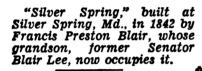
Silver Spring, Founded by Francis Blair a Century Ago, Has Grown Rapidly







Ante-Bellum Setting Was Impressive **Old Blair Mansion**

Occupied Place In History

By John Clagett Proctor. As the writer has probably said before, there are few places in or around Washington that will not, upon investigation, disclose some worth-while historic information. And so we find such familiar places as Rockville, Tenleytown, Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Alexandria, Hyattsville, Bladensburg, Silver Spring and a number of other well-known nearby localities just teeming with items of unusual interest.

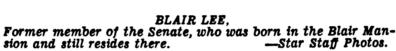
Silver Spring, the last-mentioned town, located right at our District-Maryland line and extending along both sides of Georgia avenue 11 Montgomery County, is, by name at least, about 100 years old, since it was in 1842 that Francis Preston Blair built his home in this neighborhood, and gave it this name, having previously bought a large area of ground in this vicinity, which he added to from time to time, until it reached about 1,000 acres.

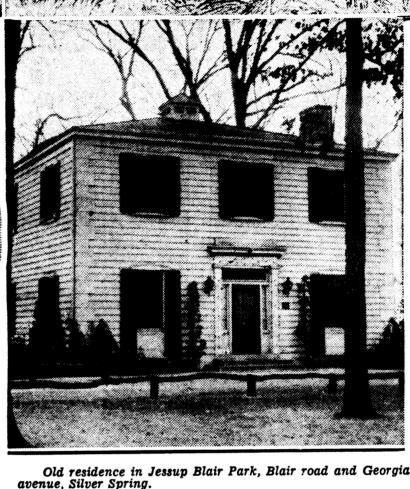


The Fenwick-Lambert home, 7713 Thirteenth street N.W

an enemy.

Raid on Washington.





Old drawing of Confederate officers indulging in revelry on the Blair estate, thus de-laying their attack on Fort Stevens.

Center, above: Famous spring house on the Blair property, which suggested the name, "Silver Spring."

Pioneer Blair Brought Here By Jackson

Discovery of Fine Spring Gave Rise To Community

Mr. and Mrs. Smith Thompson were members of the church, as were Mrs. William Thompson, the Clagett family, early landowners of this vicinity; Greenbury Walking, who owned a large section of land now a part of Chevy Chase; Richard and Alfred Ray, Maj. Lawrence and several members of the Jones family.

Changes in Estate. The Blair estate in recent years seems to have been greatly reduced,

the District of Columbia, and when

Rock Creek Park was laid out, in

1891, among the parcels of land

acquired by the Government for the

northern part of the park was one

section bought of Montgomery Blair

containing about 18 acres; another,

obtained from S. P. Lee, contained

about 18 acres. Alexander R. Shep-

In this transaction the names of

some other early landowners of this

section of the District appear, name-

ly, the Van Riswick family, the

Clagetts, the Fenwicks and others.

The last-named family was one of

the earliest owners of property in

There was a relationship between

the northern part of the District.

herd parted with about 86 acres.



The pioneer Mr. Blair came to Washington in 1830 at the invitation of President Jackson, who was strongly opposed to disunion. The President wanted Mr. Blair to come here and help him establish a newspaper to defend and explain the policies of his administration. The result was the starting of the Globe, which became a power in politics and made a fortune for its early owners and editors. At first (1830-1834), it was published by F. P. Blair; later (1834-1849), it was published by Blair and John C. Rives. The latter purchased the former's interest in 1849, and with the assistance of his sons, continued to publish and edit it until 1873. In connection with this paper, there was also published the Congressional Globe, begun during the 1833-34 session of Congress and superseded by the Congressional Record in 1873.

Story of Silver Spring.

The founding of Silver Spring by the senior Blair is interestingly told the Columbia Historical Society, where he says:

"My grandfather, who had been brought from Kentucky by Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, soon after his election, rode into its delightful wilds on his horse Selim and discovered the beautiful, sparkling spring from which its name is derived. • • • He had pur-for a park, as a memorial to her chased this saddle horse from Gen. William Lingan Gaither, from whose family the prosperous town of Gaithersburg, in Montgomery County, takes its name, then a representative man, and while he was riding Selim one day outside the boundary of the District of Columbia his horse became frightened and threw his rider and ran away among the thick growth of pines in the valley to the west of the road which is now known as Georgia avenue, in the District of Columbia, formerly Seventh street road, in the county.

