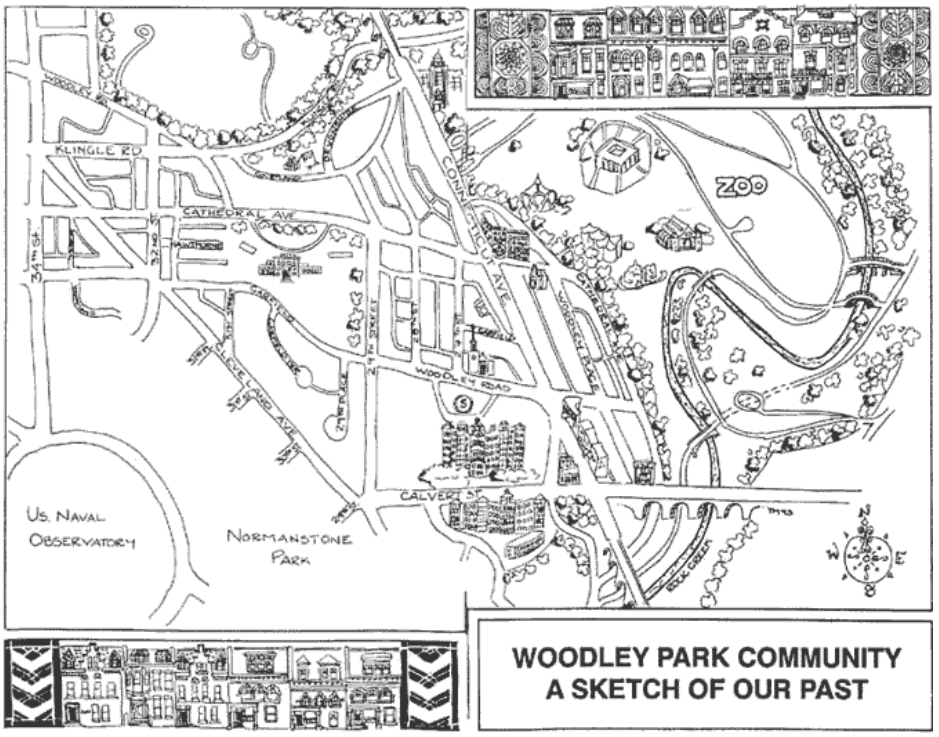
Woodley Park Community: A Sketch of Our Past



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Drawing by Timothy B. Gordon, Stanford '93

In 1890 the land we now call Woodley Park, located nearly a mile north of the boundary of the District of Columbia, present day Florida Avenue, was a pleasantly wooded area interspersed with a few large estates. By 1905, elegant townhouses had begun to line Connecticut Avenue, and by the 1920's an entire community had been created.

Woodley Park is situated between Rock Creek Parkway to the south and east, the Klingle Valley Bridge to the north and the National Cathedral close to the west. More than a dozen historic sites distinguish the community, and part of the area has been designated an historic district. Presidents Hoover, Johnson, and Eisenhower; Supreme Court Justices Warren, Black, Clark, Jackson and Vinson; congressmen, businessmen, military leaders, government workers and journalists have lived here. In the 1990's more than 6,000 inhabitants called Woodley Park their community.

In the four chapters of this booklet, we briefly present the history of Woodley Park from the 1890's to the 1990's. Chapter 1 traces the beginnings of residential development from 1890 to 1920. Chapter 2 describes the growth of commercial, business, and tourist institutions and the creation of an urban community from 1920 to 1950. Chapter 3 looks at the transformation to a diverse city neighborhood from 1950 to 1975. Chapter 4 focuses attention on Woodley Park as a visitor center from 1975 to the 1990's. Pieced together from historical documents, resident memories, census data, published articles, and student essays, "A Sketch of Our Past" records one hundred years of community history.

Madelyn Holmes is a writer and historian. Her most recent book, *American Women Conservationists*, was published by McFarland in 2004. She now lives in Burlington, Vermont. Dr. Cynthia R. Field, Architectural Historian Emeritus, Smithsonian Institution and Adjunct Professor, Corcoran College of Art, is a long-time resident of Woodley Park. Ms. Field wrote the first chapter, and Ms. Holmes the other three. Both authors shared editing and production.

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