

2.15.2020 Springfield Name Rebuttal

by Jenee Lindner, Springfield District Representative

Dear Paul and Fairfax County District Advisory Committee,

Thank you, Paul, for the research done on behalf of the Springfield Farm. It was thorough and thought provoking. It is interesting that Springfield Farm was not flagged by the History Commissioner's Confederate Name Report. I think you found something they missed. To add more to your narrative, it says in *wikipedia*, 'Springfield was officially founded in 1847 around the Orange and Alexandria Railroad's Daingerfield Station; this is today the Backlick Road Virginia Railroad Express Station, located off Backlick Road. The station was named for "Springfield Farm" owned by Henry Daingerfield and Alexandria businessman who sat on the railroad's board of directors.' If our District was called Springfield Farm or Daingerfield, after Henry Daingerfield, I would acquiesce it being a slaveholder name or, at least, for further study.

But, as all good historians know, *wikipedia* is a beginning for discussion not a final word on any subject. Thank you, Paul, for understanding that when you added your footnotes on your Springfield Farm history. Supervisor Herrity and I were on the right tract when we said it was always called Springfield; I stated it at the Redistricting Advisory Committee meeting while leading the Springfield breakout session, and Supervisor Herrity stated it at the Springfield Town Hall Meeting. This is what my research showed.

Springfield was an old name used in the area before 1847. The name did not originate with Henry Daingerfield. I will present two reasons. I was alerted to this fact 30 years ago by Edith Moore Sprouse, one of our leading historians in Fairfax County. She was President of the History Commission and a founding History Commissioner member. I had to dig in to find support for her statement. I found it.

Reason #1:

It was named after the 18th century first county seat of Fairfax County. It was in *spring fields* and was called as such, Springfield (today Tyson's Corner). In the book, Preservation of History in Fairfax County, Virginia: A Report Prepared for the Fairfax County History Commission, Fairfax County Virginia: 2001, it quoted, "the 18th century name 'Springfields' designated the area containing the headsprings of the Accotink, Wolf Trap, Pimmets and Scotts Runs."¹ It was also referenced in "County Court of Fairfax County During the Colonial Period," as Springfield.²

In another Springfield name description from Fairfax County, Virginia: A History, a 700 pages book prepared by Fairfax County staff requested, in behalf, of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors,³ it stated:

1742: The government in Williamsburg had placed all the effective power in Fairfax County in the hands of men who were a known quantity; the county lieutenant, sheriff, clerk, and the quorum of the county court had all held office in Prince William County.⁴ The council also "ordered that the courthouse of Fairfax County built at a place called Springfield situated between the New Church and Ox Road, in the Branches of Difficult Run, Hunting Creek and Accotink. Springfield (in the area which is now Tysons Corner) was a 1,429 acre tract of land owned by William Fairfax. It drew its name from Wolftrap Branch of Difficult Run, Scotts Run, Pimmit Run, and the Long and Bear Branches of Accotink all having their sources there."⁵

Therefore, Henry Daingerfield could have named it after the first county seat, Springfield.

¹ Ross Netherton and Nan Netherton, Preservation of History in Fairfax County, Virginia: A Report Prepared for the Fairfax County History Commission, Fairfax County Virginia: 2001, (University Press of America, 2001). Pg.190

² Laurence Mitchell, Historical Society of Fairfax County Yearbook, Volume 5 (1956 through 1957), 16.

³ Nan Netherton (Project Director), Donald Sweig, Janice Artemel, Patricia Hickin, Patrick Redd. Fairfax County, Virginia: A History (250th Anniversary Commemorative Edition, 1992)p.10

⁴ Fairfax Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William (Berryville, Virginia: Chesapeake Book Company, 1964), pgs. 318 - 20

⁵ Ibid.

Reason #2

Spring fields are a geographic anomaly. It is where springs originated to create streams, rivers and runs. We have them in abundance throughout Fairfax County including Springfield District. For example, the 14-mile-long Pohick Creek basin is 32.21 square miles with the headwaters (springs) at Rabbit Branch and Sideburn Branch. It all drains eventually into the Potomac River. It includes:

