

Remarks made by Stephen Powers during the September 23, 2017 East Cornerstone DCDAR Fence Rededication Ceremony

"The Milestones Spoken" – inspired by Fred Woodward's poem and his pioneering efforts to begin the preservation effort of the Boundary Stones of the Original Federal City.

The first time the stones spoke was through Andrew Ellicott, the surveyor from Ellicott City, MD, who was hired to establish the Federal City boundaries that would forever change how this land would grow and develop. At the April 15, 1791 South Cornerstone Ceremony the stakeholders there met and spoke these words to initiate the Aquia Creek sandstone sentry's task,

"May the stone which we about to place in the ground remain an immovable monument of the wisdom and unanimity of North America."

40 monuments would be left by Ellicott to define the City limits and watch as develop and grow, grapple with the pains of civil war, and flourish during the Victorian Age and Industrial Revolution.

100 years would pass, and the woodlands, agricultural farms, and dirt roads had given way to electricity, railroads, and houses and it was time for the stones to speak again.

This time it was through Marcus Baker, the city's surveyor who resurveyed the boundaries to celebrate the City's Centennial. This work would inspire Fred Woodward to circumnavigate the 10 mile square via horse & buggy and boat and photograph the 39 remaining stones and write articles to bring them to the attention of the public. Woodward, who was the Book Department Manager at his brother's company, Woodward & Lothrop (or Woodies to the locals), would dedicate the rest of his life to speaking for the stones.

His passion inspired Mrs. George P. Conway and the DC DAR in 1915 to set about to make it their mission to protect and preserve not only the 39 stones, but all 40 of the sites by placing protective fences around each of the stones. These fences were designed and constructed by the Gischner Ironworks at an initial cost of \$18 for the 3' square milestone fences and \$43 for the radial cornerstone fences, one of which you see before you.

I take you back to this time in history with the photograph in your program of the participants for the East Cornerstone Fence Dedication ceremony held on April 15, 1916 at this very spot. Fred Woodward described the location in 1906 as "About 500' south from the District Line Station of the electric railroad at Chesapeake Beach Junction. In addition he describes "Boundary Boulevard" now known as "Southern Ave" having been cut through the woods from the East Cornerstone for one mile to the SE#1 stone. He notes "Streets are being carved out, street signs erected and houses going up on every hand. "61st Street East" Signs stare us in the face, and the stone stands in a marsh field belonging to Mr. J. W. Lee, a colored man."

Over the course of the next century, Woodward and the DAR would hold countless fence dedications, place replica monuments and plaques to honor those stones lost to the prosperity of development, and pass the torch of preservation to Mrs. William Lewis, Eloise Jenkins, Gayle Harris, Ric Terman, and others as a new generation's efforts ensured the stones persevered.

200 years would pass, and the suburban communities and population densities would multiply, transportation corridors with superhighways and a subway system would blossom, and it became time for the stones to speak again.

This time the voice began with David Doyle & Chas Langelan who resurveyed the boundaries to celebrate the City's Bicentennial. Their efforts inspired myself to get involved. With the benefit of paved roads, automobiles, computer technology, digital photography, and the Fred Woodward & DCDAR preservation program foundation & blueprint, it has been my honor and privilege to lend my voice to the stones and assist with resources to prepare these undeniably 40 historic sites for the next 100 years. To be able to further the DCDAR mission to protect them and work with the DC State Regent and the various Chapters toward achieving the NACABOSTCO goal of National Historic Landmarks has been humbling and among the most personally rewarding service I have accomplished in my lifetime.

I am pleased to say that I feel the Stones have never spoken louder than they are speaking today. And with the infusion of so many recent additions to the DCDAR Boundary Stones Committee, I have no doubt that their near future is bright indeed. It is my hope that when the City celebrates its TriCentennial, that ceremonies at this site will be held at a Community Park, and look forward to continue to work toward that dream.

In closing, I would be remiss if I did not bring to light the one person without whom I could have never embarked on this journey and who continues to support me for better or worse (and including the Stones), my lovely wife, Evelyn Powers.

Thank you all for coming today and for your continued interest and support of the Boundary Stones.