



SCOTTISH RITE OF FREEMASONRY

# BULLETIN

VALLEY OF WASHINGTON • ORIENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA **SPRING 2017**

## Washington, D.C. in the 1930s

**ORIGIN OF  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**LOCATION OF  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

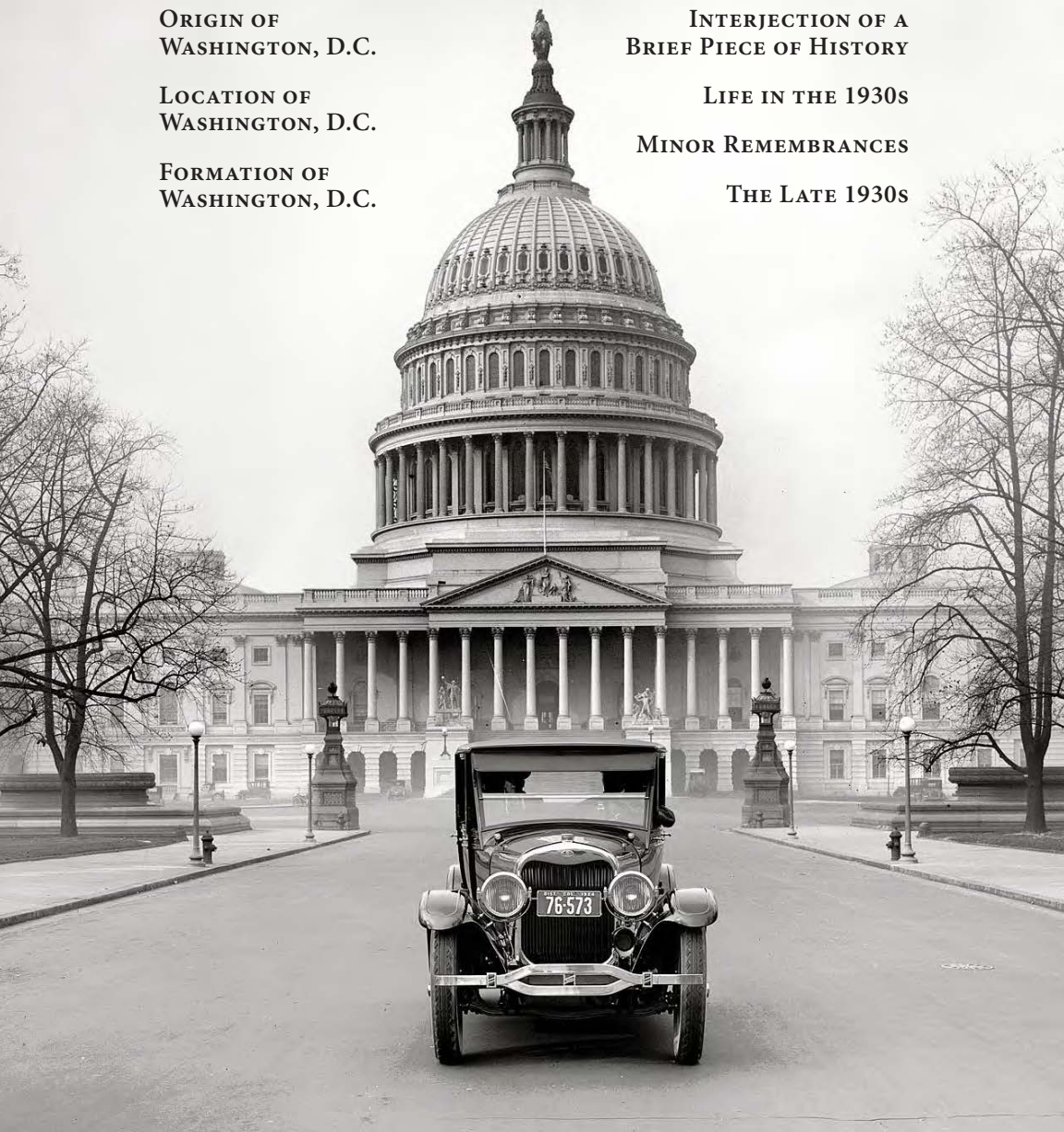
**FORMATION OF  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**INTERJECTION OF A  
BRIEF PIECE OF HISTORY**

**LIFE IN THE 1930S**

**MINOR REMEMBRANCES**

**THE LATE 1930S**



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# SCOTTISH RITE CALENDAR • SUMMER 2017 through FALL 2017

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The meeting time for these events is 7:30 PM, unless stated otherwise, in the 2nd Floor Lodge Room. The meetings are limited to Scottish Rite Masons unless stated otherwise. All meetings are preceded by dinner at 6:00 PM in the Temple Refectory.

## MAY

- 2 Mithras Lodge of Perfection
  - 9 Evangelist Chapter of Rose Croix
  - 12 **SPRING REUNION**
    - 4:00-5:15 PM – Registration
    - 9:15 PM – Recess to Saturday
  - 13 **SPRING REUNION**
    - 8:00 AM – Class reports;  
Light Breakfast
    - 7:30 PM – Reunion Concluded  
with Dinner and  
Festivities
  - 16 Robert de Bruce Council  
of Kadosh
  - 20 **CELEBRATING THE CRAFT**  
(House of the Temple Event)
  - 23 Albert Pike Consistory
  - 29 **MEMORIAL DAY – HOLIDAY –  
OFFICE CLOSED**
- .....

## JUNE

- 6 **PEN/FAULKNER PROGRAM**
  - 10 **TOUGH MUDDER EVENT**
  - 12 **DCSR GOLF TOURNAMENT**
  - 13 Evangelist Chapter of Rose Croix
  - 20 Robert de Bruce Council of Kadosh
  - 27 Albert Pike Consistory
- .....

## JULY & AUGUST

### Summer Recess (No Meetings)

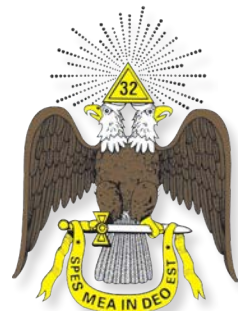
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## SEPTEMBER

- 4 **LABOR DAY – HOLIDAY –  
OFFICE CLOSED**
  - 5 Mithras Lodge of Perfection
  - 12 Evangelist Chapter of Rose Croix
  - 16 **KCCH INVESTITURE  
CEREMONY**
  - 19 Robert de Bruce Council of Kadosh
  - 26 Albert Pike Consistory
- .....

## OCTOBER

- 2 **COLUMBUS DAY – HOLIDAY –  
OFFICE CLOSED**
- 3 Mithras Lodge of Perfection
- 10 **FEAST OF TISHRI**
- 17 Robert de Bruce Council of  
Kadosh
- 24 Albert Pike Consistory



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# BULLETIN

SPRING | 2017

## WASHINGTON, D.C. IN THE 1930s

- PROLOGUE
- ORIGIN OF WASHINGTON, D.C.
- LOCATION OF WASHINGTON, D.C.
- FORMATION OF WASHINGTON, D.C.
- INTERJECTION OF A BRIEF PIECE OF HISTORY
- GENERAL
- LIFE IN THE 1930s  
*Weather, Education, Segregation of Land Grants in D.C., Segregation in the Military and Naval Forces, Central High School, Princeton University, Transportation, Recreation, Easter Egg Rolling, Back to the Parks, Roller Skating, Henderson Castle, Family Functions, Special Events, Taft's Funeral*
- MINOR REMEMBRANCES
- THE LATE 1930s
- CONCLUSION



*The first Inauguration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt March 4, 1933*

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This Bulletin is published twice a year for members of the Valley of Washington, Orient of the District of Columbia, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America.

2800 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009

SCOTTISH RITE OF FREEMASONRY  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



2800



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# WASHINGTON, D.C. IN THE 1930s

BY ILL. CHARLES S. IVERSEN, 33°,  
SOVEREIGN GRAND INSPECTOR GENERAL EMERITUS



*A group of young men play baseball in 1939*

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## PROLOGUE

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Washington, D.C. is certainly the most special city in the United States, both in its origin and in its formation, and unique in the world. Prior to delving into the city's life in the 1930s, it would be best to discuss its beginnings.

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## ORIGIN OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

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The city was the creation of the Constitution of the United States, ratified by our forefathers on June 21, 1788. In Article I, which deals with Congress and its powers, appears Section 8 specifically detailing those powers, including Clause 17:

“To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;”

As seen in the foregoing quotation from the Constitution, Congress created a special district to house the Federal government, under its exclusive jurisdiction; and the commissioners appointed by George Washington to oversee the city's development, named it Washington

in his honor. They called the area in which the city was located the Territory of Columbia, which changed in 1871 to the District of Columbia with the consolidation of the city, Georgetown and Washington County into to one administrative division, now known worldwide as Washington, D.C.

