

HIGHLANDTOWN SAID TO BE CITY IN ITSELF

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(Continued from Page 10)

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Section To The Eastward Has Had Long, Honorable History

(Continued from Page 36)

called it the "mud school" and the "cow stable."

At the beginning there were not more than twenty-five children in the school. They sat on long wooden benches, evidently picked up at some second-hand sale, eight children to a bench. Slanting boards, fixed on brackets to the reversible backs of the benches, served as desks for the children's slates. In the winter time the school was heated with an iron stove. The boys took turns playing janitor.

Organized Bus Service

Miss Mary's pupils came from scattered homes for miles around. Chris Hess, who had a roadhouse down on Eastern Avenue near Ponca Street, organized an early school-bus service. He used to pick up the children of the Bartholow, Beimiller and Copper families and drive them to school in his wagon. A few children in the village attended private school. George Schluderberg went to Knapp's Institute in the city, riding a Shetland pony.

From the front windows of their home the Pfroms could see the dome of the new Johns Hopkins Hospital. From the back they looked down across a valley to another hill where the new city almshouse, Bay View, stood. Part of the valley was meadow land where horses and cattle grazed. Part was a marsh where wild ducks fed.

But the village was growing rapidly. The butchers of Butchers' Hill were all moving to Highland Town. Half a dozen new breweries started up in the village. Mike Adams opened a new park on Ponca Street. Wiessner's Park, called Fort Marshall, added bowling alleys, a dancing pavilion, flying horses.

At one time, Highland Town supported seventeen little breweries. Each had its own beer garden with shady groves and grape arbors. All brewing was by hand and most of it was done during the winter, the kegs being packed away in ice, cut from neighborhood ponds, to await the coming of warmer weather. They were small kegs - quarters, eights, sixteenths. People couldn't handle larger barrels.

The beer gardens became favorite ports of call for the sporting gentry, bound for the driving parks on the other side of Highland Town. And for (unreadable). It is that part of the city bounded roughly by East and Foster Avenues, Monument and Ponca Streets. It does not properly include Canton, which lies on the lower ground around the elbow of the northwest branch of the Patapsco.

Many of the German butchers who settled on Fort Marshall hill became members of the United Evangelical Church, East Avenue and Dillon Street, in Canton. Locally the church was better known as "Batz's Church" after its pastor, the Rev. William Batz. The Pfoms attended Batz's Church. Mr. Baier was confirmed there in 1892, the year after his father, who was in the teaming business, had helped grade the Point Breeze railway line.

Highland Town's first church was Sacred

Heart Catholic Church, now one of the largest in Baltimore. It was built in 1873, largely through the efforts of the Rev. Joseph Mueller, a Redemptorist Father and assistant pastor at St. Michael's, Lombard and Wolfe Streets, whose congregation was largely German.

The lower floor of the first church served as rectory and school. A convent for the Sisters of Notre Dame, who took over the school, was built three years later. The present big granite Roman Church was erected in 1908. The present school replaced the old church. It is the largest parochial school in the city, with an enrollment of some 1,000 children. Church, school, rectory and convent together now cover an entire block.

Highland Town's first Protestant Sunday school was organized in the hall of the Rescue Volunteer Fire Company, on Conkling Street between Eastern Avenue and Bank Street. The firemen kept their hook and ladder truck on the first floor and held dances twice a week upstairs. The hall is still there, now a saloon.

Held Services In School

In April 1880, the Rev. J. Wynn Jones, pastor of a little Welsh Presbyterian church on Toone Street, in Canton, began to preach and hold Sabbath school services in the public school on Bank Street. Two years later a large, red brick Presbyterian chapel was erected at the northeast corner of Bank St. and Highland Avenue, beside the McGuinness home.

Horace Abbott, a wealthy Canton iron manufacturer, gave \$23,000 toward the building of this chapel, which later adopted the name of the Abbott Memorial Presbyterian Church,

with the Rev. Mr. Jones as its pastor. The chapel seated 700 persons, a tribute to its founders' faith in the future of Highland Town, inasmuch as the village then had a total population of but 500.