"He followed his horse into the woods and found him snared by the reins to a bush which had caught place was a beautiful spring full of mer Senator Blair Lee and his dewhite sand and mica, which the gush of the water from the earth forced into a small column snarbling as it rose and fell like silver. He home: The age of the Senator is forced into a small column, sparkling was charmed with the spot and public property, for the Congrespurchased the property. It was not dear, and I have a parchment cer-tificate showing that comment certificate showing that some of the Lincate showing that some of the age. But he certainly does not look age. But he certainly does not look it, nor act it. He is a gentleman of State.'

who was Violet Gist, was as fond of courteous, and with a Southern polish The wife of the pioneer Mr. Blair, horseback riding as was her husroads around Silver Spring when His biography says he graduated in they moved there, and so, in order 1880 from Princeton University and to provide a good bridle path for in 1882 from the law department of his wife. Editor Blair had laid out "that winding roadway which follows Sligo branch, now where the Seventh Day Adventists have a great ir.; Oscar Nauck, Theodore W. Noyes sanitarium." The bridal path extended about seven miles, almost entirely on the Silver Spring property.

historic importance.

Senator Blair Lee

Maryland is the owner of this beau- as such served tiful old home, having inherited it January, 1914, to March, 1917. from his mother, Eliabeth (Blair) Lee, wife of Admiral S. P. Lee, and third child of F. P. Blair, the other home prior to the Civil War, inchildren being: Montgomery Blair. Juliet, James and Francis Preston Blair.

In Famous Cases. Juliet, the second child of F. P.

Blair, died when quite young. Monta particularly prominent setting. gomery, the older of the sons, became an able lawyer and is known Naturally, the raid on Washington to have secured a defense for John by Gen. Early, in July, 1864, was an Brown of Harpers Ferry notoriety, and to have defended Dred Scott beimportant part of Senator Lee's talk. fore the Supreme Court of the Gen. John C. Breckenridge, who was United States. He was named Montsecond in command of the Confedgomery after Gen. Richard Monterate forces at that time, was a gomery of Revolutionary fame, for cousin to the elder Francis P. Blair. whom Montgomery County also was Like him, he was a Kentuckian, and named. As a politician, he stood before the war he had visited Silver foremost with his father and a few Spring upon many occasions, when it others in forming the Republican was the country home of the dis-

party, and was President Lincoln's tinguished editor of the Globe. first Postmaster General. Prior to the Civil War, he erected country home at Silver Spring, close to his father's residence, which he called Falkland. This dwelling, at the time of the Confederate raft on Washington in 1864, became the headquarters of Gen. Jubal A. Early. and was burned when being vacated by the latter's soldiers. It was later

rebuilt and is now standing. James Blair, second son of Francis P. Blair, had a colorful life, especialby Maj. Gist Blair in the Records of ly during the gold-rush period of California. He married Mary Serena Eliza Jessup, daughter of Sydney Jessup. He died in 1852 and was buried at Silver Spring, where he also owned property at the District line on the east side of Georgia avenue. In recent years his daughter, Mrs. Violet Blair Janin, gave

> for a park, as a memorial to her brother, Jessup Blair.

Entered Politics. Francis Preston Blair, jr., like his

Lee was cautious and not so optibrother, Montgomery, was a West Pointer. But the irresistible lure mistic and only consented to permit the attempt to be made should of politics seems to have run in his blood, and after having his share of | it be found perfectly feasible, which military service, particularly in the did not prove to be the case when Civil War, in which he was finally commissioned a major general, he still many people living who recall returned to his first love and to Con-Washington was at the time and gress as a Senator from Missouri, having upon several occasions previously served in the House of Repre-

sentatives from his native State. But to return to the old home of Francis Preston Blair, sr., and to Silver Spring, and, of course, to forthe old school-dignifield, polite, that even time has failed to rub off, but if anything, made even brighter. George Washington University, where his classmates were Gist Blair, Henry Calver, Matthew G. Emery, Henry K. Willard and a number of others. He was born in politics in the house in which he still lives, and knows all its good points and its bad Though the old home of Francis points, its glories and its heartaches. Preston Blair was built nearly a In the very room in which we sat

century ago, care and attention give the other day, talking over old times, it the appearance of a more recently the idea of forming the Republican constructed building, and, certainly, party was crystallized by his grandfew would ever imagine its great father and his uncle, Montgomery Blair, when he was but 3 or 4 years of of age. But he is a Democrat, and

The Senator said that many promproaching army was read the mininent persons visited this historic ute it came off the press.

