

Chestnut Lodge Commemorative Ornament

The sesquicentennial of the City of Rockville launches the first Peerless Places Commemorative Ornament highlighting local historic landmarks. The beautifully crafted ornament features the internationally famous Chestnut Lodge in Rockville's historic West End neighborhood.

Frieda's Cottage, the Main Building, and Little Lodge have been exquisitely recreated in miniature, capturing all details, including windows, shutters, and brickwork. This wonderful 2½" high, gold-plated keepsake will be offered in a limited edition. Packaged in a handsome gift box, this ornament will be treasured for generations to come.

Advance orders \$19.95 until February 15; regular price \$24.95; shipping and handling extra. Ornaments will be available for pickup at Peerless Rockville or by mail on March 10, 2010.



Peerless Rockville's 35th Annual New Year's Day Brunch

Begin the New Year with Peerless as we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the City of Rockville. On January 1, 2010 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. guests will enjoy a buffet brunch, jazz and period music by Bobby Jasinski, raffle prizes, and a special program at 1 p.m. at historic Glenview Mansion. This year Peerless encourages guests to wear a historic costume or heirloom. Please bring a dish or dessert to share. Cost: Peerless members \$10; non-members \$15. For more information, please call 301-762-0096 or visit peerlessrockville.org.

Rockville's Sesquicentennial

Did you know that March 10, 2010 marks the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of Rockville? The City as well as Peerless Rockville plan to celebrate this milestone with special events throughout the year. For more information, call 240-314-5000 or visit rockvillemd.gov/events/150.

The Chestnut Lodge Commemorative Ornament is the first in a series of Peerless Rockville keepsakes. If you would like to order one, please see the form on the back page.

Donate Now!

As 2009 draws to a close and you make your end-of-year giving decisions, consider making a 100% tax-deductible contribution to *Peerless Rockville*. A donation for as little as \$25 helps ensure that Peerless will continue to preserve and share the important history of Rockville for generations to come.

In Memoriam—Arthur M. Wagman (1918–2009)

Family, friends, and admirers of Arthur M. Wagman gathered in the Grand Courtroom of the Red Brick Courthouse to share their memories and reminiscences at a September 12 memorial service. A noted Rockville attorney and beloved community leader, Wagman died in Longmeadow, Massachusetts on August 17 after a long illness. Among his many achievements was his leadership role in founding Peerless Rockville in 1974 and serving as the organization's attorney for the first thirty years. A native of New York City, Wagman served under General Douglas MacArthur during World War II and settled in the Washington area after law school. He and his wife, the former Lynn Leizure, purchased an 1884 Queen Anne style house on West Montgomery Avenue in 1971, where they raised their four daughters and participated actively in the life of the Rockville community. Wagman was known for his keen wit and sense of humor. He loved to entertain family and friends with his poetry and limericks and he composed Valentine poems each year for loved ones. Arthur Wagman will also be remembered for his abiding interest in preserving Rockville's history and historic landmarks.



*Above: Arthur Wagman.
Below: Shelf clock
donated by Genevieve
Wimsatt.*



light revealed the surprising inscription carved into it: "A SCIENTIFIC CIGAR/ SANO/ AROMATIC – MILD – SATISFYING." Perhaps as part of a 20th century repair, the top of a Sano Cigar box had been recycled as the bottom of the clock. We had hoped to discover a maker's mark or some other clue to the clock's origins, but in our opinion, this discovery tells a good story too.

Collections Spotlight

A recent addition to Peerless Rockville's collection is a black shelf clock dating to the late 19th century. According to family tradition, this clock adorned the Rockville home of Rebecca Fields, wife of the founder of the *Montgomery County Sentinel*. Standing 10" tall, shelf clocks such as this one were common among middle-class Americans starting in the middle of the 19th century. Their small, spring-driven mechanisms made them less expensive to produce than pendulum-driven long-case ("grandfather") clocks. The clock follows an 1870s fashion for solid black furniture and decorative objects that spurred the widespread production of black clocks through the turn of the century. These clocks were often made using materials that imitated more luxurious substances, for example, black paper or paint affixed to wood and then varnished to mimic ebony or marble. The clock provides a wonderful example of this kind of camouflage. Like the rest of the clock, the rectangular base of the clock had been heavily painted black, and only a flashlight's direct

News & Notes

Thank you to:

Captain Luther Reynolds and his colleagues from the **Montgomery County Police Department** and Anne Brown from the **Montgomery County Community Use of Public Facilities** for volunteering in November to clean up the grounds around Frieda's Cottage. Many thanks for your hard work!

