

STREET IN ANACOSTIA.

ROADSIDE SKETCHES.

Village of Anacostia and Its Historic Surroundings.

WHERE POET PAYNE LIVED.

The Changes of Recent Years—The Beginning of Anacostia—The Neighboring Settlement of Hilldale—Where Frederick Douglass Lives—Picturesque Views From the Hills.

ANACOSTIA AND HILLDALE ARE among the most promising of Washington's suburbs, and they possess some attractions that are not to be found elsewhere in this vicinity. The towns themselves are not old by any means, but their environs are rich in history. Therefore a visit to and a stroll through their streets will be enjoyed. Anacostia is reached by way of the Navy Yard bridge, whose history was recited in a recent excursion. The northern end of the bridge is at 11th street southeast.

Moving across this structure, pleasing scenes are witnessed on every side. To the right are the Navy Yard, the Arsenal or Greenleaf's Point, the Potomac and the Virginia hills beyond. Moving the eye slowly toward the left, it rests successively on Geisboro and Poplar Points. Immediately in front are Anacostia and Hilldale, the heights of the latter, with their neat, showy residences, making a pleasing impression. Again turning toward the left, Good Hope Hill, Boone's ridge and the valley of the Anacostia river are presented to view.

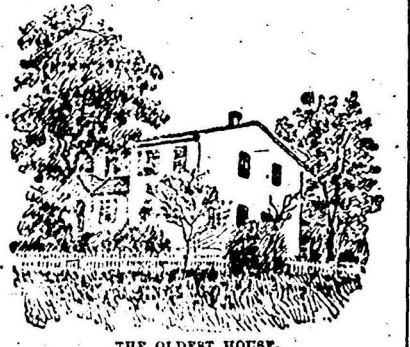
Reaching the southern end of the bridge, a few paces bring you to the junction of Harrison and Monroe streets, Anacostia, the former, which was originally the western end of the old Marlboro' pike, running eastward toward Good Hope, while the latter, which was once known as the Piscataway road, running southward toward the Insane Asylum. The dividing line between Harrison street and Good Hope road is about 300 feet east of Taylor street, while Morris road separates Anacostia from Hilldale.

THE BEGINNING OF ANACOSTIA.

Forty years ago the site of Anacostia was farm lands, and was owned by one Enoch Tucker. It formerly belonged to the Marberry estate, and was part of the "Chichester" tract. There were 280 acres in the Tucker farm, a good part of which was cultivated for truck purposes. Mr. Tucker did not attend to the farm work himself, however, for he was employed as boss blacksmith in the navy yard. The farm was either leased or worked on the share plan. The Tucker farmhouse stood alone in the old days, and, until recently, occupied the site of the present new Tyle block, on the west side of Monroe street, just south of Harrison street and the bridge.

In 1834 John Fox, John W. Van Hood and John Dobler bought the farm from Tucker for \$19,000 and divided it into building lots, naming the place Anacostia. It continued to be known by this name until 1865, when it was rechristened Uniontown, which latter name it retained until 1869, when the original name was resumed.

The first house erected in the new town after the subdivision was completed was the old two-story brick on Harrison street, now occupied by Weigel's store and bakery. George F. Pyle's grocery store, nearly adjoining on the west, soon followed.



THE OLDEST HOUSE.

But the oldest house within the limits of the town today is the old Fox mansion on the south side of Jefferson street, which was built many years before Anacostia was thought of. It was built by John Fox, one of the founders of the place, and was his residence until his death. It is now occupied by W. H. Richards. At one time it was the residence of Dr. A. M. Green. Dr. Green's attractive new residence adjoins the old house.

Another very old building is the small frame structure on Harrison street, a little west of Anderson's blacksmith shop. This house was built by James Buckley, who was bridgekeeper in the days of tolls.

The town is growing rapidly, and handsome buildings meet the eye in every direction. Many new buildings are now in course of construction and business is generally very active. The population, which is almost exclusively white, will aggregate 3,500. There are but two colored families in the place.

THE MASONIC HALL.

The old and new Masonic Hall buildings furnish a good contrast between the sleepy old place of a decade ago and the live, bustling town of today. The new Masonic building is a creditable, three-story brick structure. It stands on the corner of Jefferson and Pierce streets, and was completed last year at a cost of \$15,000. The first story is a public hall. The second story is used as a place of meeting by various local societies, such as the G. A. R., Knights of Pythias, Good Templars, &c. The third story is used by the Masons. Anacostia Lodge, No. 21, has 150 members and is in a flourishing condition. The old building is used by the Universalists as a church and Sunday school.

The town is well provided with churches and schools.

THE CHURCHES.

The new Episcopal Church, corner of Washington and Fillmore streets, now nearing completion, is of a unique style of architecture. The walls, which are low, are built of Potomac blue stone, trimmed with red sand stone, the roof, of slate, being quite elaborate and extensive. It will cost, when completed, \$12,000.

The Methodist Church is on the corner of Jackson and Pierce streets, directly opposite Masonic Hall. The Baptist Church is on Jefferson street between Fillmore and Polk.

The Roman Catholic Church is on the northeast corner of Washington and Fillmore streets, on the opposite corner, on a terrace, being the old Episcopal Church.

The fine new public school house on Jefferson between Fillmore and Pierce streets, dedicated last summer, has accommodations for 500 pupils.

Fair Lawn (well named), the home of the late Arthur Christie, down on Harrison street between Pierce and Fillmore, is one of the finest residence places in the town.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS' HOME.

Anacostia can at least boast of one historic character among her citizens—a man whose name and fame are probably world-wide. Frederick Douglass, the foremost man of his race in the country, lives in the old Van Hook house, built by one of the founders of the town, on Cedar Heights, between Pierce and Jefferson streets. The house, which is quite attractive, stands on a beautiful knoll, from which one of the finest views of the city of Washington found within the District is presented.