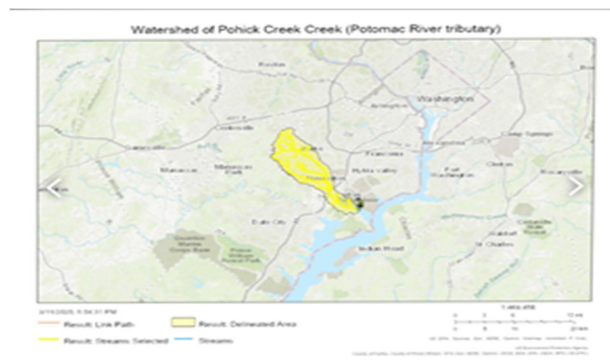
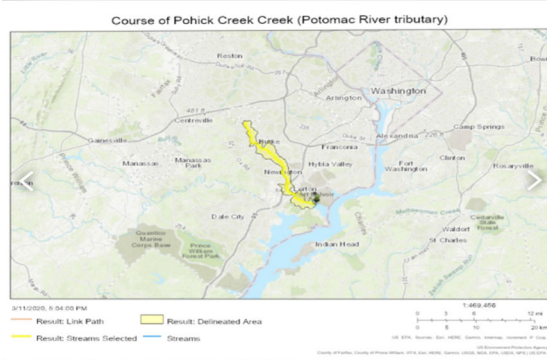
- 1) Pohick Creek
- 2) Rabbit Branch
- 3) Sideburn Branch
- 4) Middle Run
- 5) South Run
- 6) Rocky Branch

To help you understand where they are located, I have included the bridges that cross over them.

- 7) Commonwealth Boulevard
- 8) Guinea Road
- 9) Burke Lake Road
- 10) Old Keene Mill Road
- 11) VA 286
- 12) Pohick Road
- 13) I-95
- 14) Lorton Road
- 15) US 1
- 16) Old Colchester Road

Under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act to prevent soil erosion and flooding, six dams were built from 1970-1985. That included:

- 1) Lake Braddock impounding the Pohick Creek in Burke
- 2) Huntsman Lake impounding the Middle Run in Springfield
- 3) Lake Royal which impounds the Rabbit Branch in Burke above its confluence with the Sideburn Branch, where it forms Pohick Creek
- 4) Lake Barton impounds a tributary of the Sideburn Branch in Burke
- 5) Woodglen Lake which impounds the Sideburn Branch in Fairfax
- 6) Lake Mercer, the final dam completed, impounding the South Run in Springfield⁶



⁶ GNIS Detail – Pohick Creek and geonames.USGS.Gov.US Geological Survey.

Therefore, it could have easily been called a geographic description of *spring fields* as the county seat was in our history.

Below are the original remarks by Paul Berry on Springfield District being named after Springfield Farm.

Springfield

Recommendation:

Early in the Phase I of the RAC's work public testimony from residents was shared with the committee suggesting that Springfield magisterial district be renamed. While the RAC did not address this directly through our work, it did share that this wider concern from the public was present and that the Board of Supervisors would benefit from a discussion on the Springfield name.

When the RAC convened for Phase II, Springfield was added to the list of candidates for evaluation based on Criteria #7, "Is the name confusing to residents or is it geographically representative of the district?" During the first two weeks of the Phase II RAC work the Springfield workgroup paused discussion. This was done for two reasons: 1) Supervisor Pat Herrity offered to host a town hall meeting on February 9th to give members of the public an opportunity to offer feedback on the renaming possibility, and; 2) to use the intervening time to conduct background research for this report.

The town hall was held as planned and members of the public attended to share their thoughts. Sixteen individuals who spoke on the matter with eight (8) supporting a name change and (8) advocating for it to remain unchanged. {INSERT MORE HERE AFTER GETTING YOUTUBE VIDEO}

Springfield magisterial district was first created in February 1967 following the adoption of the *urban county* form of government. The *urban county* form requires that local government divide Fairfax County into 5-11 equally populated districts. As noted in *The History of the Naming and Redistricting of Fairfax County's Magisterial Districts: A Brief Report*, Springfield District and Annandale District were "named after the communities they will serve."⁷

This point bears elaboration because of ties to slavery. According to *Springfield: Then and Now* "the name 'Springfield' originated with Henry Daingerfield who, in January 1851, acquired 920 acres in the vicinity of where Backlick Road crosses the Southern Railroad tracks. This land today is partially occupied by Shirley Industrial Park and the intersection between Routes 95, 395, and the Beltway. He named his land 'Springfield Farm.'"⁸ This farm was itself composed of multiple parcels of property that once were entirely within the Ravensworth landgrant, which as the West Springfield High School website acknowledges, was home to "a large plantation owned by...slaveholders."⁹ Henry Daingerfield did own enslaved peoples during the antebellum period, inheriting 126 from Robert Darnall Sewall in 1853. It is likely that he owned slaves separate from this inheritance, although no record for that is available currently. This assumption is based on the fact that in the seven-year span between 1853 and the 1860 census Daingerfield *increased* the number of slaves attributed to his property from 126 to 160.¹⁰ This is consistent with abundant records that cite his wealth and commercial activities during the antebellum period where he was recognized as one of the most successful merchants in Northern Virginia.¹¹

⁷ Page 1, bottom. Accessed on 2-14-2022 from <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/redistricting/sites/redistricting/files/assets/documents/board-of-supervisors-naming-history.pdf>. C. Barbuschak 2020.

