

A detailed historical street map of West Annapolis, Maryland, showing a grid of streets and lots. The map includes labels for streets such as 'SEVERN', 'CIDDINGS', 'WALTON', 'RANDALL', 'SMALLEY', 'ANNAPOLIS', and 'BOULEVARD'. Lot numbers are visible within the blocks. The map is overlaid with large, semi-transparent numbers: 28, 20, 21, 22, 6, 8, 10, 5, 7, and 9. The title 'STREET SIGNS TO HISTORY' is centered over the map.

STREET SIGNS TO HISTORY

THE STORY OF THE WEST ANNAPOLIS AND WARDOUR STREET NAMES

by Constance Werner Ramirez

Cover shows detail of 1890 *Plat* of West Annapolis.

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INTRODUCTION

Much of the history of West Annapolis, including the neighborhood of Wardour, has been captured in the names of its streets and alleys. Originally part of the farmland of Anne Arundel County, in 1890, the land lying between the U. S. Naval Academy and Weems Creek from today's Rowe Boulevard to the Severn River was incorporated as the town of West Annapolis. In the early twentieth century, the part of West Annapolis along the Severn River was re-platted with larger lots and curvilinear streets and named Wardour. In 1951, the whole area was annexed to the City of Annapolis. Many of today's street names as well as other place names link us to this early history.

Roughly 2,500 feet wide and 4,000 feet long, West Annapolis covers about 225 acres. It is situated on a peninsula created by the small tributaries of the Severn River which flows into the drowned valley of the Susquehanna River, now the Chesapeake Bay. The relatively flat central area, so desirable for agriculture, is bounded by the long low ridges of ancient sandbars at Rowe Boulevard and at Wardour Circle. Farther on, along the ravines where the rising sea level of the Severn River continues to cut into the shoreline, there is evidence of ancient sediments, fossil mollusks, and Indian occupation.

In 1650, sixteen years after the founding of the English colony of Maryland at St. Mary's City in 1634, Anne Arundel County was established. The Proprietor, Charles Calvert, had large areas surveyed and sold patents, which gave ownership with only a small quitrent to the proprietor. Patented land could be sold and devised and treated as any land held in fee simple. The first patent for the area covered by West Annapolis and running west to the head of Weems Creek was assigned

* By comparison, the Colonial Annapolis National Register Historic District is about 230 acres and the neighboring U.S. Naval Academy is 338 acres, but a large amount of that is fill.

in 1658 to John Norwood, the first sheriff of Anne Arundel County. The land was inherited by his son, Andrew, who added the portion along the Severn River, called Norwood's Recovery, which is now Wardour. Over the years a series of families well-known in Maryland history owned the land and used it for farming and timber harvesting. In 1869, Luther Giddings purchased the portion called Horse Shoe Farm, the land from Rowe Boulevard to the Severn River. Twenty years later, his heirs began to develop it into residential lots. The complete list of land owners is provided in the Chronology.¹

Many of the streets in West Annapolis have had several different names and some of the names which appeared in the early plats were eliminated in subsequent maps. Other street names memorialize contemporaries of Luther Giddings or his daughters, who were overseeing the development of this new town. Giddings' relatives, members of prominent Annapolis families, businessmen, bankers, and members of the congregation of St. Anne's Episcopal Church in the center of Annapolis were honored. Other names are connected with George T. Melvin who developed the plan for the Town of West Annapolis. In a few cases, the specific person for whom the street was named is known, but in many cases, the street honors a late nineteenth century Annapolis family.

Over the years, some street names were changed, others were only platted but never built, and new streets and alleys were added. The origin of only two of the original street names, Monterey and Severn, is documented. In 1951, when the town of West Annapolis was annexed into the City of Annapolis, several street names, including Severn Avenue, were changed in order to avoid duplication of names already in Annapolis or in the other newly annexed areas. Three of the new names honor West Annapolis residents who died serving in the military in World War II. The last changes were in 1998, when three more veterans were honored with alley or lane names. Anyone having information about the source of

a street name is invited to bring it to the attention of the West Annapolis Heritage Partnership so this publication can be corrected and up-dated.

Included here are the names of all of the streets in West Annapolis and Wardour as they appeared on five historic maps and on the 2015 map of Annapolis. These appear to capture the names that were given both to platted streets and built streets. Two of the maps are dated 1890 and are distinguished as: the *Melvin Plan of West Annapolis* and the *Plat of West Annapolis*, similar but with some different street names. In 1894, a *Revised and Corrected Plat* was made by J. West Aldridge, who with Catherine Giddings Aldridge, his wife, and Elizabeth Giddings, his sister-in-law, had regained control of development of the area.

In 1907, Elizabeth Giddings retained the landscape architect and city planner, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to redesign the street and lot pattern for the area along the Severn River east of the railroad tracks, called Wardour Bluffs. In 1910, Olmsted made a plan for the larger area to the west of the railroad called Wardour on the Severn. The well-known Baltimore civil engineering firm of Simon J. Martenet Company produced the final plans, used here. One is from the 1907 Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., plan for *Wardour Bluffs* recorded in 1909. The other is the *Wardour on the Severn River* plan, drawn in 1910 but not recorded until 1915. Finally, an Annapolis City map of 2015 shows the street names as we know them today.

The maps from which the street names were taken are referred to in the text as follows:

- 1890 *Plat: Plat of West Annapolis* appears to be the map submitted to the State of Maryland for the purpose of incorporating the town. Located in Maryland State Archives.² See Fig. 1
- 1890 *Plan: Melvin's Plan of West Annapolis* (very similar to the Plat but with a few different street names).³ See Fig. 2.
- 1894: *Aldridge's Revised and Corrected Plat of West Annapolis*, surveyed Oct. 1894, by C. Lacey Chinn.⁴ See Fig. 3
- 1909: *Wardour Bluffs Plan* for Subdivision of Land of Miss Elizabeth Giddings, West Annapolis, MD, Olmsted Brothers, Brookline, Mass. August 19, 1907, Final surveys of lines and acreage by J. C. Little, Engineer, August 1909.⁵ See Fig. 4.
- 1915: *Plat of Wardour on the Severn River*, Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, S. J. Martenet & Co., Surveyors & Civil Engrs., Balto, Jan. 9, 1915.⁶ See Fig. 5.
- 2015: Street names, City of Annapolis. See Fig. 6.

After each street name, the date in parentheses indicates the map on which the name can be found. Street names still used today are identified as 2015.



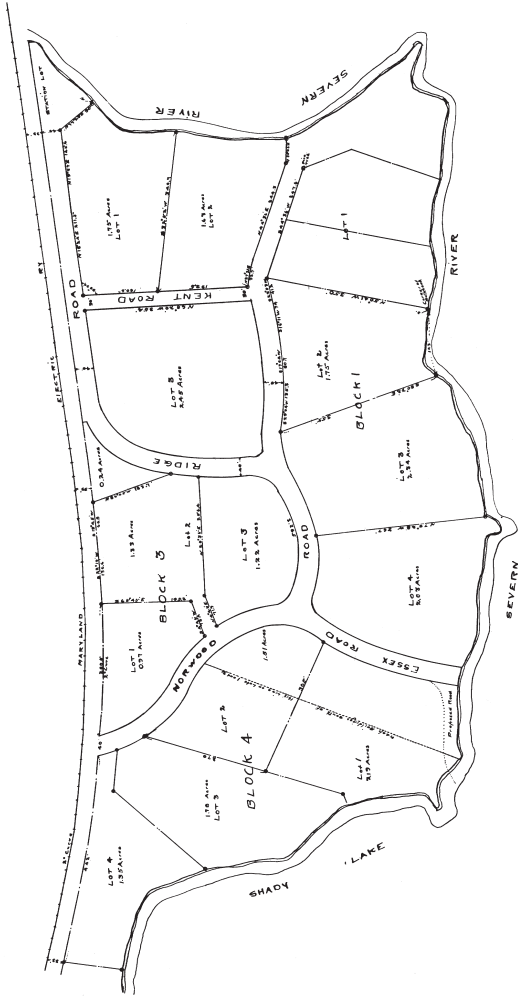
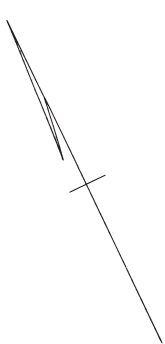
Fig.1 - 1890 Plat

PLAT NO. B322 BOOK NO. 11 FOLIO 1049 SPEED 22.

"WARDOUR BLUFFS"
 PLAN FOR SUBDIVISION OF LAND
 MISS ELIZABETH & JODDINGS
 SEE DIVISION NO.

BEARING PROVIDED, LENGTH, NUMBER,
 POINTS OF BEGINNING AND ENDING
 ACCORDING TO THE ACTS OF PARLIAMENT
 AND THE CIVIL ENGINEERS REGULATIONS, 1864.

