

The Buzz

North
Lincoln Park's
Neighborhood Newsletter

August 2000

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History of Lincoln Park

by Nick Barbash, 9th Grade,
School Without Walls
First in a series

Lincoln Park, known alternately as Lincoln Square, was on United States Reservation #14. The land was owned by George Walker, who lived in Georgetown and sold the land to the government in 1791 for the minuscule cost of \$466.62. The land lies exactly one mile east of the United States Capitol and its value is now in the millions.

From 1791 to 1860, the nameless area was neglected. An old newspaper article said that it was used as a "dumping ground." That all ended with the start of the Civil War, when the park was used as a field hospital for wounded Union soldiers.

In 1867, just two years after the death of President Abraham Lincoln, Congress authorized the park to be called Lincoln Square. Former slaves began a fundraising campaign to raise money for a memorial honoring the martyred president. Charlotte Scott, a slave from Virginia, was freed on January 1, 1863, when the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect. She donated the first \$5 she ever made as a free woman to the cause. In the end, the former slaves raised over \$18,000, an incredible amount for 1867. The money was used to purchase the "Emancipation Group" statute from Massachusetts architect Thomas Ball.

Ball was living in Florence, Italy when he heard about Lincoln's assassination; he was devastated. The day he heard the news, he went
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NLPNA is Going Online!

By August 1, we expect to have our new web site up and running on the Internet. The web site address is

www.nlpna.juniperdc.com

The web site offers pictures from the campout, important phone numbers for city services, bus route maps, and direct links to Sharon Ambrose's, Congresswoman Norton's, and many other civic and community related home pages.

If you don't have a computer with Internet access at home, don't forget that you can use a computer at the Northeast branch library, at 7th and Maryland Avenue NE.

Call Boxes Abound

If you think you're seeing call boxes every time you turn around now, it's not your imagination. The NLPNA Call Box Committee did a thorough survey, and found we have 16 call boxes within the NLPNA boundaries. We now have pictures of each call box (soon to be posted on the NLPNA web site!), and their condition has been documented. Special thanks to Mike Taister for leading this effort, and Susan Hormuth, Juliana Hilt, Nate Reilly and Jean Waskow for their help in surveying the neighborhood.

The next step is to begin brainstorming design ideas for the call boxes. If you've got an interest in history and/or art, and want to be a part of the design process, give Mike Taister a call at 546-2851.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- NLPNA meeting, August 1, 7:00 p.m., Lincoln Park (see article).
- Arts in the Park, Fridays in July and August.
- A *Buzz* distributor is needed for the 600 block of 14th Street, NE. Call Elizabeth at 543-3512 if you can help out.
- *The Buzz* needs contributions to pay for future issues. Please send your tax-deductible contribution to NLPNA Treasurer, 160 Tennessee Avenue, N.E.

Kingsman Update

The sale of Kingsman School looks bleaker now than it has in a long time. Recently, the decision was made to transfer the responsibility to sell Kingsman from the D.C. Public Schools to the D.C. Office of Property Management (OPM). It appears that Kingsman is once again falling through the cracks, and the records on Kingsman have not even been transferred between the two agencies. Andrew Reece, chief of staff at OPM, is now the contact for Kingsman. To report problems with maintenance or vandalism, call Mr. Reece at 724-4141 or send him an email at areece@opm.dcgov.org.

THE BUZZ EDITORIAL TEAM

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to work on a statue depicting Lincoln and a freed slave.

The model for the slave was a man named Archer Alexander. Alexander was born into slavery in 1810. He ran away as a boy but was the very last slave to be captured under the Fugitive Slave Act.

It took Ball many years to sculpt the statute, but he finally finished it, and Congress voted for the memorial to stand in Lincoln Square. It was unveiled and dedicated on April 14, 1876.

Some very important people were at the dedication, including President Ulysses S. Grant and the great orator Frederick Douglass. Grant spoke of his friendship with Lincoln and how Lincoln was a great American. Douglass said that Lincoln was his only white friend because he was the only white person he had met who did not treat him differently because of the color of his skin.

Several Massachusetts congressmen liked Thomas Ball's creation so much that they asked him to build a replica of it to stand in Park Square in Boston; he obliged.

The Emancipation Group stood alone in Lincoln Park for over 85 years. It faced the Capitol as a symbol of Congress and the President working together. However, many civil rights activists expressed interest in a statue of a strong African-American leader. *Next month: Mary McLeod Bethune's statue joins Lincoln.*

Looking for Old Timers

Do you have a story to share about the good ol' days in the neighborhood? We are looking for a few great folks that have lived here for over 30 years and have a story to tell us about living in our community. Do you remember the streetcars? The pie factory behind the N-a-Minit? The Safeway on D Street? When 14th Street was a two-way street? Please tell us about it. NLPNA is starting an oral history project, and we are looking for volunteers to let us tape record their stories. We are also looking for volunteers to do the interviews or transcribe them. We plan to publish excerpts from the stories in the *Buzz* and on the web site. If you are interested, please leave a message for Sharon Cochran at 399-0715.

August Meeting to Celebrate National Night Out

The August NLPNA meeting will be a potluck supper beginning at 7:00 in Lincoln Park (not 7:30, as was reported in the July *Buzz*). At the June NLPNA meeting the membership voted to start the potluck a half hour earlier than usual in the hope that more families with small children would attend. Grills and alcoholic beverages are not permitted in Lincoln Park.

WANTED! Halloween Festival Chairperson

So far, we don't have a volunteer to head up the planning committee for the annual Children's Halloween Festival. Elizabeth Nelson, who had that job that the last couple of years, won't be able to take on the responsibility this year but would be happy to help in a small way and will gladly share her notes and contacts. She can be reached at 543-3512. Let's not let this neighborhood tradition fade away!