THE 1930s AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The 1930s were a time of economic struggle in Mount Rainier. The Depression required a community response to help those in need. The town council took steps to decrease the burden while finding ways to employ the jobless and adapt to the ongoing social changes.

In 1931, the town had a surplus of $13,000, enough to run the town for six months without other revenue. The tax rate was lowered from 40 cents to 20 cents.

The town council employed jobless men to build the boundary pillars on Rhode Island Avenue as part of the state's bicentennial celebrations. (WP 2/20/1932)

The Mount Rainier Welfare Association provided work for jobless men and furnished coal and groceries to those in need. Charity food drives were held and in 1932 the response overwhelmed the town's storage capacity. (WP 1/2/1932)

The citizens voted in October 1933 to repeal the town's "blue laws." The vote was taken to consider Sunday amusements such as moving pictures, lectures, sports, and musical shows. (WP 10/23/1933)

PROHIBITION

The news of those days included discoveries of stills, speakeasies, and caches of illegal liquor. The *Washington Post* reported that a suspected rumrunner evaded pursuit on Bunker Hill Road by deploying a smoke screen and firing shots at the police. (WP 6/25/1931)

PROGRESS

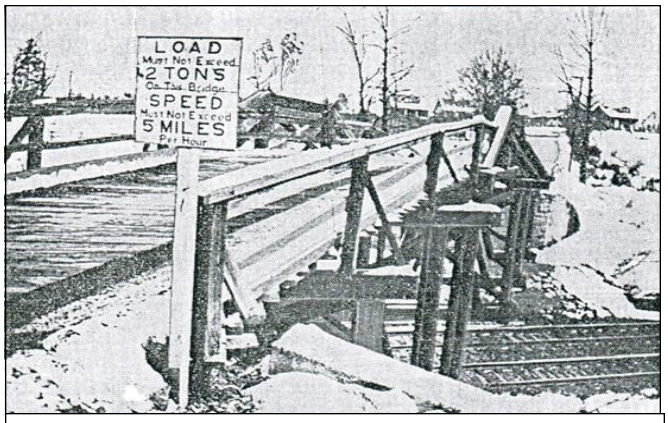
The town council adopted ordinances providing the town with the power to revoke business licenses and building permits. In addition, new laws allowed it to clean unsightly lots and charge the expense to the owner. (WP 1/24/1932) Garbage, trash, and ash collection began. (WP 3/29/1931)

3200 block of Rhode Island Avenue—1932
Source: Rhode Island Avenue dedication program, 1932

—and in 2010

A circuit court judge threw out a suit brought by town residents who opposed construction of concrete streets and sidewalks financed with bonds. The state legislature had granted the borrowing authority during the 1929 session, but the taxpayers challenged the law as unconstitutional. (WP 4/18/1930)

By 1931, nearly all the streets were paved in a town once called "Mud Rainier" (WP 3/29/1931)



Source: Washington Star, 3/18/1934

A wooden bridge crossed the tracks in 1934. This bridge was just west of current Eastern Ave. concrete bridge. (See map next page) The old concrete supports are still evident on the hillside next to the tracks. This is a view looking south toward Bladensburg Road.

In 1932, the state paved Rhode Island Avenue, which had its origins as a trail alongside the trolley line. A parade was held, Governor Ritchie spoke, and the Adah Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star provided a dinner feast at Star-Potts Hall.

In 1937, after a series of night-time burglaries, the town council voted to install all-night street lights. Mayor Pruitt said, "Women are scared to death as a result of these burglaries. Now is the time to act on this all-night lighting. If we wait any longer, this guy will have all the pockets in town cleaned out and will be gone." (PGP 9/24/1937)

By 1930, an amendment required that the voter registrar advertise in the newspaper the two days in April each year when residents could register to vote.

BOOTS AT THE "MUD RAINIER" STATION

Before the streets were paved, workers would wear boots down to the street car station to keep work shoes mud-free. The boots would be lined up at the station awaiting the return in the evening of workers who then took off their shoes and walked home in their boots. (TPG 5/28/1943)

SUFFRAGE

In 1931, the state legislature at the request of the town amended the charter to bring it into compliance with the 19th Amendment, which had been ratified in 1920. The charter's provision that only men could register to vote had been disregarded for many years; however, another change opened the way for women to run for elected office. The prior charter required elected officials to not only be registered to vote, but also to own real property "in his own name." The 1931 amendment provided that the real property could be owned by the voter, or jointly by husband and wife. (WP 3/29/1931) Even with this progressive change, the first woman did not serve on the council until the 1970s.

BONDING SUIT WON BY MOUNT RAINIER

Prince Georges Court Ruling Will Permit Public Improvements.

WORK HAD BEEN HELD UP

Consummation of the plans of Mount Rainier for the laying of concrete streets and sidewalks was made possible yesterday by a ruling handed down by Judge Joseph C. Mattingly in Prince Georges County Circuit Court at Upper Marlboro. The judge held that the act of the 1929 Legislature giving the town the right to borrow an amount equal to 8 per cent of its assessed valuation is valid. Judge Mattingly indicated that he would dismiss the taxpayers' suit brought by Rufus E. Milor and Henry J. Mulholland through Attorney Charles B. Calvert, which asked an injunction preventing the town from issuing bonds to pay for the construction work and from paying any town funds to several construction companies which had already started work on part of the project. The mayor and town council and the contractors were named jointly as defendants in the suit.

Contracts for $64,727 with the firm of Jarboe & Houghton and $60,210 with the Fred Loomis Construction Co. had been let and most of the work specified in them carried out when the suit was filed. A Baltimore firm had agreed to purchase a bond issue of $130,000 to finance the work but declined to complete the negotiations until after the suit was disposed of.

The plaintiffs argued that the act authorizing the bond issue was unconstitutional.

In handing down the opinion the judge took occasion to state that while the citizens might not always be right that it is a healthy sign when acts of public officials are subject to such close scrutiny by the taxpayers and tend to keep the public officials from careless administration of the people's affairs.

Defense attorneys were State Senators Lansdale G. Sasscer and Walter J. Mitchell, Corporation Counsel Bird H. Dolby and John S. White.