24



12 Fig.4 - 1909

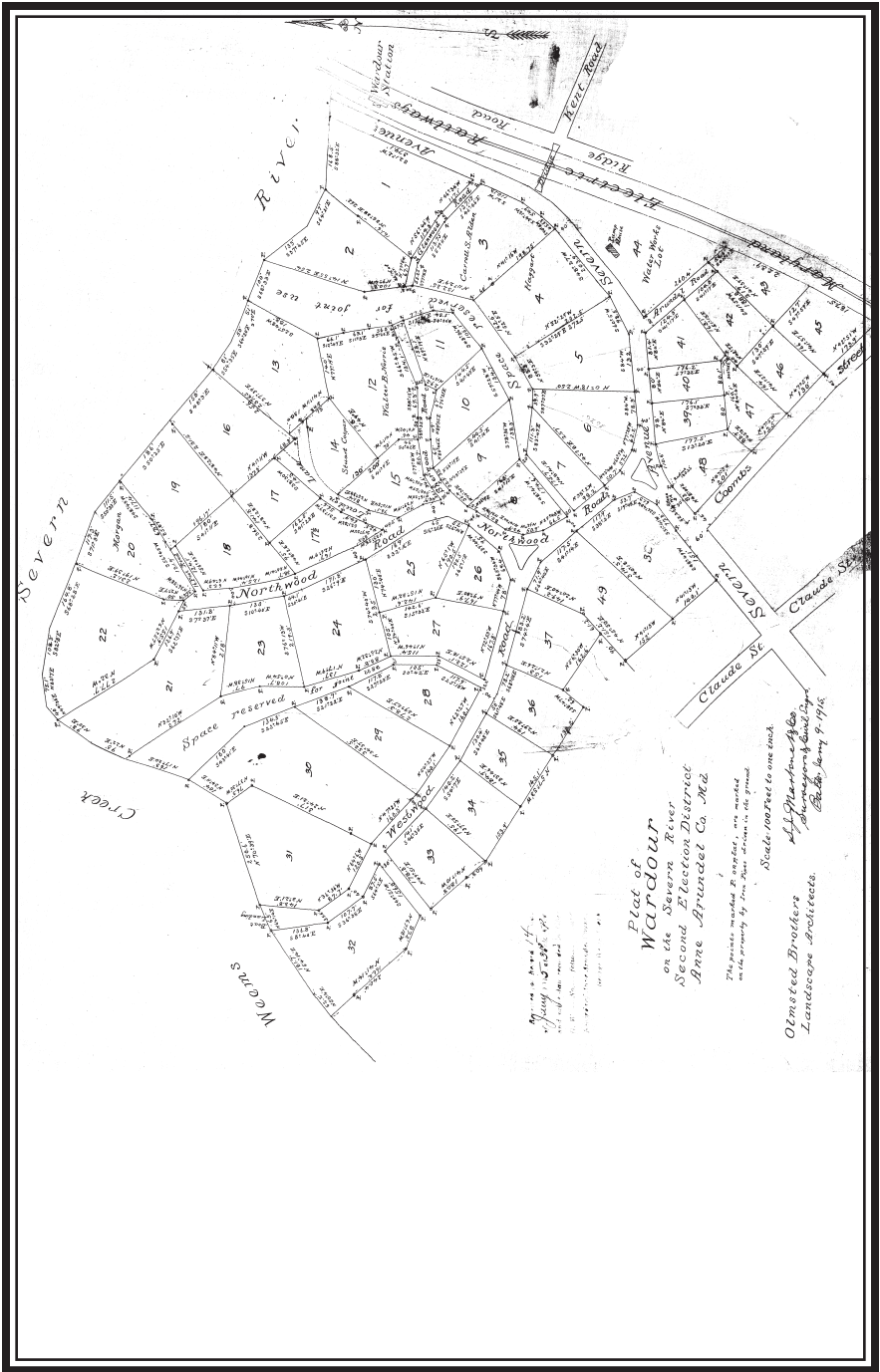


Fig.5 - 1915

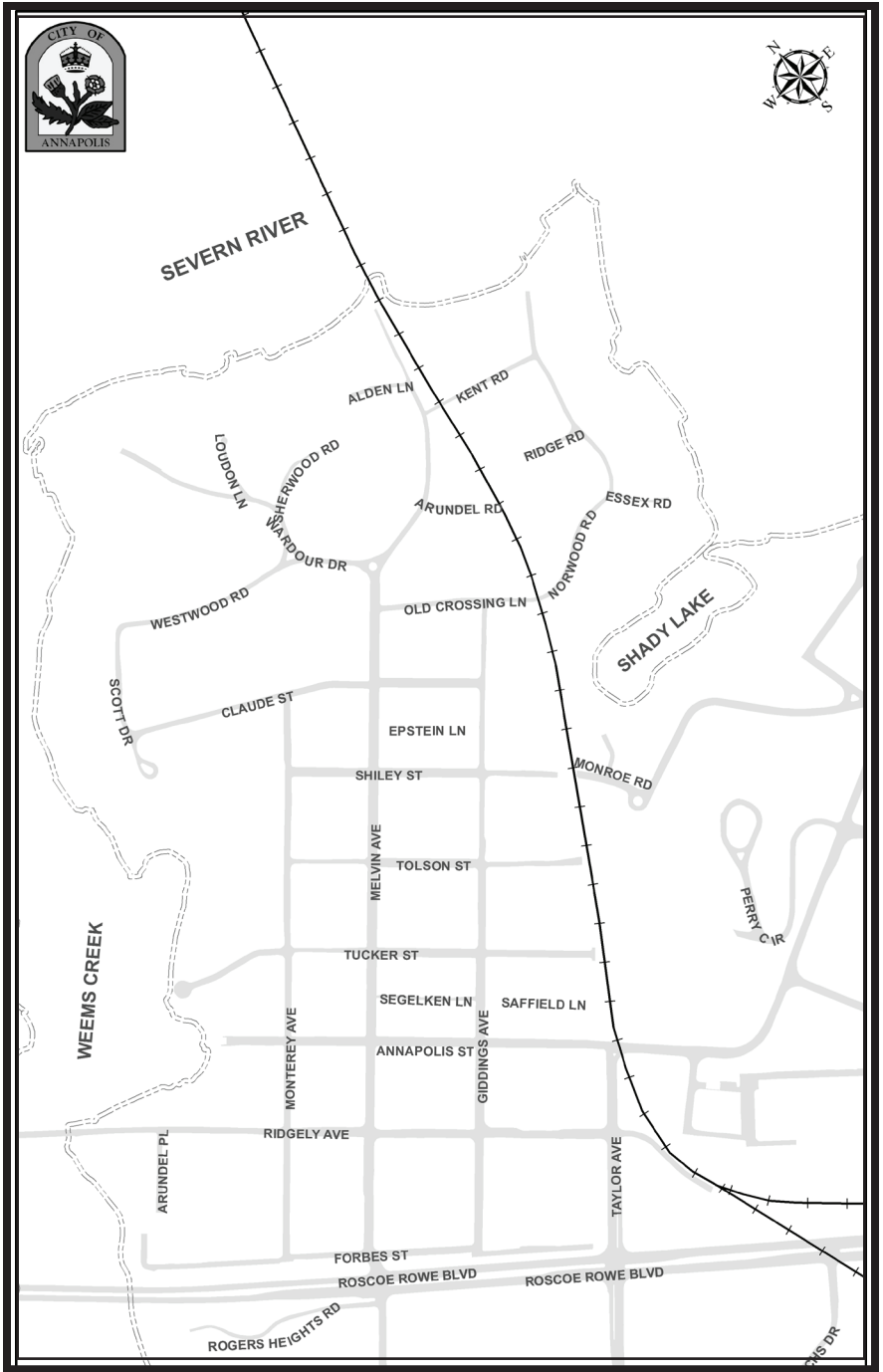


Fig.6 - 2015

STREET NAMES

Alden Lane (2015) was formerly Glenwood Road (1915) in Wardour. It was renamed sometime after 1930 for Carroll Storrs Alden (1876-1965) (Yale B.A. 1898, M.A. 1901, Ph.D. 1903) and his wife, Meeta C. Graham Alden, who purchased Lot 3 of 1.18 acres on Glenwood Road from Elizabeth Giddings in 1913, and built their house, now 7 Wardour Drive. Alden was an instructor, professor, and head of the Department of English, History and Government, at the U. S. Naval Academy from 1904 to 1941. He was co-author with William Oliver Stevens (who owned land in Wardour) of *A Guide to Annapolis and the Naval Academy* (1910, 1920) and many other publications, including *A Short History of the United States Navy* (1911) co-authored with George Ramsey Clark, Commandant of Midshipmen, USNA (1909-1910), Herman Frederick Krafft (a Wardour neighbor), and Stevens. Alden's papers are in the Nimitz Library, U. S. Naval Academy. In 1915, Alden was also one of the founders of the Wardour Improvement Association which maintains the common property in Wardour. See Glenwood Road.

Aldridge Avenue (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894) appears on the early plats as running parallel to the Severn River in the area now part of Wardour but was eliminated in the 1915 Wardour plan. On Melvin's Plan of 1890, the street abuts a park with meandering paths that stretched along the shore of the Severn River from the Railroad Bridge to "Ducking Shore" at the entrance to the West Annapolis River, now Weems Creek.

Joseph West Aldridge (1846–1919) married Luther Giddings' daughter Katherine in 1874. He was one of the three commissioners identified by the State of Maryland in the *Act to Incorporate the town of West Annapolis*, April 8, 1890. Many of the lots in West Annapolis are still identified by the block and lot number on *Aldridge's Revised and Corrected Plat, 1894* (Fig. 3). For many years, he was involved in the

sale of lots in West Annapolis with his wife and his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Giddings. In 1911-1912, the minutes of the West Annapolis Volunteer Fire and Improvement Company record his membership in the Company and donation, with Elizabeth Giddings, of land for the firehouse on the corner of Melvin Avenue and Tucker Street. A few years later, they donated land for the West Annapolis Elementary School.

