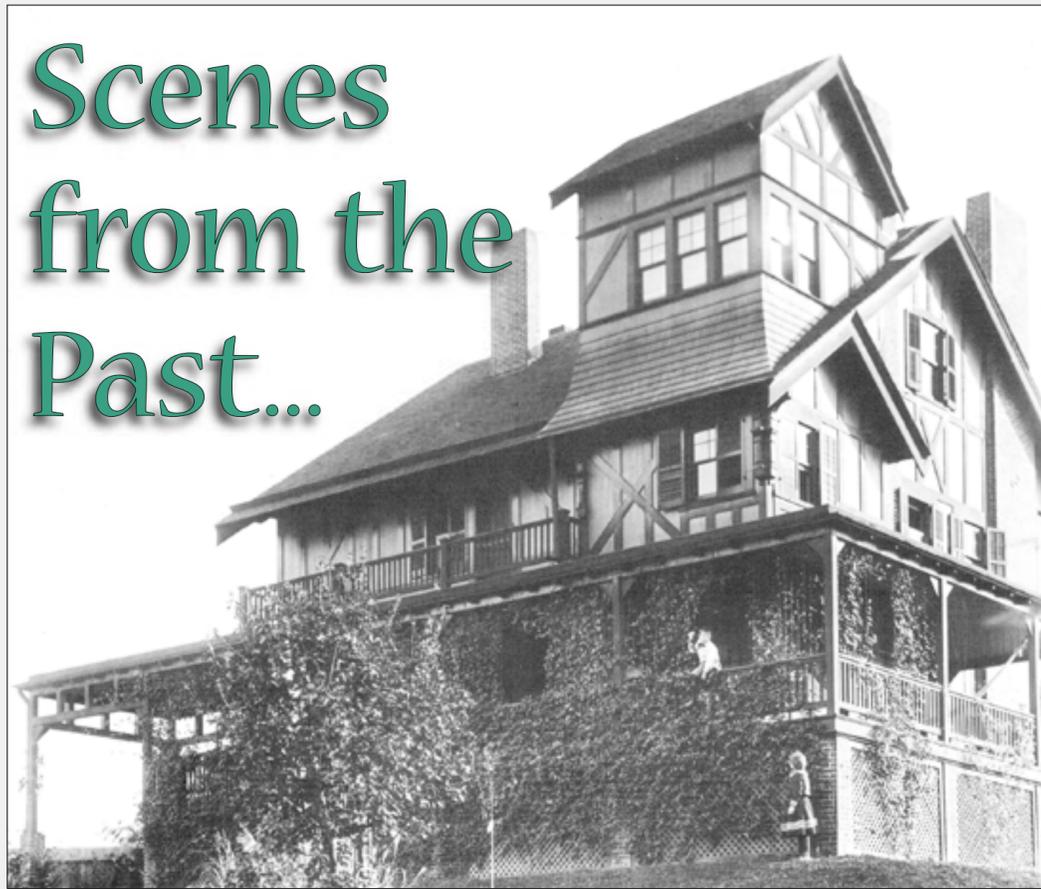


# Scenes from the Past...



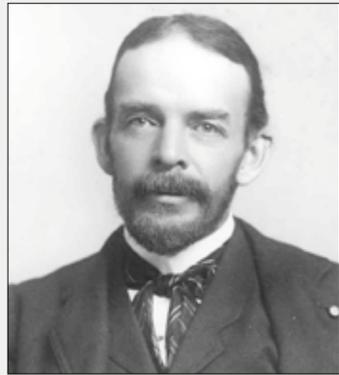
photo—Smithsonian Institution.

Shown in this early photograph soon after it was built in 1880 is Professor George Brown Goode's eclectic house in the then newly established suburb of Lanier Heights.

The Lanier Heights neighborhood of Washington, nestled between today's Adams Morgan and Mount Pleasant, is one that has not been well-researched or documented in the past, but will soon be the subject of an intensive architectural survey in the near future. It began as one of Washington's first planned suburban communities in 1880, far from the edge of what was then the city boundary at today's Florida Avenue.

Lanier Heights development began with the partnering of two individuals, George Brown Goode and Archibald Malcom McLachlen, both of whom counted themselves as founding residents of the area. The subdivision was originally bounded by today's Calvert Street, Columbia Road, 16th Street, Harvard Street, and Rock Creek. Many consider it part of the greater Adam's Morgan neighborhood.

The origin of the name Lanier Heights remains unknown, but several theories can be drawn from investigating the founders

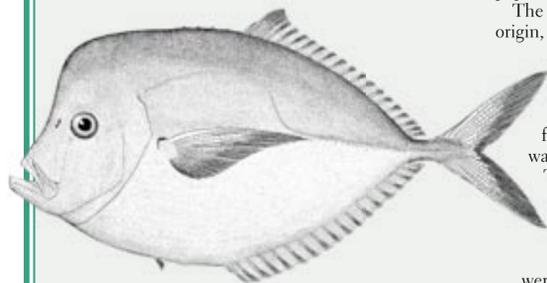


photo—www.Wikipedia.org.

George Brown Goode (1851-1896), well-known scholar and ichthyologist, served as a department head at the Smithsonian Institution.

of the community, their ancestry, and even popular figures of the era.

The word "lanier" is of French origin, with a literal translation being "woolworker," while the surname Lanier appears frequently in Scottish ancestry, from which McLachlen was a direct descendant. The community certainly could have been named after poet Sidney Lanier, who died in 1881, just about the time the streets were being laid out. And, just two years after Lanier Heights appeared on the 1887 Hopkins



illustrations—H.L. Todd, courtesy U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; originally published in George Brown Goode's *The Fisheries and Fisheries Industries of the United States*.

Map, McLachlen named his son Lanier, who was born in 1889.