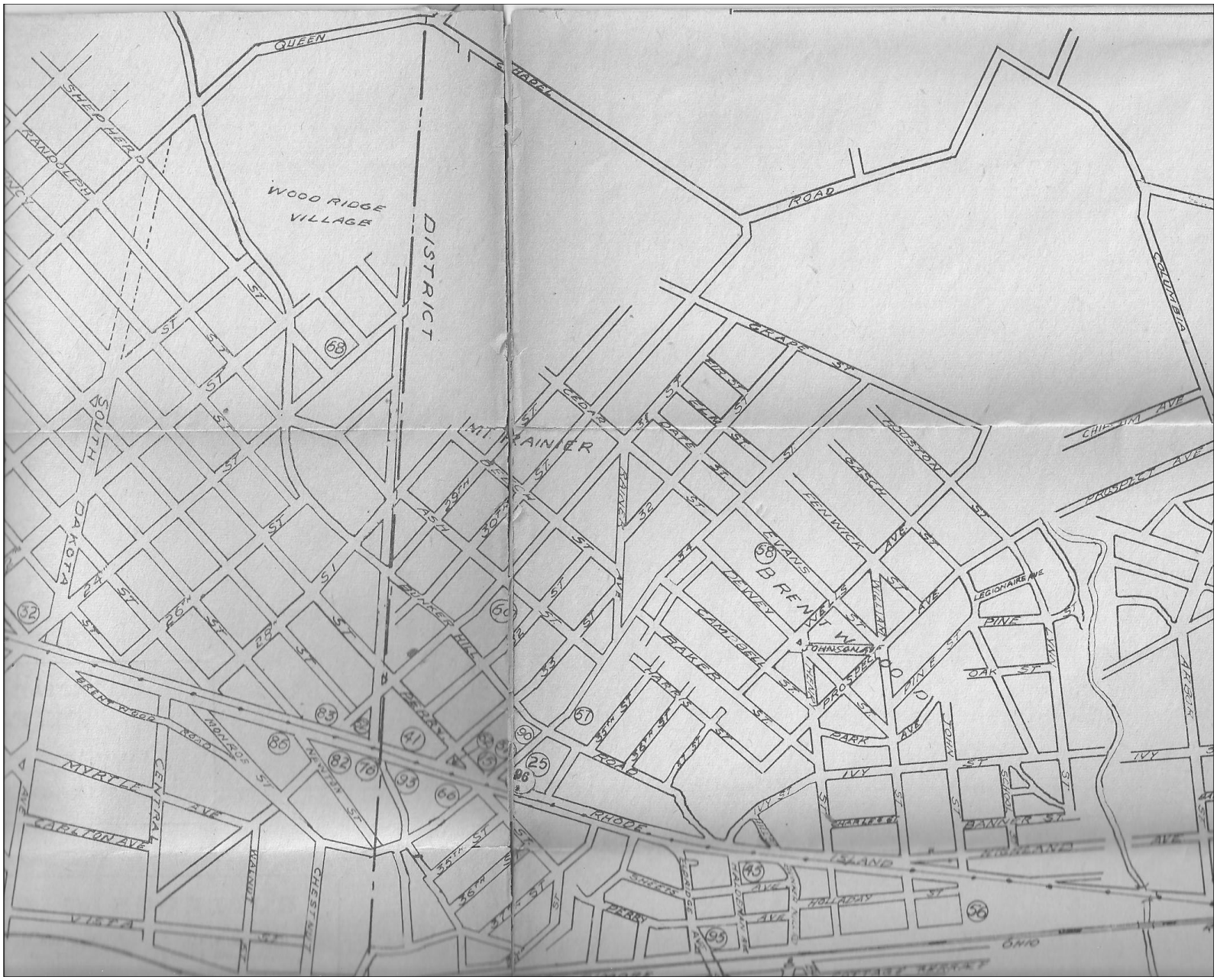
Wash. Post, 4/18/1930

Suspected Rumrunners Shoot, Escape in Smoke

A suspected liquor car escaped Mount Rainier police last night after turning on a smoke-screen and shooting once at Chief Eugene Plumer, who chased the machine six blocks through the town.

Chief Plumer said he noticed the car being driven recklessly as it passed the firehouse, coming into the town by way of Brentwood. He started in pursuit and was overtaking the machine when the smoke-screen was opened and the occupants fired once. The car escaped into the District by Bunker Hill road. Chief Plumer said it was apparently heavily loaded. A lookout was sent to radio-equipped police automobiles.

Wash. Post, 6/25/1931



In 1937, Eastern Avenue existed only between Rhode Island Avenue and Barnard Hill Park. It did not connect Bladensburg Road and Queens Chapel Road as it does today. By 1939 the connection had been made (see aerial photo found later in this chapter). The wood bridge on the previous page existed on a small road that connected Bladensburg Road and today's 37th Street.

MT. RAINIER HEADS UNOPPOSED SO FAR

Prince Georges Officers Put 7 Counts Against Driver of Alleged Rum Car.

No opposition to Mayor John H. Beall and Councilman Rexford Worley and Norman A. Pruitt, who are running for reelection on May 4, has appeared on the Mount Rainier political horizon, although it is rumored that another candidate for mayor may make his appearance.

Mr. Worley represents the Fourth ward and Mr. Pruitt is representative of the First. Apparently no one wants to run against the present incumbents, as, save for mayor, there have been no rumors of any opposition. However, there is ample time before the election for almost any sort of a race to develop. Mount Rainier nominates its officials on the petition plan rather than through conventions, as is the custom in Hyattsville.

New voters in the town election may register on April 4 and 11 at the town hall. Daniel J. Orcutt and Elizabeth Laughton have been appointed judges of the election.

If the bill providing salaries for town officials is passed at this session of the Legislature, this change must be approved by the voters at the next election before it becomes operative. The bill provides that salaries shall not begin to accrue until after a favorable referendum. The bill, which is up for its third reading in the House, carries an emergency clause which puts its other provisions into effect as soon as passed.

The new law also allows women to run for office, inasmuch as it makes them registered voters of the town. Although they have voted for some years, the charter of the town says that voters must be men, but this clause has been generally disregarded. The charter also says that any voter may be a candidate for office, so that the change may result in women entering the running in either this or later elections.

A change in property qualifications for voting will also make it easier for women. The present law requires that the voter must own $500 worth of real estate in his own name. This is being changed to allow the property to be in the voter's own name, or to be owned jointly with man or wife.

While the present administration is not making up a formal platform, it is understood that they are citing their past record as a reason for continuing them in office.

They point out that the town tax rate has been lowered from 40 to 20 cents, although 9 cents was added by the last Legislature for the upkeep of the fire department. Garbage, trash and ash collections have also been instituted under this regime.

Streets, his supporters point out, nearly all have been paved and $43,000 worth of bonds have been issued for further improving. Shade trees will have been planted throughout the town within the next few weeks. There is a surplus of $13,000 in the town treasury, more than enough to run the town for six months if all revenue should be cut off. In addition, there is in the sinking fund $17,000 more than is needed to retire the town bonds outstanding.

THREE OFFICIALS UNOPPOSED

These three members of the government of Mt. Rainier, Md., will run again in the elections to be held on May 4. Left to right—Norman A. Pruitt, councilman for the first ward; John H. Beall, mayor, and Rexford Worley, councilman from the third ward. No opposition to any of them has appeared.