J. West Aldridge grew up in Loudoun County, Virginia, near the home of William Giddings, Luther Giddings' brother and where Luther and his young daughters lived in 1863 and 1864. As a teenager during the Civil War, Aldridge was a member of the notorious Mosby's Rangers. After his marriage to Katherine Giddings, he lived at Waverly near Waterford, VA. Later Aldridge became the proprietor of the Orkney Springs Resort in Virginia which contained three large hotels, seven cottages, stables, a bowling alley, and outdoor sports areas, with a capacity to accommodate 750 people. J. West and Katherine are buried in the Giddings' plot in St. Anne's Cemetery in Annapolis.⁷

Annapolis Street (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894, 2015) runs from the edge of Weems Creek through West Annapolis to the intersection with Taylor Avenue. The street appears to follow an early dividing line, possibly a pathway, on the 1868 plat of the Pinkney Farm prepared at the time of its sale to Luther Giddings.⁸ The early road may have continued around Strawberry Hill (now marked by the water tower) and to roads leading to the Severn River and College Creek. See College Creek Bridge in Place Names.

Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad (on all post-1887 maps) opened March 9, 1887 and ran from the Bladen Street Station in Annapolis, through the Giddings' property (West Annapolis and Wardour), across the Severn River and north to Baltimore's Camden Station. Luther Giddings was the treasurer from the formation of the Annapolis and

Baltimore Short Line Railroad Company in 1879 until 1883. He obviously saw the advantages to his property to have the railroad and he may have been thinking about development of his farm into house lots. After his death in 1884, the right-of-way in West Annapolis was sold to the Railroad Company by his daughter, Elizabeth Giddings. The last passenger train ran on February 4, 1950 and the last freight train ran in 1968 with engineer Howard J. Willett, who had lived with his wife, Flora, on Monterey Avenue since 1930. The railroad bridge across the Severn River was demolished in the 1980's. Most of the railroad right-of-way is now owned by the Wardour Improvement Association. North of the Severn, the right-of-way is now a public trail to about the Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI).

Arundel Place (1890 *Plan*, 1894, 2015) follows the alignment of Feldmyer Road as shown on the 1890 *Plat of West Annapolis*. It runs parallel to Weems Creek at the edge of the ravines which cut into the shore. The name commemorates the family of Anne Arundel, wife of the Second Lord Baltimore, for whom this county is named. See Feldmyer Road.

Arundel Road (1915, 2015), located in Wardour, is not connected to Arundel Place. The Arundel family home was Wardour Castle in Wiltshire, England. Elizabeth Giddings' father was born in Cornwall, England, and an interest in her English family may have led her to name the new subdivision Wardour, and this road for the Arundel family.

Bellis Street (1890 *Plat*) is part of Melvin's grid plan and ran from the railroad tracks west across what is now Wardour Circle and ended at Weems Creek. It was renamed Wirt St. on the 1890 *Plan*, but the street disappeared on the 1915 Wardour plat. It appears to have been intended to run at the top or the ridge still visible crossing the Wardour end of Melvin Avenue.

William Henry Bellis (1842-1896) was a contemporary of George T. Melvin, who platted West Annapolis. He had a tailor's business on Main Street and owned the house behind it (now known as the Johnson House) on State Circle, attended St. Anne's Church, and is buried in St. Anne's Cemetery (under statue of carved stone angel). His son, Joseph H. Bellis (1867-1920), continued the tailor business at 98 Main Street and was also a city Alderman, State Senator, and sheriff. Due to the market for naval uniforms in Annapolis, the city had a number of successful tailors.

Buena Vista Avenue (1890 *Plan*, 1894) was approximately the location of Scott Drive, along the edge of Weems Creek. The name is associated with the Feb. 23-24, 1847, battle of Buena Vista in the Mexican-American War during which Luther Giddings was in charge of the garrison force that remained at Monterey. The alignment of the street was re-named Park Avenue on the 1890 *Plat*. In a letter to George T. Melvin in October 1889, Elizabeth Giddings writes, "*We had also had a beautiful home called "Buena Vista" - it was just outside Dayton, Ohio - there was the Mexican association also.*"⁹

Chase Avenue (1890 *Plan*, 1894) was a short street located in the area redesigned as Wardour Bluffs. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were many descendants of both Samuel Chase, a Maryland signer of the Declaration of Independence, and, his cousin, Judge Jeremiah T. Chase, living in Annapolis. Among them were Hester Ann Chase, one of the original investors in the Annapolis Water Company, and her niece, Hester Ann Chase Ridout, whose will had established the Chase Home for women on Maryland Avenue in 1888, just a few years before the West Annapolis Plan. There are other Chases who may have been friends of George T. Melvin or of the Giddings family. Judge Chase's daughter Matilda was married to Henry Ridgely, a distant cousin of William S. Ridgely (see Ridgely Street). Among the deeds for property along Forbes Street, James Munroe, as trustee for his mother-

in-law, Emily Chase, is mortgagee for one or two properties being purchased by African-Americans (see Munroe Street). Despite the many Chase connections, the name most likely honors Samuel Chase as the parallel street is Peale, another eighteenth century figure in Annapolis history.

Claude Street (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894, 1915, 2015) is named for a member of the prominent Claude family in Annapolis and most likely for Dr. Abram Claude (1818-1901). Abram Claude was a 1841 graduate of St. John's College. Later he became a professor of natural sciences on the faculty from 1871-1883 (the years when Luther Giddings, also a graduate of St. John's College, was developing his orchards and vineyards). Claude was mayor of Annapolis in 1847-50, 1854-55, 1867-68, and 1883-89 and then served as Postmaster from 1895 to 1899. Elizabeth and Katherine Giddings were related by marriage, through their cousins, the Randalls and the Worthingtons, to Abram Claude's son, Dr. Gordon Handy Claude (1854-1940), who was mayor of Annapolis 1907-09. There are many reasons why the daughters of Luther Giddings and those developing the Town of West Annapolis would have wanted to honor a member of the Claude family with a street name. Dr. Gordon Claude's daughter, Rebecca, married Ross Dierdorff, RADM USN, (1896-1964). His grandson lives on Claude Street in West Annapolis today.

The character of Claude Street is very different on either side of Melvin Avenue. The street appears to follow an earlier path that ran just south of the ridge which lies between Claude Street and Westwood Road. This may be what causes the western end of the street to abandon the grid alignment at Melvin Avenue and after about 100 feet, run in a diagonal towards Weems Creek. This part of Claude Street was included in the Olmsted Brothers' 1910 "Preliminary Plan for Subdivision" for Miss Elizabeth Giddings, but not in the 1915 plat recorded in the Anne Arundel Land Records (Fig..4). After Charles H. Lee purchased the unimproved lots from Elizabeth

Giddings' estate in 1924, he had the area along Claude Street and Scott Drive re-platted as *Wardour Plat No. 2* in 1927.¹⁰ In 1931, Lee sold the lots on the north side of Claude Street (which had been marked "Restricted Against Building" in the Olmsted plan) to Walter H. Hart, a local real estate associate. By 1935, Hart had built the row of twelve, one-and-a half story houses which today give a special character to "Upper Claude," as the residents call it. Across Melvin Avenue, Claude Street is straight and wide with a greater variety of house designs and lot sizes which present a very different character to the street.

Coombs Street (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894, 1915) originally extended from Weems Creek across West Annapolis to the Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad where it became First Street and ended at Shady Lake. On later plans, it continues as Coombs Street and angles east and ends at the Severn River. About 1930, the portion from Melvin Avenue across the railroad tracks to Norwood Road was re-named Old Crossing Lane.

The original name honors Charles A. Coombs who was general manager of the Annapolis and Baltimore Railroad from 1890 until the end of 1897. Coombs was born in Brunswick, Maine, in 1836, was a Kansas Ranger in 1857, a Colorado pioneer in 1859, and fought with the Third Maine Regiment in the Civil War. Starting in 1867, he worked for a number of railroads in Massachusetts. He came to Annapolis in 1890 with his wife and three children to work as superintendent of the Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad. In 1897 he returned to Bath, Maine.¹¹

Epstein Lane (2015) was named in honor of Paul Herschel Epstein (1918-1944) who was killed in action during World War II at St. Lo, Normandy, on July 5, 1944 while serving in the Army. His father, Myer Epstein had served in World War I. The family lived at 301 Melvin Avenue. The West Annapolis

Civic Association dedicated this alley in Epstein's name in 1998. See Veterans Memorial.

Essex Road (1909, 2015) has a name of unknown origin. It is a short street running from Norwood Road to the Severn River. The name is assumed to have been selected by Elizabeth Giddings. Luther Giddings was born in England and his daughter, Elizabeth, may have selected English names related to her father's family. (Interestingly, the Taylor Land Company was developing the suburb of Essex outside Baltimore at this same time, about 1907.)

Feldmyer Road (1890 *Plat*) ran from Annapolis Street to Forbes Street, parallel to Weems Creek, and led to the home of William H. Feldmyer (1830 Germany-1914) who acquired ten acres of land from Luther Giddings in 1873. The footprint of his house is shown on this map and on other maps of West Annapolis. The property is now under Rowe Boulevard. In the 1890 *Melvin's Plan of West Annapolis*, the street has been replaced by Arundel Place. The end of Feldmyer Road is marked by the concrete entrance posts visible in the underbrush at the end of Monterey Avenue. William Feldmyer's brother, Gottlieb Feldmyer, was a City Councilman for four terms.

