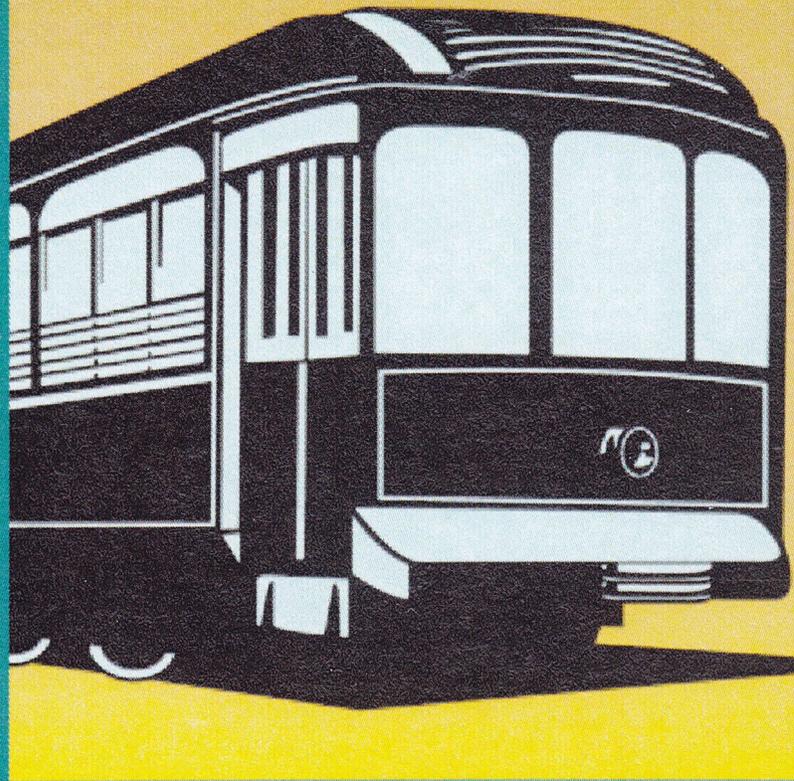


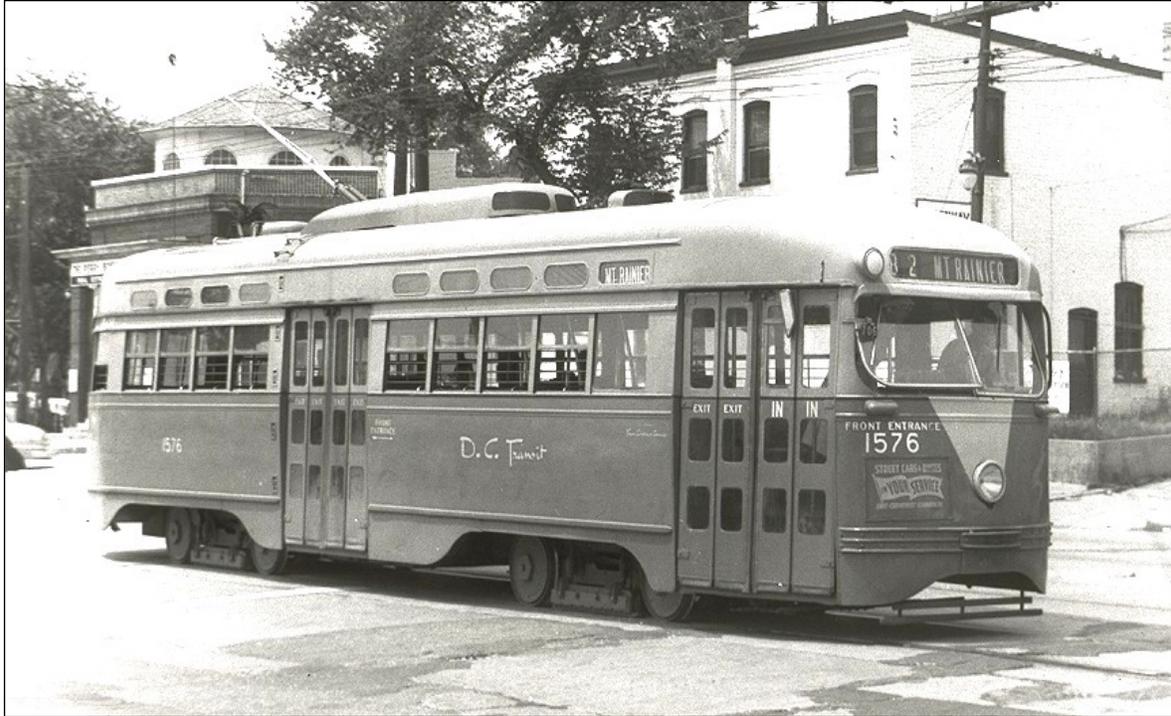
CENTENNIAL
OF A
STREETCAR SUBURB



MOUNT RAINIER

MARYLAND





TYPICAL MOUNT RAINIER STREETCAR IN THE 1950s

INTRODUCTION (Web Version)

It is a great honor to present *Mount Rainier, Maryland: Centennial of a Streetcar Suburb* to the city's citizens. An editor of such a work is tasked with selecting material that will capture the essence of the municipality over its many decades of changes, while at the same time being concise to make it a quick read and including enough intriguing material to make it enjoyable. In editing the material, I selected items that provided the basic historical facts, highlighted significant themes that run through the decades, and noted each era's challenges and triumphs. The good and bad, beautiful and ugly are presented. I have not shied from presenting some of the less glorious episodes. Why? Knowing the past provides a benchmark from which to judge the amazing progress made to overcome those negative events. After reading this history, I believe you will agree that the city has without a doubt progressed in the face of many challenges in the last 100 years and will continue to be a beautiful and historic place in which to live and/or own a business.

Commemorative booklets were produced in 1960 for the 50th anniversary and in 1985 for the 75th. This centennial edition will not reproduce those histories *in toto* but will instead focus on the last 25 years while also providing some material from the previous histories since they are no longer in print. This web-based version of the printed history provides updated and additional material and allows for color photos. Much more research material is available in notebooks kept at City Hall and in the Prince George's County Historical Society library.