But the land mark that touches the Anacostian's heart above all others, and the one that he is proudest of, is the old Talburt house, with its famous old chestnut tree, under whose inspiring branches John Howard Payne penned his immortal "Home, Sweet Home." The visitor of today will miss the old tree, for the last remnant of it was blown down by a gale last winter. I had the good fortune to secure

sketches of it before its destruction, which are presented to the readers of THE STAR. The north end of the old house is also shown in one of the pictures. The tree was over one hundred years old at its death. Before its decay it measured fifteen feet around the trunk, and its old branches overtopped every tree in the vicinity. The rustic seat that used to encircle its trunk is securely preserved as a precious heirloom in the attic of the old house.

The late George W. Talburt, the then proprietor of the Talburt estate, was the friend



WHERE "HOME, SWEET HOME" WAS WRITTEN.

and boon companion of Payne. Although there was quite a disparity in their ages, Payne being much the elder, there was something in their natures that drew them toward each other. Perhaps it was the love of music, for which they were both noted. And then each was of a convivial turn, and each played and sang well. Both were bachelors when the famous song was written, and their companionship was almost inseparable. They would sit for hours together of a summer evening under the spreading branches of the old tree, singing and playing favorite airs, and it is a matter of neighborhood gossip that jolly old Bacchus looked on approvingly on those occasions.



THE OLD PAYNE TREE WITH NORTH END OF OLD TALBURT HOUSE.

It is probable that Mr. Talburt, who was learned in music, aided Payne very materially with his song. At any rate it was sung and resung by them many times before its introduction to the public.

In this connection I must correct a popular error. It has been repeatedly stated in the newspapers that the original manuscript of "Home, Sweet Home" is in the possession of the Talburt family. I have been informed by a member of the family, who ought to know, that there is no foundation in fact for this story. Payne was careless about such things, and it is more than probable that the manuscript went into the waste basket.

Payne was a wanderer, without a home, and his loneliness, compared with the happiness of the household in which he was treated as more than a common guest, doubtless suggested the idea of the song.

THE TALBURT-PAYNE HOUSE.

That Payne and Talburt were very fond of each other is proven by the fact that they planned for the erection of a residence for their joint occupancy. Payne selected the site and Talburt built the house, but fate had decreed that this was as far as their scheme should go. In 1841 the poet died in Tunis, Africa, he having been appointed United States consul to that place by President Van Buren.

The sad and sudden loss of his dear friend, and the consequent failure of their plans, had a marked effect on the future of Mr. Talburt. Instead of Mr. Payne, he took for his companion and helpmate through life's journey one of the best and most accomplished young women of this section. They lived happily in the new house until Mr. Talburt's death in 1865. The widow is now a resident of Northeast Washington, enjoying, in her advancing years, the society of her children and grandchildren and the esteem of her neighbors.

The Talburt-Payne house is beautifully situated on Maple avenue and is now the home of Mr. H. A. Griswold, who came into possession of it in 1873. The accompanying illustration shows the house as it was when occupied by the Talburts. Mr. Griswold has changed the outlines materially, especially the front exposure.

The ancient Talburt mansion down on the river's side, which, by the way, can be reached by a lane which forms a continuation of Morris road, yet belongs to Mrs. Talburt, but a man named Allen has a lease of it and works the land as a truck farm.

The Woodruff cottage, on the water's side, a little east of Talburt's, is an old historic place. Mrs. Woodruff was the mother of George W. Talburt by her first marriage.

Anacostia is distinctively a white community, although the population of the surrounding villages of Hilldale, Stantontown, Garfield, &c., are made up largely of colored folks. It is a harmonious, law-abiding community, and I am told that the arrest of one of its citizens for a crime is of rare occurrence.

It has doubtless been noticed that the older streets were named after the Presidents of the United States.

A post office was first established in Anacostia in 1849, John Lloyd being the first postmaster. The office was discontinued in 1858, and was re-established in 1865 under the name of Uniontown. The name of the office was again changed to Anacostia in 1869.

HILLDALE.

Morris (formerly "Now Cut") road is the dividing line between Anacostia and Hilldale. The latter is a comparatively new settlement. Its site was a houseless woodland thirty years ago, with the exception of Poplar Point, which was many generations since the home of sturdy old farmer Jas. Barry. Howard avenue leads down to the old place, and should you decide to visit it you will find there some of the bricks of the ruin of the old mansion house, torn down many years ago. The place got its name of Poplar Point from the great number of poplar trees that grew on it, some of which are still standing, silent witnesses, as it were, pointing to former grandeur. A large row of Lombardy poplars used to separate the Barry and Talburt places.

Mr. James Barry, the original owner of this estate, which extended southward to the Hamilton road and westward to Geisboro', was of English birth and a staunch Roman Catholic. It is said that adherence to his religion cost him an earldom.

The Poplar Point tract is now divided up into small truck farms, which are worked with good profit by colored men.

Monroe street, Anacostia, ends, and Nicholas avenue, Hilldale, begins at Morris road.

Hilldale Heights occupy a commanding position, magnificent views of Washington and the country around being obtained from their summit. Some handsome residences grace the most elevated points, among others being those of Mr. Messer, Lawyer Sherwood and Dr. Grant of the internal revenue office, Treasury Department.

The streets of Hilldale have the appearance of being neglected by the authorities, and inconvenience and discomfort are experienced by the residents as a consequence. The taxpayers are becoming restive under this neglect. Howard avenue, for instance, which leads down to Poplar Point, and which is occupied by many residences on either side, is a mere country lane, not even provided with a sidewalk.

GEORGE SIMMONS.