Forbes Street (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894, 2015) extends parallel to Rowe Boulevard along the boundary of West Annapolis. The most likely member of the Forbes family to have his name given to a street is Joseph Harris Forbes (1837-1906) who was president of the Annapolis Savings Institution in the 1890's.¹⁴ Both Forbes and Munroe (see Munroe Street) were mortgagees (lenders) for African-Americans purchasing lots along Forbes Street. As early as 1891, J. West Aldridge (see Aldridge Avenue) and Elizabeth Giddings were selling lots to African-American families, including the Jacobs, Browns, Bates, Maddoxes, and Warrens. Early aerial views show small frame houses facing across Forbes Street and the fields of

the Magruder and Feldmyer estates to the farm now covered by the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium and Admiral Heights. A few descendants of the original owners still live in the area.¹²

Giddings Avenue (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894, 2015) is one of the three avenues that runs the length of West Annapolis. It was named for the Giddings family whose farm was developed as West Annapolis. Near the south end, it forms the boundary of the block containing Luther Giddings' house, Ceralvo Cottage, and at the north end, now in Wardour, is the house built by his daughter, Elizabeth Giddings, in 1909-1910. There has been speculation that Giddings Avenue is an old road which ran along the edge of the fields which stretched across what is now Melvin Avenue to Monterey Avenue. In the 1880 Maryland Agriculture Census, Luther Giddings' farm had 45 acres of peach trees, 10 acres of apple trees, and 20 acres of vineyard (from which he sold 35,000 pounds of grapes and 400 gallons of wine), as well as 12 milk cows which produced 42,600 gallons of milk which Giddings sold. For more information about Luther Giddings, read *An Interesting Career: The Life and Work of Luther Giddings (1823-1884)* by John Eric Fredland (available from the West Annapolis Heritage Partnership).

Glenwood Road (1915) is now Alden Lane in Wardour. The name may have been changed when West Annapolis was annexed in 1951 so as not to be confused with Glenwood Avenue (now Street) in Cedar Park. That area, between Taylor Avenue and College Creek, was platted in 1912 as "Cedar Park, The Place for Your Home overlooking Annapolis."¹³

Kent Road (1909, 2015) was named by Elizabeth Giddings, possibly for the county in south east England which gave its name to Kent Island and Kent County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The Kent Road Bridge across the Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad tracks was built about 1920 to

allow access to Wardour Bluffs after the crossing at the end of Coombs Street was closed (but later re-opened). The Kent Road Bridge was closed to automobile traffic in the 1980's.

Loudon Lane (1915, 2015) is named for Loudoun County, VA, and was the home of Luther Giddings' older brother, William. From 1862 to 1864, Luther Giddings and his three young daughters lived with William. Later Luther's daughter Katherine married Joseph West Aldridge from Loudoun County. After Giddings' death, his daughter Elizabeth returned to the Aldridge home, Waverly, near Waterford in Loudoun County and lived there for almost ten years. See Aldridge Avenue.

Magruder Avenue (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*) was the road (now Taylor Avenue) from the end of Annapolis Street to Rowe Boulevard. It formed the boundary of Fair Oak, the ten acre property and home of Judge Daniel Randall Magruder (1835-1915). Although the land of Fair Oak was included in the deed from the Pinkney heirs to Luther Giddings in 1869, he immediately sold these ten acres to Anne Marie Greenhow, who later sold to Magruder. The footprint of the house is visible on the 1890 *Plat*. The site is now under Rowe Boulevard and the Maryland District Court. Judge Magruder was a judge in Calvert County and was named a Maryland State Judge after he returned to Annapolis.

Melvin Avenue (2015) was originally named Severn Avenue. The name was changed to Melvin Avenue in 1951 when West Annapolis was annexed to the City of Annapolis so as not to duplicate Severn Avenue in Eastport.

George Thomas Melvin (1851-1920) was one of the three commissioners appointed by the State of Maryland in the *Act Incorporating the Town of West Annapolis*, April 8, 1890. Born December 18, 1851 in Denton, the seat of Caroline County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Melvin



Fig. 7 - Portrait of George T. Melvin, about 1900.

was an attorney. In 1885, he and William S. Ridgely (see Ridgely Avenue) purchased *The Maryland Republican*, and moved to Annapolis. By 1889 he was involved with Henry S. Mancha, a real estate developer also from Denton, in the platting of Glen Burnie for the Glenn family. In December 1889, Melvin and Mancha entered into an agreement with the heirs of Luther Giddings to lay out streets and lots for a new community to be called West Annapolis. (See

West Annapolis in Place Names.) Within a couple of years, the Giddings family had the agreement revoked and the area replatted in 1894 as *Aldridge's Revised and Corrected Plat of West Annapolis* (Fig. 3).

Melvin also acquired land which he called Melvin's Garden Farms on the north side of Weems Creek and in 1892 obtained permission to build a bridge across Weems Creek from the end of Ridgely Avenue. See Weems Creek Bridge in Place Names. In December 1890, Melvin entered into an agreement with the heirs of Dr. James Murray for the development of Murray Hill, the Annapolis neighborhood along Franklin Street, Murray and Southgate Avenues in Annapolis. He was also owner of the Maryland Hotel. Several of his descendants still reside in Murray Hill. In West Annapolis, his great-granddaughter owns J. Melvin Premier Properties on Annapolis Street. See Severn Avenue.¹⁴

Monterey Avenue (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894, 2015) runs along the edge of Weems Creek. Its original alignment may have been to buildings on the Pinkney farm located near the intersection with Shiley Street. The section between Shiley and

Claude Streets remained unpaved until after 1950. The name of the street was proposed by Giddings' daughter, Elizabeth, to honor her father's role in the Mexican-American battle of Monterey, July 7 1846. In a letter to George T. Melvin in November 1889, she wrote, *As to the names of the streets you are laying out — with the feeling we have of pride in my Father's career — I think it would not be inappropriate (if I may offer a suggestion) to keep up some association with his record in the Mexican War - an unusual one for so young an Officer. Would "Monterey Avenue" be too high sounding or unusual, from the Battle of Monterey?*¹⁵ In his book, *Sketches of the Campaign in Northern Mexico*, Luther Giddings described the battle in detail. See *An Interesting Career: The Life and Work of Luther Giddings (1823-1884)* by John Eric Fredland.

Monroe Road (2015) is the remnant of Munroe Street across the Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad tracks from the end of Shiley Street, formerly Munroe Street. See Munroe Street.

Munroe Street (1894), also Oliver Street (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*); now Shiley Street. As late as 1990, some plats still give the name Munroe to the end of Shiley Street from Monterey Avenue to Wimsey Cove. James Munroe (1826-1896) was mayor of Annapolis in 1871-1875 and, like Luther Giddings, a graduate of St. John's College. Members of the James Munroe family held a number of public offices, attended St. Anne's Church where Elizabeth Giddings and her cousins, the Worthingtons and Randalls, were parishioners, and had a dry goods store on Main Street in Annapolis. Land records of the 1890's suggest that Munroe, Revell, and Ridgely and maybe others, were involved in many of the same land transactions in Anne Arundel County. Also, former land owner, Jonathan Pinkney, Jr.'s wife was Elizabeth Munroe.

Northwood Road (1915) appears on the plan for *Wardour on the Severn*; later changed to Wardour Drive.

Norwood Road (1909, 2015) refers to John Norwood, who received a patent in 1658 for “Norwood,” the land now covered by West Annapolis. John Norwood was the first sheriff of Anne Arundel County. See Chronology.

Old Crossing Lane (2015) replaced Coombs Street from Melvin Avenue to the tracks of the Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad. The name appears to have been changed about 1930. See Coombs Street.

Oliver Street (1890 *Plat*) was changed to Munroe Street on the 1894 plat and then renamed Shiley Street about 1951. The origin of the name is unknown. The only person named Oliver who is related to West Annapolis is the daughter of William S. Ridgely (see Ridgely Avenue) who married Henry Oliver and lived on Long Island, NY.¹⁶ At the end of the nineteenth century, there was a professor at the United States Naval Academy named Marshall Oliver who was known as an intellectual and also an amateur architect. He may have been a friend of Elizabeth Giddings or the Randall family. The name appears only on the earliest of the West Annapolis plats and plans. See Munroe Street and Shiley Street.

Park Avenue (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894) ran roughly where Scott Drive is today, ending in a park along the edge of the Severn River, but was not built. The name appears as late as 1905 on the Southern Map Company’s map of Annapolis, West Annapolis and Eastport, suggesting that Melvin’s plan with a park along the river was still being considered. The idea of a park may have been one of the things that led Elizabeth Giddings to look to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., for the design of Wardour. Olmsted’s plan replaced the park with areas designated “Space Reserved for Joint Use” that follow several of the ravines and carry out his naturalistic landscape planning.

Peale Avenue (1890 *Plan*, 1894) disappeared when the east end of West Annapolis was replatted as *Wardour Bluffs*. The Peale family was well known for the eighteenth century artist, Charles Willson Peale and his artist sons.

Point Avenue (1890 *Plat*) was not built. It ran down to Horse Shoe Point, now at end of Norwood Road at the Severn River.

