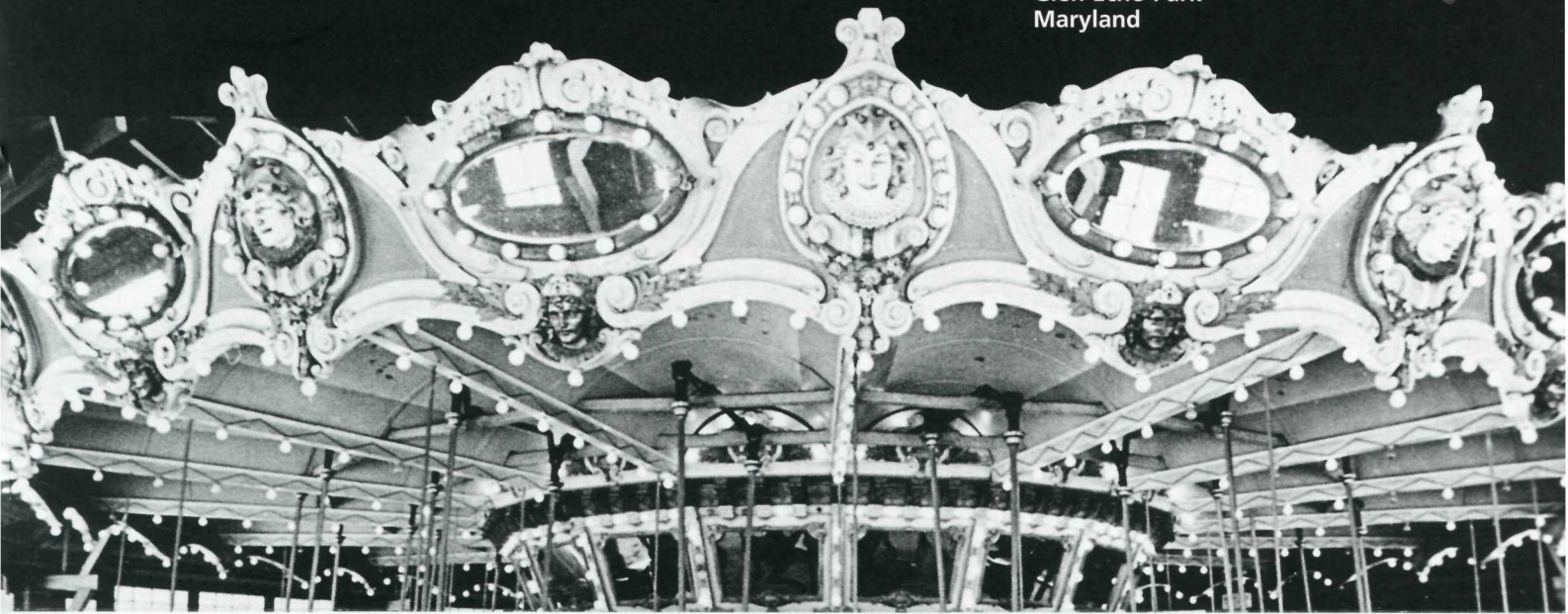


Glen Echo

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Glen Echo Park
Maryland



For 100 years the land Glen Echo Park sits on has been dedicated to people. In 1891, it was a National Chautauqua Assembly involving people in the sciences, arts, languages, and literature. From 1899 to 1968, it was a famous amusement park. Now it comes full circle, as a park emphasizing arts and cultural education for the community.

In this latest incarnation, the land and historic remnants of former buildings host varied activities for both the community and visitors. You can wander on the Midway to recall sights and sounds of an old amusement park where, as a child or adult, you played miniature golf, saw yourself distorted in the Hall of Mirrors, danced to Glenn Miller's music, sunned on Crystal Pool's sand beach, or rammed a bumper car while sparks flew from the electrified ceiling.

In summer on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends you can still ride and listen to tunes from the antique, hand-carved Dentzel Carousel, preserved by community effort. All year you can picnic, visit the workshops of artists now housed in the park, or take workshops in art forms that range from ceramics, through dance and music, to painting and drama. Glen Echo Park travels forward to where it began.