Every attempt has been made to provide accurate information; however, some stories are based on an individual's memories and in some cases local lore. The source of the information is provided in footnotes for those inclined to dig deeper. For this edition of the history, the Internet has opened access to sources not readily available to previous books. Hundreds of 19th and 20th Century newspapers are now archived and searchable on-line. Personal memories of earlier times are now provided on websites and in blogs. Digital and video cameras provide vastly more photos!

In editing this material, I found that some local issues never change. For instance, consider the following passage from the *Washington Post* on Jan. 13, 1947*: "The citizens of Mount Rainier have one sharp difference among themselves. The Johnny-come-latelys ... say "Ra-neer," ... but the natives, and old-time residents call it "Rainy-er."

To my ear, in 2010, most people call their home, "Rain-year." No matter how you pronounce it, the sense of pride in and commitment to constantly improving our little city in the shadow of the nation's capital has not changed since 1910.

I hope you find this centennial edition informative and entertaining.

Bryan Knedler, Editor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An editor relies on the work of other people. I would like to acknowledge them.

First, those individuals who compiled the 50th and 75th anniversary books upon which this book heavily relies.

Patricia Pugsley, Bunker Hill Road resident, whose determined hours of archival research added so much to the story. In addition, she created the chapter layouts.

Jimmy Tarlau, councilmember Ward One and chair of the Centennial Committee who collected materials, scanned many many pages of historical materials, and dealt with the business aspects of producing this book.

Becky Livingston, former resident and history sleuth who proofread chapters and provided valued advice and inspiration.

The many residents who provided stories and photographs that enrich documentation of our community's history.

