

## **In Search Of Little Folks Camp, Elkridge MD, circa 1950-1965**

On September 18, 2023, the Greater Elkridge Facebook Group received a query from Dustin Thacker stating, "I am researching some family history and I am looking to learn about the "Little Folks Camp" here in Elkridge Md. It was run by Dr and Grace Burkett from Baltimore. Approximately 1950-1965ish. My first question, where was the farm/camp located? Is it still in the family?" He had already seen the camp mentioned in obituaries found on line. Two obituaries are included in the Appendix.

The curator of the Elkridge Heritage Society was not familiar with the camp but was very interested in learning about it for the Society's archive, so we have organized all the tips from various contributors to the Facebook thread in this document.

One hint came from someone in the Facebook group who shared a page from the Baltimore Afro-American newspaper, from January 6, 1979. An excerpt of the page is included in the appendix of this record. Of particular interest was a column by Marie Phillips Cooke called "R.S.V.P.". In addition to all the New Years happenings, she states that "When we were very small, Grace Burkett – whom we called "Splash" ran the Little Folks Camp out in Elkridge, where her dad, Dr. Thomas J. Woolridge had a home . . . she called from Albuquerque to say that her dad, whom we called "Papa" had died at the age of 94 . . . she's en route home to Baltimore for the burial."

Another Greater Elkridge Facebook group member went into the Maryland Land Records and discovered that Thomas Woolridge sold his farm to Leeds Corporation in 1970. It was on the north side of the Baltimore-Washington Turnpike. See the Maryland Land Records Lib. 559 fol. 33. However, The Woolridges sold a 6 acre portion of their land to the Burketts in February 1959. (Lib 328 Fol 580). The Burketts sold the land to Samuel and Constance Pistorio in 1971. (Lib 548 Fol 421). Pistorio was a major developer. He did Turf Valley. He quickly sold the 6 acres that he bought from the Burketts to Leeds Corp. in 1971. In 1974, Leeds transferred the Woolridge and Burkett parcels to Kaiser Aetna, along with other contiguous parcels (683/372). The transfer record says it's Map 37 parcel 570. It's "The Village at Elkridge" (apartment complex) development off Ducketts Lane, across from the Roberts junkyard on US. Route 1.



Appendix

I. Obituary of Grace Burkett

As shown on FindAGrave.com

Grace W. Burkett, of Albuquerque since 1973, died on February 16, 2006, a month before her 91st birthday. She is survived by her children, Robert Burkett and June Chapman; daughter-in-law, Carmen; son-in-law, Joseph; grandchildren, Christian Colotario, Uilani and Thomas Burkett; Jeffrey, Granger, and Evette Chapman; great-grandchildren, Dranreb, Darnyl, and Darien Colotario, Christopher and Jasmine; two sisters-in-law; many nieces, nephews and good friends.

Mrs. Burkett earned her teaching certificate from Coppin Normal School in 1935, a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Morgan State College in 1937, and her Master of Arts Degree from New York University in 1945, all with concentrations in early childhood education.

An educator for 38 years in the Baltimore City Public Schools, Mrs. Burkett is known for her love of little children. Widely respected for her superior skills as a teacher, she taught kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades and piloted the Ford Foundation's early school admissions program which later became Headstart.

Mrs. Burkett also started and operated for 17 years her own summer camp for 3-7 year olds in Elkridge, MD. In Albuquerque, she was for many years an active member of the Paradise Hills Civic Association.

A loving, caring Christian woman, Mrs. Burkett cherished her relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ; knowing that she is with Him supersedes our missing her on earth. Service will be held at French Mortuary - Westside Chapel on Thursday, February 23, 2006, at 11:00 a.m. Interment will be in Baltimore National Cemetery beside her husband, Robert Burkett, a veteran of the U.S. Navy. Friends and family may visit on Thursday, one hour prior to Services. To our "Amazing" Grace: Your Kindness and warmth were shared with all, Your smile gave us a lift; Your life - well lived - a beacon bright God's precious, loving gift. French Mortuary 9300 Golf Course Rd. NW (505) 897-0300

## II. Obituary of Ambia Vondalee Rucker

As shown on [vaughncgreene.com](http://vaughncgreene.com), her obituary states

Mrs. Ambia Vondalee Rucker, 82, passed away peacefully while surrounded by her sons, on February 27, 2023.