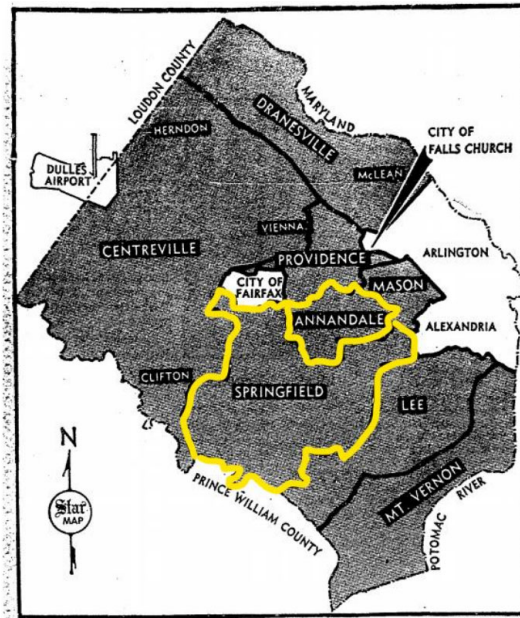
⁸ Accessed 2-14-2022. <https://www.edsallpark.org/history-of-springfield>

⁹ Accessed 2-14-2022. <https://westspringfieldhs.fcps.edu/about/history/local/enslaved>. Also see <https://ravensworthstory.org/people/owners/daingerfield-henry/#fn-1455-1>

¹⁰ Accessed 2-14-2022. <https://www.poplarhillonhik.com/aahp/infirmar/infirmar.html>

¹¹ Hurst, Harold W. "The Merchants of Pre-Civil War Alexandria: A Dynamic Elite in a Progressive City." *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.* 52 (1989): 327-43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40067871>.

This map illustrates the original boundaries of Springfield and Annandale districts. Stretching from Alexandria in the east to Clifton in the west, and from Fairfax City in the north to the Prince William County line, Springfield District encompassed Springfield, West Springfield, and Burke.



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This map from the Fairfax County government website highlights the original (and current) location of the place designated "Springfield" according to the US Census bureau:



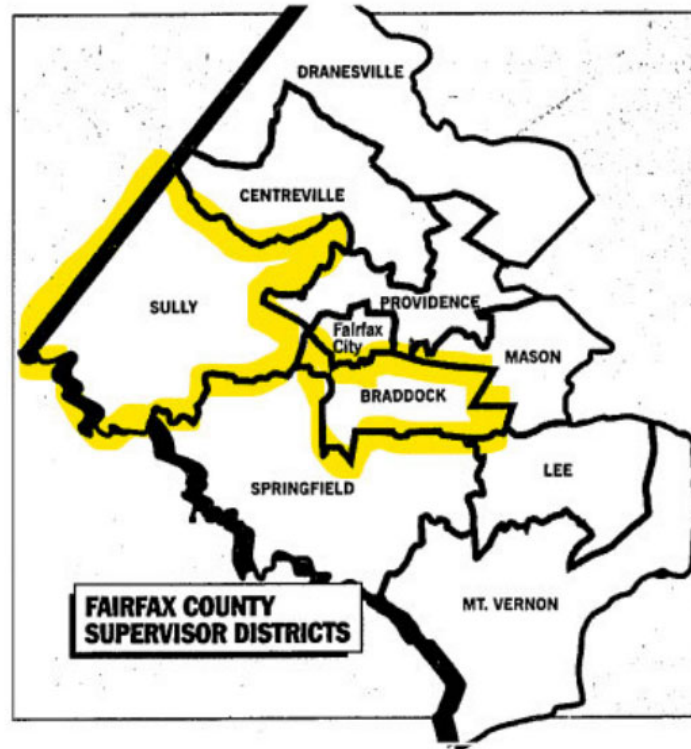
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census boundaries. Map prepared by the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services.

In 1991 the Board redrew boundaries following the decennial census. Following this, the US Department of Justice approved the redrawn map that expanded Springfield, Lee, and Mt. Vernon districts westward. Springfield no longer

¹² Page 7, bottom. Accessed on 2-14-2022 from <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/redistricting/sites/redistricting/files/assets/documents/board-of-supervisors-naming-history.pdf>. C. Barbuschak 2020.

bordered Alexandria – this portion of the Springfield district that included the US Census designated places of North Springfield and Springfield were split between Mason, Lee, and Braddock districts. West Springfield remained in the Springfield district.