## LOCATION OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

The northern states wanted the capital city to sit in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania along the Delaware River, and the southern states wanted the capital city to sit along the Potomac River: a Congressional compromise was required to effect a resolution of this dispute. It so happened that Congress was dealing with a more serious problem at the same time, state indebtedness.

Following the Revolutionary War with Great Britain, all thirteen states were suffering from a financial burden. Since most of the fighting had taken place in the north, the northern states had the greater amount of debt; so serious, that it was crippling their governments. Therefore, they advocated that the new Federal government take over all of this indebtedness. Since the south was less concerned with the problem, it did not favor the north's request. Thus arose the compromise: to obtain the south's consent to have Congress take over the war debts, the north surrendered its demand that the capital city be on the Delaware River. Therefore, Washington, D.C. sits along the Potomac River.

## FORMATION OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

Now that Congress had decreed that the district would lie along the Potomac River, where exactly, would this be? President Washington, the executive officer of the new Federal government had the primary responsibility to carry out the wishes of Congress in this regard.

He wanted the district to include the city of Alexandria, Virginia<sup>1</sup>, his hometown, and the city of Georgetown, Maryland, both then seaports. Three land surveyors were engaged to lay out the 100 square miles of land physically on this ground. After a considerable number of objections and compromises, the issue was finally resolved. In 1791, the surveyors drove a stake into the southwest point of the district, today located in Alexandria, Virginia. Then they moved eastward and northward until they had bounded the entire district. Approximately sixty-nine square miles lay in Maryland, and the remaining nearly thirty-one square miles lay in Virginia, forming a rectangle. The two states ceded their respective tracts of land to the Congress. It was mostly wilderness. The

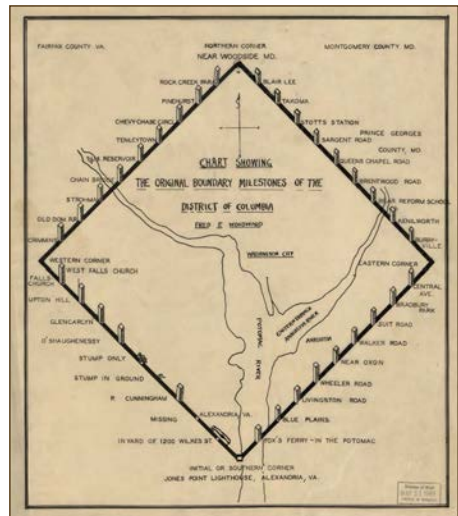


Figure 1 - Boundary Stone Locations

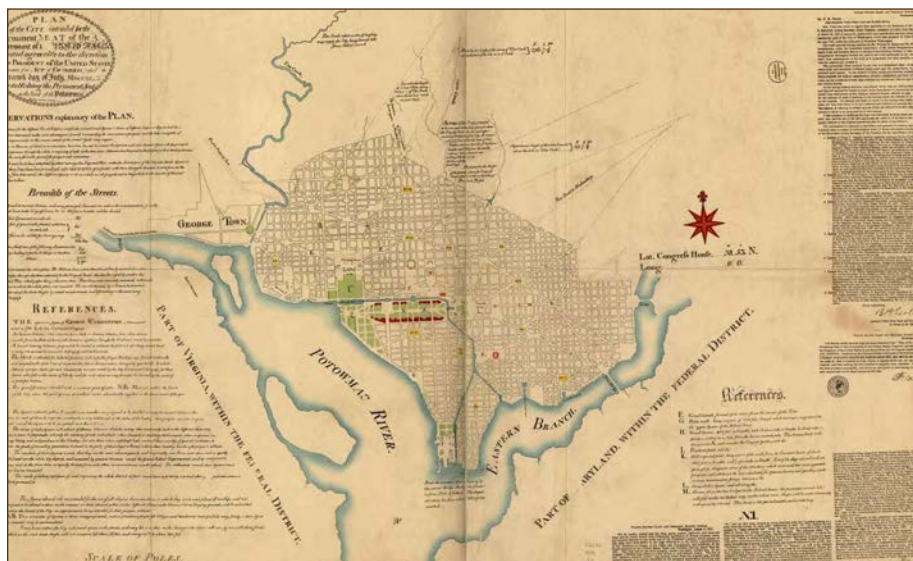
<sup>1</sup> A 1791 Amendment to the Residence Act of 1790 added Alexandria to the District.

Congressional plan was to move the capital city from Philadelphia to the district in the year 1800, nine years hence. Accommodations had to be ready for the members of Congress and the President, together with all the subordinate officials and servants, as well as commercial accommodations to sustain the new residents.

For this very important assignment, President Washington engaged Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a Parisian architect. L'Enfant planned to place the Capitol building, the home of the Congress, on Jenkins' Hill near the center of the city and to have all streets radiate outward from it in all four directions until they reached the borders of the states of Maryland and Virginia. In those days, of course, such an expanse was superfluous, so he concentrated only on the central, or downtown, portion of the city. A substantial portion of the land that was included in the plan for the Federal city was in private hands, and President Washington personally negotiated its purchase.

Unlike other cities, Washington's design was first out on paper, with four quadrants of approximately equal size, the center of which was, as stated, to be the United States Capitol building. From there the city was to fan out from the Capitol into four quadrants. Each quadrant was to have the same street numbering and lettering system as the others, starting with a street numbered "First", the next numbered "Second", the third "Third", etc., running north and south and spreading eastward east of the Capitol and west of the capitol until each ran into the Maryland and Virginia boundaries.

The intersecting lettered streets started with the letter "A", then the second "B", the third "C", etc. to run east and west spreading northward north of the Capitol and southward south of the Capitol until they abutted land of Maryland and Virginia. Street numbers were inexhaustible, but the lettered streets were limited to the alphabet, so additional lettered streets



*Pierre Charles L'Enfant's plan for Washington, D.C.*



were to contain one syllable names, then two syllable, then three syllable names, and finally, if needed, names of flowers, each quadrant to be alphabetized separately from the others. It took over 100 years to exhaust the naming in the city.

Diagonally interposed on the grid of streets, were avenues named after the states of the Union. All of the numbered and lettered streets intersected at right angles. However, when an avenue appeared it intersected at an odd angle, thus the implementation of traffic circles to ease the flow of traffic at intersections, but when traffic was heavy, confusion reigned. The speed limit during the 1930's was 22 miles per hour.

Since most street addresses appeared the same in all four quadrants of the city, postal envelopes had to include the quadrant of the delivery address. Therefore, at the end of the address line on the envelope it was necessary for the sender to add the quadrant for delivery, i.e., "NW", "NE", "SE", or "SW". As we know, three decades after the 1930s, the U.S. Post Office introduced zip codes to the address scheme.

Because of L'Enfant's temperament, it became necessary for President Washington to discharge him from his duties, but his street plan for the city remained and its expansion developed when the city population expanded and needed more and more land for living and working over the ensuing years.

The city grew slowly except during wartimes when large numbers of federal employees, military personnel, and many others having business in the city added to its population. The city then had to provide additional necessities, comforts and conveniences, together with the personnel to operate them. During World War II, the city reached its maximum capacity of nearly 800,000 residents. This also caused a rapid increase in the number of suburbanites in Maryland and Virginia, so their communities were required to add housing and commercial outlets, as well. Today, each of the two adjoining Maryland counties has a higher population than the city of Washington, but in the 1930's, even with the residency needed to operate the New Deal, there was little effect on the two adjoining counties of Maryland, or that of Virginia.

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### INTERJECTION OF A BRIEF PIECE OF HISTORY

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It might be well to discuss briefly the development of the city in its earlier history, the early and middle 19th century. The Constitution explicitly provided Congress with exclusive jurisdiction over the city, but Congress opted to rid itself of the day-to-day operations of city affairs, and so it provided for an elected mayor and city council to handle municipal matters unrelated to Federal interests. Unfortunately, one of the mayors envisioned noble ideas for the comfort and convenience of the citizens, spending borrowed money to such an extent that the city fell hopelessly in debt: removed from office, he fled, but the debt remained.