Other contributors to this history booklet include:

Staff of City of Mount Rainier: City Manager Jeanne Wallace, Asst. City Manager Michael Jackson, Cable TV Director Graciela Carbonell, MRTV production technician Robert Page, City Clerk Janis Lomax, MRPD Chief Michael Scott, MRPD Capt. James Stoots, Councilmember Ivy Thompson, and Mayor Malinda Miles. George Denny, local historian and Brentwood's former mayor; Howard Berger, M-NCPPC staff; Vic Lemas; Kaywood Gardens Management; Fort Hill at Clemson University.

Residents and Former Residents: John Bowman, Cheryl Fountain, Deborah Grisar, Otis Hayward, Don Hibbard, Bill Holton, Joseph Howell, Jodi-beth McCain, Barry Miller, Karen Morrill, Marilyn Mowatt, Doyle Niemann, Patricia Pugsley, Allen Rice, Jimmie Rice, Fred Sissine, Patricia Williams.

And thank you to our Sponsors and Advertisers who helped defray the costs of production.



Raphael Talisman/The Gazette

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.

The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes to save space.

CCM. City Council meeting minutes
M-NCPPC. Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission
MSG. MESSAGE newsletter

PGJ. *Prince George's Journal*
PGP. *Prince George's Post*
TPG. *The Prince Georgian*
WP. *Washington Post*
50th AB. 50th Anniversary Book
75th AB. 75th Anniversary Book

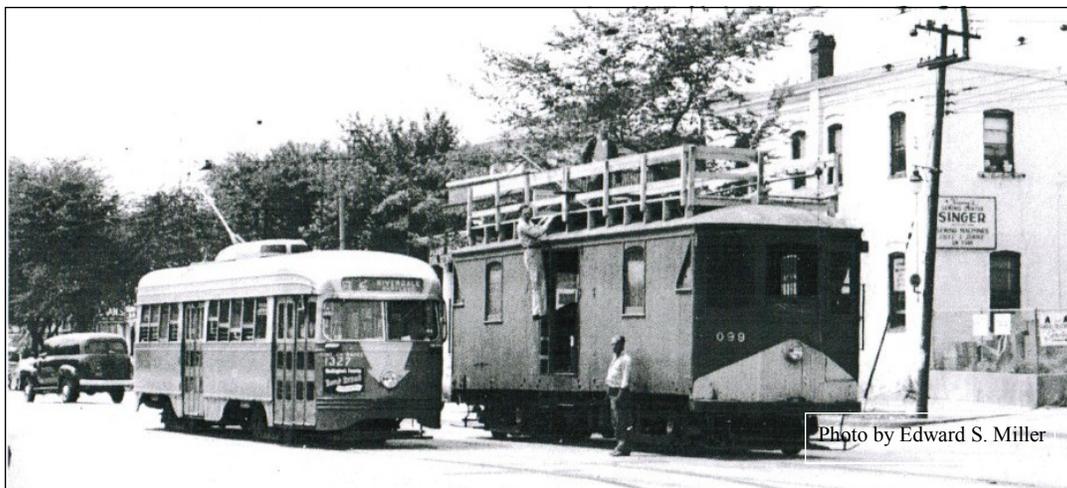


Photo by Edward S. Miller

FOR RESEARCHERS

If you are beginning research on your house or local history, below are some suggestions.

If you are researching your home and it was built before 1940, you will need its pre-1940 address. The Prince George's County street names and address numbers changed in 1940 in order for street names to more closely follow those in Washington. To find the old address, consult the 1939 Sanborn fire insurance maps. The current and old address is given for each house. These maps are available as noted below. Mount Rainier is included as part of the District of Columbia map series in some of the early years.

On-line searching. The Internet provides a vast amount of archival data. If you are using a search engine, be sure to use several variants of the city's name: "Mount Rainier," and "Mt. Rainier." Also, "Rainier," "Ranier," and "Rainer." All variants will be found! Old newspaper archives are available from specialized collections on-line (some free and some requiring a fee or subscription) and offer a wealth of information.