Source: Wash. Post, 3/29/1931

This article provides a glimpse of issues and conditions of the town in 1931, including changes to election procedures, officials' salaries, women's suffrage, taxes, street conditions, and tree plantings.

About fifteen persons already have been charged with having fictitious markers in a drive being conducted on residents of Mount Rainier and nearby towns who have District license plates although living in Maryland. According to State Police, who have been checking up for the past month, there are about 35 more who have not yet been served with warrants.

Yesterday afternoon there was a line waiting to put up collateral before Judge Robert Joyce.

Source: Wash. Post, 3/21/1931

Nothing new under the sun… the familiar issue of D.C. licensed vehicles on Mount Rainier streets. But this report is from 1931!

PROGRAM

for the

Celebration of the Completion

of

Rhode Island Avenue

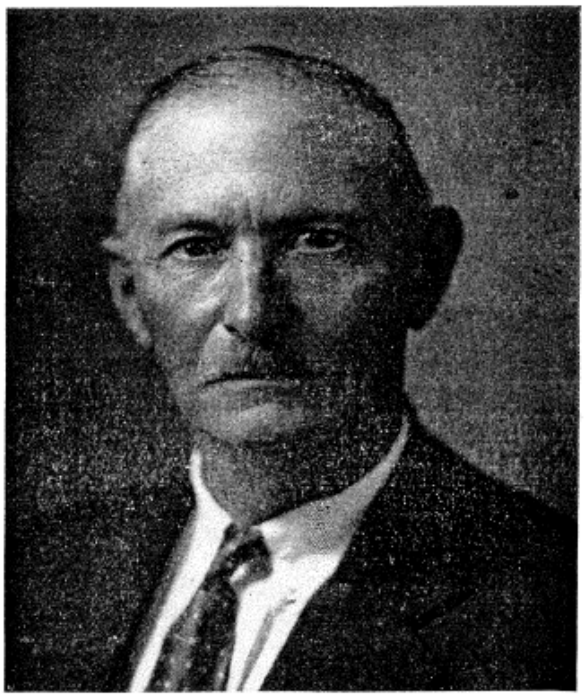
Mt. Rainier, Md.

October 15th, 1932

This commemorative booklet includes photographs, historical information, and advertisements from dozens of local businesses. A copy of the booklet is kept in the Prince George's County Historical Society Library.

Earliest known photo of Potts Hall (1930s), provided by the Order of the Eastern Star which owned the building for many years until the City bought it in 2010.
This is likely a scene from the 1932 completion ceremony for Rhode Island Avenue.

Mayor John Beall



JOHN H. BEALL

Born January 21, 1876, at Buena Vista, Md.; attended public schools in Prince George's County, Md.; appointed Mayor September 18, 1926, to complete the unexpired term ending May, 1927; elected May, 1929, for two year term, reelected 1931; during his administration of the office there was initiated the first comprehensive policy of public streets improvement. During the nine months he was Mayor, from September, 1926, to May, 1927, there was authorized by the Legislature and approved by the voters of Mt. Rainier, legislation which has made possible the paving of 90 per cent of the streets. With the completion of this year's program there will have been expended approximately $450,000 in street and sidewalk improvements. The Act under which this work has been done is the model for not only many towns in Maryland, but other states interested in making improvements on terms that property owners can meet. During Mr. Beall's present term the following improvements have been either effected or have been authorized:

Extension of bright lights on Rhode Island Avenue, from the District Line through the town, and installation of traffic signal system at Thirty-fourth Street and Rhode Island Avenue; completion of street marker and tree planting program; establishment of efficient police system; garbage, ash and trash collection service; reassessment of all property and equalization of assessments of the real property of the town on a standardized basis, resulting in tax reduction rate from 40 cents to 15 cents on the $100; inauguration of a budget system of expenditures; installation of an up-to-date accounting system in the Clerk-Treasurer's office.

His motto is: "A dollar's worth of service for every dollar spent."

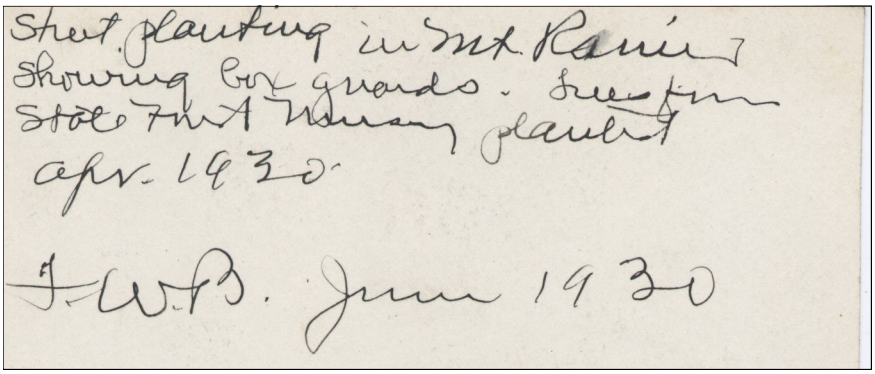
MOUNT RAINIER'S 1930's-ERA TREES

Dear Mr. Tarlau,

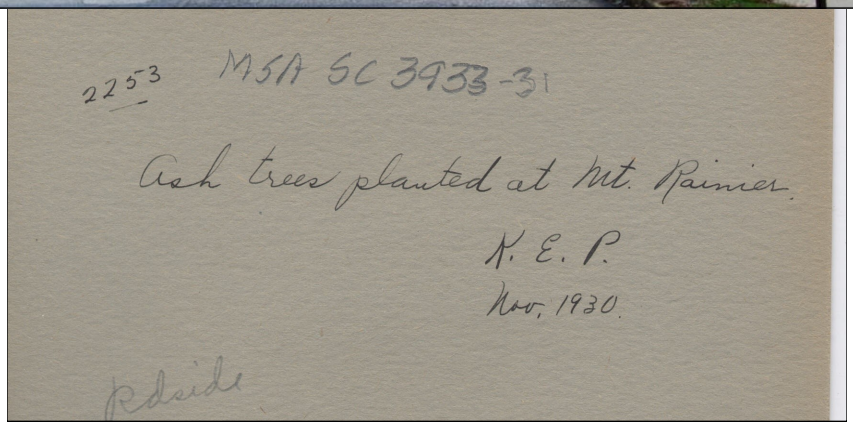
The photos were taken by a Maryland state forester apparently at the time the state forest service provided street trees for Mt. Rainier ca. 1930.
I'm the retired historian for the Maryland Park Service. The attached photos are from a collection of thousands of photographs taken from ca.1920 to the 1960s by Maryland state forest and park employees to document visually everything they were doing in those days to promote forestry and park use. All the photos are now housed in the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis. Some years ago, in preparation for the centennial of forestry and parks in Maryland, I scanned hundreds of the pictures. Knowing the Rick family's long tenure in Mt. Rainier, those five photos were of course of keen interest to me, so I made sure to scan them. When I retired a year and a half ago, I put a lot of my electronic work files on an expansion drive to keep, and all the pictures are in that expansion drive. The information on the backs of the pictures have the initials of Fred W. Besley, Maryland's first state forester (served 1906-1942). If any of the photos are published, please credit:

Fred W. Besley, state forester (served 1906-1942), Maryland Forest and Park Gift Collection at the Maryland State Archives. Let me know if I can be of further assistance.
Sincerely,
Ross Kimmel

Elms planted in 1930 on Bunker Hill Road at 31st St. **Same view in 2010. The elms died many years ago.**



Shepherd Street (then Ash Street) at 32nd Street looking east toward 34th Street. In 1930, the state forestery department documented the planting of street trees. These are likely ash trees to reflect name of the street at that time. The new trees are protected with wooden boxes. The streets were concrete not asphalt. Fertilizer for the trees is ready at hand in this photo! Stop signs were not a necessity yet.
Below is same view in 2010.



3500 block of Perry Street (then called Newton Street) in 1930 with newly planted trees; and same view in 2010. The tall house with gables on the left in 1930 is also visible in the 1912 photo below.
The architect obviously preserved the "gabled" motif in the south façade of City Hall when it replaced the house in the 1990s.
Could that possibly be the exact same utility pole in both photos?!

Another viewpoint of the gabled house (1930) and City Hall (2010) is provided below. This is the 3700 block of 35th Street looking north.

ELEVENTH ANNUAL
CONVENTION
AUGUST 12TH 1933

PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

MT. RAINIER · MARYLAND

OFFICERS

ARTHUR J. BATES
DEPUTY CHIEF

W. S. FREEMAN
CAPTAIN

MT. RAINIER FIRE DEPT.

KARL A. YOUNG
CHIEF

GEORGE R. LEE, JR
LIEUTENANT

1933

BERNARD BEALL
SERGEANT

Mount Rainier Police Chief Cleared on Drunk Charges

Eugene Plumer Convinces Court in Prince Georges County That He Was Dazed by Injury From Fall While Entering His Auto.

Wash. Post, 1/19/1933

Charges of being drunk and disorderly against Eugene Plumer, chief of police of Mount Rainier, Md., were dismissed in Hyattsville Police Court yesterday after Plumer explained that he was dazed from a fall at the time he was alleged to have been intoxicated.

Numerous persons prominent in Prince Georges County appeared to testify that Chief Plumer always had a good reputation. Charges of assault and battery against Plumer were also dismissed when Judge J. Chew Sheriff decided that no assault had occurred.

Chief Plumer told the court that he had slipped while getting into his automobile in Hyattsville and struck his face on the gear shift lever. A few minutes later, he said, he lost consciousness and did not regain his senses until he found himself in custody of Hyattsville police. In the meantime, it was charged, Plumer had gone to a nearby house and attempted to break in.

About a year ago Plumer suffered an accident when he was thrown from his motorcycle while chasing an automobile in Mount Rainier. He never fully recovered from this and the previous injury coupled with his fall in the automobile accounted for his dazed condition, he said.

St. John's Episcopal Church — 1933 Sunday School class

CORINNA LORING MURDER MYSTERY

Corinna Loring

On the night of Nov. 4, 1935, Corinna Loring was murdered in the "lover's lane" on the "lonely Saddleback Ridge" (latter the Kaywood area—see next page). Her body was found five days later by a man out hunting rabbits. She had been beaten, bitten, and strangled. She was killed two days before her planned marriage to Richard Tear who police arrested as the first suspect.

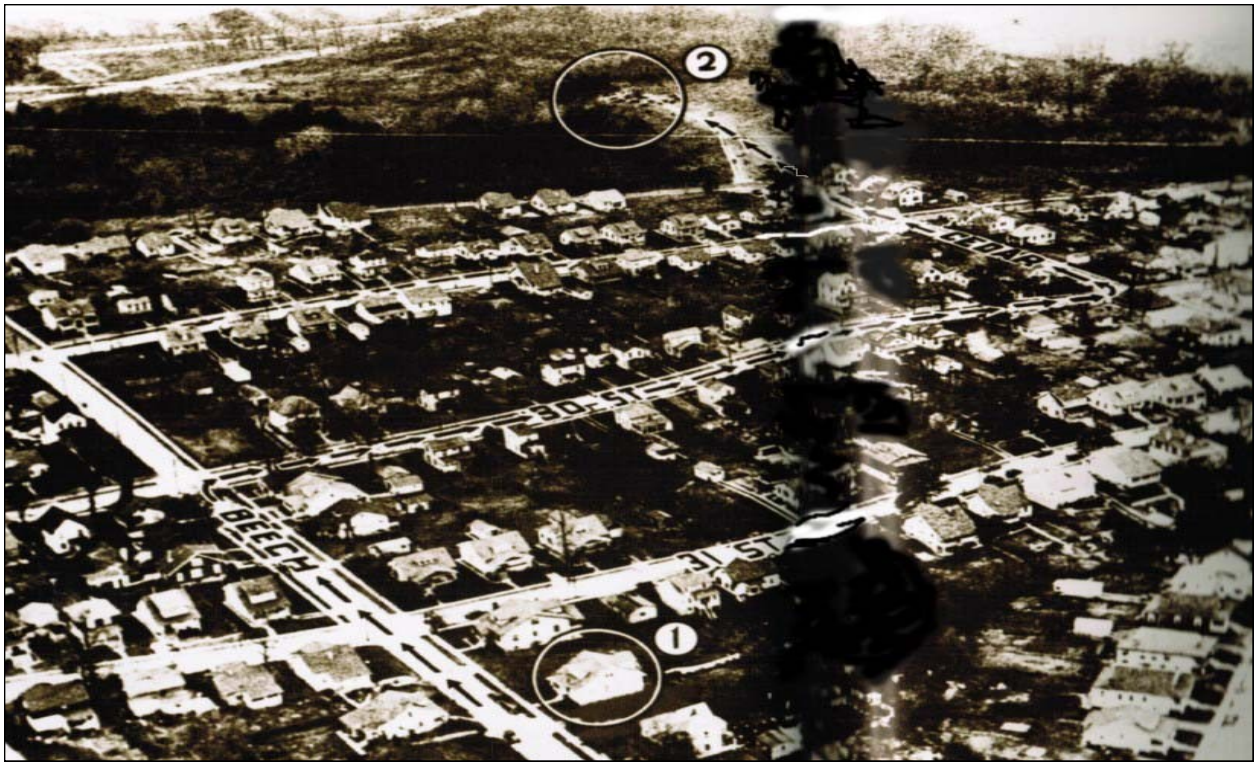
The coroner found teeth marks on Loring's hand and deduced that only a woman would bite during a fight; therefore, he suspected that Loring was killed by two people, a man and a woman. The coroner also found two holes in Loring's head and speculated they were made with ice tongs. News of the sensational murder brought hundreds of people to see the bloody crime scene. Loring's uncle died of a heart attack after hearing of her brutal murder. The sensational murder of the bride-to-be was reported from New York to Los Angeles; Chicago to Miami.