Early undoubtedly had Washingcluding Jefferson Davis and his ton as his objective from the start wife, and during the war the Great of his campaign in the Valley, and Railroad, charging tolls to those noted men of the past hang on the officials at the Capital were, no their mail. Rural free delivery did

the attempt be made? Early's legions were naturally intoxicated with the results already achieved, and they did not hesitate it interfered seriously with Sligo, a to push on toward Washington.

But this was not the only thing, we are told, that intoxicated Early's soldiers, for upon their arrival at the the number of letters mailed and north was the residence of Benja-Blair home they found in the cellar

Indeed, it was in the library room of this pictures que mansion that his all hands proceeded to partake of the Silver Spring office discon- Hy Norton, Charles Stewart, Wilwith Gen. Breckenridge, then serving found in the house they dressed up in Congress, not to vote for the re- in and amused themselves dancing tinuing it 'rescinded.' I remained which, in his estimation, if accom- tacking Fort Stevens that aft- and established the money order plished would mean a declaration of ernoon, when few if any soldiers system and the rural free delivery war against the Union by the South- were on guard, they remained at there with three carriers. The office ern leaders. But Breckenridge did Silver Spring until morning. The requiring more time than I could not heed the advice, and upon the 6th Massachusetts Regiment ar- give it, I resigned, and Frank L. breaking out of hostilities joined the rived the following day, and Wash- Hewitt, my assistant, succeeded me Confederacy, and before the war was ington was saved. over he was again a visitor to Sil-

ver Spring-not as a friend, but as Frank Blair, was glad when his tration." Confederate cousin, John Breckenridge, left the premises, he and his shows the station of the Metropol-As the war situation was still a critical one, Gen. Early knew what cohorts having found by this itan Branch of the Baltimore & the capture and burning of Wash- time what they were up against, Ohio Railroad, and south of this, ington would mean toward help- and concluded to follow the old on the east side of Georgia avenue, ing the Southern cause-more finan- adage: "He who fights and runs early known as the Brookville pike, away may live to fight another cial assistance and more men flockday." The Confederates were soon ing to the support of the Stars and crossing the Potomac into Virginia, the District line on the same side Bars and more discouragement to much to the relief of the people of of the road was Mrs. Mary Blair's the North, then almost at the Washington. breaking point. Early was eager;

Great Development.

To many the development of Silver Spring seems almost marvelous. A few years ago there was practically nothing hereabout; today it | cated on the west side of Georgia the final test came. But there are is a good-sized town. Here is what avenue in what is now the business Maj. Gist Blair says it was 43 years section of the town. It combined just how frightened everybody in ago

ver Spring was a cross-roads withed, subsequent to 1897, a frame out inhabitants. A tollgate existed building of Colonial architecture, about half a mile north of the staoccupied at one time by the Hewitt tion on the Baltimore & Ohio family. It was removed about 1932. Above this and a little south of the Emancipator, Lincoln. Pictures of the military authorities and high who lived south of it for obtaining Colesville pike was the tollgate. Going north, lived S. G. Cissell, N. H. walls of this old residence, and a doubt, aware of his intentions. not then exist, so I calculated a Holcomb and then came a store and large engraving of Gen. Jackson has Especially was this true after his petition for a post office for the shoeshop. Farther north was Mrs. successes in Western Maryland, district south of the tollgate, and M. Fidler's place, the home of Joswhere he exacted a tribute of \$20,000 the office of Silver Spring was eph S. Childs and the parsonage of from Hagerstown and 10 times as named and established near the sta- the Episcopal clergyman, the Rev. much from Frederick, and, all tion on the Baltimore & Ohio Rail- J. P. Averill. Back farther from the things considered, why should not road. I was made postmaster May road lived Thomas B. Cissell, S. Lytton and a family named Wyn-5, 1899. "The office was kept in existence gate.

only by constant fighting, because

quarter of a mile away and just the right, lived William Talbott, north of the tollgate, the receipts and a little house nearby was owned for that office then depending on by Montgomery Blair. Farther conceled there. In 1900 the posta barrel of bourbon whisky, which master at Sligo succeeded in having E. P. Blair, residences of N. Tyler, hearing and had the order disconand remained postmaster until re-Naturally, the Union cousin, moved by a Democratic adminis-

A plat of Silver Spring of 1878 was the home of Perry Collins and Washington Bonifant, and nearer place and residences of Thomas Jones and Samuel Jones. To the west of the avenue was the larger part of the Blair estate.