To alleviate the mess and to retake firmer control of the city's finances, Congress in the 1870s adopted a new form of city government, namely, the creation of a Board of Commissioners to rule the daily operations of the city and its residents. There were three commissioners,

one to be an officer of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and the other two to be residents of the city, one of the latter two to be named chairman of the Board. Each was appointed by the President and approved by the Senate for terms of three years, but eligible for reappointment. Congress continued to be the legislature for the city, but the Board had authorization to adopt regulations to govern the operation of the local government within the statutes of Congress: thus, Congress retained the purse strings. For appropriations of funds, the commissioners had to apply to Congress. It took about eighty years to clear the indebtedness left by the elected mayor. This was the situation in Washington in the 1930's, but in the 1960's Congress again established provisions for an elected mayor and city council with the power to raise funds directly through taxes and assessments.

However, in this article, we are concerned primarily with life in Washington in the 1930s, and the remainder of the article will confine itself generally to that time. Before doing so, however, an important event occurred in 1846 needs mentioning. In that year, Congress ceded to the Commonwealth of Virginia all that portion of the District of Columbia lying in Virginia, south of the Potomac River. Thus, the district lost almost thirty-one square miles of land, one-third of its territory. Virginia apparently wanted its former land back, and the district at that time had no need for it<sup>2</sup>. So today, all land comprising Washington, D.C., was originally a part of the state of Maryland, 69 square miles of land plus a portion of the Potomac River and two smaller streams of water, the Anacostia River and Rock Creek.

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### GENERAL

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In the 1930s, I lived in Washington, having moved here with my parents in early January 1930, and lived in the first of two adjacent apartment buildings on Fuller Street, N.W., just west of 16th Street (known then as the Meridian Hill area). Since we came from a small



*Henry D. Cooke School*

town in Massachusetts, and I was only nine years of age, my father, who came to the city early to make all housing and employment arrangements in advance, was careful to see that we lived a short distance from an elementary school. He took an apartment in 1650 Fuller Street, around the corner from the entrance to Henry D. Cooke School located on 17th Street. My walk to school was about a half block in distance and I did not have to cross a street. My father's initial employment was also nearby, a short walk each day.

A cousin on my mother's side of the family, Jane Richards, lived in the adjacent apartment building, namely, 1630 Fuller Street, N.W., with her daughter, Clare, and her husband Julius Richards. Therefore, my parents were never lonely and became oriented to the city in short order. My cousin was extremely active and was kind enough to include my mother in some of her doings. After about four years, we moved into the same apartment building with our cousins: it was nicer.

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<sup>2</sup> The 1791 Amendment to the Residence Act foreshadowed the retrocession in that it forbade erection of public buildings south of the Potomac, and thereby stymied whatever potential economic development may have resulted.

Back to history. The city constructed a water inlet in the southwest quadrant diverting water from the Potomac River into a man-made tributary called the Washington Inlet that allowed some of the river to flow into it and provide a quiet harbor for boats to dock, some pleasure boats and some commercial vessels. The inlet also carried water into a round reservoir called the Tidal Basin that formed the center of a lovely park. It is the site of the cherry blossom trees given by the Japanese government in 1912, and the location of the Jefferson Memorial. John Russell Pope designed this tribute to our third President, which had its cornerstone laid in 1939, and its dedication ceremony in 1943.

For a short time, probably through the 1930s<sup>3</sup>, there was a bathing beach along the short shoreline of the Tidal Basin. Another leisure activity nearby, was a small marina where members of the public could rent swan boats and paddle boats by the hour for travelling around the calm waters of the basin. Though possibly suspended during World War II, the paddleboats remain a popular recreational activity today.

Most of the southwest quadrant remaining in the city, except for the Army's Ft. McNair, was turning into a slum area, the way it appeared in the 1930s. About thirty years later, the city condemned most of the quadrant, razed the affected buildings, commenced restoration of the area to the then modern needs, and repopulated.

My interest in the southwest quadrant stems from the fact that my father became an employee of Julius Richards, my cousin's husband, who owned a wholesale fruit and vegetable market on Maine Avenue (Water Street). Two years later, in 1935, he bought it from Mr. Richards when the latter elected to retire.

My father's accountant recommended that my mother become his partner for tax purposes, so both worked there for about twenty years when they sold it. There were perhaps five wholesalers in a row with a spur of the Pennsylvania Railroad running behind their warehouses, where merchandise went directly from the train into storage for resale to grocery stores and restaurants. Until after World War II, there were no chain stores like those of today. Many food products appeared after the war, such as frozen foods, improved refrigeration, plastics for packaging, even an increase in automobiles, and other inventions and improvements that induced the creation of the large chain stores of today (Safeway, Giant, etc.) who do their own wholesaling. They nearly eliminated independent retail grocers, but restaurants remained generally dependent on the wholesalers.

Most wholesale markets conducted their business between 1:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, when retailers placed orders via telephone the day or evening before delivery was required. Some customers preferred to visit the wholesale house and select their merchandise personally. My father supplied, in addition to stores and restaurants in the District and its suburbs, also retailers in far reaches of Maryland and Virginia by sending daily ten trucks with drivers and helpers filled with pre-ordered fruit and vegetables. My father had ten employees in the sales department; each having his own specialties, and my mother handled the bookkeeping and other paper work with the help of two other women. Finally, in the 1950's they sold the business to a competitor.

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<sup>3</sup> The Tidal Basin Beach operated from 1918 until 1925.

The northwest quadrant of the city contained the best housing facilities and the best and most of the retail outlets, as it is today. The center of the downtown commercial area was in the northwest sector. Georgetown, George Washington, American and Howard Universities were all located in northwest, together with most private schools. A number of foreign embassies and most federal buildings were also located there, as today, as well as many commercial and professional offices. Public schools were and are located in all quadrants.

Northwest borders on the Potomac River and the Maryland communities of Bethesda, Chevy Chase, most of Silver Spring and Takoma Park (all contained in Montgomery County, which over the years developed into the major bedroom community for those who worked in the city and preferred to live in the suburbs). This was the case in the 1930s.

The other county of Maryland adjoining the District is Prince George's County. It abuts the northeast and southeast quadrants, and the Potomac River, and the Anacostia River flows in that sector. The northeast quadrant of the city contains a very large area owned by the Roman Catholic Church and includes churches, homes for nuns and monks, and a replica of the catacombs of Rome and, after World War II, a cathedral. There are also church schools throughout the city as alternatives to the public schools, as well as the Catholic University. A noted college for the deaf, Gallaudet University, is located in the northeast quadrant. These two counties of Maryland, Montgomery and Prince George's, house the largest concentration of suburban Marylanders in that state and have much in common with Washington. The two Maryland counties now have a population of nearly two million, while the city of Washington has about 700,000.



*Southwest D.C. in the 1930s*

The southeast quadrant includes the community of Anacostia, Fort Dupont Park, Bolling Air Force Base, and St. Elizabeth's Hospital, among other historical places. The Anacostia River that flows into the Potomac River just off its shores also borders it.

Unfortunately, like most large cities, crime has accelerated almost exponentially over the decades following World War II in Washington, drug intake has increased

in similar proportions and in many instances, the two have been related in their growth. The Metropolitan Police Department has increased the number of uniformed and detective personnel to meet this crisis, and other police forces, mostly Federal, have likewise increased staff to handle their specific jurisdictions in the city. However, in the 1930's crime, compared with today, was miniscule.

In the 1930's it was customary to assign uniform police foot patrols whereby each officer would be assigned an area to patrol on foot and to sign books to signify that he had covered

each part of his area (banks, stores, restaurants, large apartment buildings). The officers and residents of each area were often acquainted and were seen conversing on street corners. Residents felt secure even though it was the custom then to keep all residence doors unlocked. There were very few murders.

If convicted of murder in the first degree, the person's automatic sentence was death in the electric chair, the judge having no discretion in the case. The same penalty applied when someone died during the commission of certain felonies.

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## LIFE IN THE 1930s

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Having oriented ourselves somewhat to the city historically, geographically, it is time to look at life there in the 1930s. The comments in this article express those of a boy and teenager, ages 9-19, my age while living there with my parents. Most of the comments concern those parts of the city familiar to me. There is much more omitted than expressed.

### WEATHER

One of the biggest differences between life in Washington today and in the 1930s was the weather, or rather the methods of surviving the conditions created by the weather. Most people lived in apartments or row houses then so that the flow of air, if any, was very limited: little cross ventilation.

Each summer the four daily newspapers of the city (the *Evening Star*, the *Morning Herald-Tribune*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Evening News*, listed in the order of circulation) would picture an egg frying on the sidewalk the first hot day of summer. In order to avoid the long, hot and humid summers, Congress would take a recess, and many government officials and others would leave for cooler climes: foreign diplomats preferred New England.