The motive was unknown since she had not been robbed (her broken watch indicated the time was 9:05), nor sexually assaulted. It was unknown why she was at the park, but she had changed clothes just before leaving the house (3104 Taylor Street), and left her purse at home. It appeared that she had gone there to meet someone she knew. Suspicion fell next on her ex-boyfriend, Aubrey Hampton, who might have committed the crime as revenge for being jilted. Tear and Hampton were released once their alibis were confirmed. Some suspected her mother.

Evidence from the scene included a man's leather glove that fit Tear, some hair tangled on one of Loring's coat buttons (determined later to be her own hair), and a bloody piece of scrap paper—evidently used to wipe the murderer's hands. Psychiatrists were told to watch for unusual behavior among those who attended the funeral at the Methodist Church.

In the end, the murder was unsolved.

Loring —in her wedding dress— is buried at Fort Lincoln Cemetery.



Source: *Journey Through Time: A Pictorial History of the Prince George's County Police Department*

The Loring home (1) on Beech Street (now Taylor) in relation to the wooded murder site on a "lonely lane" (2) in today's Kaywood area. Cedar Street is now Upshur Street.

Aerial view of the then wooded Kaywood area in 1939.
The "lonely lane" is easy to spot in the open area surrounded by woods.

Woman Sought in Bride's Death; Tooth-Marks on Hand of Victim

Figures in Inquiry of the Murder of Saddleback Ridge

Corinna Loring Fought by Two Killers, Is New Theory.

Police Are Hunting Man in Washington

Fiance of

ARREST EX-SUITOR OF MURDERED GIRL

Police Take Federal Employe From Washington to Maryland in Loring Inquiry.

OFFERED TO AID SEARCH

Came Forward Before Body of Strangled Bride-to-Be of Was Found.

Tragic Story Revealed By Mother of Corinna

Mrs. Loring Describes Events Leading Up to Finding of Bride-to-Be's Body on Lonely R Girl Had No Enemies, Bereaved Parent

By Virginia Lee Warren.

Copyright, 1933, by The Washington Po

For the first time, Mrs. George A. Loring told words yesterday the story of events leading up t pearance of her daughter, Corinna, 27-year-old

Monday, November 4.

In an exclusive interview the gray-haired mother described the suspense between the time of the girl's disappearance and the finding five days later of her battered and garroted body on bleak Saddleback Ridge, less than half a mile from her home at 3110 Beech street, Mount Rainier.

She told of efforts she made dur ing those five long days to find h daughter; of the way she learn the body had been found.

But now, more than a week Corinna's burial, Mrs. Lori has no idea as to who m murdered the girl only before the time appoint wedding to Richard Te at St. Elizabeths Hos

"I can understand might have a gru but Corinna had slain girl's moth

She was sit tle living r while bung close by, flushed doors, hanging yard.

The evident on was gone. The were soft. Free eyes crinkle smile. Her back softly from her framed a face that was pleasant in its expression.

When she referred to her daugh ter, Mrs. Loring frequently used the present tense as if the girl was alive and on her honeymoon instead of in a crypt at Fort Lincoln Cemetery.

Occasionally the mother shook her head and said:

"It all seems like a bad dream. I just can't believe has happened. I sh her walk through that as she used to."

Calmly Mrs. Loring reviewed

Continued on Page 5, Column 2.

STRANGLED GIRL AND FIANCE

Richard Tear, held for questioning by police of Mount Ranier, Md., and his bride-to-be, Corinna Loring, who was found murdered two days before the day set for her wedding.

[Associated Press Wirephotos.]

FORMER SUITOR SEIZED IN DEATH OF BRIDE-TO-BE

Escort of Murdered Girl in Recent Weeks.

[Chicago Tribune Press Service.]

Mount Rainier, Md., Nov. 10.—[Special.]—A stalwart, six foot college student who had paid ardent but unsuccessful court to Corina Loring, pretty 26 year old Sunday school secretary and public stenographer, was taken into custody tonight for questioning concerning her murder last Monday night, two days before she was to have been become another man's bride.

The new suspect is Aubrey Hampton, 27 years old, of Washington, D. C., who is taking an advanced course at a night school in the national capital.

Washington police, accompanied by Chief Eugene Plumer of the Mount Ranier force, arrested him shortly after 11 o'clock at his home on New Hampshire avenue in Washington.

For several months before he was replaced in her affections by Richard Tear, 29 year old hospital orderly and ex-marine to whom she was to be married last Wednesday, Hampton, police say, was Miss Loring's frequent escort.

A friend of Hampton, a young man named Hough, also was being sought for questioning tonight. Hough and Hampton went out often with the slain bride-to-be and another girl, according to police.

Despite the fact her wedding date was near, Miss Loring had permitted Hampton to escort her out several times in recent weeks, detectives have been informed.

Plan Trip to Murder Scene.

After Hampton has been given an intensive grilling, he and Tear, who has been in custody since a few hours after the murder was discovered, will be taken to the lonely thicket, where her battered body was found, the authorities disclosed.

The trip will be made by the eerie glow of flashlights, for police expect to reach there by 2 a. m.

From the first investigators have held to the belief that jealousy was the murderer's motive. But, despite

Chicago Tribune

SEARS HOUSES

Sears Roebuck offered mail-order houses through its "Honor Bilt Modern Homes" catalog. In addition to the materials, Sears offered financing. The catalog offered many styles, each with a name (see examples in list below). The buyer would receive blueprints and instructions for installation of heating, plumbing, and electrical. They were marketed as easy to construct. All wood components were pre-cut and shipped to the site along with nails, screws, siding, roofing shingles, interior wall and floor sheathing, window sashes, decorative interior moldings, doors, floors, and paint. Plumbing and wiring were available but at added cost. Sears did not supply plaster or masonry, but "sheet plaster," the forerunner of drywall, was available at extra cost.

Materials were shipped by rail and deliveries were timed to arrive as needed; therefore, the materials did not sit waiting at the construction site. The sale of the homes ended in 1940 during the mortgage foreclosure crisis of the Great Depression.
Sears also offered a selection of homes of lower quality and cost than the Honor Bilt Modern Homes. Other companies such as Alladin and Montgomery Ward also sold mail-order houses.