Ramsay Road (1890 *Plan*) appears on the plan as a road leading from the new streets of West Annapolis across the sand spit at the entrance to Shady Lake to the United States Naval Academy Grounds. It may mark an existing dirt path but was never built. On the 1909 Wardour plat, the location is marked "Bridge." In a letter from Elizabeth Giddings to the Superintendent of the Naval Academy on August 8, 1907, she wrote: *Let me thank you for consideration given my request to have a little bridge across the mouth of the Inlet between our land & yours. . . . It could in no way be a thoroughfare. . . . People have always gone over there, & with already a roadway to it. When the tide is low they jump across the mouth of this pond, when it is higher they put logs across, & when the tide lifts the logs, the other [higher] path is used. If we ever have the bridge, we are wondering if it would not be advisable to have some such sign there as "No Thoroughfare" — showing that it is — in a way — almost a 'Private Grounds' as we do not wish to permit any longer the very general passing through our land that has been to its injury for so long.*¹⁷ In a letter of August 11, 1909, the Naval Academy writes that the bridge is gone. The source of the name Ramsay is unknown. The name may have been a reference to Captain Francis M. Ramsay, who fought in the Union Navy in the Civil War and was the first Naval Academy graduate to become Superintendent (1881 to 1886).

Randall Street (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894) was changed to Tucker Street in 1951 so as not to be confused with Randall Street in downtown Annapolis. Luther Giddings' first wife,

(Elizabeth Giddings' mother), was Catherine Ann Randall, daughter of Thomas Randall (1792-1877). In Annapolis, the Giddings family spent a lot of time with Thomas' brother, Alexander Randall (1803-1881), and his children. J. Wirt Randall (1845-1912), Alexander Randall 's son, attended St. John's College, was an attorney active in local and state politics, director of the Farmers National Bank of Annapolis in 1879, and sponsor of the 1884 bill which created Maryland Arbor Day (a nice coincidence since trees are important to West Annapolis). He was also the attorney for a number of the sales of land in West Annapolis. John K. [Knapp] Randall (1853-1886), a nephew of Alexander Randall, was the attorney for the sale of the Pinkney farm to Giddings in 1869. Luther Giddings and his family lived with the Randall family on College Avenue (in the Bordley-Randall House) on a number of occasions, once for almost two years. See Tucker Street.

Randall Street in Annapolis was laid out along the edge of John Randall's property (now Middleton's Tavern) from Market Space to Prince George Street (and later to King George Street) in the mid-nineteenth century. John Randall had come from Virginia in 1772 as an assistant to William Buckland, famous for his work on the interior of the Chase-Lloyd House and the Hammond Harwood House in Annapolis.

Revell Street (1894) was named Ridgely Street on the 1890 plat, then changed to Revell on Aldridge's 1894 plat, and later reverted to Ridgely Avenue. There are a lot of prominent Revells in Annapolis in the second half of the nineteenth century for whom the street might have been named. Since it appears only on Aldridge's plan, the street was likely named for the entire family or for James Revell (1840-1908) who was a Maryland State's Attorney. The name may have been changed when Revell Street, off of Shipwright Street in Annapolis, was platted. See Ridgely Avenue.

Ridge Road (1909, 2015) follows one of the ancient geological sandbars which cross Wardour from northwest (approximately the corner of Westwood and Scott Drives) to southeast, the current Ridge Road. Geomorphologists suggest that this may be an ancient sandbar, a terrace of an ancient Severn River, a pleistocene periglacial dune deposit, or a miocene remnant.¹⁸

Ridgely Street (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*), now **Ridgely Avenue** (2015) runs the width of West Annapolis from Taylor Avenue to Weems Creek. The name continues on the other side of Weems Creek to the intersection with Bestgate Road. See Revell Street.

William Short Ridgely (1838-1903) was one of the three commissioners appointed by the State of Maryland at the incorporation of the town of West Annapolis in 1890. He was an attorney in Caroline County where his father, the Reverend Greenbury W. Ridgely, had been instrumental in providing land in 1867 for the creation of the town of Ridgely. Although that initial town plan failed, it may have led to his interest in joining with his former law student, George T. Melvin (see Melvin Avenue), and J. Frank Mancha and Henry S. Mancha (town of Ridgely real estate agents), in the development of West Annapolis. Ridgely moved to Annapolis in 1885 when he and Melvin purchased the newspaper, *The Maryland Republican*, which was published in Annapolis. According to his obituary, Ridgely lived at the Maryland Hotel (owned by George T. Melvin) in the last years of his life. He purchased Bay Side Farm, now the farm at Sandy Point State Park, in 1892 but it is not likely and that he and his wife, Annie W. Ridgely, ever lived there. He died at the home of his sister, Mrs. William R. Howard, in Baltimore and is buried in St Paul's Cemetery, Hillsboro, near his birth place in Caroline County, MD. George T. Melvin not only honored his partner with the name of a street in West Annapolis, but also by naming his son, Ridgely P. Melvin. See Melvin Avenue.¹⁹

Roscoe Rowe Boulevard (2015) opened in 1954 on the former land and houses of Judge Magruder and William Feldmyer (see 1890 *Plat*). The new entrance to Annapolis was named for Roscoe C. Rowe (1884-1952), Navy veteran of World Wars I and II, mayor of Annapolis 1949-1952, and buried in Cedar Bluff Cemetery in Annapolis. As Mayor, Rowe pushed for annexation of West Annapolis and Eastport, which took place on January 1, 1951, and for the construction of Rt. 50 /301 and the connection to Annapolis, Rt. 70. In 1957, the portion of Rt. 70 from Weems Creek to Northwest Street was named Roscoe Rowe Boulevard by the City of Annapolis.

Saffield Lane (2015) is one of the alleys laid out in the blocks between Giddings Avenue and Melvin Avenue in the 1890 *Plat of West Annapolis*. In 1998, the previously unnamed alley was named for Roland F. Saffield (1891-1944) who was killed while serving in the Army in WWII. The Saffield family lived at 13 Tucker Street. Saffields's uncle, George William Saffield, Jr. (c. 1887-1933), a painter, was killed when hit by a train near West Annapolis on October 10, 1933. See Veterans Memorial.

Scott Drive (2015) appears on the 1927 *Plat No. 2 of Wardour* and runs from Claude Street to the entrance to Few Acres, the 1919 home of James Brown Scott (1886-1943), on Westwood Road. The street does not appear in the 1910 Preliminary Plan by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and apparently was a short cut from the end of Claude Street to Scott's house.

James Brown Scott was educated at Harvard and in Berlin. He taught international law at several universities and was an advisor to the U.S. presidents and secretaries of state between the 1890's and 1940. In 1911 he served as Secretary of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and worked at the Carnegie Endowment for International Law. He is recognized as a leader in the development of public international law. After his wife's death in 1939, he retired from Washington to his house in Wardour where he died on

June 25, 1943. The house has been enlarged several times by subsequent owners.

Segelken Lane (2015) is one of the unnamed alleys laid out in the blocks between Giddings Avenue and Melvin Avenue in the 1890 *Plat of West Annapolis*. In 1998, the West Annapolis Civic Association named the alley in honor of Carl Edward Segelken (1915-1945) who was killed in WW II while serving in the Army in Luzon, Philippine Islands, June 24, 1945. His grandfather, Joseph Tayman, was the tender of the Weems Creek Bridge for many years. The Segelken family lived at 13 Annapolis Street. See Veterans Memorial.

Severn Avenue (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894, 1915) runs along an early dividing line of the nineteenth century Pinkney Farm. The central and main avenue in the new West Annapolis, it was named for the Severn River at the request of Elizabeth Giddings, who wrote in 1889, *I think Severn Street would sound well, bespeaks its proximity to the River. I am thinking also of my Father's admiration for the Severn.*²⁰ In the early plats of Wardour, the name was continued from Forbes Street along today's Melvin Avenue all the way to the end of today's Wardour Drive at the Severn River. When West Annapolis was annexed into the City of Annapolis in 1951, the name was changed to Melvin Avenue to distinguish it from Severn Street in Eastport. See Melvin Avenue.

Sherwood Road (1915) appears in Olmsted's 1910 *Preliminary Plan* for Wardour and led to the home of one of the first buyers, Walter B. Norris, professor at the United States Naval Academy and author of *Annapolis: Its Colonial and Naval Story* (1925). It is not known if there is any link between the name of Luther Giddings' former farm that is now covered by Sherwood Forest near Crownsville, MD. There may have been some family connection in England.

Shiley Street (2015), formerly Munroe Street, was renamed for Earle Metzger Shiley (1912-1945) to avoid confusion with Monroe Street in Eastport after annexation of West Annapolis. Shiley graduated from the United States Military Academy (West Point) in 1938. He died from pneumonia while in the prison camp at Fukuoka, where he was interred after the fall of Corregido, during World War II. The Japanese government reported his death date as 2 Feb 1945. The Shiley family lived at 500 Melvin Avenue. See Munroe Street. See Veterans Memorial.

Taylor Avenue (1894, 2015), formerly Magruder Avenue on *1890 Plat*, runs from Annapolis Street to Cedar Park Road and then to West Street. Many people with the Taylor family name are associated with Annapolis history. It may have been named in honor of President Zachary Taylor, under whom Luther Giddings fought in the Mexican-American War. It could also have been named by Zachary Taylor's grandson, John Taylor Wood, USNA class of 1853, who lived on his farm between College Creek and today's Taylor Avenue until 1861, when he left Annapolis and joined the Confederate Navy. Taylor Avenue was referred to as Government Farm Road in some nineteenth century deeds for property abutting it in Cedar Park. Taylor was also the earlier name of the street from the Annapolis Market Space to East Street, now called Pinkney Street. See Magruder Avenue.