D.C. Martin Luther King Library. Has some materials related to Maryland suburbs, including Sanborn maps.

Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, College Park. The Ku Klux Klan records are there. The library also has extensive collections of old area newspapers on microfilm and area maps, including the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. Mount Rainier is included in the Sanborn's Washington D.C. map series in the early years. National Trust for Historic Preservation materials such as the Sears, Roebuck mail-order house catalog and related archival data reside here as well. The University's Maryland Room - a special collection - is also housed at Hornbake. The library's catalog is online.

Hyattsville Branch of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System on Adelphi Road. There is a wealth of local historical information at this branch, and its Maryland Room catalog is available on-line. If you are looking for an old federal census, that is a good place to start. The Periodicals Room has several major area newspapers on microfilm and also some census results.

Library of Congress. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps are available online and in hard copy, but few related to Mount Rainier appear to be available online.

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission has an archive of old maps and photos.

Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation. The real property index shows the approximate date of a home's construction and provides some previous ownership and transfer data.

Maryland's Environmental Resources & Land Information Network has a collection of aerial maps.

Maryland State Archives, Annapolis. Extensive assessment record research can be done here which will reveal when major changes were made to a property such as construction of a house and major additions.

Mount Rainier City Hall. For each house address, the city has an old tax folder in which you will find the names of previous owners, code enforcement notices, and old liens on the property. In addition, it is possible you may find old blueprints for additions to houses, photographs, and news clippings.

Prince George's County deeds and plats are available at the County Courthouse in Upper Marlboro and many are on-line through the Maryland State Archives.

Prince George's County Historical Society, Frederick S. DeMarr Library of County History, Greenbelt.

Researching your House in Mount Rainier

by Jarrett Stoltzfus

Deeds for Your House: Finding Ownership Over Time

Online Tools:

Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (1960s to current day): <http://dat.state.md.us/>

Maryland Land Records Website (pre-1960s): www.mdlandrec.net

Background:

The Maryland Land Records site shows deed transfers for properties. These deed transfers will identify the seller and buyer of a property. These sellers/buyers can be one person or a couple, and sometimes may often include a organization or corporation. For instance, some properties in Mount Rainier may have been bank owned, will to a Church upon the death of their owner, or some other party. The information in a deed can vary, but almost always contains the buyer, seller, and a reference to the previous deed. It may contain information on restrictive covenants (for instance, the house not being used to produce alcohol)

Utility for House Research:

You will want to start house research by working back from the most current owner. If you look up your property on the SDAT website, you will be able to get a wealth of information, including information on the type of your house, square footage, legal description of your location, and The section titled "Transfer Information" is important. It provides a listing of the property transfers over the last few decades. The section titled "Deed1" for each Seller shows a series of numbers like this "Deed1: /03635/ 00239". These numbers are the folio and liber numbers for the actual deed and can be used on the MDLandRec site. The MDLandRec site will allow you to view an original copy of the deed.

Most – but not all – deeds will have a reference (liber and folio) to the previous deed. This will allow you to look up a previous deed by the reference in the current deed you are looking at.

Note: Since addresses have changed so often in history, they generally are not used in the deed. Instead, you will want to write down the legal definition of the location. For Mount Rainier, this will take the form of a lot within a block number of a specific subdivision. This historic legal location will be referenced even in the newest deeds, but in the oldest deeds, will be the only identifier for your house.

For instance, "*Lot 10 of Block 11 of the Rogers Addition to Mount Rainier*". This means, your property is Lot 10 (one of probably 10-16 lots) within a particular block (in this case, Block 11), in a certain subdivision in the city. (in this case, the Rogers Addition to Mount Rainier). In some cases, your property may actually span more than one lot (some properties in Mount Rainier sit on a double or triple lot), or may be on half a lot (this happens particularly with corner houses or houses on East-West streets). Seeing a location like "the southern 1/3 of Lots 4, 5, and 6 of Block 11 of the Rogers Addition is normal.

