

# W Watergate Hotel Review



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Winter 1975

## Foggy Bottom, U.S.A.

Part 2

When Congress approved the founding of a Permanent Seat of Government it had no funds for the million dollar project.

Virginia promised \$120,000...provided the site be in the Potomac region. Maryland pledged \$72,000. The bulk was to be obtained by George Washington, who was authorized to "accept grants of money and land," and to select the site for the Nation's new Federal City.

In January, 1791, he chose an area with a comely setting (below), but little else. The land was mainly undeveloped, privately-held "plantations." (Originally royal grants in the proprietary domain of Maryland, they bore such names as *Duddington Manor*, *Jamaica*, and *Mexico*, ten acres of which are now the Watergate Hotel and Watergate Complex.)

The only settlements were Carrollsburg, on the Anacostia, and one fronting the Potomac. This 130-acre tract, once part of the *Widdowe's mite*, was purchased by a Jacob Funk in 1765. He divided it into lots, with the river (now Constitution Avenue) on the south, Funkstown Ditch (H Street NW.) on the north. East to west they extended, roughly, from 19th to between 23d and New Hampshire Ave.

A lovely name was not fated for this hamlet. Mr Funk labeled it *Hamburgh*; many called it *Funkstown*. During the 19th century the village grew into a notorious district known as *Foggy Bottom*. A decade ago it achieved the status of a fashionable community.



The most difficult task assigned to President Washington was negotiating terms with landowners and obtaining title deeds for the land required.

Though *Hamburgh* had few structures in 1791 the titles to its 287 lots were held by numerous individuals.

From his office in Philadelphia the President sent instructions to William Deakins and Benjamin Stoddert, "close contacts and men of public spirit, residing in *George Town*." A letter dated February 17, 1791, said, in part:

"The Maryland Assembly has authorized a certain number of acres to be taken without consent of owners or making compensation....This will be principally useful as to the old lots of *Hamburgh*. However, by purchasing as many as we can we shall be free to take, on terms of the act, so much of any other lands in our way and, consequently, those whose proprietors refuse all arrangement....Immediately buy up all you can in *Hamburgh* at lowest terms, not to exceed £25 the acre....Dispatch a private agent for this -- or do it by any other means which, in your discretion, may not excite suspicion...."

### *Nae On Ye Life, Mon!*

The major owners of property in the area designated for the Federal City were asked to sell at £25 (\$67) an acre land needed by the Nation for building-sites and grounds and to *donate* acreage for thoroughfares. The remainder would be divided into lots and sold, with proceeds from every other sale turned over to the Government.

Most of the 19 original proprietors were willing "to sacrifice for the good of the Nation" provided they "accrued good." This prompted the President to advise them "that wilst they were contending for the shadow they might loose the substance." Meaning: be reasonable, or you'll have no Federal City here. The men understood, and agreed. But, none signed away his title at that time.

The one proprietor who refused to negotiate with anyone was David Burns (or, Burnes), owner of the largest "farm" in the city limits. Enraged by the man's attitude, Washington vowed to bring the "obstinate farmer" to terms.

According to some historians, the Chief Executive approached Burns personally. Neither Washington's physical stature nor his status daunted the doughty Scotsman. As for the new terms offered him, Burns' reaction was a terse "Nae on ye life, mon."



