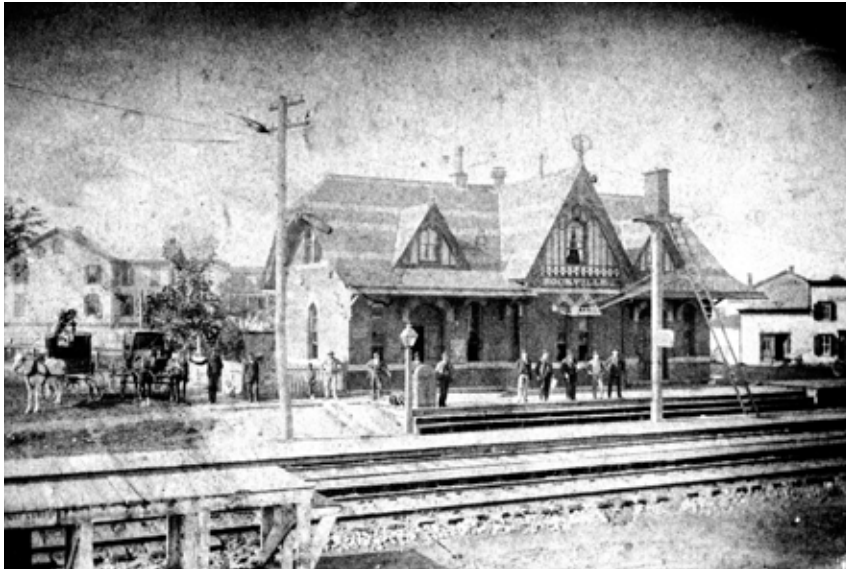


Homes & Hospitality Tour

Join Peerless Rockville on Saturday, May 8 from 1-5 pm for the 2010 Homes and Hospitality Tour. This year's tour features a variety of interesting and beautiful homes in Rockville's historic West End. In addition to live music, tasty hors d'oeuvres and beverages, and lush spring gardens in bloom, the tour offers the opportunity to visit with fellow residents and mingle with local public officials. Tickets go on sale April 1 and may be purchased online, by phone, or at Peerless Rockville. \$15 Peerless members; \$20 non-members. All proceeds benefit Peerless Rockville's award-winning preservation and education programs in the community and beyond. We look forward to seeing you there!



This year's Homes & Hospitality Tour features houses in the historic West End of Rockville and includes 100 Forest Avenue.



In 1883, Rockville's B&O Railroad Station provided a meeting place for townspeople, local farmers, and visitors. Adjacent to the station, the neighborhood of East Rockville was a perfect location for new families to Rockville.

East Rockville Walking Tour

Explore the neighborhood of East Rockville with Peerless on Saturday, April 17. From 10-11:30 am, the tour will focus on the variety of architectural styles found in the neighborhood as well as the people and events that made this the dynamic community we know today.

Meet at the corner of South Stonestreet Avenue and Baltimore Road. \$5 Peerless members; \$10 non-members. Advance reservations recommended. There will be walking and standing for extended periods of time so please come prepared with comfortable footwear, water, sunblock, or anything else to make this an enjoyable experience.

Support Peerless: Peerless is now accepting sponsors and ads for the May Homes & Hospitality Tour—a great way to reach hundreds of people in your community and support Peerless Rockville. Call 301-762-0096 or email info@peerlessrockville.org for more information.



Mayor Alexander J. Greene served 1958-1962.

In Memoriam—

Alexander J. Greene

Former Rockville Mayor and community leader Alexander J. Greene died January 27 at the age of 87. A native of New York, Greene came to Rockville during the post-World War II era and settled in Roxboro, subsequently moving to the West End. He and his wife Jayne, a journalist and editor, raised their five children in Rockville and were active in civic and cultural affairs. A budget analyst with the federal government, Greene joined the Rockville Civic Association and helped organize the historic City election of 1954 which brought sweeping reform and modernization to local government. After four years on the City Council, Greene was elected to two terms as Mayor, working to augment City autonomy and community identity. According to historian Eileen McGuckian, his proudest accomplishment was the City's 1957 purchase of Glenview Mansion as Rockville's civic center. Active in Rockville Little Theatre, Greene was a founding member of both the Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockville and Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation. He was interviewed numerous times by Peerless staff, contributing his memories, experiences, and insights on local history during a critical period of growth and development. Peerless joins with the Rockville community in extending condolences to Alex Greene's family and friends. We will miss his friendly smile and boundless community spirit.

Collections Needs

An important part of Peerless' mission is the preservation of objects and information important to Rockville's history. Today, Peerless has approximately 7,500 artifacts dating from the 18th century to the 21st, making it one of the best resources for the public to discover and learn about people, places, and events in Rockville. A few of the more popular objects include: an 1885 pocket-sized set of prescription scales that once belonged to Russell Bogley, longtime assistant to Willie "Doc" Vinson at Vinson's Drug Store; 19th century ink containers from the *Montgomery County Sentinel* newspaper; and 18th century coins.