This was not motivated by geography, but rather population concerns: “The 1990 Census revealed that the population of western Fairfax County had dramatically increased, which required the creation of a ninth district.”¹³ As a result of the ninth district’s creation (Sully) populations between the districts required balancing in order to “guarantee that all of its citizens had equal representation.”¹⁴ The redistricting process approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1991 moved North Springfield and Springfield out of Springfield District in order to achieve equal representation (see below).



Map of Fairfax County districts in October 1991¹⁵

The subsequent three redistricting processes spanning 30 years approached the *equal representation* concept similarly: as populations across the county grew, precincts were shifted between magisterial districts to achieve proportional balance, keeping the names and numbers of districts remained the same at nine (9).

In the most recent 2021 decennial redistricting the Board of Supervisors approved a map submitted anonymously by a member of the public that aimed to balance the population equally in the same spirit of “one person, one vote,” a concept supported by the Redistricting Advisory Committee as a companion ideal to the *One Fairfax* policy.

In this approved map population growth again drove changes to Springfield district. As mentioned above, North Springfield and Springfield were removed from Springfield district in 1991 to accommodate population increases in the western part of the county. In 2021, the eastern edge of Springfield district that held some of the densest part of that district – a thus, creating an overpopulation imbalance – were shifted again to other districts to achieve equal representation. In this iteration the precincts of Irving and West Springfield, which together cover all of the Census designated place of West Springfield, were moved.

¹³ Ibid. Page 8.

¹⁴ Anderson, John Ward. “NAACP Targets Fairfax Redistricting: Group Says Plan Dilutes Minority Votes, Asks U.S. to Reject It”. The Washington Post, June 19, 1991, C4

¹⁵ Page 8. Accessed on 2-14-2022 from <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/redistricting/sites/redistricting/files/assets/documents/board-of-supervisors-naming-history.pdf>. C. Barbuschak 2020.

The resulting map again retained nine districts in an attempt to balance three critical concepts to the decennial redistricting process: equal representation, protection for communities of interest, and minimal disruption. While imperfect, this new map reduces the splitting of the greater Springfield community from between three magisterial districts (Springfield, Lee, and Braddock) to just two (Lee and Braddock).

The hypothetical solution where West Springfield remained in the Springfield magisterial district is worth considering. As already noted, West Springfield, identified here as Irving precinct and West Springfield precinct, are two of the densest precincts in the county by population. If they had remained in Springfield district the leading western edge of Springfield district would have had to move eastward in order to maintain a population balance. In that case, precincts like Newgate, Greenbriar West, or Fair Lakes would have had to move to other districts. Given the precedent set by the 1991 redistricting where the westernmost Springfield district boundary moved westward, it should be obvious that continuing the trend of removing eastern precincts from Springfield district like Irving and West Springfield instead of reversing it by removing Newgate, Greenbriar West, Fair Lakes, or others allowed the Board of Supervisors to achieve equal representation across all 9 magisterial districts.

Economic Impact

There have been suggestions that a name change will have negative economic impacts on residents of the districts. This concern is minimized upon deeper evaluation:

- Unlike the name changes for Lee and Lee-Jackson highways, there are no signs or other public landmarks that require public funds to correct old names.
- Residents are not required to list their magisterial district on postal addresses, eliminating the possibility that individual or commercial economic activities will be newly confusing if Springfield is renamed
- Hunter Mill district, formerly named *Centreville* district, underwent a name change in 1991 without any notable impact on economic activity

Lastly, it is worth noting that the Springfield Government Center (which shares space with the local police and fire & rescue) the West Springfield Post Office, and West Springfield High School are still in Springfield District. The Redistricting Advisory Committee deliberately avoided creating maps that moved essential government services from the districts in which they are located, namely the district government office. The locations of these offices appeared in the redistricting software used to create the maps submitted by RAC commissioners and members of the public in the 2021 RAC Redistricting Report so as to avoid leaving districts without a functioning local government building. The concern for this was the impact to taxpayers who would, in the event a district no longer had a government building, have to finance the construction of new facilities, to say nothing of potential temporary disruption of services.

Thus, while the West Springfield Post Office, West Springfield Government Center, and West Springfield High School would be in a new district bearing a name reflecting the wider geographic and demographic interests of the rest of the district as redrawn in 2021, it is important to recall that special considerations for not moving them resulted in their remaining within the Springfield district, namely an overabundance of caution for resident tax dollars and to minimally disrupt everyday life.