taken from Sligo Creek as part of the foundation.⁴⁵

³²Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 65.

³³The Takoma Park Booster, 1938, pgs. 5-7.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 65.

³⁶Ibid, pg. 18.

³⁷Ibid, pg. 66.

³⁸Ibid, pg. 50.

³⁹Ibid, pg. 18.

⁴⁰Ibid, pg. 45.

⁴¹Ibid, pg. 18.

⁴²Ibid, pg. 40.

⁴³Ibid, pg. 58.

⁴⁴Ibid, pg. 56.

⁴⁵Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 66.

1935 (circa) - The Takoma Park Library began as a project of the Takoma Park Women's Club and was operated as a volunteer organization until it became a municipal department in 1963.⁴⁶

1953 - The second Seventh-day Adventist Church was built at Eastern and Laurel Aves.⁴⁷

1967 - Arsonists destroyed the Takoma Train Station.⁴⁸

1982 - The Washington Sanitarium was demolished to make way for new hospital structures.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 44.

⁴⁸ Ibid, pg. 17.

⁴⁹ Takoma Park: Portrait of a Victorian Suburb, 1883-1983, 1984, pg. 29.