Tolson Street (2015), formerly Walton Street, was named in honor of Harry Warren Tolson (1920-1944) who was killed in action during World War II at St. Manview, France, August 4, 1944. He had been married in 1941 to Florence Estelle Paxton. The Tolson family lived at the upper end of Melvin Avenue. See Walton Street. See Veterans Memorial.

Tucker Street (2015), originally Randall Street on *1890 Plan*, was renamed to honor John Clifton Tucker (1925-1945) who was killed in WWII at the age of 20 while serving in the Navy

when his ship, the destroyer, *U.S.S. Evans*, was attacked by kamikazes off Okinawa, Japan. The Tucker family lived at 106 Tucker Street. See Randall Street. See Veterans Memorial.

Walton Street (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894) is now Tolson Street. The Walton family had connections to both Luther Giddings and George T. Melvin. As owners of the City Hotel on Main Street in Annapolis from 1847 to 1876, the Waltons advertised regularly in the *Anne Arundel Advertiser*, whose first editor was Luther Giddings. City Hotel was near the home of Elizabeth Giddings' cousin, Mrs. Joseph Muse Worthington, where Elizabeth often stayed in the later years of her life. Henry Walton's son, James Alphonsus Walton (1872-1945) was president of the Anne Arundel County Commission (1913-1923) and president of the Annapolis, Banking & Trust Company (1917-1931), following George T. Melvin who had been president since the bank was chartered in 1904. The name choice may have been made by Melvin. See Tolson Street.

Wardour Circle (1915, 2015) is the rotary at the entrance to the Wardour neighborhood at the north end of today's Melvin Avenue.

Wardour Drive (2015) is the continuation of Melvin Avenue into the Wardour neighborhood. Later the name was extended from Wardour Circle and replaced the name Northwood Drive. See Wardour in Place Names.

West Annapolis Boulevard (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*) is the continuation of Annapolis Street from the intersection with Taylor Avenue, to King George Street. The road linked West Annapolis to the road to the Severn River (now Route 450) and to the bridge over College Creek and into the City. It is identified on Aldridge's 1894 *Plat* as *The Road to Annapolis* and follows the alignment of today. The awkward turn around the hill with the water tower may have been originally to accommodate the entrance to Strawberry Hill, the Poor House. See Strawberry Hill in Place Names.

Westwood Road (1915) is one of the meandering streets in Olmsted's plan; origin of name is unknown.

Wirt Street (1890 *Plan*, 1894), formerly Bellis (1890 *Plat*), ran parallel to the Severn River from the Severn River to Weems Creek. The name honors the family of Luther Giddings' wife, Catherine, who was the daughter of Laura Henrietta Wirt Randall (1803-1833). Laura's father was William Wirt, a lawyer who held many political positions and was U.S. Attorney General in 1817-1829. The name also relates to J. Wirt Randall, son of Alexander Randall and Elizabeth Wirt (Catherine's sister), and, therefore, cousin of Katherine and Elizabeth Giddings. J. Wirt Randall was a well-known attorney in Annapolis and acted as his cousins' trustee in many transactions. The street was eliminated by the Olmsted Plan of 1915. See Bellis Street.

First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Streets (1890 *Plat*) were laid out by Melvin in the area later known as Wardour Bluffs, but were never built.

PLACE NAMES

Alleys, Avenues, and Streets

Alleys are indicated on the Melvin Plat of 1890 running down the center of the blocks between Melvin and Giddings Avenues and between Giddings Avenue and the Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad. In the 1894 Aldridge's Plat, there are only three alleys, which are the ones which exist today. There is no indication that alleys were ever planned for the north side of Melvin Avenue. There is no record of names for these alleys prior to the current names of veterans given to them in 1998.

Avenues are indicated on the plats as the streets running east-west down the length of West Annapolis: Monterey, Severn/Melvin, and Giddings. Recently Ridgely Street was changed to Ridgely Avenue.

Streets, since the first plat in 1890, run north-south across West Annapolis: today they are Forbes, Ridgely, Annapolis, Tucker, Tolson, Shiley, and Claude.

Avon River (1894) is the name given to Weems Creek on the Aldridge Plat of 1894. It may have been another English name favored by Luther Giddings, who had been born in Cornwall, or by his daughters. The Avon River in England flows into the Severn River.

College Creek Bridge was built about 1893. There was interest as early as 1821 in having a bridge, but farther upstream near St. Anne's Cemetery (about where Rowe Boulevard crosses College Creek today). In 1885-86, the Baltimore and Annapolis Short Line Railroad built the railroad bridge across College Creek. Sometime between 1891 and 1894, King George Street was extended between St. John's College and the Naval Academy and the College Creek bridge was constructed. See Strawberry Hill.

Gudger Beach was named by the Wardour Improvement Association in memory of Mike Gudger who died in 1998. A consultant in international agriculture, when Mike was home he would get his exercise and clear his brain by getting outside to help take care of his property and the reserve spaces owned by the Wardour Improvement Association. He could be seen clearing the rights of way, taking vines and ivy off the trees, dragging wood out of the ravines, clearing the beaches, and often making vine wreaths for his neighbors. His wife said, *Mike grew up in the mountains of North Carolina and these skills were part of his life. He always said he never understood the reasons for running after a ball or being on a machine for exercise when there was so much work to do, so much nature to admire, fresh air to breathe.* Also in 1999, an osprey station was built at the foot of Gudger beach in Mike's memory. Every year since then, the birds have returned in March on his birthday.

Horse Shoe Point (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*) is the name for the south east point of Wardour which juts into the Severn River. The name for this point predates ownership of land by Luther Giddings, but he adopted it for his farm which stretched from today's Rowe Boulevard to the Severn River. The Point, itself, resulted from the erosion of the headland which creates an elongating spit down-current.²¹ This is visible in the 1823 chart of *Annapolis Harbor and Roads* and in the 1846 chart of the *Harbor of Annapolis*.

Severn River appears on maps of Maryland as early as 1666. The Severn River in England flows south over 200 miles along the border with Wales to the Atlantic Ocean. See Severn Avenue.²²

Shady Lake (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*, 1894, 1909), an inlet off the Severn River, appears on the 1889 chart of the Severn River. The lake is also referred to as Cock-a-Doodle Creek and Governor's Gut (a reference to the bar across the entrance and the adjacent

Government property). The lake appears on all the maps of the area. On the 1869 plat of the adjacent Strawberry Hill, it is referred to as Norwood's Pond. See Strawberry Hill. See Ramsay Road in Street Names.

Strawberry Hill, an eighteenth century estate, is marked on both the 1890 *Plat* and 1890 *Plan* as three small square buildings (main house and two dependencies) just east of the Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad track at Annapolis Street. Today the site is under the water tower near that intersection and the apartments at Perry Circle off of Rt. 450, near the end of King George Street. The 1890 *Plat* also shows the large naval hospital built on the hill about 1869. See Strawberry Hill History.

Tucker Street Landing is the terminus of Tucker Street on Weems Creek and is maintained by the City of Annapolis for launching small boats. Rocks protecting erosion of the shoreline at Tucker Street are named **George's Rocks** in honor of George Breed, whose early twentieth century bungalow (demolished 2014) was situated on the promontory above the water.

Veterans Memorial is located at the corner of Annapolis Street and Melvin Avenue on the property of the West Annapolis Elementary School. It was erected in 1998 by the West Annapolis Civic Association. It honors the memory of Isaac Wilson Boone, Herschel Paul Epstein, James Stirling MacVicar, Jr., Roland Francis Saffield, Carl Edward Segelken, Earle Metzger Shiley, Harry Warren Tolson, John Clifton Tucker, Teddy Waxman, and James Lloyd Wood.

Wardour was originally two parts, Wardour Bluffs and Wardour on the Severn. The earliest part, Wardour Bluffs, was advertised in 1907 as "Beautiful Suburban Estates on the Severn River." Named for the castle of Anne Arundel 's family in Wiltshire, England, the name was chosen by Elizabeth Giddings for the area laid out according (continued on page 40)

STRAWBERRY HILL HISTORY

Described as an “elegant estate . . . affording a splendid view of the Severn river and also of the harbor and bay,” the 234-acre farm called Strawberry Hill passed back and forth from private to public hands over more than a century before most of it became part of the U.S. Naval Academy. Composed of a 17th century patent named Dorsey and part of a later tract named Norwood Beale, the farm covered most of the peninsula between College Creek and Shady Lake.

Who built the central house of the “elegant estate” is unclear, but Annapolis lawyer Richard Sprigg bought Dorsey in 1780 and considered the two-story frame house, flanked by two-story wings, his country estate. Almost certainly it was in that house in 1785 that Sprigg’s daughter Sophia married John Francis Mercer, dashing Virginia congressman and later Maryland governor. And it was to this house that Belgian émigré Henri Joseph Stier brought his wife and teenaged daughter a decade later. Stier believed country life would be less expensive, but after two years, the family moved into William Paca’s former home in town where the social life was more exciting for Rosalie, who soon married and became mistress of Riversdale. When Richard Sprigg died in 1796, his daughter Elizabeth inherited Strawberry Hill, but her husband, a Baltimore businessman, had no interest in country living either.

Three years after the disastrous fire in 1800 that destroyed the county Poor House on West Street, where the National Cemetery is now, Poor House trustees bought Strawberry Hill and moved their charges to Sprigg's elegant estate. In 1828 they relocated the poor to Londontown, and State Treasurer George Mackubin bought Sprigg's estate, again using it as a farm to support his home in Annapolis. Mackubin devised the land to his eldest son, Dr. Richard Creagh Mackubin, who added 40 acres of the adjacent tract, Norwood Beale.