Had "Jones's Church"

Twenty-six members of the Toone Street Church, who preferred services in the English language to Welsh, constituted the chapel's first congregation. But the Rev. Mr. Jones was a forceful preacher, and the size of his flock increased greatly. Highland Town soon (unreadable) made way for row houses. By 1908 Highland Town was the second largest city in Maryland with a population of 30,000. Its businessmen revived agitation for consolidation with Canton to form "East Baltimore City."

Division Had Disappeared

Long before then any semblance of a physical division between Baltimore and Highland Town had disappeared. Harris Creek had been straightened, covered, converted into a sewer. Streets and houses ran right across the city-county line. Finally the 1918 annexation act brought Highlandtown (for "Highland Town" had become one word) into Baltimore.

Highlandtown still has its butchers and brewers. The brewers work in bigger breweries. Many butchers are employed in one of the largest meat packing plants in the country. But other and newer industries bulk large in community prosperity: the Weiskittle foundry and the Crown Cork and Seal Company within Highlandtown; copper works, oil re-

fineries, steel plants, an airplane factory, an automobile assembly plant beyond its boundaries.

Are Taverns Aplenty

Prohibition cleared Eastern Avenue of most of its old saloons. Rising real estate values pushed out the old beer gardens. But today there are taverns aplenty. One at Foster and Highland Avenues upholds an old tradition by offering what it claims to be the biggest beer in town--an eighty-ounce glass that sells for a quarter.

German restaurants and rathskellers flourish. On Fagley Street near Fleet the old Eichenkratz Singing Society operates its own rathskeller. Its choruses meet here on Tuesday and Friday nights to sing and there is German music for dancing several times a week. Highlandtown has its Italian restaurants, too. For a sizeable Italian colony has grown up on the north side around a new Catholic church, Our Lady of Pompeii.

Streets Have New Names

The old numbered streets, running north and south beyond Highland Avenue, have all received new names of alphabetical significance--Baylis, Conkling, Dean, Eaton, Fagley, Grundy, Haven, Iris, Janney, Kresson, Lehigh, Macon, Newkirk, Oldham, Ponca and so on.

Old homes are disappearing. The Wiessner home, in later years the Wiessner Orphanage, has just been torn down. Of the frame houses which once lined Eastern Avenue, farther on, only that of Herman F. Ramsel, at 3725, remains intact with its front yard, once tended

by Ramsel's father, Leopold, whose name is on the gate.

Old Names Disappearing

Old names are disappearing, particularly in the business blocks of Eastern avenue, the heart of old Highland Town, where a new generation of shop keepers are crowding in. Henry Sehrt's grocery and hardware store is still there, however. And Mrs. Anna Herpich still runs the dry goods (unreadable) pretty family china on the dresser shelves, homely old prints on the walls, conch shells lining the grassplot in the front yard.

An iron fence that once surrounded Grandfather Pfrom's burial lot in Baltimore Cemetery, shuts the yard in from the street. Grandfather's name, J. M. Pfrom, is on the iron gate in cast-iron letters. Brick walks lead back from the gate, beneath the side gallery of the house to a flower garden, and beyond to a little chicken yard by the old slaughter house.

Keeps House Well

Miss Lily keeps house single-handed, and keeps it mighty well, for both her brother and a brother-in-law, J. Frank Harrison, who lives two doors away. She likes to go out, to bowl, or to see a movie, or watch a baseball game in Patterson Park, or take an occasional little excursion out of town. But her brother sticks close to home. The Pfromes are a temperance family; and he has no outside distractions.

"Give him a paint brush and a bucket of paint and he's happy," Miss Lily laughs.

Keeps Painting

He keeps the outside of the old home in a polished, perfect state of high repair that rivals Miss Lily's excellent housekeeping indoors. That was the way his father did it and the way he likes to keep it.

"Everything has changed so much," he says. "Father wouldn't know where this was if he came back."

Keeps House Well

Miss Lily keeps house single-handed, and keeps it tight well, for both her brother and a brother-in-law, J. Frank Harrison, who lives two doors away. She likes to go out, to bowl, or to see a movie, or watch a baseball game in Peterson Park, or take an occasional little excursion out of town. But her brother sticks close to home. The Promises are a two-parance family; and he has no outside dis-

"Give him a little brush and a bucket of paint and he's happy," Miss Lily laughs.