



THE HISTORY OF PIGTOWN'S NAME

Citizens of Pigtown Community Association, Since 1973
(S.W.C.C. Inc.)

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Baltimore's historic Pigtown community lies along Washington Boulevard, from Martin Luther King Boulevard to Carroll Park, south and east of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad yards. Developing initially as a community for railroad workers in the 1840's, along Columbia Avenue (now Washington Boulevard), Ramsay, McHenry, and Poppleton Streets, the area grew rapidly to the south during the industrial expansion of the 1850's and 1860's. Small two-story houses were built for workingmen on the narrow streets running south of Washington Boulevard, with three-story gable-roofed, and then early Italianate houses lining Washington Boulevard and Scott Street to serve as housing for shopkeepers and upper-level managers.

The development of Pigtown was intimately linked with hallmark events of the Industrial Revolution in Baltimore, particularly the growth and development of the Baltimore & Ohio, America's first railroad. Location of the B&O on West Pratt Street in 1830 and the rapid growth of related industries around it, like locomotive works and car-building shops, directly resulted in the growth of the nearby working class community. Pigtown is one of the earliest examples in the city of a mainly two-story working class neighbourhood developed around a specific factory or industrial site. Examples of every form of urban vernacular residential architecture built in Baltimore between 1830 and 1915 can be seen in the district.

The industrial history of Pigtown begins with the brickyards established in the late 1700's on land belonging to the Mount Clare plantation owned by Dr. Charles Carroll of Annapolis. Dr. Carroll acquired some 2,368 acres southwest of the fledgling settlement of Baltimore Town in 1732 and soon put it to both agricultural and industrial use. Rich in natural resources, the Mount Clare Plantation became one of the nation's first agricultural and industrial complexes, complete with a sawmill, brick kilns, and an iron foundry, one of the state's earliest iron furnaces. In 1754 Dr. Carroll's son, Charles Carroll, Barrister (1723-83) inherited the Mount Clare estate and proceeded to turn his father's modest farmhouse on the property into a grand Palladian country seat. Overland travelers from Alexandria and Georgetown passed through Mount Clare on their way to Philadelphia. Mount Clare Mansion, the oldest house in Baltimore City, is now a museum in Carroll Park.

After the Barrister's death, a number of brickmakers and brickmaking firms bought parcels of the original estate and established brickyards and kilns. Several of these entrepreneurs, like George Warner, James Berry, and Alexander Russell gave their names to streets later laid out near the location of their brickyards, most of which were located on either side of the Washington Road, an area then known as "Carroll's Field." The 1798 Federal Property Tax List identifies fourteen brickmakers working in south Baltimore.

In 1827, leading businessmen of Baltimore joined together to found the nation's first railroad company and decided to break ground for the new railroad going west on a piece of the Carrolls' property. Once the route had been settled upon, members of the Carroll and McHenry families sold the railroad company parcels of land on the southwest corner of Pratt and Poppleton Streets and the real history of southwest Baltimore began. As the B&O reached westward and the local engine and car-building shops expanded, more and more workers sought housing in the area. The first houses went up beginning in 1833, north of the yards on Pratt, Lombard, and Hollins Street, and south of the yards on McHenry Street, Ramsay Street, and Washington Boulevard. Pigtown and the surrounding area around the B&O yards would become one of the most important industrial sections of the city by the end of the nineteenth century.

Pigtown earned its name during the second half of the nineteenth century when pigs offloaded from B&O Railroad cars coming in from the Midwest were herded across Ostend and Cross Streets to slaughterhouses in South Baltimore. Since the area was a German neighbourhood and most of the city's butchers were German, many pigs were butchered locally for sale in area shops. Some butchers belonged to the Baltimore Butchers Loan and Annuity Association, which gave mortgages on houses purchased in Pigtown in the late 1870's. Old-time residents of Pigtown recall



the pigs being herded through the streets to the slaughterhouses in South Baltimore (Federal Hill) like Heinz's Riverside Abattoir established in 1885 in the 1900 block of Light Street. A mural depicting one of the last of these events is on the side of 8xx Washington Boulevard, across from the Washington Village Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Pigtown is one of Baltimore's most diverse communities, leading to our selection in 2004 as Baltimore's Best Neighbourhood by The City Paper. In recent decades, some individuals and groups have attempted to rename the neighbourhood as Washington Village. The local community association, the Southwest Community Council, Inc., which has represented the citizens of the area since 1973, determined in 2006 that the area should be known as Pigtown, NOT Washington Village, and the organization is now known primarily by its trade name, Citizens of Pigtown. We believe that Pigtown has a rich and unique history that is best celebrated and preserved by proudly claiming the name Pigtown!