When the Naval Academy returned in 1865, the new superintendent, Vice Admiral David Dixon Porter, quickly realized the school needed more space. Within just a few years, Porter acquired for the Academy a total of about 113 acres of Strawberry Hill. It was on the highest hill that Porter built the anchor-shaped hospital that became known as "Porter's Folly." And it was in 1869 that the first burials took place on the sloping lawns of Strawberry Hill that are today the Naval Academy Cemetery. The Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad Company bought the rest of Strawberry Hill in 1886.

by Jane Wilson McWilliams

Author, *Annapolis: City on the Severn, A History*

to the designs of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., landscape architect. A few years later in 1910, Elizabeth Giddings retained Olmsted again, this time to develop a plan for the land west of the railroad track and running to Weems Creek. This area was named Wardour on the Severn and the plat was recorded in 1915.

The use of the name may be linked to the growing interest in Maryland's colonial history at the beginning of the twentieth century. Just a few years earlier, the *Baltimore Sun* had reported that the Society of Colonial Dames had had a speaker on Wardour Castle who had just returned from a trip to "pursue historical research."

Weems Creek is named for the Weems family who owned land adjacent to the creek for over fifty years. In 1787, John Beale Weems inherited the land known as Norwood Beale, which included all of West Annapolis and the land west along the shore of Weems Creek to about West Street. In 1809, he sold the parcel which became West Annapolis to Jonathan Pinkney, Jr.. By the 1840's, Weems' heirs had sold all the property they had inherited along Weems Creek.

The name, Weems Creek, first appears on a chart of 1846. In the eighteenth century, the name appears to have been Warner's Creek, Howard's Creek, or Norwood's Creek, depending upon the prominence of the adjacent land owners. On the 1818 map of Annapolis Harbor by the U.S. Topographical Bureau, it is designated Poor House Creek, which may be a reference to the mansion which overlooked the area of West Annapolis. (See Strawberry Hill) The name was changed on the 1890 Plat to *West Annapolis River* and on Aldridge's *Plan* of 1894 to *Avon River* but neither of those names was ever adopted.

Weems Creek Bridge (1890 *Plan*, 1894, 2015) was included in Melvin's 1890 *Plan* but was not authorized until February 1892 when the State of Maryland passed an act to allow

George T. Melvin to build a bridge over Weems Creek. It also allowed him to charge a toll. The bridge provided access to Melvin's property on the north side of Weems Creek. The second bridge was built in 1929, which was replaced by the current bridge in 1998.²³ For many years the bridge operator who opened and closed the swing bridge was Joseph Tayman who lived in the house at the corner of Ridgely Avenue and Melvin Avenue. See also Segelken Lane. At the dedication of the "new" bridge in 1998, it was anointed with "Old Bay" seasoning, according to the *West Annapolis Newsletter*, Winter 1998. See Melvin Avenue.

West Annapolis (1890 *Plat* and all subsequent plats and maps) is the name selected when the town was incorporated. It is mentioned in a letter written to George T. Melvin, one of the three commissioners appointed by the State of Maryland at the incorporation of the town of West Annapolis in 1890. On November 11, 1889, Elizabeth Giddings wrote from her sister's house in Waterford, Loudoun County, VA, to Melvin: *Not very long ago Mr. Alex. Randall, in writing to Mr. Aldridge [her brother-in-law] asked if we had said anything to you about the name to be given to our new town or "west end." We think your suggestion, "West Annapolis" a very good one, indeed thought it had been very definitely settled upon. I think for every reason it is better than any new name that has no distinctive association.*²⁴

West Annapolis River (1890 *Plat*, 1890 *Plan*) was the name selected by George T. Melvin to replace Weems Creek. The name was never adopted.

Wimsey Cove refers to the cove on Weems Creek between the end of Tucker Street and Scott Drive at the end of Shiley and Tolson Streets, one of the few natural estuaries left within the city limits of Annapolis. The name was found on a nineteenth century map showing Weems Creek as Wimsey Creek. In 1961, H. O. (Jeff) Werner, Professor Emeritus, USNA, gave this name to the cove on which his house was located.

NOTES

- 1 The story of the Giddings family can be found in *An Interesting Career: The Life and Work of Luther Giddings (1823-1884)* by John Eric Fredland, West Annapolis Heritage Partnership, 2015.
- 2 ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT (Equity Papers), No. 4571 [T71-66; 00/28/04/002.
- 3 ANNE ARUNDEL LAND RECORDS, Plats B-17-B-18; Plat Book 12, pp. 13-14.
- 4 ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY LAND RECORDS, Book JCB 4, p. 297.
- 5 ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY LAND RECORDS, Section 1, Folio 24, a Copy of this Plat will be found in Book 27, p. 48; and at ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY Plats B-322; Plat Book 11, p. 49.
- 6 ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY LAND RECORDS, Plat Book 13, p. 37; Plat 553-A
- 7 Company D of the 43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry, see <http://www.mosocco.com/default.htm>
- 8 See Pinkney Farm map, Fig. 6, in *An Interesting Career: The Life and Work of Luther Giddings* by John Eric Fredland, 2015.
- 9 Letter of Nov. 11, 1889, in Anne Arundel County Equity Case 1577.
- 10 Anne Arundel County Land Records, Plat Book 6, p. 46; plat 348.
- 11 See <http://www.onlinebiographies.info/me/saga/combs-ca.htm>. Charles A. Coombs, formerly Superintendent of the Knox and Lincoln Railroad, has been appointed Superintendent of the Baltimore and Annapolis Road. *Bar Harbor Record* January 16, 1890. Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Coombs and the Misses Grace and Clases arrived from Baltimore where he had been superintendent of the B & A RR. *Bath Independent* December 18, 1897. See STIRRING LIFE STORY OF CHARLES A. COOMBS in [Bath Independent And Enterprise](#), Saturday, July 3, 1909, Bath, Maine at <http://access.newspaperarchive.com/>
- 12 Notice of death of Forbes in The Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. VII, No. 1, p. 14, Sept. 29, 1906, in Roland Park (possibly the model for Wardour), Baltimore, MD.
- 13 AAC Plat Book 12, p. 1; Plats B-2] and was also annexed into the city in 1951. The connection between the name and Elizabeth Giddings who was developing Wardour is not known. Glenwood Avenue in Baltimore and Glenwood in Howard County, MD, and other uses of the name Glenwood suggest it was a popular turn-of-the-century place name.
- 14 *Tercentenary History of Maryland*, Vol. 111, S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago, Baltimore, 1925, pp. 201-202.
- 15 Letter from Elizabeth Giddings to George T. Melvin, Nov. 11, 1889, Anne Arundel County Equity Case 1577.
- 16 The Sun, Mar. 1, 1937, "Ridgely Welcomes Kin of Founder," p. 7.

- 17 Letter from Elizabeth Giddings to Captain Charles J. Badger, U.S.N., Superintendent of the Naval Academy, August 8, 1907, provided by the Wardour Improvement Association from its historical files (copy from the records of the superintendent's office, Naval Academy, National Archives and Records Administration).
- 18 Don Mullis, C.P.G., *The Geology and Environmental Setting of West Annapolis: What's under West Annapolis? A Record of Climate Change*, talk given Dec. 10, 2014 to the West Annapolis Heritage Partnership.
- 19 *The Sun*, June 8, 1903, *Denton Journal*, June 13, 1903.]See <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mdcaroli/Ridgely.html>
<http://ridgelymd.org/about/a-brief-history/town-history/>
<http://ead.library.jhu.edu/ms076.xml>
- 20 *Letter from Elizabeth Giddings to George T. Melvin, Nov. 11, 1889, Anne Arundel County Equity Case 1577.*
- 21 Don Mullis, C.P.G., *The Geology and Environmental Setting of West Annapolis: What's under West Annapolis? A Record of Climate Change*, talk given Dec. 10, 2014 to the West Annapolis Heritage Partnership.
- 22 For historic maps of Maryland, see Edward C. Papenfuse and Joseph M. Coale III, *The Maryland State Archives Atlas of Historical Maps of Maryland 1608-1908*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- 23 Weems Creek Bridge was documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, (HAER No. MD-112), n.d., 7 p.
- 24 Anne Arundel County Equity Case No. 1577

CHRONOLOGY OF WEST ANNAPOLIS AND WARDOUR HISTORY

The dates below have been found in various land records, newspaper articles, and the records of various organizations. For corrections and additions, please contact the West Annapolis Heritage Partnership.

- 1658 John Norwood, sheriff of Providence County (later Anne Arundel) receives a patent dated February 8, 1658 for 1,230 acres called "Norwood" from Lord Baltimore. The land ran roughly from today's Claude Street to the head of Weems Creek near West Street. A year later, Norwood also got a patent for land, named the "Intake," in the adjacent area along College Creek in today's Cedar Park neighborhood.
- 1686 Andrew Norwood, Capt. John Norwood's son, got a patent for "Norwood's Recovery," the area now covered by Wardour.
- 1718 Andrew Norwood, the grandson of John Norwood, sells the property to his brother-in-law, John Beale, who names it "Norwood's Beale." Records of the period that Beale was living on his plantation, "Norwood's Beale."
- 1787 The property is inherited by John Beale Weems (1783-1814). (Relation of Weems to John Beale unclear.)
- 1809 Weems sells the land covered today by West Annapolis, Wardour, and Rowe Boulevard to Jonathan Pinkney for \$3,020, except ½ acre for burying ground.
- 1869 Trustees for Jonathan Pinkney's estate sell a tract called Norwoods Beale, 225 3/4 acres, to Luther Giddings. It includes the area covered today by West Annapolis, Wardour, and Rowe Boulevard with farm buildings in the area of Monterey Avenue and Tolson Street.
- 1869 Giddings sells a 10 acre tract to Ann Marie Greenhow for \$800. Land approximately at Taylor Avenue and Rowe Boulevard intersection.

