



Hyattsville Walking Tour

NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

Brief History of the Community

Records from the early 18th Century indicate a riverfront settlement named Beale Town was located where Hyattsville now stands. The hamlet never achieved town status and, in 1742, for both economic and topographical reasons, the residents of the area petitioned the General Assembly to have a new town established one-half mile below Beale Town at Garrison's Landing (later renamed Bladensburg). The Colonial legislature accepted the petition, and Beale Town's days were numbered.

Christopher Clark Hyatt purchased a land parcel in the same vicinity in March of 1845. The location was ideal for settlement due to the presence of the railroad and telegraph. Soon surrounding farmland began to be subdivided into housing lots. By 1859 the tract was recognized as Hyattsville by the Post Office and cartographers. Dawson Lawrence wrote in G. M. Hopkins' 1878 Atlas of Prince George's County:

Hyattsville, on the Washington Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, a beautiful village of tasteful homes in the modern style of architecture, ornamented with gardens and lawns, is largely indebted for its prosperity to Christopher C. Hyatt, who began the good work of making a village

30 years ago, and it has gradually increased in beauty and prosperity until it stands as one of the foremost villages between Baltimore and Washington.

The Act of Incorporation of the City was signed into law in April 1886.

The popularity of the area increased quickly as both a summer haven for Washingtonians distressed by the unhealthy conditions in the capital city during hot weather, and as a year-round community in which to live. In 1982, a portion of the residential area, much of it developed before or shortly after the



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turn of the century, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Today, Hyattsville is a thriving suburb enjoying the advantages of a small town. Homes cover the spectrum from Victorian mansions to bungalows, four-squares and cottages. Just as the housing stock is diverse, so too, are the backgrounds and interests of Hyattsville's active citizenry. Many local projects are under way focusing on art, horticulture, the environment, religion and historic preservation, to name a few. Baltimore Avenue or Rhode Island Avenue or Route One, is the old carriage road/turnpike between Washington and Baltimore, and represents our Main Street. It is the focus of our revitalization projects, and your tour begins here:



**1 Hyattsville Hardware/
Franklin's General Store & Deli,
5121 Baltimore Avenue.**

This structure dates from between 1880-1890 and initially housed the fire department on the ground floor and a carriage factory on the second. From 1910 to 1990, it was occupied by a purveyor of assorted hardware and household goods. It is currently owned by Mike and Debbie Franklin, leaders in the renaissance of Hyattsville's Main Street, and features a delicatessen and gourmet food shop with novelties and gifts.

**2 Professional Building,
Gallatin Street and Baltimore Ave.**

Built in 1904, this building was used by the First National Bank of Hyattsville from 1914 to 1936. During this period, it was remodeled into its present form. A second story was added, essentially wrapping the brick building with limestone. It became Prince George's County Building and was home to the Police Court and Jail until the functions were moved to the new County Service Building. The structure was vacated in 1962, and was mostly vacant until about 1984 when it became rentable office space.

**3 United States Post Office,
4325 Gallatin Street.**

Built in 1935, the Hyattsville Post Office is a three-part brick building consisting of a 1 1/2 story, side-gabled central block and lower flanking wings. The central block is detailed with round-arch windows, Flemish bond brick, limestone quoins, frieze and modillioned cornice; there is a domed frame cupola centered

at the ridge of the slate roof. The interior is decorated with six murals by painter Eugene Kingman. The building is an excellent example of Colonial Revival architecture.

**4 Hyattsville Municipal Building,
4310 Gallatin Street.**

Completed in the summer of 1990, this structure was designed by Allen Sparber & Associates and built under the supervision of College Park Contracting, Inc. It houses nearly all of the City offices, including the Police Department.

**5 Disciples of Christ Church,
3401 Gallatin Street.**

Dedicated on November 10, 1901, under the Reverend J. W. Rawles, this building served for 50 years as the home of the First Baptist Church.