The city's Sears houses are listed in the *Mount Rainier Historic District National Register Nomination* and/or the booklet: *Sears, Roebuck and Company Mail Order House Survey in Prince George's County, Maryland*. The city's Sears houses vary in age with some built before 1920.The following homes have been identified as Sears houses:

3424 Newton. "Winona"
3505 Rhode Island Avenue. "Avoca"
3004 Upshur. "Conway"
3114 Upshur. "Conway"
3207 Upshur. "Windsor"
3112 Varnum. "Oak Park"
4115 28th. "Lakecrest"
4203 28th. "Conway"
4118 29th. "Vallonia"
4215 29th. "Vallonia"
4507 29th. "Cornell"
4223 34th. "Avoca"

Certainly more Sears houses exist in the area and confirmed examples will be added to the list as they are documented. In addition, mail-order homes from other companies likely exist in the city.

"The Vallonia" at 4118 29th Street

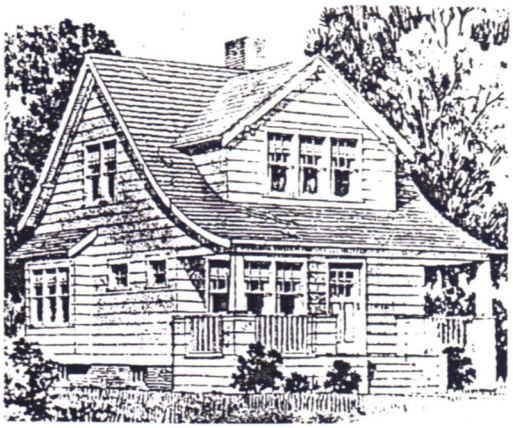
"The Windsor" at 3207 Upshur Street

THE LAKECREST

This story-and-a-half bungalow-type design contains everything to be desired in a small home. Exterior attractiveness and practical interior arrangement at a very low cost. Note the graceful way the main roof curves down over the large front porch. At a small additional cost, the porch can be screened in for summer.

Details and features: Five rooms and one bath. Full-width front porch supported by tapered piers; gabled dormer. Fireplace in living room; semiopen stairs.

Years and catalog numbers: *1931* (3333); 1932 (3333); 1933 (3333)



Price: No price given

Identical to: The Marion

Years and catalog numbers: 1933 (13333); 1934 (13333); 1935 (13333); 1937 (13333); 1939 (3415)

Price: $1,330 to $1,537

4115 28th Street, Mt. Rainier

Photo by Bryan Knedler

"The Lakecrest" at 4115 28th Street during the February 2010 blizzard

OTHER EVENTS AND FACTS

Source: Inventory of Historic Sites, M-NCPPC

"The Winona" 3424 Newton Street ("Ziegler Cottage")

1930

- Population reached 3,832.
- Mount Rainier High School opened (present site of Rainier Manor on Queens Chapel Road). (WP 10/26/1930)
- Taxpayers rally at the Bluebird Auditorium in Mount Rainier to oppose the taxes levied by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission and the National-Capital Park and Planning Commission. (WP 10/26/1930)
- Memorial Park is created (with barberry bushes along the borders that still grow there in 2010!). (WP 3/15/1930)
- Mount Rainier authorities ordered Brentwood police to stop making arrests within Mount Rainier. (WP 4/17/1930)

1932

- Mount Rainier-Brentwood Boys Club founded.
- The town council decided to continue planting trees along the newly paved streets since both trees and labor were cheaper than in the past. (WP 2/20/1932)
- An advertisement for police officers appeared when the town found itself with two motorcycles and no one to ride them. Chief Plumer who had been involved in several motorcycle accidents refused to continue riding one. (WP 1/9/1932)
- The Adah Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star prepared a time capsule to be opened in 100 years. (Rhode Island Avenue dedication program, 1932)

1937

- The Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) dedicated at Bunker Hill Road and 30th Street.
- A soap box derby was held on 34th Street at the hill between the Upshur Streets. (PGP 9/3/1937)

Source: Celebrating Official Opening of Rhode Island Avenue, 1929

Source: Bill Holton

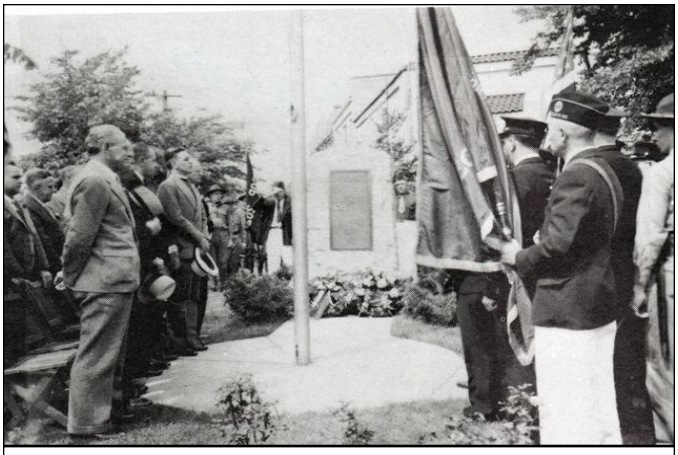
Rhode Island Avenue — 1929 (above)
Looking eastward. 3400 Rhode Island Avenue is just past the Prince George's Bank on left.
3400 Rhode Island Avenue — 1930s (right)

- A blinking amber traffic light was approved for Rhode Island Avenue at 34th Street. (PGP 3/7/1937)

1938

•A granite rock with the names of town officials dedicated at Memorial Park. (TPG 5/5/1938)

•"Deceased Mayors Honored at Rites." Wash. Star, 1938 (dedication of Memorial Park stone monument)



Source: Walter P. Plumley

Memorial Day at Memorial Park

1939

•A new streetcar terminal built at 34th and Rhode Island Avenue. (PGP 9/14/1939)

SOURCES

•*Sears, Roebuck and Company Mail Order House Survey in Prince George's County, Md.* M-NCPPC, by Marina King. 1988.

•*Houses By Mail, A Guide to Houses From Sears, Roebuck, and Company*. By Stevenson and Jandl. 1986.

•*Mount Rainier Historic District National Register Nomination*. M-NCPPC. 1990.

•*Program for the Celebration of the Completion of Rhode Island Avenue. Mt. Rainier, Md. October 15th, 1932.*

•"Parkway Planned for Mount Rainier." *Wash. Post*, 3/15/1930.

•"Member of Council Under Bond in Fight." *Wash. Post*, 1/18/1931.

•"Bonding Suit Won by Mount Rainier." *Wash. Post*, 4/18/1930.

"•Mt. Rainier Heads Unopposed So Far." *Wash. Post*, 3/29/1931.

"Suspected Rumrunners Shoot, Escape in Smoke." *Wash. Post*, 6/25/1931.

•"Mt. Rainier Food Drive Brings Overflow Supply." *Wash. Post*, 1/2/1932.

•"Council Gets Right to Revoke Licenses." *Wash. Post*, 1/24/1932.