New England was my favorite spot too. My father would take me to the railroad station (Union Station) two days after the close of school, around June 20, and seat me in a chair car, tip the porter to see that I had lunch and turned over to my paternal grandfather on the New Haven platform, with my suitcase filled with summer clothing. I then spent three months in Connecticut and Massachusetts with my two sets of grandparents alternately until my New Haven grandfather on or about September 20 would ship me back on a chair car to my father in time for school's fall season. My mother took me shopping for winter clothing the next day and I was in class the second day. Whatever I say about hot days in Washington of the 1930s in the summer is purely hearsay.

My parents lived in an apartment near Meridian Hill Park, so on the hottest nights they would take blankets and pillows to the park, as would many other residents, and lie on the cool green lawn until early morning when the night air descended whereupon they would return to their apartment for the rest of their sleep. The residents had only electric fans and ceiling fans for relief from the heat and these devices only circulated the hot air. There was no way to dispel the humidity.

The simplest way to cool off was to drive out 16th Street to the Maryland state line in an

## Washington, D.C. in the 1930s

automobile with all windows wide open and enjoy the evening air circulating around the interior of the vehicle. Theaters and restaurants were favorite places to enjoy relief because they were often cooler and they were among the first places to install air conditioning in the mid to late 1930s.

First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Washington, which my parents attended and where I was enrolled in Sunday School, was centrally air conditioned in 1934, one of the first in the city. It seated 1150 members and guests and was full, or nearly so, every Sunday morning. Places for public accommodations followed suit and so prior to the start of World War II, many theaters and restaurants were most comfortable and were the preferred antidotes to the heat and humidity.

On the housing front, manufacturers, starting in the, 1930s, produced window exhaust fans. When installed in a room, distant from the bedroom it would draw air through an open window and allow the night air to circulate through the bedroom. This was a great help, but then window air conditioning units appeared, which would force refrigerated air around the room, thus eliminating both the hot air and the humidity. Finally, starting in the 1950s, builders of housing installed central air conditioning for the entire house. My wife, Eleanor, and I tried both the exhaust fans and the window air conditioning units; then in

1965, we had our whole house centrally air-conditioned. What a relief! Now, back to tie 1930s.



*The busy streets of D.C.*

What to do about employees in office buildings without air conditioning in the 1930s on the hottest days when the temperature soared? Usually they had permission to leave early in the afternoon. There were some World War I temporary buildings still standing on or near the Mall and were used by the federal government, so some of them did not open at all on the hottest days. Private businesses and professions experienced with the same problems, and closed when necessary.

It should be remembered that in the 1930s those engaged in professions and most businesses, including their employees, reported to work in jackets, shirts and ties (for men) and in dresses and high necklines (for women), and both wore hats outdoors and often carried umbrellas and parasols to shield them from the sun.

In winter, the temperature was rarely as cold as in the northern states. Nevertheless, it was necessary to keep all buildings warm for the occupants, and coal was the fuel of choice. I can remember standing on Clifton Street, N.W. near Central High School and looking southward

over the center of the city below and spread out before and below me on low-lying land. Sometimes it was difficult to see the buildings in the city below due to the accumulation of smoke. After the 1930s, owners of buildings started converting to oil and, later, to natural gas. So today, smoke is largely history.

Whenever there was a heavy snow in the 1930s the city would close off a street in each community evenings and weekends, when feasible, to be used solely by sleds. So, in my neighborhood, children of all ages, some with large toboggans, others with small sleds, would gather at the head of Irving Street, N.W., where it intersects with Mount Pleasant Street. We would slide at will down Irving Street that descended and curved to Adams Mill Road where it leveled off and then descended again to Rock Creek Park via Kingle Road and Porter Street: the distance was about a mile. The sledders would walk back up the same route to take another ride. There was only time for two round trips per evening. Following the sledding, I would usually walk with friends to the Peoples Drug Store at 18th and Columbia Road for a cup of cocoa prior to our return home for the night. There were many fewer automobiles then than today. With one's life mostly confined to the city in most cases, public transportation was all that most residents needed since they rarely left the environs of the city.

In spring and fall, the weather was ideal and many activities were out-of-doors: picnics, parties, the annual Cherry Blossom Festival, circuses, ball games, conventions, etc.

## EDUCATION

Washington, D.C. in the 1930s had a superior public school system: 1) elementary level (Kindergarten to the sixth grade); (2) junior high level (seventh to ninth grade), and (3) high school level (tenth to twelfth grade). I attended Henry D. Cooke Elementary located half a block from my apartment. The junior high (Powell Junior High) was located about a mile north northeast of the apartment. The high school (Central) was located about a mile from the apartment due east. Access to all was by walking. There were no school buses excepting for children with physical need. Those who had to ride did so on streetcars and public buses, with reduced fares for students. While in the last year in elementary school, I was a school patrol boy and assisted younger children to cross 16th Street at Euclid Street, a busy intersection.

The city schools were apparently superior to the schools in the suburbs because many of the pupils, particularly in the high schools, were residents of Maryland but lived in the city during the week with relatives and attended the public schools in the city. Then weekends they would return home to be with their parents and return Sunday evenings. I understand that the parents paid a fee for their education.

In the 1930s, however, the District had racially segregated schools: the white system and the colored (as then described) system. In the early days, the three commissioners of the District appointed the members of the school board (Board of Education). That board then selected the superintendent of schools. In 1906, Congress amended some of the laws appertaining to the schools, one of which was to place the appointment of the Board of Education in the hands of the judges of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. The Board of Education chose a superintendent of education who operated the two segregated

school systems, which were supposed to be equal. The Federal and District governments controlled construction and maintenance of the schools, and procurement of supplies. When appearing before the Congress for appropriations for the District government, the school system was a part of the Commissioners' charge. This was the situation during the 1930s, and continued until the 1970s when the public election of the mayor, city council and Board of Education became law.

This concept of segregation applied also to the colleges in the city. Georgetown, George Washington, American and probably Catholic Universities were open for white students only and perhaps for males only. Howard University, founded in 1867 to educate African-Americans, barred from attending local colleges. It was, I believe open only for them.<sup>4</sup> The University of the District of Columbia did not exist in the 1930s. Segregation was pervasive in those years, not confined to Washington, D. C. When I enrolled at Princeton University in New Jersey (1939-1943), only white males could attend. The same applied to Georgetown University Law School in 1946 to 1948 when I was a student there. Not until the 1950's did these and many other institutions of learning change their policy. The change in admissions followed a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in 1954, when it decreed that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. Almost immediately all public schools opened their doors to all students, and the private schools commenced a program to comply, although the decision did not apply to them. The only time I attended a non-segregated school was in the late 1920's in Cheshire Grade School in Massachusetts where one black pupil was in my classes. He was a ward of a lovely African-American woman who lived in the town.

### SEGREGATION OF LAND GRANTS IN D.C.

About the same time that the Supreme Court announced its non-segregation policy regarding the public schools, it also changed the law with regard to segregation in land ownership and occupation. It had been a common practice in the 1930's and earlier to execute land deeds that contained a restrictive covenant that prohibited the land from being owned by, conveyed or leased to, or occupied by African-Americans in Washington, D.C. If a deed contained such a covenant and the covenant violated, then any occupant of any lot in the block where the covenant existed could apply to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia for enforcement of the covenant. In the great majority of cases, the covenant was enforced. Denial of a request for enforcement happened only in cases of technicalities. The Supreme Court amassed four cases from around the country, one from Washington, D.C., and changed the law by declaring that the courts could not henceforth entertain cases for enforcement of the covenant because to do so would counter public policy. The court could not hold the covenants to be illegal because that would violate the constitution by interfering with an individual's right to enter into contractual relations, and perhaps interfere with freedom of speech. This was an innovation of law. Many old deeds on record still containable old covenant, but no court may entertain suits to enforce it. The effect of these restrictive covenants caused certain areas of the city to be unavailable to African-Americans for ownership or occupation, thus creating white enclaves in certain parts of the city. This established separate black and white living areas.

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<sup>4</sup> From its outset, Howard has been nonsectarian and open to people of all genders and races.



## SEGREGATION IN THE MILITARY AND NAVAL FORCES

Racial segregation was the norm in our military and naval forces until after World War II, namely, 1946. My personal experiences in World War II will illustrate this practice. I served in the Officers' Candidate School for the field artillery in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and advanced training class in Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. Next, I transferred to the Military Intelligence Service for training at Camp Ritchie, Maryland, where I remained for about three months as a student, six months as an instructor, and one month in training as an Order of Battle Officer. I then spent a month in London observing the operations of the British Military Intelligence, before assignment as Order of Battle Officer for the Fifth Infantry Division in Northern Ireland, and on the continent from Normandy to Czechoslovakia. My final duty station was as an interpreter with a War Crimes Investigation Team in Bavaria, Germany. In no instance was there an African-American assigned or attached to any of these units. The above assignments covered a period of nearly three years. I saw African-Americans in two areas: as military drivers and helpers on trucks operated by the Red Ball Express,<sup>5</sup> the major transportation unit in Europe for the United States Army, and as members of smoke creating units employed by our division while crossing rivers during battles in Europe. I bring this subject up to show the extent of segregation in our country until the 1940's following World War II.