- 1869 Giddings sells 10 3/4 acres of land to William Feldmyer for \$1,000. Land approximately between Melvin Avenue and Weems Creek under Rowe Boulevard.
- 1870's Luther Giddings and his family are living in their house, Cervalo Cottage (in the middle of the block later marked by Annapolis, Melvin, Ridgely, and Giddings Avenues) and the farm is planted with an orchard and vineyard. The vine dresser's cottage is now 2 Annapolis Street (One Petticoat Lane).
- 1884 Elizabeth Giddings and her sister, Catherine Giddings Aldridge, inherit their father's property which extends from Forbes Street to the Severn River.
- 1889 George T. Melvin and Henry S. Mancha enter into an agreement with the Giddings sisters to develop the land they inherited from their father, Luther Giddings.
- 1890 Town of West Annapolis is incorporated by the State of Maryland on April 8th.
- 1891 Power of Attorney given to J. West Aldridge by Catherine Aldridge and Elizabeth Giddings to sell land inherited from Luther Giddings. Aldridge begins selling lots along Forbes Street and Melvin Avenue to African-Americans who had been farm laborers on the Giddings farm.
- 1893 Elizabeth Giddings, Catherine Giddings Aldridge and J. West Aldridge went to court to break contract with George T. Melvin. In 1894, they were successful in regaining control of the development of West Annapolis.
- 1905 Heirs of Catherine Giddings Aldridge (died 1899) convey the portion of the West Annapolis land they inherited to Elizabeth Giddings.
- 1906 Elizabeth Giddings sells lots between Annapolis, Severn (now Melvin), Ridgely and Giddings Avenues to Frederick W. Shaw, including the Giddings home, named Cervalo Cottage
- 1907 Elizabeth Giddings retains Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to lay out the plan for Wardour Bluffs. She begins to sell lots there by 1909.

- 1910 Elizabeth Giddings retains Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to lay out the lots for the subdivision of land north of the Annapolis and Baltimore Railroad, known as *Wardour on the Severn*.
- 1911 West Annapolis Volunteer Fire and Improvement Association (WAVFD) is organized by Fred W. Shaw, Alvin Oaksmith, Clinton S. Shaw, Roy E. Proskey, and Eugene O. League. Firehouse built in 1912.
- 1913 B&A train falls off bridge into the Severn River. June 24
- 1913-1915 The Methodist Episcopal Church is built near the corner of Annapolis and Melvin Avenues; moved to 12 Annapolis Street in 1933.
- 1915 Wardour Improvement Association is formed by George Turner, Robert Giddings Aldridge (nephew of Elizabeth Giddings), Carroll Alden, and J. W. Valiant. Upon the recommendation of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., they look at the by-laws of the Roland Park Civic League in Baltimore as a model. It may have been Olmsted's plan for Roland Park that led Elizabeth Giddings to ask him to come to West Annapolis.
- 1916 West Annapolis Elementary School opens in one or two room school house. WAES PTA currently researching early history of the school for its centennial in fall of 2016.
- 1919 Electricity in West Annapolis.
- 1919 Mother's Circle of West Annapolis and WAVFD active in supporting the school and Teacherage (home for teachers on Annapolis Street next to the elementary school), now located at 10 Annapolis Street).
- 1920 New West Annapolis Elementary School, brown shingled building built on Annapolis Street at corner of Monterey Avenue.
- 1921 Parent-Teacher Association for West Annapolis formed (apparently from the Mother's Circle).
- 1924 Trustee for estate of Elizabeth Giddings sells all unsold lots (over 160 lots plus common areas and many streets not dedicated to Anne Arundel County and the electric light plant) in West Annapolis and Wardour to Charles F. Lee.

- 1928 Ladies Auxiliary of the West Annapolis Volunteer Fire and Improvement Association active had been formed and was very busy with community activities.
- 1929 Charles F. Lee files Wardour Plat No. 2 which reconfigures streets and lots on Olmsted Plan of 1915 for area along Claude Street.
- 1936 New and enlarged West Annapolis Elementary School built.
- 1935 Water and sewer lines extended to West Annapolis.
- 1951 Town of West Annapolis is annexed into the City of Annapolis.
- 1952 West Annapolis Civic Association is incorporated on April 3rd.
- 1954 Roscoe Rowe Boulevard (Rt, 70) opens.
- 1954 Wardour Garden Club established.
- 1956 Acme Supermarket and drugstore (now Graul's and Rite Aid) built on site of former nursery at Ridgely and Taylor Avenues.
- 1959 United States Navy and Marine Corps Memorial Stadium built.
- 1973 West Annapolis Volunteer Fire Association moves to new building on Jennifer Road in Anne Arundel County.
- 1980's West Annapolis Business Association (WABA) is created; re-incorporated as the West Annapolis Business Affiliation (WABA) in 2009.
- 1990 First annual Oktoberfest on Annapolis Street sponsored by WABA.
- 1998 Veterans Memorial dedicated by the West Annapolis Civic Association at the corner of Annapolis Street and Melvin Avenue on the grounds of the West Annapolis Elementary School.
- 2002 First Meet the Creek Day sponsored by the West Annapolis Civic Association.
- 2011 West Annapolis Heritage Partnership (WAHP) formed. WAHP organizes Maryland Day events each year in March to celebrate West Annapolis history.

- 2015 Wardour Improvement Association celebrates its 100th Anniversary.
- 2016 West Annapolis Elementary School (K - 5th grade) opens new building on Melvin Avenue covering entire block where original school started.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The information on the history of West Annapolis and Wardour streets and places has come from many sources gathered over several years. I am indebted to many of the authors of Annapolis and Maryland history, particularly Jane McWilliams. Eric Fredland's biography of Luther Giddings provided a lot of the background information on the connection between the Giddings family and West Annapolis. Some information has come from the land records for property in West Annapolis. Most biographical information has come from the Ancestry.com website and Internet sites with newspapers and other information. Information which may not be easy to find, I have tried to provide a source.

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For online title searches, see <http://mdlandrec.net/main/>

For plats (surveys), see <http://plato.mdarchives.state.md.us>

[Title searches on many properties led to information about street name changes.]

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The subject of this booklet, the street names in West Annapolis and Wardour, was suggested by Virginia Vroblesky during 2012 when we were involved in researching the history of West Annapolis for an exhibit, *Finding Our Roots on Annapolis Street*. As we learned more about the people who had lived in this neighborhood of Annapolis, we recognized how important the street names are in telling the story of the area. Some of that information went into the folder, *Walk the Village of West Annapolis* which was published in 2014. More information was found as Eric Fredland researched and wrote, *An Interesting Career: The Life and Work of Luther Giddings (1823-1884)* which was published in 2015. Those products and this publication have been supported by grants from the Four Rivers Heritage Area with matching grants from the West Annapolis Business Affiliation, the West Annapolis Civic Association, the Wardour Improvement Association, and the donors and merchants listed in the back of this book.

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Searching for the origin of our street names has opened many questions about the history of West Annapolis and Wardour. I encourage everyone to look at the history of their own property in our neighborhood or to their association with West Annapolis and to add to our information.

Constance Werner Ramirez
Annapolis, MD
March 2016

SPONSORS

We wish to acknowledge the support of the many West Annapolis residents, businesses, and friends who have helped underwrite this publication about the history of the names of the streets and places which make West Annapolis and Wardour special.



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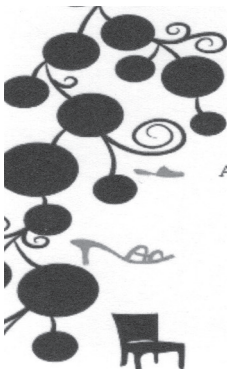


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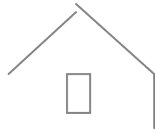
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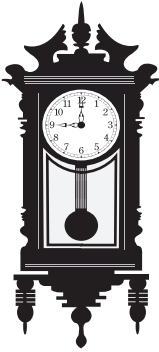
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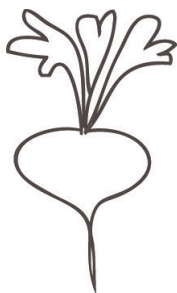
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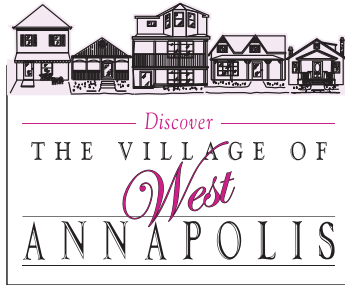
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Constance Werner Ramirez grew up in Annapolis and became interested in the city's history as a teenage junior guide for Historic Annapolis. She holds degrees in architectural history and city planning and earned a doctorate in urban and regional planning from Cornell University in 1975. For many years she worked as a historic preservation officer for a number of federal agencies while also teaching in historic preservation graduate programs. She lives in a house built in 1926 by Charles F Lee on Wimsey Cove.

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