Our **volunteers** Rose Dunn, Sheryl Falk, Wini Herrmann, Wilbur Leventer, Eileen McGuckian, Jason Miller, Elizabeth Natsios, Bonne Prettyman, Bailey Russell, and Rose Sharkey who provide administrative and collections support throughout the year.

Welcome New Board Member: Michele Tourney, an archivist working for History Associates, Inc.

Grant Awards: In October, Peerless Rockville received a Heritage Montgomery mini-grant to produce a self-guided walking tour booklet of historic places that represent the importance of women in shaping Rockville's heritage. In December, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County awarded Peerless two grants. The first grant will allow Peerless to purchase computer equipment and software and the second grant to hire a collections intern for the Spring semester.

Designation: On December 7, the Mayor and Council designated 224 Elizabeth Avenue a historic district.



Peerless Places Montrose School

Each day, thousands of commuters on Rockville Pike drive past a white stucco building with a green metal roof. Surrounded by shopping malls, towering high-rises, and bustling roads, this diminutive building—Montrose School—evokes a unique era in local educational history and plays a special role in Peerless Rockville Places.

Maryland's public education system was established in 1860, and by 1868, a one-room school building had been constructed south of Montrose and Randolph Roads. Spurred by the completion of the B&O Railroad in 1873, the local population grew substantially. By 1879, the village of Montrose had the largest population between Bethesda and Rockville, boasting a general store, blacksmith shop, and post office. The one-room schoolhouse, however, was no longer adequate to serve its enrollment of more than 50 children.

In 1908, the Montgomery County School Board appointed Thomas C. Groomes to design a two-room school building in the Montrose vicinity. Completed in 1909, Montrose School sported a stylish gabled façade and offered classes for first to seventh grade. It featured the latest in educational architecture, including air vents in the masonry foundation, a hipped roof with improved air circulation, tall windows for maximum indoor illumination and ventilation, and high window placement to help ensure full attention from the students. Other modern amenities included kerosene hurricane lamps affixed to the walls and pot-bellied coal burning stoves in each classroom; an outside hand pump provided well water, and outdoor boys' and girls' rest rooms. Increased modernization, including electricity and indoor plumbing were added throughout the early to middle decades of the 20th century.



Montrose School operated until 1960, when it was converted to a facility for special education. The site was abandoned by the school system in the early 1970s and was used for storage by the State Highway Administration (SHA). The building was destined for demolition because of its deplorable condition—a leaky roof, broken windows, peeling paint, and damaged plaster. In the late 1970s, Peerless Rockville made the case to SHA to save Montrose School because of its significance with educational history and the village of Montrose. SHA agreed to sell the building to Peerless for one dollar.

Over the next two years, Peerless raised money for rehabilitation and renovation to remove inappropriate alterations and meet code requirements. Care was taken to retain all original materials and architectural features. Equally important, Peerless found an appropriate adaptive use for Montrose School, which has housed a variety of tenants during the past two decades.

Montrose School continues to serve the local communities as an historic icon and a reminder of the value of local preservation.

Peerless Rockville continues to preserve Montrose School. Earlier this year, the chimneys were repaired to ensure maximum energy efficiency and the deteriorating patterned tin roof was replaced to prevent water damage to the building. In the future, Peerless Rockville plans to raise enough funds to paint the exterior, repair windows, and make other improvements.

The Peerless Places series highlights Rockville's historic sites. Contact us for more information.

Peerless Rockville, PO Box 4262 Rockville, MD 20849

Tel: 301-762-0096 ■ Email: info@peerlessrockville.org ■ Web: peerlessrockville.org



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Mission

Peerless Rockville safeguards and promotes Rockville's past by preserving buildings, spaces, objects, and information important to our city's heritage. Peerless Rockville advances its goals through education, example, advocacy, and community involvement.

Contact Us

T: 301.762.0096
F: 301.762.0961
E: info@peerlessrockville.org
Surf, Point, Click, and Discover at peerlessrockville.org

Hours

Resource Center,
Library and Peerless Store:
Monday-Friday,
10 am-1 pm
and by appointment
Office:
Monday-Friday,
9 am-3 pm

2009-2010

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Please consider Peerless Rockville when you are making your end-of-year donations.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution to be applied toward (please specify amount):
 Eileen McGuckian Preservation Fund \$_____ Where most needed \$_____
Qty. ____ **Chestnut Lodge Ornament:** \$19.95 for advance orders until February 15 plus \$4.95 shipping and handling for first ornament; \$2.00 each additional
Membership: Sign me up to be a new member. Renew my membership.
 Individual—\$35/\$25 for Senior/Student Family—\$60/\$50 for Senior/Student Family
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