•"Mt. Rainier Adopts New Traffic Rule." *Wash. Post*, 2/20/1932.

Source: Raymond M. Hollidge, Jr.

Apples for sale at a vacant 3200 Rhode Island Avenue

Loring Murder

•"Tragic Story Revealed by Mother of Corinna." By Virginia Lee Warren. *Wash. Post,* Nov. 1935.

•"Loring Suitor Watched Home, Police Are Told." *Wash. Post*, Nov. 1935.

•"Woman Sought in Bride's Death; Tooth-Marks on Hand of Victim." *Wash. Post*, Nov. 1935.

•"Police Hunt Killer of Girl at Funeral." *Miami News*, 11/13/1935.

•"News of Slaying Kills Girl's Uncle." UP Wire Service, 11/11/1935.

•" 'Test of Death' Fails to Point Slayer of Girl." *Pittsburgh Press*, 11/14/1935.

•"Former Suitor Seized in Death of Bride-to-Be." *Chicago Tribune*, 11/11/1935.

•"Arrest Ex-Suitor of Murdered Girl." *NY Times*, 11/11/1935.

•*Journey Through Time: A Pictorial History of the Prince George's County Police Department*. By Lt. Dennis Campbell, 1991.

The Queenstown area in the 1930s when it was still woods and farmland. Queens Chapel Road enters the aerial photo in lower left corner and makes its still familiar bend at what is now Rainier Manor Apartments but was the high school (below) at that time (school was set back from the road and its roof is visible in the photo above). The white (almost square) area in the middle of the photo is now the Queens-Chillum Shopping Center with Chillum Road along its north edge where it intersects Queens-Chapel Road.

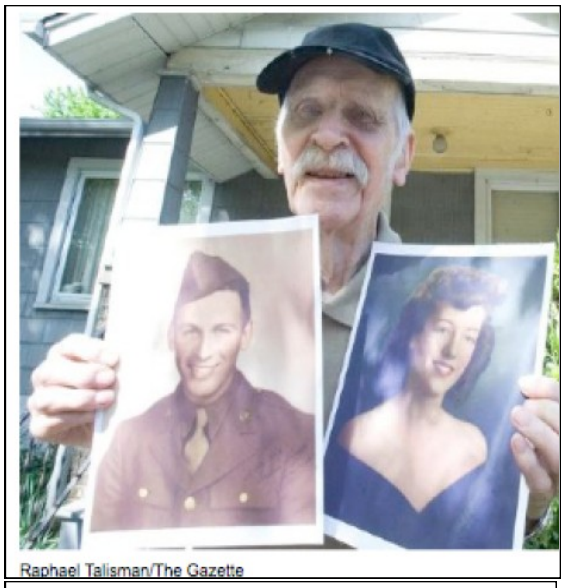


Photo courtesy of Gazette

Jimmie Rice, who moved to Mount Rainier nearly 80 years ago, in the 1920s, holds a photo April 2010 of himself and his wife, Ann.
Mr. Rice provided a number of photos for the city history project.

Rice in front of Mount Rainier High School and on 31st Street with the former 3103 Shepherd in background (now a parking lot).

BYLAWS FOR PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I--NAME

The name of this association shall be the Mt. Rainier High School Parent-Teacher association.

ARTICLE II--OBJECTS

SECTION 1. The objects of this association shall be: To promote child welfare in home, school, church, and community; to raise the standards of home life; to secure more adequate laws for the care and protection of women and children. To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child; to develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantage in physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education.

SECTION 2. This association shall be nonsectarian, nonpartisan, and noncommercial in all its relationships.

ARTICLE III--MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

SECTION 1. Parents whose children are attending this school, the principal and teachers, and any adult residing in the school district who is interested in the objects for which the association is organized may become members by registering.

SECTION 2. Persons who reside outside the school district not having children in the school may be entitled to membership upon the recom-

Mount Rainier High School

The Mt. Rainier High School, located at the intersection of 30th St. and Queens Chapel Road Was opened in September 1930. It was practically a fire-proof brick building containing thirteen large classrooms, besides an office, library teachers' room, and the "largest school auditorium in Prince George's County." Modern lavatories, shower and dressing rooms were provided, as well as a well-equipped general shop for the boys and a home economics room for the girls, fitted with electric ranges and sewing machines. A science laboratory was opened with over $500 worth of the latest apparatus for studying chemistry, biology, and physics. Twelve typewriters made possible a thorough stenographic training for small, intensively drilled groups. A large athletic field allowed ample space for soccer, field-ball, dodge-ball, and tennis courts, with baseball in season.

During the first year only one senior high school class of normal size was admitted, and a small second-year class of students formerly enrolled in Hyattsville and Washington. By 1932-33 all four years of high school were in operation. The enrollment, in excess of 250 children was the largest among Prince George's eleven high schools. Housed in the same building and using the same equipment was a junior high school department numbering in 1932-1933, approximately 80 children.

In "The Program for the Celebration of the Completion of Rhode Island Avenue, October 15, 1932," the citizens of Mt. Rainier, Brentwood, and other neighboring communities were urged "to investigate the educational opportunities now available in their own local schools before making a decision to continue sending their children into Washington."

What we now call the Mt. Rainier High School was first opened in 1930. (See Special Section.) Until then, our children of high school age were compelled to attend classes at the Hyattsville High School or go into the District of Columbia. Since World War II our high school students have been transported to either Bladensburg Senior High School or Northwestern Senior High School.

The act of April 17, 1931, approved by the voters on a referendum vote provided a salary of $200 per annum for the Mayor and $125 per annum for each councilman.

Avenue Widened

In October 1932, Rhode Island Avenue was widened and completed through to Hyattsville. A mammoth celebration was held to commemorate this event with a dinner in the Star Hall attended by several notables and a parade along Rhode Island Avenue.

Also in 1932 the Mt. Rainier-Brentwood Boys Club was formed.

Somehow during its coming of age, Mt. Rainier became the possessor of a row of houses and a corner restaurant which was affectionately known to the people as "Chinch Row." This was located in a triangle at the corner of Rhode Island Avenue and Perry Street. Immediately on the corner, at the apex of the triangle, was the restaurant known as Allen's Inn. Just behind this restaurant, facing on Rhode Island Avenue, were five or six two-story frame buildings. Sometime around 1940 this landmark was torn down and replaced by the streetcar terminal, complete with snack bar, rest rooms, and loop.

Just before the United States' entry into World War II, there was begun on the old Hoover tract on the northwest side of Mt. Rainier, an apartment project known as Kaywood Gardens. In the next few years, two more projects were completed known as Queenstown and Queens Manor Gardens. 34th Street was cut thru and continued on into Chillum Road, making it a thru street for the first time.