Occasionally, a deed will not include a reference number for the previous deed. In this case, you can look at the Grantor/Grantee index for that time period on the MDLandRec website. The index will let you find the liber and folio number based on either the buyer or seller.

Lastly, the important thing to remember is that this is a deed transfer. In the early days of Mount Rainier, there was a lot of land speculation, and often lots without houses were sold. You can ascertain whether a house was there based

on Sanborns Maps or Tax Assessments (both discussed later).

The University of Maryland has a great site for understanding MDLandRec.net at: <http://lib.guides.umd.edu/content.php?pid=166406&sid=1402905>

Plats for Your House: Finding Your Subdivision

Background:

Mount Rainier consists of a series of land divisions made during the early years of the development of the city (1900s-1920). Major additions include the original Mount Rainier, Rogers Addition to Mount Rainier, Rogers Second Addition to Mount Rainier, Granby, Edgemont, 35th Street Addition, Rhode Island Avenue Addition, Rhode Island Avenue 2nd Addition, and so on.

Utility for House Research:

You should find the division that your house is located in. You can also find a map for the original subdivision (this only contains the land and not your house, of course, as it occurred before any houses were developed). This can be a reference point when looking in the deeds.

Neighborhood Maps Of Your House's Structure and Location

Sanborn Maps

Background:

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps have been drawn and revised by the Sanborn Company since 1867 for the entire United States. The earliest for Maryland go back to the 1880s and have been created for most cities and towns in the state. While the originals are drawn to identify the material that a structure was built from construction type for fire insurance purposes, they show a lot of information including number of stories, locations of porches, etcetera.

The Sanborns maps that are available for Mount Rainier date from 1921 and 1939. These are fortunate dates, given that those were key periods of growth for the City. Only about half of the city's lots were built upon in 1921, but by 1939, almost every single lot had a house built. Electronic copies of the Sanborn Maps can be found at the University of Maryland, at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, at the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis, or (for the City of Mount Rainier) from the City itself.

Utility for House Research:

The Sanborn Maps contain a lot of information. For instance, they will show if a house existed at all, how many stories it was (a lot of houses had attics that were later built out, which will be reflected on the map), locations of front or back porches, and other outlying buildings like garages or sheds. Since very few houses in Mount Rainier never had any additions, the Sanborn maps can be useful in identifying the location and age of various sections of your house.

Note: The Street names changed between 1921 and 1939 (from the 'tree' names like Ash, Beech and Cedar to the currently DC aligned names like Shepard, Taylor, Upshur, etcetera. Commercial buildings are also included on this map along with their uses.

Tax Assessments (Of Land and Houses)

Tax Assessments

Background:

Tax assessments may be used to ascertain an approximate date for the construction of a house. While deeds show an exchange of title from a seller of a property to a buyer, they do not convey whether a house was present. In present day, the selling of a property almost always includes a house. In the early days of the City, lots were sometimes sold multiple times within a few years, and a house may or may not have been included.

However, Maryland's tax assessments were based on two things. The "Land" itself, and "Improvements". Improvements in the case of a residential plot always meant a house and any other structures. So by reviewing the tax assessment for your house, you can find if there was a tax assessed on just the Land, or a separate assessment on Land and Improvements.

Unfortunately, there is no online tool for the tax assessments. You will need to go to the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis, Maryland to review the tax assessment book (you will actually be looking at the original copy of the tax assessment book)

Visiting the State Archives

The State Archives are a wonderful source of materials. They are open somewhat limited hours, and you can only request 3 materials at once. You can also not get the materials yourself – they have to be checked in and out by a Archives librarian. (this is due to the age and importance of the materials).

You will want to bring a camera (no copies allowed), pen, paper, and laptop (wireless is available). Rubber gloves are available free of charge.