Back to education in the District of Columbia in the 1930s. When I left junior high school, I had little or no interest in academia. However, accompanying the transition to high school this negative attitude changed. As if by magic, upon entering Central I experienced a deep desire to learn, earned honor grades, and was, in my first semester, elected into the National Honor Society where I remained throughout high school. It surprised my parents as much as it did me. At the same time, I started to appreciate the teachings in Sunday school, and I believe that the transition in my thinking and attitude had a relationship between the two schools. In any event, it continued through my three years at Central and I was most pleased to have served in senior year as president of both the Dramatics Club and the German Club, plus in serving as an officer in the Cadet Corps.

I would be remiss if I did not mention my favorite teacher and her unusual accomplishments in high school. I refer by way of a eulogy to Miss Emily White, my German teacher. She came to Central High as a Latin teacher, but when the German language was reinstated in the high school curriculum in Washington in 1935 (after having been absent for 18 years due to its removal from the schools in 1917, the year that the United States declared war on Germany), Miss White was assigned as the German teacher. She proceeded to write her own textbook and produced it- by chapters on sheets of paper 8½ by 11 inches in size with three holes in the left hand margin. Then she gave to each of her new pupils a loose-leaf notebook with three rings. Upon arrival in class, each pupil received a notebook and the sheets covering Chapter 1 of her book. When it was time to advance to Chapter 2, she replaced the Chapter 1 sheets with the new ones.

In order to make the study of German more interesting, Miss White would select a few of her students to be actors in a short play and have them memorize their parts in German, then direct them as actors. When the play was ready for showing on the stage, she invited

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<sup>5</sup> Almost 75% of Red Ball drivers were African American.

other students outside her classes to the school auditorium during free periods to view it. The students could not understand a word of German, yet they followed the play because of the action and expressions of the actors, and they laughed heartily at their friends acting on the stage. This likely increased interest in German courses.

In addition to her teaching, Miss White formed the German Club with membership open to all of her pupils, and they met occasionally for reading of stories and just plain conversation. I was proud to be the club president from 1938 to 1939. The most cherished meeting of the year occurred just prior to Christmas holidays when we had a party in one of the large classrooms. There a music teacher played the piano and we all sang carols, concluding the hour by enjoying the large chocolate covered marzipan bars that Miss White had purchased during her annual summer trip to Germany.

When I was serving as First Reader in First Church of Christ, Scientist, mentioned above, one Sunday at noontime I descended the back stairs from the Reader's room to the ground level. At the bottom of the stairs stood Miss White in company with a member of the church. It was between 1956 and 1959, almost twenty years after I had left Central. She looked the same as in earlier years and we had a great talk together. She was then the chairman of the Department of Languages for the public schools. Although other teachers were excellent and devoted their time and attention to their pupils, even in after hours, there was no other teacher in Central or thereafter comparable to Miss White.

### CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

While I was a pupil at Central in the 1930's, the main auditorium in the school was the largest in the city. Organizations that needed that much seating space would rent it for their activities. One was the National Symphony Orchestra, at that time conducted by its first leader, Hans Kindler, a native of The Netherlands. The orchestra held its concerts there and used it for its rehearsals.

During free periods, pupils came to listen to the rehearsals. Dr. Kindler would have a musician play his instrument in the wings, then ask the pupils the name of the instrument, or he would have the orchestra play a few notes and ask the name of the piece, or would play several bars and ask if we could tell the key and whether it was a major or minor key. It was interesting, but did not rub off on me as demonstrated when I took an elective course on music appreciation. The teacher would play a chord on the piano and ask us it's key. I never gave the correct answer, because I did not have the vaguest idea about the key. Yet, the teacher was kind enough to give me a passing grade. I realized then that I would never be a conductor of an orchestra, so I started looking elsewhere for my place in life.

Sometime after the 1930's, the Daughters of the American Revolution constructed their great Constitution Hall, so the National Symphony Orchestra chose the new location as its venue. The acoustics there were superior, the seats more plentiful and more comfortable, and the ambience more suitable.

While a pupil at Central, I was a member of the Cadet Corps (now called the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps) and enjoyed the intra-city competitions between the several schools.

The instructor of this department at Central was Lieutenant Doerr. In the summer of 1944, I met him by chance in France at an officers' mess. He was then a lieutenant colonel and I was a first lieutenant.

By way of conclusion of this subject on the schools in Washington, I can honestly state that the teachers at Central were most effective, willing to stay after school to help us, mostly career people who had no desire to engage in other fields of endeavor, and most concerned about their pupils. They were primarily women, and the change of events since then, lead me to conclude that those were some of the most impressive years of my life. My experience at Central led to some fortuitous circumstances, one of which I believe requires mention.

### **PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**

For some time, I had been interested in a career in the foreign service of the Department of State and happened to discuss it with a Sunday school administrator. She told me that her deceased husband had been in the service and had told her that, in his opinion, the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University had the best training for those interested in the service.

It so happened that one day in 1938, my father was planning a trip north, so I asked him if I could go along and if we could drop by Princeton, New Jersey, on route. He agreed. We stopped by the town of Princeton and found the main building on the university campus, Nassau Hall, built around 1740's. Upon entering, we learned that the Dean of Admission, Dr. Herrmance, was in his office and not otherwise engaged, so we went to see him. During our conversation he asked me many questions and seemed satisfied with the answers, whereupon he arranged a tour of the campus for us. Upon completion of the tour my father and I were both highly impressed, so, upon our return we again sat with Dr. Herrmance in his office. He advised us that we should sign the formal application. My father did so without hesitation. The Dean informed me that my high school records needed review, and that I had to take aptitude and achievement tests, four entrance exams, and appear before a body of alumni in Washington who would report their opinion on my personality and compatibility with the other students, all male and white then. This was to take place in Washington on The George Washington University campus starting in a few months. Everything happened as the dean had indicated until all was completed. Then, a short time later, I received a letter from the dean indicating my acceptance into the Class of 1943. Every step of this experience was most harmonious.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation in Washington in the 1930s consisted of automobiles and trucks, of course, also buses, trolleys (called streetcars) and taxis, also horses and wagons. A private firm, the Capital Transit Company, controlled by Mr. O. Roy Chalk, owned the buses and streetcars. The equipment, track maintenance, employees, and other matters concerned with the operation of the system were the responsibility and cost of the owner. As the population of the city entered upon a period of growth due to the increase of residents needed to operate the expansive New Deal programs new problems appeared. Whenever there was a tie-up or delay in arrivals at stops, an outcry would arise, frequently printed in the Washington Post,

that usually advocated public ownership of the system. Up to that time, the city did not bear the cost of operation. However, it happened after several years of complaints, and the city took over the system and its expenses in the 1940s.

Streetcars seemed to be more popular than the buses because of the smooth ride caused by gliding along the smooth tracks, and the streetcars were larger and could carry more passengers. However, sometimes problems would arise concerning the tracks or an accident or other incident would occur. The streetcar could not avoid the obstacle by driving around a block or two as a bus could do. At traffic circles the trolley tracks in both directions were on the same side of the circle, so one track was bucking the oncoming automobiles flowing on the tracks. Until the introduction of the subway system (the Metro in Washington commencing in the 1970s) the traffic congestion increased and at the expense of the public who then had to pay all operating expenses and continually faced with increasing fares.



*Traffic in the streets of D.C.*



*Passengers riding a D.C. streetcar*

Taxis had been available for many years. Corporations owned some of them in the 1930s, rented individually to the drivers. An example were the Diamond Cab and Yellow Cab companies who advertised their cleanliness and politeness of their drivers. Others owned by individuals, who licensed to be independent taxi owners, as well as drivers. There were no taximeters as there were in most cities. Washington had several zones and the fare based on the number of zones entered during a trip. Passengers

would occasionally complain that they had not entered as many zones as charged by the driver, or that the cab was dirty, or that they could not understand the driver's foreign accent, etc. This occupation was popular with immigrants who could not find other employment. There were instances where drivers were robbed, assaulted, or both. For a while in the 1950's,

I served part of one day a week on the Hackers' Appeal Board in the city where we heard complaints by passengers against taxi drivers. On occasion the result of a hearing would affect the continued right of a driver to ply his trade. Most drivers, however, were neat and courteous and seemed to enjoy the job of driving their cabs and meeting the public. They usually received generous tips. If a passenger needed to drive into the suburbs, he and the driver would negotiate the price for the suburban part of the trip.