Affectionately known as Von or Vondalee, she was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on August 20, 1940, and was the daughter of the late Staff Sgt. Bennie Patterson and the late Ambia Woolridge Patterson Neale. She attended Harriet Tubman Junior High School in Howard County, MD, and then St. Francis de Sales High School in Powhatan County, Virginia, which opened as a boarding school for African American and Native American girls. She graduated from there in 1959.

During her early years, Mrs. Rucker spent much of her time with her grandparents, Thomas Woolridge, Sr., MD., and Etna Humbert Woolridge on their farm in Elkridge, MD. Her fondest memories were working and playing on the farm with her cousin, June Chapman, and participating in the annual "Little Folks' Camp" under the direction of her Aunt Grace Burkett.

Mrs. Rucker, following in the footsteps of her mother, aunt, and uncles, attended and graduated from Morgan State University in 1964 with B.A. in Sociology. There, she met her future husband, Dr. James Tarver Rucker, Sr. It was also a place where she, her cousin June, and other students decided to take a stand for civil rights by protesting Northwood Theatre's refusal to let blacks enter. She and other Morgan State University students were arrested and jailed for several days. With significant outside pressure and white students from Baltimore area colleges joining black students from Morgan State in the protests, the Baltimore City Mayor announced that Northwood Theatre would open its doors to blacks and release students from jail. In 2015, Morgan State University awarded Mrs. Rucker an Honorary Doctorate Degree, along with other students who were arrested in this movement.

Following her graduation, Mrs. Rucker worked for the D.C. Department of Recreation as Center Director, the Baltimore City Department of Social Services as a Foster Care Worker, and the American Red Cross as Customer Service Representative.

She also had an international trade business in the late 1970s that launched as Von's Imports and Exports. As she phased out of the international business scene, she developed a

passion for international fashion, which led her to establish her business, Ambi-Xotic. She designed and sewed beautiful pieces of clothing which were often featured in the many fashion shows she participated in or hosted.

Mrs. Rucker enjoyed attending professional events with her husband, including those sponsored by Chi Delta Mu, a professional Allied Health fraternity that was co-founded by a family member, Charles Humbert at Howard University. She found great joy in camping trips with the "Black Hawk" camping club. Also, she loved entertaining, cooking, sewing, and spending time with family and friends.

Mrs. Rucker is predeceased by her husband, Dr. James Rucker, Sr. Her memories will continue to be cherished by her three sons, James Jr., Ivan (Sandra), and Alfred (Janaé), three beautiful granddaughters: Camryn, Kayla, and AVA; best friend Levonne Harris; a host of loving family members and friends.

Viewing and visitation will be held at Vaughn Greene Funeral Home in Randallstown, MD on Monday, March 13, 2023, from 3:00 pm-6:00 pm. A private graveside service will be held at Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery in Owings Mills, MD. In lieu of flowers, a donation in memory of Ambia V. Patterson Rucker may be made to the Morgan State University Foundation to benefit the Class of 1964 fund. Checks or money orders should be made payable to the Morgan State University Foundation and sent to Morgan State University, 1700 E. Cold Spring Lane, Baltimore, MD 21251. Online donations: [www.givetomorgan.org](http://www.givetomorgan.org)

III. R.S.V.P. Column from Baltimore Afro-American newspaper



**Happy New Year!** We're just as happy as you are about the fact that you've seen the dawn of another year. New Year's Eve is a time for remembering, for re-assessing, for planning for whatever day this one promises us... and, of course, a time for happy gathering of family and friends.

For many one of the most significant holiday events was the annual cherry ball sponsored by Baltimore Chapter of Continental Airlines Inc. It was at Maria's West Friday evening, and attracted a large crowd.

Continental supports a number of charities in our town, including this newspaper. Mrs. Susan and our Green Book Drive. Other beneficiaries include: Camp Fire, Children's Shoe Fund, several college scholarships, YMCA Camp King's Leadership Fund, Camp Gaydon for Diabetic Children, Erecto Search for Talent, Kidney Foundation Research, Providence Hospital's Stroke Cell Research and Morris Saxe University.

Members of this group really live up to their credo "dedicated to serve the needs of underprivileged and disadvantaged youth."

They are: Frances Branch, Lillie Branch, Consuelo Baker, Zolma Brown, Sevilla Carroll, Helen Chamberlain, Odessa Dwyer, Katherine Green, Audrey Hardin, Evelyn Holmes, Susan Jones, Daisy King, Louise Mapp, Patricia Marshall, Marlene W. Mohamed, Maule Murray, Ann Parker, Emily Peck, Helen Quarles, Doris Smith, Dolores Sykes, Phyllis Thompson, Mary Tucker, Margaret Turner, Emma Washington and Dolores Young.