First: The Chautauqua Assembly

Edwin and Edward Baltzley conceived of promoting sales of land and houses by starting a Glen Echo Chautauqua "to promote liberal and practical education, especially among the masses of the people . . . and to fit them for the duties which devolve upon them as members of society." The Chautauqua Movement was popular. Financing the effort with profits from Edwin's inventions, the Baltzleys opened theirs in June 1891. It prospered until Henry Spencer, who ran the Spencerian Bus-

iness School here, died of pneumonia. Rumors that he died of malaria kept people away from this "Rhineland of the Potomac." The Chautauqua Assembly enjoyed only that brief season here. From 1893 to 1898, the Baltzleys rented Glen Echo to various fundraising organizations, which continued using the land for public shows.

Then: An Amusement Park In 1899 the Baltzleys rented Glen Echo to the Glen Echo Company, which installed a full-fledged amusement park. For 60 years the amusement park was one of the most popular spots in Washington. Its rides and the ballroom attracted thousands—the pool alone held 3,000 people. But tastes change, and by the mid-1960s Glen Echo's heyday was over. Attendance dropped markedly, and at the end of the 1968 season the owners announced the park would close. But the land and the remnants of buildings that reflected a history of architectural tastes were still there.

Now: A Cultural Arts Park Community action by a group of public-spirited citizens helped assure Glen Echo Park's future. In a land exchange with its owners in 1971, the Federal Government acquired Glen Echo Park. Between the time the amusement park closed and the time National Park Service management began, many of the rides were sold, including the historic Dentzel Carousel that had been brought to the park in 1921. A group of interested individuals organized a fundraising campaign to purchase the carousel, so it could be kept at the park for the public to enjoy. Bringing the park into public ownership also saved the land from possible development that could have adversely affected the natural beauty of the Potomac Palisades as well as the bordering C&O Canal National Historical Park and Clara Barton Parkway. By working with educators, artists,

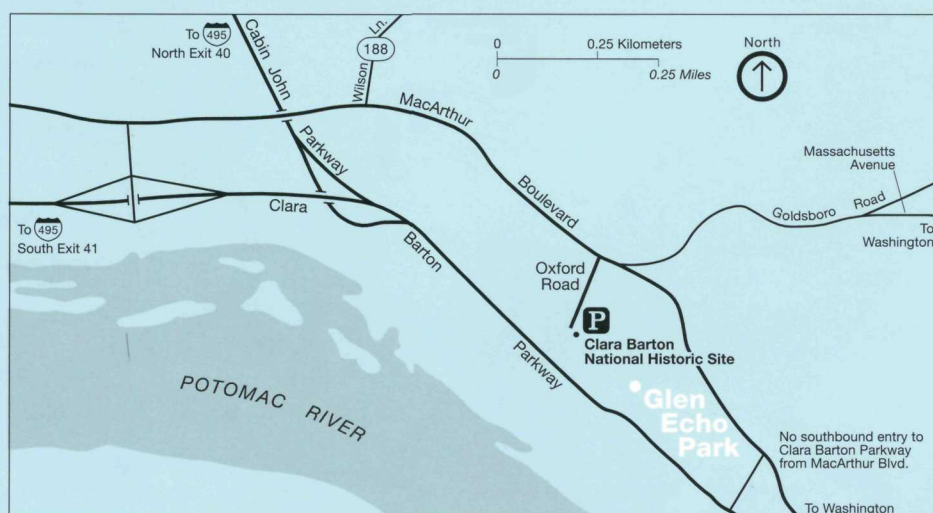
community leaders, and special interest groups, an initial theme evolved—to use the land as a resource center, an educational and cultural forum where artists, students, teachers, and visitors could meet and exchange ideas, as well as learn from each other. It was not a new idea but a recycled one from the days when the park had functioned as the Chautauqua Assembly. Once again, Glen Echo would be a learning center. Professionals in fields ranging from the performing and visual arts to consumer-oriented topics were invited to move into the remaining amusement park buildings, to repair and refurbish these structures, and to bring them back to life. In exchange, the groups agreed to open their facilities for public classes and to provide free demonstrations and performances. Other artists came to teach in the multipurpose classrooms. With the addition of the summer Chautauqua Season, the park has continued to flourish.

Future: A Cooperative Effort Drawing on the park's history and the enthusiasm for its cultural revitalization, major structural rehabilitation and stabilization is now underway. Major interior restoration design will return the Historic Spanish Ballroom to its original 1930s appearance. The ballroom was a venue for great talents such as the Dorsey Brothers and Glenn Miller. The dilapidated 1940s Art Deco North Arcade building is being replaced by a modern Art Deco classroom building retaining the flavor of the Old Amusement Park Era and sustaining the park's mission of education in the fine and performing arts.