Peerless' collection of approximately 20,000 maps, documents, and photographs is also an outstanding resource, with items such as Wire Hardware correspondence, receipts, and orders, a large number of Roy Perry's superb images of mid-century Rockville, and early city maps.

Peerless has been fortunate to have generous supporters who are ready to do what it takes to preserve Rockville's irreplaceable heritage. We are currently seeking donations for the purchase of conservation supplies (protective sleeves for photographs, acid-free boxes for historical objects) and a large flatbed scanner to digitize Peerless' oversized maps and photographs. If you would like to make a donation toward the preservation of the collection, please see the donation form on the back page.



Perry Street, 1946. From the Roy Perry collection, Peerless Rockville.

News & Notes

Volunteer Opportunities: Are you energetic, full of ideas and eager to lend your expertise to a great organization? If so, please consider volunteering at Peerless. We have several opportunities including working on a committee (1860s Baseball, Homes & Hospitality Tour), assisting with special events, and participating in a one-time discussion about the community's perception of Peerless Rockville. For more information, please contact Mary van Balgooy.

Go Green! In an effort to minimize our impact on the environment, Peerless Rockville will offer its newsletter, calendar of events, and other information online. If you prefer to receive Peerless news online, please send your email address to info@peerlessrockville.org with "online" in the subject line.

New Cemetery Brochure: Peerless has a new brochure. Produced by the Montgomery County Cemetery Coalition, the brochure contains basic information about historic cemeteries in Montgomery County, the Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory project, cemetery care, and resources. If you would like a copy, please contact Peerless or visit PeerlessRockville.org.

American Express Membership Rewards Program: You may use your reward points to benefit Peerless Rockville. American Express allows members to redeem reward points for charitable donations. You can also send us your points for much needed purchases, such as office supplies and computer software. For more details, visit PeerlessRockville.org/donate_volunteer/donations.htm or AmericanExpress.com/Give.



Peerless Places

Rockville Volunteer Fire Department

Solid and substantial, the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department (RVFD) has occupied a prominent site on Hungerford Drive since its 1966 dedication. Popularly known as “The Big House” or “The Rock,” RVFD is Rockville’s flagship station, responding to thousands of calls each year. Completed during Rockville’s urban renewal era, RVFD was built to serve the needs of the postwar population boom and was designed to meet standards of modern design, firehouse construction and firefighting technologies.

Firefighting in Rockville originated in 1806, with the purchase of a hand-drawn water barrel. By 1900, the fire department was staffed by volunteers, including a cadre of African American residents supervised by deputy sheriff George Meads. A disastrous fire in 1921 spurred efforts to upgrade the antiquated system, resulting in the completion in 1925 of a new firehouse on Perry Street. Constructed of brick, the two-story facility sported a fashionable Art Deco cornice and four arched openings with folding panel doors.

By the 1960s, Rockville had outgrown the outmoded facility. The population boom fueled postwar development, driving the need for a new firehouse. Modern construction methods and improvements in firefighting technology revolutionized firehouse design throughout the country, driven by the imperative for speedy emergency response. A civic and institutional structure, the modern firehouse was also designed to provide living quarters for professional and volunteer staff and to accommodate firefighting and communications equipment and storage facilities. Accessibility, function-based plans, and open versatile spaces were among the new design criteria. Sited strategically on a major roadway—Rockville’s new station featured square drive-through bays with



roll-up doors to ensure rapid response time and to provide overhead clearance for maneuvering large equipment. Built for \$416,000, the RVFD was described as “ready to roll in ten seconds.”

Modernism was integral to architect Donald Coupard’s rectilinear design, which was planned “to blend in with the [City’s]... mid-city urban renewal project.” Coupard, whose work included Rockville City Hall (1960), wrapped the exterior of the RVFD in panels of concrete with recessed brick insets, piercing the mass with a variety of modernist window types. The flat roof and crisp horizontal lines were punctuated by a siren tower along the western façade; brick fencing on the south perimeter offered privacy for a garden patio. An emblem of civic readiness, the RVFD signaled an era of modern urbanity, public safety, and community planning.

Not surprisingly, the RVFD has long since outgrown the 1966 building. Current plans call for a \$5 million renovation for a Victorian-style exterior to match the neo-traditionalism of Town Center. If completed, this represents yet another loss of a well-designed modernist building in Rockville and a deepening disconnect with the City’s recent past—a vitally important era in local history. Peerless encourages the RVFD to retain the architectural character and historicity of its 1966 flagship station while continuing to ensure public safety and technological innovation.

Rockville Volunteer Fire Department (1966) designed by Donald Coupard.

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

Peerless Rockville, PO Box 4262 Rockville, MD 20849

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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.

Save the Date!
1860s Baseball Game
Saturday, July 10, 6 pm, Povich Field

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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