**6 Mt. Hermon Masonic Lodge,
Gallatin Street & 43rd Avenue.**

Constructed in 1893, this 2 1/2 story brick rectangular building features graduated buttresses and long windows with semi-elliptical arches. The main lodge chamber is located on the third floor, and the lower level has been used for storage, as a community center, a temporary public high school, as well as a temporary church following a fire at St. Jerome's Roman Catholic Church.

7 Tiny Park on Gallatin Street.

In 1905, a 2-story brick, eight-room public school opened on this site formerly called Spencer Street. It was razed in 1977 and is currently a neighborhood park lovingly tended by local residents. It provides a lush setting for a brief respite.

8 5107 42nd Avenue.

This classically simple 1916 frame house is reminiscent of the Italian villa style with original standing seam metal roof, which is dominated by the tower. Formerly 38 Wine Avenue, this residence was first occupied by John and Mary Fainter whose son Wells recounted his early memories of Hyattsville in our centennial volume: *Hyattsville: Our Hometown*; 1986.

**9 Charles H. Welsh House,
4200 Farragut Street.**

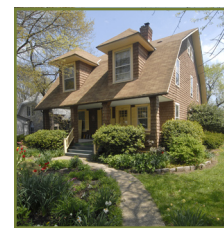
Built 1889-1890, the Welsh House is a 2 1/2 story, cross-gabled frame dwelling with projecting bays, paneled, bracketed gables and wraparound porch. It was built for Charles H. Welsh, a banker who was instrumental in Hyattsville's development. It is a fine example of Queen Anne-style domestic architecture.

**10 Church of God & Saints of Christ Church,
4203 Farragut Street.**

Formerly Hyattsville Presbyterian Church, it was constructed in 1915 of gray stone. The coursed stonework is of a very high quality. Detailing is drawn from several sources, including the Richardsonian tradition and the Arts and Crafts school.

**11 Fox's Barn,
5011 42nd Avenue.**

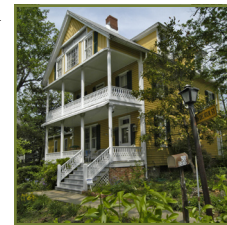
Built in 1892, Fox's Barn is a 2 1/2 story, gambrel-roof frame dwelling, noticeable for its inset porch, hip dormers and cypress-shingle siding. It was built for Gilbert and



Marian Fox, and for a quarter century was the home of T. Hammond Welsh. It is an unusual example of a gambrel-roof, cottage-style dwelling.

**12 Harriet Ralston House,
4206 Decatur Street.**

The Harriet Ralston House is a 3-story, front-gabled frame retreat cottage, which stands on one of the original streets platted for the Town of Hyattsville. It is distinguished by its fine Victorian trim and its prominent 3-story veranda supported by chamfered posts with molded capitals and bases and jigsaw brackets. In 1882 Harriet Ralston purchased several lots in Hyatt's Addition to Hyattsville. Mrs. Ralston's son Jackson built the Queen Anne style house on the adjoining lot.



**13 "Checkerboard Block",
4100 block of Emerson Street.**

The houses on this block flank the narrow street, which runs east-west up a steep hill. All of the houses are 2 1/2 story frame, with similar spacing, setbacks, landscaping and materials, alternating between Dutch Colonial and vernacular Victorian styles.

**14 Benjamin F. Smith House,
5104 42nd Avenue.**

Built in the 1880s, the Benjamin F. Smith House is a 2-story frame dwelling of the gable-front-and-wing plan, with two 2-story projecting bays on the south side elevation. It was built in the late 1880s by Benjamin and Frances Smith on lots that

front on the principal residential street in Victorian Hyattsville. It exhibits many early and handsome features and is a good representative of a late Victorian urban dwelling.

15 William A. Shepherd House
5108 42nd Avenue.

Built in 1906, the Shepherd House is a 2 1/2 story, gable-roof frame dwelling, with a 3-story octagonal corner tower, flared bracketed eaves and a wraparound porch with jigsaw detail. Constructed for William A. Shepherd, Town Clerk and Tax Assessor, it has Queen Anne-style decorative details.