You will be looking for Prince George's County Records:

<http://guide.mdsa.net/county.cfm?>

[action=viewSeriesList&qualifier=C&type=county&county=PRINCE%20GEORGE%27S%20COUNTY](http://guide.mdsa.net/county.cfm?action=viewSeriesList&qualifier=C&type=county&county=PRINCE%20GEORGE%27S%20COUNTY)

Within that, you will be looking for County Tax Assessment Records (here): <http://guide.mdsa.net/series.cfm?action=viewSeries&ID=C1164>

They are separate by Election District. By 1910 or so, Mount Rainier was in the Chillum District. Before that, Mount Rainier was located in the Bladensburg district.

This is important because the Tax Assessment books for Prince George's County are separated in half (half the election districts in one, half the election districts in another). Make sure to check out the right book.

Once you locate the book with Mount Rainier in it, you will want to find the tax assessment for your property. You will need to have done the deed research before you get to this point for the owner names and legal name of your property.

You will need the following:

Owner Name : (by Last Name. Can be a company as well)

Legal Name of Your Property (Ie, the 'Southern 1/3 of Lots 4, 5 and 6 of Block 11 of Rogers Addition to Mount Rainier)

You will need to look through the tax assessment book once you have located the correct Election District and look by last name. It is in roughly alphabetical order, but not exactly, so make sure to go through every single page and look for your owner's name.

For instance, Frederick Heiling was the owner on a particular Mount Rainier house in 1908.

We know that it was on the "Southern 1/3 of Lots 4, 5 and 6 of Block 11 of the Rogers Addition to Mount Rainier".

We know this from the deed research/ Working backwards, we can find it in the Tax Assessment Book.

This snapshot below of a Prince George's Tax Assessment Book from 1908 shows Frederick Heiling's property in Mount Rainier. We know this is the same property, because it is labeled "S 1/3 Lots 4,5,6 B11 Rogers """). This stands for "Southern 1/3rd of Lots 4, 5, and 6 of Block 11 of the Rogers Addition to Mount Rainier", which is the legal name of this particular property. You can see "300" located above the Lots 4,5,6 and you can see later on that line where "Imp. 850" is written. This stands for Improvements, or the existence of a house! So the total taxes for the house were 300 on the land, and 850 for the house for a total of \$1,150 in 1908.

Note: Assuming you know your house was there by at least 1921 (on the Sanborns 1921 map), this is the only real way to see if there was something there before that date (if you don't have any photos of your house), since the deeds don't often indicate whether they was anything built on the property. You can do this research back to the original subdivision – but it is highly unlikely that there were any houses built on the Mount Rainier grid before the grid itself existed.

MAYORS

Robert E. Joyce	1910-1911	Floyd Mathias	1941-1949
Jospeh T.K. Plant	1911-1913	Herbert Reichelt	1949-1954*
W.H. Vanneman	1913-1914	Frederick Richardson	1954-1968**
Fred Weber	1914-1917	Roy W. Callaway	1968-1977
Perry Boswell	1917-1921	Linda Nalls	1977-1983
W.E. Rider	1921-1923	Stanley Prusch	1983-1989
Fred Negus	1923-1925	Linda Nalls	1989-1993
Kenneth Bovay	1925-1926*	Fred Sissine	1993-2001
John H. Beall	1926-1927	Michael Lawson	2001-2002*
Fred Negus	1927-1929	Bryan Knedler	2002-2005
John Beall	1929-1934	Malinda Miles	2005-
Norman Pruitt	1934-1941		

* Resigned ** Died during term † Recalled

COUNCIL MEMBERS

FIRST WARD

C.O. Bohrer	1910*
F.M. Proctor	1910-1911
Julius C. Statts	1911-1913
John Klein	1913-1915
Daniel Morgan	1915-1919
Norman Pruitt	1919-1923
W.P. Earnest	1923-1925
Louis Rosenfield	1925-1927
Norman Pruitt	1927-1934*
A.J. Bates	1934-1945
Leo McMahan	1945-1947
Frederick Richardson	1947-1954*
A.J. Bates	1955-1957**
Roy W. Callaway	1957-1968
Joseph H. Plumer	1968-1980**
Frances Plumer	1980-1983
Don Hibbard	1983-1985

