



**Winfield M. Kelly, Jr.**  
Secretary of State

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MKC  
OKIC*

11/19/91

Dear Bill:

Please find attached a brief history of how Berwyn Heights got its name as promised the last time we talked.

*Win Kelly*

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**CANON A. PIERCE MIDDLETON**  
705 Americana Drive, # 15  
Annapolis, Maryland 21403

November 14, 1991

The Hon. Winfield M. Kelly, Jr.  
Secretary of State of Maryland  
The State House  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr Kelly:

Pursuant to your request I have put on my "thinking cap" and composed a brief account of my understanding of how the name Berwyn came to replace that of Charlton Heights, in Prince George's County, in 1896.

I was born in Berwyn in 1916, and my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all lived there. Our connection with Berwyn began around 1885, when my grandfather and his parents moved there from Washington.

T. Raymond Burch: HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY OF COLLEGE PARK, BERWYN HEIGHTS, GRREENBELT AND ADJACENT AREAS, n.d. states, under the heading of Berwyn:

"In 1896 the name of this area [i.e. Charlton Heights and Central Heights] was changed to 'Berwyn.' This name was adopted from that of the new Presbyterian Church that had been erected and named 'Berwyn Chapel' in honor of a party who who had aided in the building of the church. At the same time a number of residents of the area and of 'Charlton Heights' requested the B & O Railroad to change the name of the railroad station from Charlton Heights to 'Berwyn' and this change was made."

As a result, the post office, which had been established in 1890 and known as Charlton Heights, also changed its name to Berwyn on April 2, 1896, when this name was adopted by the residents of the area.

The constant oral tradition in my family bears out the words of T. Raymond Burch, an early postmaster of Berwyn. It affirms also that my grandfather, Frank Leander Middleton (1862-1930), started the Presbyterian chapel, which was built by his father, Leander Baker Middleton (1840-1895), a contractor in Washington on a lot donated by Francis Shannabrook, who had come from Pennsylvania, bought the old Higgins Farm, subdivided it, and built fifteen houses for sale.

At that juncture, my grandfather, who was a patent attorney

in the firm of Spear, Middleton, Donaldson, and Hall in Washington, had a client, also from Pennsylvania, whose promising young son, named Berwyn, had died unexpectedly. Unfortunately, I do not know the father's name, but he offered to give a large sum of money (I think \$ 1000) toward the building of the church on condition that it would be named Berwyn Chapel. His offer was accepted, and that explains the origin of the name given to the chapel and subsequently to the town.

All I can add is that my grandfather was highly indignant that the local B & O Railroad station bore the name of Charlton, who, in his view, was a suspicious character, thought to be engaged in gambling and other unsavory activities, and in 1896 he spearheaded the move to persuade the B & O Railroad to change the name of the station to "Berwyn" and his efforts were crowned with success.

With all best wishes to you, my fellow Prince Georgian,

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

A. Pierce Middleton +