Blue Laws Removed

By a vote of 412 to 154, Mount Rainier yesterday wiped out its ancient blue laws. The vote was taken to determine sentiment on Sunday moving picture shows.

Among the events allowed on Sunday under the new law are concerts, lectures, musical entertainments, and sports. (TWP) 10-22-33.

Traffic Light Approved

Installation of blinking-amber traffic lights at 34th Street and Rhode Island Avenue was approved. (PGP) 3-7-37.

Soap Box Derby

With the big day only one week away, county youngsters are giving their soapbox racers a final tuning up to put them in tip-top shape for the speed classic of Prince Georges county. The races will be held in Mt. Rainier next Saturday.

The affair, patterned after the national soapbox derby held in Akron, Ohio, each year, is being sponsored jointly by the Charles F. Huntemann Post, No. 110, American Legion at Mt. Rainier, and the Prince Georges Post.

The contest is open to boys, 9 to 15, living in the county. The driver must build his own car, which in many cases is nothing more than a soapbox set on four wheels. No more than $10 can be expended in building the car.

Post time will be 2 p.m., next Saturday. The speedway will be laid out on 34th Street, with the starting line at Cedar Street. The course will run north.

Cash prizes and trophies will be awarded the boys who finish one-two-three. Five dollars will be given for first place, $3 for second, and $2 for third.

Entry blanks may be secured from the Post, Mt. Rainier Novelty Shop, Spire's Pharmacy, or Abdella's news stand. Entry fee is 25 cents.

Judges for the races will be Mt. Rainier's Mayor Norman A. Pruitt, Richard Hain, AAA director of safety; and Ray Hoyt, editor of the Post.

Starters will be James Broaddus, manager AAA Emergency road service; George J. Richardson, secretary, International Association of Fire Fighters. (PGP) 9-3-37

Pants Burglar Brings Street Lights to City

Mt. Rainier's pant's burglar now has put $300 into the pockets of the electric light company. Because of fright caused by this fellow's many visits in the town during the past few weeks, the town Mayor and council voted Monday night to install all-night street lighting.

Three other towns recently have contracted for all-night street lighting but Mt. Rainier held back because funds to pay for it had not

Walter P. Plumley

St. John's Episcopal Church Parish Hall and Rectory, 1932.

Layout page from the 75th Anniversary history booklet (1985). Note the use of old publishing technology—cellophane tape.

been provided in the year's fiscal budget. But, Monday night, when the burglary subject was brought up, councilmen hurdled fiscal hurdles and made arrangements to provide lighting immediately.

Mayor Norman A. Pruitt said: "Women are scared to death as a result of these burglaries. Now is the time to act on this all-night lighting. If we wait any longer, this guy will have all the pockets in town cleaned out and will be gone. Lighting the streets during the time when most of the robberies occur—from two a.m. until daylight—will be the best way to combat the menace."

The contract with the Potomac Electric and Power Company called for nightly lighting from 15 minutes after sunset to 45 minutes before dawn. (PGP) 9-24-37

Memorial Park Unveiling

Memory of deceased former Mt. Rainier town officials will be preserved by the town thru a granite shaft set in Memorial Park at Perry Street and Rhode Island Avenue. The memorial, authorized by the town council, will be dedicated May 30, according to tentative plans of the Memorial Committee, headed by Councilman John T. Duever.

Altho a tablet on the shaft has space for 46 names, only three will be placed there at the time of dedication. The late former Mayors William H. Vanneman, Fred Weber, and William E. Rider will be first honored. (TPG) 5-5-38.

Louis-Farr Scrap Movie At Mt. Rainier

A ringside blow-by-blow movie of the great Louis-Farr prizefight now is being shown at the Cameo Theatre in Mount Rainier. The picture goes on from noon to midnight, approximately every hour on the hour. It will be shown for an indefinite period.

(Hyattsville Independent) 9-3-37

Unemployment Low

There were only about 15 unemployed persons in Mt. Rainier, Chief Plumer told the mayor and council, following the reading of a request by the national unemployment census bureau that a local committee be appointed to assist the postmaster in compiling unemployment statistics within the town. (PGP) 10-21-37

Avondale Grove Annex?

Permission of the State Assembly to incorporate North Woodside and Avondale Grove into the town of Mt. Rainier is being sought, according to Bird H. Dolby, town counsel.

Such a bill has been drafted by Mr. Dolby at the request of the town council. It was expected that the proposed measure would be introduced in the Legislature this week.

It would provide for a referendum among the residents of the area affected, to determine if they desire to be taken into the town. There are about 100 homes in the area.

Fire protection is already given by the fire department of the town. (PGP) 2-16-39.

New Terminal For Capital Transit

Company officials estimate that land, track loop and terminal building cost approximately $58,000. When full service is put on the loop, 17 streamlined cars will use the terminal in all day service supplemented by 29 two man cars in rush hours. No plan for use of the terminal by buses has as yet been announced. (PGP). 9-14-39.

ADVERTISEMENT

Mt. Rainier BOWLING Alley

"POP" and HUGH CRAWLEY

Phone Warfield 2198 **33rd and R. I. Ave.**

(PGP) 3-3-41

Page from the 75th Anniversary history booklet.

OFFICE OF

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

MT. RAINIER, MD.

SCHEDULE

Effective ~~March 1, 1937~~ SEPT 1st. 1940

Garbage, Ash and Trash Service

GARBAGE

MAY 16 TO SEPTEMBER 30

THREE Collections per week

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
All Wards	All Wards	All Wards

OCTOBER 1 TO MAY 15

TWO Collections per week

Monday--All Wards Thursday--All Wards

ASHES

OCTOBER 15 TO APRIL 30

ONE Collection per week

1 and 2 Wards -- Tuesday

3 and 4 Wards -- Wednesday

TRASH

Collection of trash will begin on the

FIRST TUESDAY of EACH MONTH

NOTE--Paper will not be collected.

Ream Printing House, 3725 Thirty-fourth St., Mt. Rainier

Mount Rainier Police Chief Held As Speeder Here

Eugene Bernard Plummer, 42, chief of police at Mount Rainier, Md., was arrested and charged at the Ninth Precinct Station yesterday with speeding.

Motorcycle Policeman Richard T. Meyer, who last week stopped Representative T. Alan Goldsborough, judge-designate of the District Court of Appeals, for speeding, stopped the police chief at Bladensburg road, near Neal street northeast.

Driving a civilian automobile in plain clothes, Plummer was taken to the Ninth Precinct Station and he identified himself only when the desk sergeant asked for his occupation. He replied: "Chief of police, Mount Rainier." The case was set for Traffic Court April 3. Plummer was released on his personal bond.

Meyer said he was riding north on Bladensburg road when he noticed a southbound car traveling at a high rate of speed. When he turned in behind the car, it slowed to a moderate rate, the policeman stated.

Wash. Post, 3/26/1939