SECOND WARD

J.B. Moore	1910-1912*
Victor Brooks	1912
Warren W. James	1912-1914
Irvin F. Haskins	1914-1918
John M. Earnest	1918-1920
Warren W. James	1920-1926
Philip C. Dorr	1926-1928
Warren W. James	1928-1932
Roger W. Moser	1932-1934
John Duever	1934*
Roy F. Fowkes	1934-1936
John Duever	1936-1940
Charles Haskins	1940*
John Duever	1940-1941
Warren W. James	1941-1959
Dominic DeSarno	1959-1967
Clinton Burnett	1967-1969
Jerome A. Richards	1969-1977**
Charlotte McDonald	1977-1983

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Below are sources of general information used for this booklet. Each chapter has specific source material listed.

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- *Prince George's County: A Pictorial History*. By Alan Virta. 1991.

THIRD WARD

W.H. Vanneman	1910-1913*
Fred Weber	1913-1914
Harry Lanning	1914-1918
J.H. Hanback	1918-1920
Floyd Mathias	1920-1922
Shelby Smith	1922-1924
H.T. Clayton	1924-1928
Floyd Mathias	1928-1934*
John Parsell	1934-1941
Robert Mathias	1941-1942*
Price Myers	1942-1945
J. Bozeman	1945-1947
Robert Merson	1947-1955
W.B. Brown	1955-1965
James R. Tanner	1965-1971
Linda Nalls	1971-1977
Robert Creamer	1977-1983
Alice Zickafoose	1983-1985

FOURTH WARD

A.H. Winslow	1910-1911
Bert E. Iglehart	1911-1913
Thomas Elliott	1913†
Gilbert Hughes	1913-1915
Charles J. Peckham	1915-1917
C.E. Jones	1917-1919
Theodore Schulz	1919-1920*
Bert Iglehart	1920-1921
John A. Weiler	1921-1923
Bert E. Sager	1923-1925
John A. Weiler	1926-1929
Rexford Worley	1929-1935
Carl Herberger	1935-1941
C. Glascock	1941-1945
Charles Xander	1945-1949
Gurney Thompson	1949-1955
Jack Bransom	1955-1965
Cedric Samuel	1965-1967
Joseph Bianchini	1967-1969
Cedric Samuel	1969-1981
Stanley Prusch	1981-1983
Jon Moran	1983-1985

The City Charter was amended such that beginning with the 1985 election, the city was divided into two wards rather than four. Each ward with two councilmembers.

WARD ONE

Alice Zickafoose	1985-1987
Donald Hibbard	1985-1989
Steve Rogers	1987-1989
Edward Turner	1989-1993
Nicholas Burgess	1989-1991
Susan Bailey	1991-1997
Daniel Granzow	1993-1995
Cyndi Alexander	1995-1997

WARD TWO

Doyle Niemann	1985-1987
Otis Hayward	1985-1989
Malinda Miles	1987-1989
Bonnie Klotz	1989-1993
Sheldon Hayes	1989-1990*
Fred Sissine	1990-1993
Chuck Hackett	1993-1997
Malinda Miles	1993-1997

The City Charter was amended such that beginning with the 1997 election, terms of officer were for four years rather than two, and the terms of office were staggered.

WARD ONE

Carol Gandee	1997-2001
Michelle Suvanasai	1997-1999
Susan Bailey	1999-2001*
Intisar Haamid	2001-2005
Devon Brown	2001-2003
Carol Gandee	2003-2007
Alta Morton	2005-2010**
Jimmy Tarlau	2007-
William Updike	2010-2013
Jesse Christopherson	2013-

WARD TWO

Janine Jackson	1997-2001
Bryan Knedler	1997-2002*
Brooke Kidd	2001-2003*
Gina Downin	2002-2003
Malinda Miles	2003-2005
Pedro Briones	2003-2009
Bryan Knedler	2005-2011
Ivy Thompson	2009-
Brent Bolin	2011-