

HISTORY OF BEACHMONT FARM

Originally part of the Susquehannock Indian hunting grounds, Beachmont land was not under colonial ownership until 1684. Captain Richard Hill of Anne Arundel County joined other sea captains and gentlemen seeking to invest in undeveloped land. Even though Capt. Hill patented 1,000 acres known as Hill's Forest, there was virtually no access to it. Settlement did not come to this area for another thirty years.

Part of "Hill's Forest" eventually became the family farm of James Gittings in the late 1700's. In 1791, records show that James Gittings was one of three men appointed by the legislature to lay of the present Harford Road.

In 1838, Jesse Garrett, a 42 year old Quaker farmer, purchased the farm from the Gittings heirs. He, his wife and daughter, spend the rest of their lives at this farm, then known as "Chestnut Grove". When Mr. Garrett died in 1878, his estate inventory shows simple but comfortable furnishings, and a plain operation for the farm. He was also a man of respect and means, because he had financially helped and acted as surety for neighbors in times of need.

When son in law Thomas Armstrong purchased the farm from the Garrett heirs in 1885, things began to change. A French Victorian architectural style took his eye and the place was transformed into its present appearance. All these improvements were too much for his pocketbook. Even though he was a Treasurer of the Md. and Pa. Railroad, and owned a soap and candle manufacturing company, his debts were too great. The farm was sold for \$14,000, and the Armstrongs built a smaller, but comfortable house near the Glen Arm train station.

A series of Baltimore families owned Beachmont for the next thirty years, some using it as a summer home to escape the city heat.

In 1926 George White purchased the farm for a

large scale dairy operation. He added to the already monstrous barn, and built more farm buildings. His silos were the largest on the east coast at the time of construction. When the Great Depression struck, Mr. White was forced to sell Beachmont. Beachmont was once again sold to pay off debts.

New life came to Beachmont when purchased by the W. P. Cole family. Mr. Cole was a well loved congressman who did a lot for the neighborhood and state. University of Maryland named Cole Field House in his honor for all he had done for the school. Being a good democrat, President Roosevelt appointed him to a federal judgeship. So the Coles left Beachmont for New York.

When purchased in 1938 by the Foreman brothers, the farm became the home of the overseer, Mr. Crewe. German prisoners of WWII were brought from the Pikesville Armory to work in Beachmont's fields watched by shot gun bearing guards.

Beachmont underwent another renovation when W. H. and Aimee Burton Foard made their 1950 purchase. They spent one year making exterior improvements and repairs to the house, gardens and farm buildings. In 1951, they brought their pure bred Gurnsey business to Beachmont. Foard cows were record producers in the state, and the milk supplied the patients at City Hospital.

When the Foards retired from farming in 1966, they sought to use the farm for the good of the neighborhood. After Mr. Foard's death in 1967, his wife searched for a ministry, and donated ground for Beachmont Christian Camp in 1973. In 1984, she was killed in an automobile accident when hit by a drunk driver. Her will directed that Beachmont Farm be used for a Christian purpose, which is presently under study. In the meantime, Beachmont continues as a family residence and center of much activity.

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