Horses and wagons were still in use by delivery companies such as dairies and ice companies. I remember as a boy in the early 1930s hearing the milkman drive his horse and wagon down the street and stop at the entrance to our apartment building, then hear the jingling of bottles carried to and from the wagon. Many people had milk, cream, eggs, butter and other such products delivered on schedule. This was usually before dawn. Then the horse and ice wagon would follow and stop at the entrance while the driver carried a hunk of square ice with his tongs into the building to place the piece of ice into an icebox. If a person needed ice, he had placard that indicated the size of ice he wanted, measured by weight. The deliveryman would place the block of ice in the box and remove any small, unused pieces. Since no one locked his door, the iceman had access to the kitchen. The reason that I could hear this activity was because my bedroom window was next to the front door of the apartment house deliverymen arrived every day, and horses knew where to stop without direction. Horses and wagons delivered other merchandise, as well.

## RECREATION

Washington, D.C. is and was replete with recreation areas, some owned by the federal government and some by the city. The largest by far was and is Rock Creek Park, a park kept in its natural habitat, and includes the National Zoological Park. I believe that the entire park covers about 5% of the land area of the District of Columbia. It encases Rock Creek that comes to the city via Montgomery County, Maryland. It is located, in the northwest quadrant of the city and runs in a north-south direction, dividing the quadrant about in half. Maintained by the National Park Service to resemble the time when the Indians lived there, and left to grow and develop pretty much as nature dictates. At one time, the southern portion of Rock Creek, which flows from north to south, was navigable by small boats that would move merchandise back and forth to and from the Potomac River. Tributaries and drainage systems flow into it, and the creek itself flows into the Potomac River in Georgetown. The "Rock" part of the name of the creek because it is loaded with giant rocks (boulders), particularly in its central portion.

I understand that before the 1920s the park took on its present appearance by the paving of Beach Drive, the main artery in the park from the northern end to Rock Creek Parkway and the Potomac River. Several other paved streets that intersect Beach Drive, are Rock Creek Parkway, Park Road, Tilden Street, Broad Branch Road, Bingham Drive, Sherrill Drive, the Military Road overpass with entries into the park, and others.

While driving along Beach Drive, the creek appears alternately on the west and then on the east side of the drive. The crossings of vehicles over the creek are now by bridges, but in the 1930s and earlier days the crossings were by fords. The creek would cross the road and cars would proceed through the creek while staying on the road, elevated at the crossing

point the creek was only two to five inches deep: the speed limit was five miles per hour. Unfortunately, when a heavy rain came down, the increased depth at the site of the ford made vehicular crossings dangerous, so the fords would close until the depth returned to normal. Many tourists disliked the fords and stayed out of the park.

Near one of the fords that is still in place but made obsolete by the construction of a modern bypassing bridge, sits a century old log structure that is called "Miller's Cabin." Back before 1900, Joaquin Miller, a wild west poet who hailed from the far west of our country, built this cabin on Crescent Place, a high parcel of land just west of 16th Street, N.W., the only housing in the area at that time. He could sit in front of his cabin, and look down upon the downtown part of the city from his quiet, rural home and feel that he was in a wilderness. Then he was inspired to his hobby of writing (still available at libraries), and be at peace. Then



*Miller's Cabin*

one day another human being decided to join Joaquin and built his home nearby. Gone was Joaquin's solace and inspiration, and gone was Joaquin who moved permanently back to the Wild West, leaving his deserted cabin. A Good Samaritan got permission to move the cabin to Rock Creek Park thus keeping the memory of Joaquin and his life in Washington intact. It sits now at its original relocation site since the early 1910s. As a teenager in the late 1930s, I used to walk from my apartment to the cabin's present site.

Since prior to the 1930s there have been several picnic groves in the park, each numbered, and residents of the city are allowed to reserve them for private parties. Most have rustic fireplaces where one can have a wood fire in order to cook food, the wood supplied by the park officials. As was the custom in Washington in the 1930s, the race segregated the sites. This practice ceased shortly after the end of World War II.

The park also has unpaved trails winding through the trees where a person can enjoy the beautiful scenery from different perspectives. There is a horse stable in a remote portion of the park where one can rent a horse so that the rider may enjoy the beauty of the trails and acquire some exercise. I rented a horse there with others, on occasion, as a teenager, but I wonder what it is like today when the horse crosses a paved road now that automobile traffic has increased beyond the original expectations.

The midtown part of Rock Creek Park contains the National Zoological Park, a part of the Smithsonian Institution. Bound on the east by Harvard Street and on the west by Connecticut Avenue, N.W., the eastern entrance was located a few blocks from my apartment, and I would visit it frequently alone or with friends. The closest animals to the eastern entrance were ducks and geese in the outdoors, and seals, otters and bears nearby. The swimmers were in the water most of the time, while the bears had water available, and caves into which they might retreat for rest from humans and the cold. In a heated house nearby were the lions and tigers, also some apes, and next door the new reptile house. Closer to the western

entrance, camels and other desert creatures live, also the birdhouse. Some birds are indoors, but others kept outdoors within a net. The spectators could enter the net with them, but feeding of any animals not allowed. Some of the animals seemed to recognize me, whether



*A group of children at the National Zoo*

by sight or smell I do not know. Elephants, giraffes, crocodiles and other large animal had roomy and appropriate accommodations. A visit to the zoo was both good exercise and enlightening.

There was a man who frequented the park and our paths would cross on occasion. He was a United States Senator from a far western state, perhaps Utah. Chauffeured in a mustard colored

limousine, he would sometimes leave the car to approach an animal for a better look, and we became nodding acquaintances. This was likely his way of relaxing from his governmental duties.

Starting on September 22, 2016, the Federal government closed southernmost quarter of Beach Drive, thus isolating that portion of the park, to start a three-year renovation of the main roadway through the park. The work will cause closure of the park in four steps, thus making the closed portion unavailable to vehicular traffic.

## EASTER EGG ROLLING

Although the White House does not qualify as a public park, it turned into one for tiny tots during the decades-old Easter Egg Roll on its grounds on Easter Mondays. The children rolled their Easter eggs on a broad expanse of its lawn and sometimes enjoyed a visit from the president. In the 1930s and earlier, perhaps until around the early 1940s, the invitation was only for white children. African American children rolled their Easter eggs on a broad, descending green lawn in the zoo, extending down to the road from the lion house.



*Children playing around the maypole during the White House Easter Egg Roll*

## BACK TO THE PARKS

All other parks in the city were either of medium or small size. At nearly every traffic circle is a round park that contains a statue of a famous Union Civil War general, surrounded by benches, green grass and flowers in season, and used in good weather by residents living in the area. An example of a medium sized park is Meridian Hill Park, mentioned heretofore.

It lies between 16th Street, N.W. on the west, 15th Street on the east, Euclid Street on the north and Florida Avenue on the south. The park is level on its northern section and slopes downward on its southern section, and surrounded by a high, expansive wall of tan stone. The upper portion consists of three broad green lawns connected by concrete walkways and bordered by small trees and bushes. It also contains a life-sized statue of Joan of Arc on horseback and flaunting a sword. This covers about 60% of the park. It is here where, in the warm weather, the caretakers, with wickets located proper distances from each other, laid out croquet courses and the visitors invited to play a game. Usually on Sunday afternoons, a group of semi-pro male players who would amass a reasonably large audience in the fresh air, and play nearly perfect croquet. It was a popular venture to see the game or games and there was no cost, a plus when the economy left little money to expend on recreation.

Looking south from this upper portion of the park beyond a stone railing, one would see that steep sloping lower portion of the park. It consisted almost entirely of an Italianate fountain, enormous in size that covered probably 70% of the southern portion. Water would flow from north to south across a series of eight large basins, and end in one extra-large basin where the water would be recycled back to the top of the fountain. On this portion of the park there were two statues, one of Dante holding his famous book, “The Divine Comedy,” and one of James Buchanan, 15th president of the United States in a sitting position; also pedestrian walkways beside the fountain, and bordered by small trees. During days of segregation, including the 1930s, both races could enjoy the lower portion of the park, but only white people could use the upper portion. Separate toilets and drinking fountains were available to visitors, both located in the lower portion.

