

## Minutes of the October 25, 2015 Meeting of the Burleith History Group

The twelfth meeting of the Burleith History Group was held at 3600 T Street NW on November 25, 2015 from 4:00 - 5:45 p.m.

### **ATTENDEES:**

Dick Hall  
Dwane Starlin  
Linda Brooks  
Ross Schipper  
Carol Baume  
Ed Ohl

### **AGENDA:**

The main agenda item was the development of the pictorial history of Burleith as part of **Arcadia's *Images of America* series**. In addition, Dwane Starlin discussed the **Oral History project** and Ross Schipper discussed the proposal to rename the **Western High School Stadium** to its original name.

### **BURLEITH ARCADIA PROJECT:**

Ross Schipper described the over 200 images that have been collected so far. Each of these has been collected according to Arcadia's strict standards for digital images (TIFF format, 300 dpi, B/W, 8" wide). These images were organized into sub-categories based on topics as follows:

#### Burleith Maps

Scottish maps (1654-Barlyth, 1849-Barleith, 1950-Burleith)

Burleith maps (1887, 1940, 1954)

#### Pre-Shannon & Luchs Burleith

Richard Smith Cox (c. 1860), Pond (1907)

#### Early Burleith (1923, 1927, 1931)

#### Burleith Coat of Arms

#### Burleith Scenes

Street Scenes

Hanging Gardens of Burleith

Burleith Fires

#### Famous Burleith Residents

Robert Bruce Horsfall, Nancy Ordway, Herbert Holdridge

#### BCA

BCA Presidents (Mary Ann MacKenzie (#36), Neva Van Peski (#39))

Burleith Summer Picnics (1973, 1984-1987)

Burleith Art Show (1976)  
Burleith Garden Club (Burleith Tot Lot 1985)  
Education  
The Western High School (W.H.S.)  
Western High School Stadium  
W.H.S. Cadets (Charlie Volkman, Myles & Humphrey Johnson)  
W.H.S. Cadets training at Western Stadium  
W.H.S. Cadets competing at Griffith Stadium  
Gordon JHS  
House of the Good Shepherd  
Mount Tabor Church  
Miscellaneous  
Myles Johnson, Rag and Bone Wagon, Street Cars, Exorcist Steps

These topics might help inform the organization of the book itself.

#### **ACTIONS: related to the Arcadia Book Project**

**Action 1:** Ed Ohl will contact the Library of Congress to see if we can obtain permission to use five images in the Arcadia publication on Burleith, and what words we should use to credit Library of Congress as the source.

**Action 2:** Dick Hall will contact the Smithsonian Institution to see if we can obtain a digital copy of an image of Western High School and permission to use the image in the Arcadia publication on Burleith. If permission is granted, then we need the words we should use to credit the Smithsonian Institution as the source.

**Action 3:** Carol Baume agreed to investigate what images might be available in the Western High School Archives. Ross Schipper will interface with Charles Volkman and Myles Johnson to get the address of the archives and any points of contact who might be helpful in locating and getting permissions to use images.

**Action 4:** Ed Ohl will contact Eric Langenbacher to get the name of a Georgetown historian to see if that institution might have images that include Burleith.

**Action 5:** Dwane Starlin and Ross Schipper will make an appointment to visit the Historical Society of Washington, DC. That society has over 77 images of Burleith that include The Cedars (home of John Cox), Henry Threlkeld, John Threlkeld, House of the Good Shepherd, Western Pharmacy, Fillmore School, Gordon JHS, Western High School, and numerous Burleith street scenes.

**Action 6:** Ross Schipper - Dick Hall was interested in learning more about the restrictive covenants that were originally attached to the deeds of Burleith homes. Ross will look over the information he obtained from the Burleith archives in the Gelman Library.

## ORAL HISTORIES:

**Dwane Starlin** gave a brief presentation describing the status of taking oral histories of long time Burleith residents. He asked for help in trying to determine what type of equipment he should use to record and transcribe the oral histories. **Carol Baume** offered to do an Internet search of the latest technologies, including the types of recording devices available, whether the oral histories should be audio alone or video recordings, what types of voice recognition software is available to assist in the transcriptions of the oral histories. Some information can be found at <http://www.oralhistory.org/oral-history-in-the-digital-age/>  
**As soon as we have a proposed set of equipment and a cost estimate, we can request financial support from the BCA.**

## RENAMING WESTERN HIGH SCHOOL STADIUM:

**Ross Schipper** talked about an initiative that **Charles Volkman** is undertaking to get the name of Ellington Field officially renamed to "The Western High School Stadium," the name it bore from the late 1920s until 1974. The Western High School, whose landmark building now houses the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, was central to Washington west of Rock Creek Park and was a vibrant part of Georgetown, Palasades, Burleith and Glover Park. Pre-1974 it was the only non-residential entity in Burleith, with the exception of the House of the Good Shepherd (a Catholic institution for girls). In its time, the Western High School was arguably one of the five highest ranked public high schools in the United States (not just DC, but the entire US). To see what outstanding contributions its alumni have made, one has only to look at the list of graduates between 1897 and 1974 to witness the profound impact they have had at the local level as well as the national and international scenes, not to mention the service of its cadets in both world wars and other conflicts. Since 1974, the memory Western High School has progressively waned, and renaming its field back to its original name would be a small but fitting way to preserve its proud name and the part it played in the history of Burleith and surrounding neighborhoods. Charles Volkman has asked DC Ward 2 Councilman Jack Evans to introduce a bill to the Commissioners to officially designate and rename the field as "The Western High School Stadium." Jack's office wants to hear from the residents of Burleith. As a result, Charles Volkman will introduce this proposal at the BCA Annual Meeting on Thursday, November 12, 6:30 pm, at the Washington International School. Whether you would support Charles' proposal or not, it is an issue of deep historical significance, and the members of the History Group should be there to voice their opinion.