A score of out-of-town Continentals were also for the black tie affair, including:

The Chairmen (Marion Jackson, Lawrence (Shirley) Warwick, and Mrs. Doris Heyne) (they're Washington Caranians), and the William (Marie) Saxes, formerly of New Jersey and now of Florida.

Also the Richard Warnick, Jesse Warnick, and Curtis Langford of Philadelphia; Mary Bortolone and Judy Parham of Springfield, Mass.; the Ronald Banks and John Williams of Paulsboro, N.J., and the John St. Chair of Alexandria, Va.

Beale J. Reid and her sister, Anna G. Bennett continued the family tradition. On New Year's Day, their Liberty Heights Avenue home was again a busy place with many members from Sharp Street Methodist Church where they've been lifetime members, were about to sample the special dishes for which they are popular.

My parents tell me the sisters and their late brother, Charles G. Bennett, grew up in the 1500 block of Druid Hill Avenue and they began the New Year events over 30 years ago. I also learned a bit of history. Their grandfather, Isaac Bennett Green was a lifetime member of Sharp Street, and he and his son, their father, were score keepers. Baltimore is truly rich in history.

Another nice gesture was the New Year luncheon Charles Payne gave at his Rolling Road home for wives of his club members. There to enjoy the festive dinner and the merry Christmas were: Evelyn Henderson, Mill Taylor, Ben Wright, Maule Gardner, Betty Gage, Selma Parker, Eugenia Bru, Mae Chamberlain, Liz Williams and Mildred Williams were absent because of illness.

A real wall-to-wall group greeted the New Year at the spacious Mean Washington home of the Anne and Ulysses Williams. It was the annual sponsored by the Lee One Club of which Edith Henry is president. Out-of-towners there were: Mary Frances Darvey of Morrisown, N.J., and Francis King of D.C.

We enjoyed a real down-home, country New Year dinner with the Offlers Gaddys at their Dorchester Road home. They're officers and members of my father's - Rev. Ronald E. Branson Allen A.M.E. Church, 133 W. Lexington Street. We appreciated the invite... we'd been entertaining the entire Christmas week, family from distant places, loved ones and friends, new and old. We were especially glad to have with us Ronald's mother and sister, Virgie M. Braxton and Baidya Braxton, both of Norfolk, Va.

And now we're going ready for the big day... Friday, February 8, 7 p.m. at the Prince Hall Masonic Temple. Hope to see you there!

And, Joe and Lennie Felton's New Year's Day gathering of family and friends was warm and full of fellowship... Joe and Lennie Felton's open house the same day attracted a number of his relatives and young friends to the Elmer Place home he and Diane have done over beautifully.

People on the move - Aristocra Travel's James and Sheila Altam and Galaxy Travel's William and Margaret Garrett are in from a holiday in Rio... Agnes and J. C. Shavis and son, Jeffrey, holiday in Detroit... John and Gwendolyn Ouellet and Gwena and Charles Hillier were in D.C. for the inauguration of D.C.'s new mayor, Marion Barry... also there Ada Woodard, of our town.

Alchita Tison of Miami and Preppan visited with the Ode Pross... and when Ivy Griggs and Verneice Reynolds entertained the life Wives Club members and some guests at brunch on New Year's Day, member Joe Brown and hobby, Walter, had with them Linwood and Minnie Roberts of Hopewell, Va.

Temple's annual was at Blue Cross on Friday evening and the real high a number of them gathered at Harry and Doris Cole's for fellowship.

When we were very small, Grace Burkett - whom we called "Papa" ran the Little Falls Camp out in Ellicott, where her dad, Dr. Thomas J. Woodbridge had a home... she called from Albuquerque to say that her dad whom we called "Papa" had died at the age of 94... she's on route home to Baltimore for burial.

Another pre-very holiday party was that hosted by the Theodore Thompsons (Coles) who gathered friends at their lovely Springdale Avenue home last week to "eat, drink and be merry." The innovative hosts planned games, cards, dancing and lively conversation, making for a really fun evening.