It is interesting to note that despite the effects of the Great Depression of the 1930s, Washington did not suffer as greatly as other parts of the country, because those working in the federal or city governments did not face unemployment, and those working in fields of endeavor supplying the government employees were relatively secure. So, most of the croquet watchers could probably have paid a reasonable fee to watch the players. In order to limit layoffs and effects thereof, some states would employ only one member of a family in a government job, but the city had no such restriction.

It might be interesting to note that Meridian Hill Park obtained its name from Thomas Jefferson when he was president. It was his idea that 16th Street starts at the front door of the White House and extends in a straight line northward to the Maryland state line would become the national meridian of the United States from which all measurements and times calculated. Even though Jefferson failed to accomplish his goal, the name “Meridian” stuck to the park.

### ROLLER SKATING

For relaxation usually on Saturday or holidays, others and I would roller skate from our apartments in midtown to downtown along F Street, N.W., the major retail-shopping district in the city. On occasion, we would attend a movie at one of four theaters along F Street: the Capital, Palace, Metropolitan and Columbia. However, most Saturdays were my days for attending a movie at the Ambassador Theater at 18th and Columbia Road, N.W. The movies consisted of an adventure story or comedy, newsreel, a cartoon, coming attractions, and



the weekly episode of a ten-part serial film of extreme adventure. I these, the hero would be clinging by his finger tips to a cliff high above a ravine, or be about to drown in slime, or be doomed to suffer some equally horrendous disaster. Before leaving for the office each Saturday morning, my mother would give me 25¢ to see the matinee. However, if I had sassed my mother or had committed some other equally obnoxious misdeed, the quarter was not forthcoming. Every other Saturday she gave me 25¢ for a haircut.

Back to skating. Whenever we skated any distance, we carried a roller skate key on a string around our necks, as well as one or two extra skate wheels in our pockets. If a wheel gave out, the skating stopped, and we had to walk home carrying our heavy skates. They were made of iron excepting for the leather straps that held the skates to our ankles and heels. The old-fashioned skates of those days clamped in the front to the leather soles of our shoes and the straps kept our feet in place. You could hear the skates clearly two blocks away when in action, as we glided along the sidewalk, jumped off the curb, crossed the street and jumped up onto the next sidewalk. Whenever a wheel ceased functioning, we used our key to remove it and replace it with a new one. In order to slow down or stop, it was necessary to turn one skate at right angles to the direction of travel, thus reducing the speed or stopping. This made a particularly loud screeching noise and eventually wore out the wheels.

In addition to skating downtown, we enjoyed skating northward on 16th Street to Kennedy Street, N.W. where there was an abandoned reservoir that used to supply fresh water to that area but had been replaced. The two empty concrete abysses remained in place without any written warnings of danger. They were about 20 feet deep. Across the center that divided them was a concrete walkway about four feet wide and some of the teens would walk or run across it (a distance of about 30 feet) to the other side and back. I did not hear of any mishaps, but if one had it might have proven fatal. I often wondered why someone had not fallen into the ravine during a dark night. After World War II, the City constructed a baseball diamond to cover the filled ravines.

## HENDERSON CASTLE

Across 16th Street from Meridian Hill Park stood a large red brick castle surrounded by a high matching red stone wall. It was called “Henderson’s Castle” because it was built and occupied by Missouri Senator John B. and Mrs. Mary Newton Foote Henderson.<sup>6</sup> In anticipation of the glorification of the Meridian Hill area, Mrs. Henderson was personally responsible for construction of several the beautiful mansions built along 16th Street from Florida Avenue to Columbia Road, and foreign governments purchased them for use as their embassies (Spanish, Mexican, Italian, Polish, Lithuanian, and Cuban). The Mexican government owns the one directly across Sixteenth Street from our Scottish Rite Temple, and although the embassy later relocated, Mexico still owns the building. Furnished to resemble a palace or mansion, it is used it for official purposes. To show the influence of Mrs. Henderson, she worked diligently to have the White House moved to a site at the north end of Meridian Hill Park near Euclid Street facing south and overlooking the downtown part of the city. She claimed that the view was extraordinary and the air much healthier. I believe this was her only failure.

<sup>6</sup> Senator Henderson was co-author of the Thirteenth Amendment.

Mrs. Henderson died in 1931, and in 1937, the mansion became a club. I can remember frequent invitations in the 1930s for dances held in the ballroom. Razed in 1949, and replaced by a number of townhouses, only the castle wall still stands.

### FAMILY FUNCTIONS

My parents worked hard and long, Mondays to Saturdays in their business but relaxed on Saturday evenings and Sundays as a family. Both were in good health. Life was simpler in the 1930s for several reasons: lack of recreational funds due to the financial depression, shortage of types of recreation, the radio, movies, sports, visit to museums, and just plain walking. My parents never ventured forth evenings due primarily to my father's unusual hours of employment, so Saturday nights he slept through until about 8:00 a.m. Sunday mornings. The rest of the day was for family affairs.

After breakfast, we dressed in our Sunday best and walked the three city blocks to our church, Sunday school for me, at 18th and Columbia Road, N.W. where we remained for the 11:00 o'clock service until 12:00 noon when it ended. Then we walked back to the apartment for lunch prepared by my mother. Just before 2:00 o'clock p.m., we were walking into the Ambassador Theater for a first run movie that cost a nominal amount. Two hours later, we headed for the Garden Tea Shop on Columbia Road about two blocks west of the theater. The food was excellent and relatively inexpensive (about \$1.25 per diner), plus tip (no sales tax then). The dinner consisted of appetizer, soup, salad, entree, finger bowl, desert, rolls and beverage. Customers filled the restaurant all Sunday afternoon and evening. Sometimes we would eat at one of two other fine restaurants in the area: Colonial Inn at 18th and Columbia Road, and Avignon Freres, which was directly across the street from our church and rather expensive with excellent French cuisine

Occasionally we attended a companion theater, the Tivoli, on 14th Street and Park Road, about six blocks farther than the Ambassador, northeast of our apartment, where on occasion we walked if my parents preferred the Tivoli movie on a particular Sunday. Less than two blocks from that theater was another Garden Tea Shop where we dined after the show.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

An unusual event occurred annually the week of Decoration Day (now Memorial Day) when solicitors for funds for the veterans of World War I were collecting on street corners and would hand a contributor an imitation red poppy that the men would place in their lapels. In the 1930s, nearly every man wore a jacket with lapel, shirt and tie daily in all weather. Then another event occurred on Mother's Day in the same month. It was the habit for a man to wear in his lapel a carnation in honor of his mother, a red one if his mother were living and a white if she were deceased. My father and I bought two red ones at the florist near the church because fortunately both of our mothers were living, my father's mother living in Connecticut and my mother standing next to me.

The first mentioned holiday above was so-named Decoration Day because it was the custom in every community in the country to decorate the cemetery burial site of each deceased veteran of World War I on that holiday. A slight deviation occurred in the District. All along 16th Street, N.W., from Arkansas Avenue northward, in the public portion of that street, on

both sides, bordering the sidewalks were small cement markers. Each one bore the name of a soldier killed in the war and who, when in service, was resident of the city. Early on each Decoration Day, a detail of soldiers would place a carnation on each marker.

Every two months or so, on Sunday, Jane and Julius Richards, our cousins, would occasionally invite the three of us to accompany them into rural Virginia to have dinner at a Southern-style inn. Julius was from the Deep South and enjoyed anything southern. Jane's daughter, Clare, who was two or three years older than I, would usually join us, and there was plenty of room for all of us in Julius's commodious sedan. None of us was large, excepting Julius, but he sat behind the steering wheel. I remember that on one Sunday we drove all the way to Natural Bridge, Virginia.

On occasion, on Saturday or Sunday evenings, my mother served a light dinner to which she invited the Richards and the Burkes, to our apartment, often preceded by a game of cards (usually whist or 500, then popular), and followed by a sing-along. My mother had a piano and would often buy sheet music at the store that bore the lyrics and music of popular tunes recently used in current movies and theatrical productions. She would play and we would sing: inexpensive entertainment. My mother was a fine pianist, having learned from a teacher, and while a student in Mount Ida, a finishing school in Newton, Massachusetts now a suburb of Boston. Her ability sharpened when, immediately following her schooling, she became the personal companion of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 8 miles south of my mother's Cheshire home. The two of them would play duets on Mrs. Coolidge's pianos, so my mother sharpened her talent through her employer's help. Mrs. Coolidge was a noted pianist and a loving and generous person. She was the one who paid for the installation of the Coolidge Auditorium in the Library of Congress in Washington. She also financed a foundation that pays for the frequent musical presentations held in her auditorium, which I believe are still given today. Mrs. Coolidge lived in Washington annually in her apartment at 2400 16th Street, N.W., during the social season that ran from January 1 to April 30 each year.