A partnership between the Federal Government, State of Maryland, and Montgomery County is funding the project for \$18 million. Each partner will be contributing \$6 million over a three-year period.

Glen Echo Park is in Glen Echo, Md., just north of the District of Columbia. Parking is available in the large lot on Oxford Road, just off MacArthur Boulevard. Glen Echo Park is one of more than 380 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places so that all may enjoy our heritage. Visit our website at www.nps.gov.

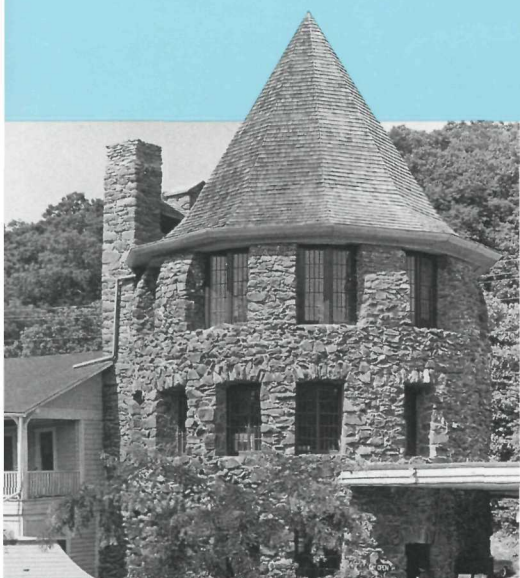
For information on park programs contact:
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101
301-492-6282
www.nps.gov/glec



Exploring Glen Echo Park

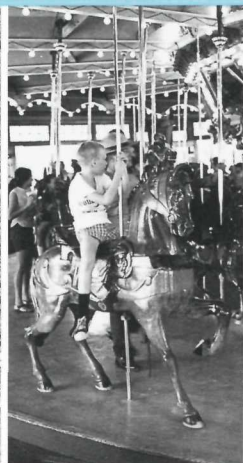
“To promote liberal and practical education, especially among the masses of the people . . . to prepare its patrons for their several pursuits and professions in life, and to fit them for the duties which devolve upon them as members of the society.”

—Chautauqua philosophy, 1891

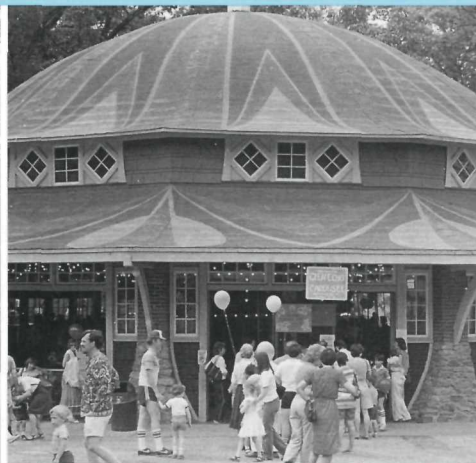


The Stone Tower is the last remaining building left complete from Glen Echo's 1891 Chautauqua period. It houses a gallery now that shows

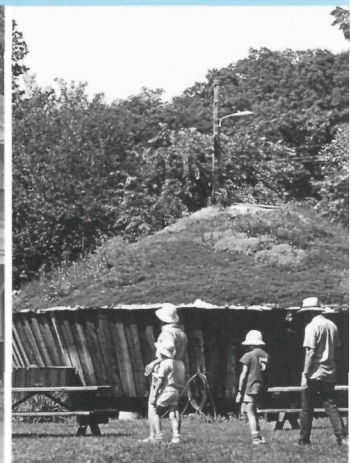
the work of Glen Echo artists who teach and create in the park.



Its Dentzel Carousel typifies Glen Echo's heyday as an amusement park. Brought to Glen Echo in 1921, it featured a Wuritzer Military 165



band organ. It is run on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends May through September and is a delight to ride and to watch.



Designed after an ancient Mongolian dwelling, the government surplus yurts were recycled in the 1970s as studio spaces.

About Your Visit

Stop at the Park Office for a good introduction to Glen Echo Park and to get information on park activities. The office is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Glen Echo Park artists and other educators provide the public with classes in painting, music, photography, ceramics, glass, dance,

and other fine arts year-round. Theater productions and ranger-led programs are also available throughout the year. Dances, demonstrations, workshops, and festivals are offered in summer. The carousel runs May through September, noon to 6 p.m. on weekends and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Picnic facilities are

available first-come, first-served. We invite you to join in some of the park activities while you are here.

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