16 W. G. Lown House,
4107 Gallatin Street.

Built in 1891 as a country residence for Mr. Lown, a prominent coffee wholesaler in Washington, DC, this 2-story dwelling exhibits such architectural features as the crenelated shingles and interlocking chain molding on the verge boards of the gables. The porch balusters were designed by the present owners and manufactured in Kashmir. Among the ten previous owners of this residence were Richard White, secretary of a building, and loan association who owned the property until 1927, when he sold it to Smith W. Brookhart, a U. S. Senator from Iowa.



17 McEwen House,
4106 Gallatin Street.

Built in 1887, the McEwen House is a 2 1/2 story, multi-gabled frame house, with Rockville bays, paneled gables, fish-scale shingles and windows with colored border lights. It was one of the early houses in the subdivision of Hyattsville, built for Clarence McEwen from a house pattern distributed by R. W. Shoppell's Cooperative Building Plan Association. The house is a fine example of Queen Anne-style architecture.

18 Frederick Augustus Holden House,
4110 Gallatin Street.

Built in 1883, this Holden House is a 2 1/2 story frame house with hip-and-gable roof and especially fine detail, including sawtooth shingling and scissors trusses. It was built by George N. Walker, an active contractor in the growing Hyattsville community, for Frederick A. Holden, Hyattsville town commissioner. It is an important example of Carpenter Gothic or Eastern Stick-style domestic architecture. *(See photo on page 1)*

19 Lewis F. Holden House,
4112 Gallatin Street.

Built in 1897, this Holden House is a 2 1/2 story frame dwelling with oriel window, paneled gables, projecting bays and wraparound porch. It was built for Lewis F. Holden, a bookbinder, on lots adjoining the previously-built dwelling of his father. One of two houses of this design in Prince George's County, it is a fine



example of Queen Anne-style architecture. The noisy ghost of a previous owner resides here with the current occupants.

20 Edgewood,
4115 Hamilton Street.

Edgewood is a 2 1/2 story frame cross-gabled dwelling distinguished by geometric paneling in the principal gable and originally located on the edge of a wooded area known as Wine's Woods. A 1-story hip-roof porch, bounded by a balustrade of crisscross members in an X-pattern, shelters the north entrance. Built in 1888 for the Paul Tricon family, it was purchased in 1900 by Matthew Halloran, who became Chief of the U. S. Civil Service Commission and an early Mayor of Hyattsville. Mrs. Halloran, a New York stage actress and Mrs. Fainter organized the "Edgewood Players" and produced theatricals using this property for rehearsals.

21 Rachel Tise House,
5220 42nd Place.

In 1892, Rachel Tise, who with her husband operated a retail grocery in Hyattsville, constructed this large and handsome frame dwelling adapted from Design #299 which had first appeared in Shoppell's Modern Houses in 1887. The house is side-gabled, with asymmetrical projecting gables and a 1-story veranda across the principal façade. Occupied for many years by the prominent James Webb Rogers family, it is distinguished by an unusual 3-story gabled rectangular bay that projects at a 45-degree angle from the corner of the main façade.

22 The Castle,
Jefferson and U. S. Route 1.

Completed in 1918, the Hyattsville Armory is a 3-story, fortress-like stone structure, distinguished by turrets, parapets and buttresses. It was designed by Robert Lawrence Harris for the State of Maryland in 1918, and served as the headquarters of Company F of the First Maryland Infantry, later the 115th Infantry Regiment, 29th Division. Since its deactivation in 1971, it has served as a restaurant and theater and currently as a church. It is a noticeable landmark on Hyattsville's principal commercial route.

23 NationsBank,
5214 Baltimore Avenue.

Built in 1926 with additions in 1948-1949, the older part is a single story Bedford Limestone over brick structure. It has a gray granite base, and includes a basement. The front on Baltimore Avenue is the main entrance featuring twin Ionic columns and recessed door and window openings. The entrance has other Greek revival motifs including the transom above the front door, which was created when the front door was remodeled and a smaller aluminum door replaced the large bronze one.

DO NOT TRESPASS

Please remember that most of these buildings are privately owned

For additional information contact:
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