Back in the 1930s, my parents had to devote most of their energy to their wholesale business, and that caused me to need help and supervision, particularly in the earlier years due to being alone. So, in order to accomplish that, my mother hired a maid who would arrive while my mother and I were having breakfast, my father having left for work around 12:30 a. m. six days a week. My mother would take the streetcar to her office duties after breakfast and I would walk to school. When I returned home from elementary school during lunchtime, the maid would have my lunch ready for me. My father would return home around 1:00 p.m., unless he stopped at his health club in the Southern Building in the city for exercise and, occasionally, a rub down. When he arrived at the apartment, he would take a nap or, in summer time, precede his nap by sun tanning in the back yard. The maid prepared dinner and greeted me when I arrived home from school. In later years, I would go back outdoors until dinnertime and the arrival of my mother from her office. We then enjoyed dinner, read or listened to the radio, and retired for the night. The maid cleaned up and left until the next morning. When not preparing meals, the maid did housework, and sent out the laundry for processing.

On Saturdays, both parents returned home from work shortly after lunch that the maid had given me. Then they both relaxed a bit and my father took his usual nap in the latter part of the afternoon. For supper my mother usually called the Sun Restaurant and ordered a Chinese supper, often Chow Mein. At the proper time, I walked to the restaurant, near Avignon Freres, and pick up the goodies. Having had the luxury of a maid during my early years, a friend recently asked when I had first made my bed. After giving considerable thought to the question, I answered that it was on February 12, 1943, my first night in Reserve Officers' Candidate School in Oklahoma at the age of 22. Between my mother, the maid, and my grandmother, I escaped that ordeal as a child and young man. In college, the janitor made my bed.

### TAFT'S FUNERAL

An unusual event occurred in early March 1930, about two weeks after I had moved to Washington. William Howard Taft, the 27th President of the United States and the immediate past Chief Justice of the United States died a few after days after he had resigned as Chief Justice. On a cold, windy morning, Taft's funeral service was at All Souls' Unitarian Church on 16th Street, N.W. at the corner of Columbia Road. My father and I were standing in front of the Italian Embassy on 16th Street at the corner of Fuller Street, about one block from our apartment, watching the proceedings. When we got there, the service was in progress inside the church; and outside the church many spectators had arrived to watch, accompanied by many army soldiers, some on horseback, with an artillery caisson and many police officers.

After what seemed to be an eternity to a boy of nine, soldiers carried the flag-draped casket down the front steps of the church, placed it in a hearse. The cortege then moved south on 16th Street on route to Arlington National Cemetery for the burial. Taft was the first and only president interred in that national military cemetery until the assassination of President Kennedy.

It might be of interest to note that President Taft was the person most responsible for the construction of a separate building to house the Supreme Court of the United States and its library, justices' suites, courtroom, cafeteria and its many other conveniences. It sits across the street from the Capitol of the United States in which building the court had held its public sessions and private meetings. The justices theretofore did their research and writing in their individual homes. The court met in a room in the basement of the Capitol prior to 1935 when they moved to their own home.

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### MINOR REMEMBRANCES

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1. While we lived in 1630 Fuller Street, my bedroom window was in the rear of the building (fifth floor) and during the warm weather was usually kept open. In late spring and early fall, prior to my departure to New England for the summer each year, excitement came through that window. It started in the late 1930s while I was in high school. The Cuban Embassy faced 16th Street but backed onto Mozart Place, the street that divided the embassy from my apartment building. Evenings, often weekends, the ambassador delighted in throwing parties for diplomats. Noises of revelry and music would carry from the embassy back yard into my window about the time it grew dark. The guests

- would enjoy the Rhumba music, food and drink, also the brightly colored lights strewn around the yard, in Chinese lanterns. I loved it although it often kept me awake for a short time. It was there that I decided that this might be the life style for me, a diplomat dancing and eating my way through life under the most enjoyable circumstances. Only this year, the Cuban Embassy came back into being in the same location.
2. Shortly after moving to Fuller Street from Massachusetts, 1931 or 1932, a new apartment building was erected on the southeast corner of Fuller Street and Mozart Place, then a half block from my apartment. We children would wander around the ground floor of the new building picking up souvenirs, the favorite being small, brightly colored, octagonal tiles used to cover the floors and/or walls of the new bathrooms.
  3. Most Sunday evenings, my cousin Clare would pick me up about 6:30 p.m., and we would walk to the All Souls' Unitarian Church at 16th Street and Harvard Street. The church had a sizeable social auditorium accessible from the 15th Street entrance where we watched a foreign film shown each Sunday evening with English sub-titles. Clare and I could follow the story by using the subtitles. If I had a problem with any of the story, Clare would straighten me out. The film lasted about an hour and a half, so we were home between 8:00 and 8:30. Clare was three years older than I was.
  4. My closest buddy at one point was Bill McKenzie who lived in 1650 Fuller Street with his father, while I still lived there. After Lunch on Saturdays, his father required that he attend church confession at his Catholic church located at 16th Street and Park Road. We would work our way up there and I would sit in the last pew (no service in progress) while he visited with the priest. Then he would serve his penances, repetition of prayers, until he had finished, then we would leave. His father, his mother having died or having left the family home was raising him, so he was most considerate of his father's wishes, and knew that his father worked hard, took good care of him, and was a lonely man.
  5. While in high school, I took German lessons, as stated above, so late in the evenings just prior to retirement for bed, I turned on the short-wave radio that I owned and listened to a foreign German station beamed from Germany to the United States, and perhaps elsewhere. I could pick up only a portion of what I heard, but it gave me a different perspective of the language that I was not getting (the spoken German). A couple of times I heard Hitler speaking, mostly shouting, at a rally. It was probably pure propaganda, but it made no impression on me as such.
  6. As a little boy in grammar school behind my apartment, we danced around the May pole on May Day, each holding a ribbon while skipping in circles and singing, "Here we go 'round the mulberry bush." One boy about my age sounded like a frog when he sang, so the rest of us would sing softly so that his voice would predominate. Then in my senior year in grammar school, I, like the other seniors, was allotted a small piece of dirt ground where we planted seeds given to us in late April and kept the ground weed less and moist until school closed around June 20. It was interesting to watch the seeds turn into vegetables or flowers and then be picked and used while others followed behind the earlier plants.

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### THE LATE 1930s

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In late August of 1939, I left with steamer trunk for Princeton, New Jersey, where I matriculated at Princeton University for my freshman year. My parents moved to their new home a

month later, at 1208 Geranium Street, N.W., near what is now the old Walter Reed Hospital for the Army personnel. When I returned for Christmas holiday, they were ensconced in their new abode. Its location caused my father to drive an additional quarter hour to his business and my mother to extend her streetcar ride an additional half hour, but it was worth it. The house afforded much more space, had four toilets to accommodate guests and the maid along with the family. For about ten years, it was my legal residence while I sojourned in college, then in the Army, then in law school.

Eleanor lived with them once she and I were married in May 1943, and our daughter, Joan, spent her first years there until January 1949. The three of us then moved into our own home in Silver Spring, Maryland, for the next nine years.

While living with my parents, Joan spent her pre-school and kindergarten years in a private school in Washington, and rode in private van each school day. Then her first grade was in Forest Glen elementary school in Montgomery County, Maryland. In September 1959, we moved into our new home at 5013 Acacia Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland, where Joan lived while attending Walter Johnson High School, and was her legal residence while attending Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri.

Because of our long association with the District of Columbia (some of the time my association being a period of legal residency while in college and the army rather than physical residency) Eleanor and I were members of the Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia, celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2015. The organization meets monthly for lunch and an interesting talk about some of the history of the city. It is astonishing to see the large number of people who qualify for membership. In addition to residence in Washington, my office for the practice of law was there for over 35 years starting in 1948.

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### CONCLUSION

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During the 1930s, many residents of Washington spoke with a distinct accent, slightly southern, but distinct from any other. Today, it has disappeared probably because of the influx of citizens from around the country, even the world. I cannot remember the sound, but I believe I would if I heard it again. My first law partner spoke with the accent: he was a third-generation Washingtonian.

The 1930s ended the post-Civil War era that started in the 1870s, and continued for seven decades when World War II encompassed us. The four war years (1942-1945), brought vast changes to our lives culturally, technologically, scientifically, educationally, sociologically, and racially.

After another seven decades following the war, we are no longer parochial, but national, even international, in our thinking and acting. Washington has become the center of our country, even of the world, an economic and political leader of mankind. Where does this Constitutionally-based city go from here?

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