One of the first houses to be built in Lanier Heights was that of George B. Goode in the early 1880s on what today is the southeast corner of Summit Place and Clydesdale Place. He purchased a large lot that extended from Summit Place to Ontario Road from his neighbor, Archibald McLachlen, who had come to Washington in 1881 and built his house on the site of the today's Ontario apartment building.

At the time, Quarry Road, which was opened in 1872, led to Rock Creek where the blue stone used in the construction of municipal and commercial buildings was quarried. Portions of what was then Quarry Road are now known as Harvard Street.

G.B. Goode is perhaps best-known as an early Smithsonian Institution department head, historian of science, and ichthyologist, the branch of zoology dedicated to the study of fish. Goode was also an ancestor of local historian and author James M. Goode, known for his books *Best Addresses* and *Capitol Losses*. G.B. Goode was born in New Albany,



photo—Kelsey & Associates private collection.

This 1887 G.M. Hopkins map shows the site of Goode's wood-frame house located between what was then known as Summit and Ontario Avenues, just above the letters 'N' and 'T' in the word Lanier. It was only one of seven houses that had been built by that date in the Lanier Heights subdivision.

Indiana, on February 13, 1851. After his mother died only a year-and-a-half later, his father remarried and in 1857 moved his family to Amenia, New York. Goode graduated from Wesleyan University in 1870 and briefly attended Harvard University, where he studied under Louis Agassiz, the famed naturalist noted for his study of fossil fish. The following year, he left Harvard to return to Wesleyan to take charge of its new natural history museum.

After meeting Spencer Baird in 1872, he quickly became his trusted

assistant and colleague. In that capacity, Goode directed the Smithsonian displays at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition (1876), and the Fisheries Exhibitions in Berlin (1880) and London (1883); he had also served as the Curator of the U.S. National Museum, beginning in 1879.

In 1887 he was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian, and assumed full responsibility for the National Museum following Baird's death that year. Goode's extensive work, travel, and authorship of over 2,000 articles, books, and scholarly works seem to have attributed to his untimely death at his house in 1896 at the age of 45.

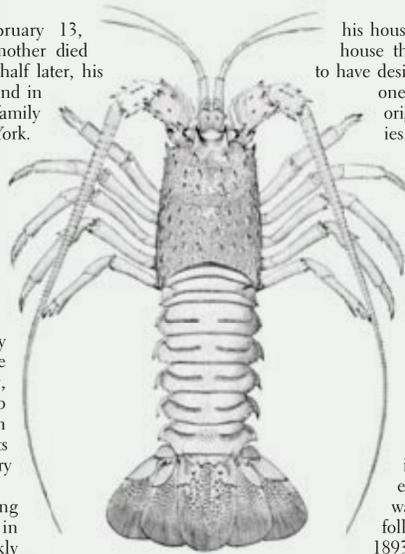
The Lanier Heights subdivision had grown slowly. In 1883, there were only five houses, and all of the owners except McLachlen worked at the Smithsonian. By 1893, there were a mere ten 10 houses before an onslaught of townhouse development began to replace each of the early constructed wood homes found on large lots.

In 1886, German born architect Adolf Cluss designed a house for John Smith, seen on the Hopkins Map at 1721 Lanier Place. Smith was an assistant curator at the Smithsonian, and

his house is the only frame house that Cluss is known to have designed, and the only one located outside the original city boundaries. In 1908, the city built the Mission style firehouse at 1763 Lanier Place.

The man that partnered with Goode in laying out streets and making Lanier Heights his home in the early 1880s was Archibald M. McLachlen, turning his initial investment into an incorporated real estate business that was founded in 1887, followed by a bank in 1893.

McLachlen had been born in Geneseo, New York on September 2, 1857 into a long lineage of Scotsmen



that began with his great grandfather with the same namesake who had immigrated in 1804, only to be murdered in Caladonia, New York in 1807.

Following an education at the State Normal School in Ypsilanti, Michigan and the University of Kansas, the young Archibald opened a drugstore in Altoona, Kansas, but came to Washington, DC in 1881 with an interest in real estate speculation. His first wife, the former Mattie Hall, whom he married in 1877, died in 1884, and two years later, McLachlen married Ohio native Kittie Van Horn.

McLachlen had incorporated the privately held McLachlen Banking Corporation in 1891 with offices at 10th and C Streets, NW where they remained in a building the company later built in 1913. Other family owned businesses included the Washington Investment Company, Federal City Construction Company, and the Brookland Building Company.

Lanier was apparently a favorite word of the McLachlens, as it also served as the first name of his son, Lanier Park McLachlen, who had been born on December 5, 1889. He would follow in his father's footsteps as director of the family banking concern, and also name his own son Lanier.

McLachlen razed his own impressive house at 18th Street and Summit Place in 1903, to make way for his newest real estate venture, construction of the impressive Ontario apartment building on three acres that comprised his property and the two large lots to the west, bordered by Ontario Road, Poplar Street, Summit Place, and Goode's property, which then ran along Clydesdale Place; his house was torn down in the early 1920s.

The 120-unit Ontario was designed by James G. Hill and built in two phases between 1903 and 1905. It would remain in the McLachlen family until 1953, when it was sold and converted into a cooperative.

—Paul Kelsey Williams  
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photo—Kelsey & Associates private collection.

Lanier Heights evolved rapidly from a rural suburban setting in the 1890s into a neighborhood dominated by the massive Ontario Apartment building, which was built between 1903 and 1905. It was built on the home site of one of Lanier Heights founders, Archibald M. McLachlen. Goode's house was adjacent to the Ontario for awhile, located on the lot immediately to the northwest, at the corner of Summit Place and the newly cut through Clydesdale Place, as seen in this 1954 Baist Atlas entry.