Joining them for the festive occasion were:

Mrs. and Mesdames Theodore (Charlotte) Johnson, Robert (Dorothy) Saxon, I. Henry (Laura) Phillips, Elbert (Pauline) Armstrong, Clarence (Odessa) Dwyer, James (Lillie) Myers, James (Rosalie) Thomas, Kenny (Olivia) Swift, Forrest (Zenobia) Smith, Arthur (Maie) Suren, Mesdames Russ Smith, Janice Sauer, Rose Whitaker, Florence Jackson, Kerrie Jackson and Ariana Carter.



**EVENING EYECATCHERS** - Flair Studio Models show off the latest silks after dark fashions. The models did informal and mannequin modeling at Security Mall. Shown are (L to R): Quiana Cooke, Andrea Bland and Gwen Kellam. See page 32 for more pictures.

By Michele L. McRae and Patti Hodges

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Robinson recently hosted a family reunion at their E. 28th Street home.

Guests included Mr. Mary Jane Caldwell and son, Joseph of Youngstown, Ohio; Mr. and Mrs. Robert, Carson and son from Laurel, Md.; Mrs. Annie Jeter, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Lomas, Mr. and Mrs. J. Dachs, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Dachs, and son, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Conway and Mrs. Lucille Martin and family all of Baltimore.

Members of the Kappa Chapter, Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc. were recently entertained by their Lambda's at a gala disco - buffet style party. The affair was hosted at the Chase A'Nele, 3302 Park Circle.

There were fifty guests in attendance, including sorors and their guests. Kenneth Ervin, president of the Lambda's served as the disc jockey. He played music for the young and old in hours. The music ran from Ozark Mountain to Paul Simon.

## Conference discusses working women and their problems

A conference to discuss the problems of working women will be co-sponsored by the Maryland Commission for Women in January. The Southeast Regional Dialogue will be held Saturday, January 25, at the Baltimore Hilton Hotel. The conference will be co-sponsored by the National Commission on Working Women as one of a series of regional dialogues with working women around the country.

Aimed at women often considered as female oriented, such as clerical, service industries, retail stores, and factories and plants, the conference will attempt to:

- Document the problems and concerns of working women in these occupations
  - Define solutions to these problems
  - Increase public awareness of the status of working women, and
  - Stimulate follow-up for change.
- Libby Keontz, chairperson of the National Commission on Working Women, and other members of the National Commission will attend the conference. In addition, a panel of leaders from business, labor, local and state government, the media and education have been invited to participate in developing a report of the

problems of working women and suggested solutions to those problems. Women working in these fields are invited to apply to attend the dialogue, which is free of charge. Limited financial assistance will be provided to qualified applicants to cover costs of transportation and accommodations. Participants will be selected from among the applicants. For further information or to apply, call the Maryland Commission for Women at 303-0902.

## Public relations seminar

The Media Coalition of the Maryland Commission for Women, chaired by Kathleen M. Carter, M.C.W. vice-chairwoman, will sponsor a Public Relations Seminar from 11:45 to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 13, at Howard Community College. The seminar is designed to assist organizations which lack professional public relations staff in developing publicity campaigns. Individual workshops

IV. Blow-up Of Article Mentioning Little Folks Camp

When we were very small, Grace Burkett — whom we called “Splash” ran the Little Folks Camp out in Elkridge, where her dad, Dr. Thomas J. Woolridge had a home . . . she called from Albuquerque to say that her dad whom we called “Papa” had died at the age of 94 . . . she’s en route home to Baltimore for burial.

V. Interesting photo that we believe shows a shop just south of the camp, so that Mr. Woolridge’s land is in view in the distance. Source:

<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/for-colored-store/>



The website attributes this image to Margaret Bourke-White, 1938, with the caption “FOR COLORED sign atop round Coca-Cola sign tacked to a wooden Star of David in front of BOOKER TEA WASHINGTON store effecting a cruel display of racist condescension in the land of segregation.”

According to our Facebook Contributor, “After much studying of maps and digging, I believe it is looking northbound on Route 1, roughly at Hillside Road where the self storage company is. The billboard behind the gas pump is still there.” (September 18, 2023)

- VI. Side note from another Greater Elkridge Facebook Group contributor: Mar and Pistorio were 2 developers who bought the Rockburn mansion and several hundred acres. They razed a beautiful barn at Rockburn and a house as well as some of the woods and cut back the trees along Belmont Woods Rd preparing to develop it. They tried to rezone it to quarter acre lots (at that time in Ho Co the most dense zoning category was half acre zoning!) The county commissioners were going to allow that, except an election happened and people who were against quarter acre zoning won! They gave up on the development and ended up selling the property to DNR which added substantial acres to Patapsco State Park.