



The 37th Stone

"NW 7, which was just west of Chevy Chase Circle, has been removed." So wrote Edwin Darby Nye in a story for Sunday Magazine two years ago. Nye had done an enormous amount of research and legwork trying to locate the 40 original boundary stones that were used in 1791-92 to mark the outlines of the city that would be the Nation's Capital. NW 7, Nye wrote, should be near the intersection of Western Avenue and Cedar Parkway, but it was missing.

Well, it turns out it wasn't quite missing: The top of it was still showing in the front yard at 5600 Western Ave., the home of Mrs. P. A. Davis. Mrs. Davis, after reading the story, shared her knowledge with Nye and sometime later the Daughters of the American Revolution asked if they could raise the stone. Mrs. Davis granted permission, the stone was unearthed and elevated, and now it can once again be easily seen.

The first thing George Washington did after choosing the site of the new capital was to hire two surveyors to lay out the boundaries of the 10-mile square and set the stone markers. Andrew Ellicott and Benjamin Banneker, the son of a slave, worked long and hard, cutting their way through much wilderness to set down the city's boundaries.

Nye uncovered 36 of the stones. With the later discovery of NW 7, three still are missing: NE 1, Georgia and Alaska Avenues; SE 9, Fox Ferry Point in the Potomac; and SW 7, last seen on a hill south of Arlington Boulevard, east of Seven Corners, in 1962, on a site which since has been excavated for the building of an apartment house.

Mrs. P. A. Davis inspects the marker stone that was resurrected in her front yard over 170 years after it was put there to mark the boundary of the Capital City.