The post office was centrally lowith it a store, and nearby was the gomery County, Md., February 14, "When I returned from St. Louis | Eagle Inn, probably conducted by 1871; Adolph Martik Wilhelm Birghow every bit of news of the ap- to settle in Maryland in 1897 Sil- J. L. Dorsey. It was in this vicin- field, born July 10, 1848, died Jan-

ity also that Maj. Gist Blair erect- | uary 30, 1871, at Independence. Montgomery County; John Gott Fidler, born in Slessing, Prussia, April 23, 1823, "fell asleep" March 1, 1874.

Mr. Fidler was the village blacksmith and a reliable, quiet man. However, he had the reputation of settling all the contentions in and about his neighborhood in a decisive and stern way; in other words, he was the judge and jury to all the people thereabout, and all accepted his decisions.

Edward Pilling, who is interred nearby, died May 20, 1883; his record states that he was born at Huddlesfield, England, A very old stone just says "Ida Plater" and North of the B. & O. station, to another, "Nancy Jones, died 1873."

Church Members.

Senator Blair, in speaking remin Schneider, a house owned by grandfather had argued and pleaded freely. The women's dresses they tinued, but I secured a further liam Thompson and not far from ents, Francis P. Blair, sr., and Mrs. bordering Rock Creek on the west, Georgia avenue on the Colesville Blair; Montgomery Blair, his uncle, pike was the schoolhouse, and a who was a lay reader in the church, heirs, and the property to the north peal of the Missouri Compromise, and drinking, and instead of at- postmaster until February 21, 1906, little farther north, on the Balti- and, as many will recall, was Postmore pike, was the Sligo Methodist | master General in President Lin-Episcopal Church, and north of coln's cabinet; Rear Admiral and this was Grace Episcopal Church, Mrs. S. P. Lee, parents of Senator teenth street N.W. was once the on the site of which there has been | Blair Lee; Dr. and Mrs. Josiah Har- home of the Fenwick family and a church since 1858. It is at Wood- ding, members of the family of that Kalmia road was probably side, about one mile beyond the Crosby S. Noyes, when the family called Fenwicks lane in the early District line. This area was prob- was living at Alton Farm; the fam- days. (There are still on that street,

> of Silver Spring, from which the living at Sligo; Mr. and Mrs. old cedar trees that suggests the church got the larger part of its Charles Bachelor and Gen. and Mrs. Getty. It was Gen. Getty who led the troops that drove Early Surrounding this early church is a graveyard in which are interred

some of the Confederate soldiers well that he returned after the war killed in the Battle of Fort Stevens. Others buried here included Eleanor Windham, who died at the age of 56, and Elizabeth Windham, aged home.

37. The earliest burial, as taken from the gravestones, is that of Sarah B. Wilson, whose death occurred December 3, 1861, when she was 65. Her husband, Thomas N. Wilson, died September 18, 1862.

Old Residences.

Other early burials here were those of Charlotte Grace Cousins, who was born in London, England, April 11, 1797, and died in Mont-

the Carrolls and the Fenwicks, Capt. Ignatius Fenwick having married the widow of Charles Carroll of Cargarding this Episcopal Church, of rollsburg. Boschke's map of the which he has been a vestryman for District of Columbia, completed in 58 years, recalled as early members 1859, shows a large area of land in of the congregation his grandpar- the northern part of the District, as listed in the name of the Carroll is in the name of P. Fenwick.

Senator Blair Lee tells the writer that the old residence at 7713 Thirably once looked upon as a part ily of Col. Charles Newbold, when east of Sixteenth street, a line of

thoroughfare to be an old one.) Talmadge A. Lambert moved to this residence about 1883. In 1870 north on the Seventh street pike, he married Averilla van Riswick, and he liked the neighborhood so second daughter of John and Mary (Fenwick) van Riswick, which shows and bought a farm two miles north the connection between these three of the church, where he made his families-Lambert, Fenwick and Van Riswick.

congregation.