*Pan American Union*

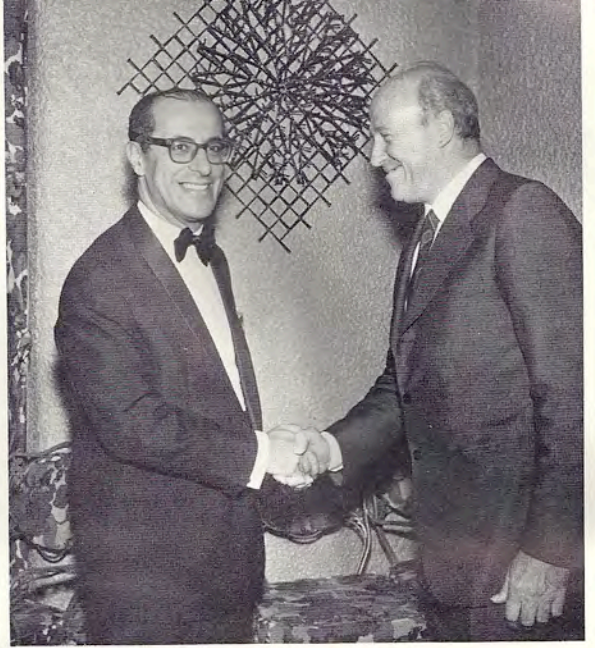
At the time only the President had seen *Langfang's* (Washington's spelling) plan for the city. Burns, however, had seen how often "that Major Longfont" rode about his property. He was certain the Government wanted much of the land he cherished. So, if forced to part with any of it, he wanted profit enough to educate his only child and provide the comforts he and his Anne (Mrs. Burns) had never enjoyed.

Time proved him right: L'Enfant's design placed much of the grand avenue (Pennsylvania) and the President's House on his land. Burns drove a hard bargain, plus insisting that work on the projects be delayed until he had harvested his tobacco fields.

Were the old laird here today he'd be struck dumb with awe, envy and pride. His fields, forests and swamps — from 18th Street to beyond the apex of the Federal Triangle at 6th, Constitution and Pennsylvania — boast the greatest concentration of this city's points of interests: the Pan American Union, Washington Monument, the Mall, National Archives, Smithsonian Institution, FBI, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the departments of The Treasury, Justice, and Commerce, Internal Revenue Service, the Metropolitan Club, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Air Transport Association, mazes of streets and circles, and many more impressive sites and scenes.

[continued on page 5]

"Taking the world's economic pulse" is a function performed jointly by governors (officials) of the World Bank's 125 member states and the International Monetary Fund's 126. Attending the annual conclave, known as *the meeting*, were several thousand finance ministers, bankers, economists and currency specialists from six continents. The many international dignitaries on our roster included Morocco's minister of Finance and Mrs. Benslimane; members of the Board of Governors; chief executive officers of the Bank of America, Credit Lyonnais, Dai-Ichi Kangyo Ginko, Merchant Banking Association; Pierre-Paul Schweitzer, former I.M.F. managing director and now with Bank of America International, Paris, and Mrs. Schweitzer. Pictured here: guests at a reception in the Watergate Terrace.



Manuel Jacinto Nunes, governor of the Bank of Portugal (L), and Dr. Giorgio Rota, World Bank Executive director for Italy, Portugal and Spain and the host for the reception honoring finance ministers, governors, and the delegations from the three countries.



Mrs. Francesco Palamenghi-Crispi (L), with Nello Picca, U.S. representative for I.M.I. (Istituto Mobiliare Italiano); Giorgio Cappon, director general of I.M.I. in Rome, and Sergio Siglienti, co-director of Italy's Banca Commerciale Italiana.

Francesco Palamenghi-Crispi (L), the International Monetary Fund Executive director for Italy, Spain and Portugal, and Gabor Olah de-Garab, vice president-general manager of the Watergate Hotel. In the background: members of Spain's delegation to the annual joint-meeting.



From Banca d'Italia (the central bank of Italy) headquarters in Rome: Rinaldo Ossola (R), the deputy director general, and Mario Ercolani, the bank's central director.



The exciting, spell-binding aura of a performance by Vladimir Horowitz is an unforgettable experience, and one that has occurred so rarely in the past decade. The charismatic pianist, who made his Western debut in 1924, was here recently for two special occasions: his first Washington concert in more than six years, and a ceremony at the Embassy of Great Britain where the "world's greatest pianist" was awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society's gold medal. The historic medal, conferred ever so rarely, was presented to Mr. Horowitz by Britain's ambassador (L), H.E. The Honourable Sir Peter Ramsbotham.

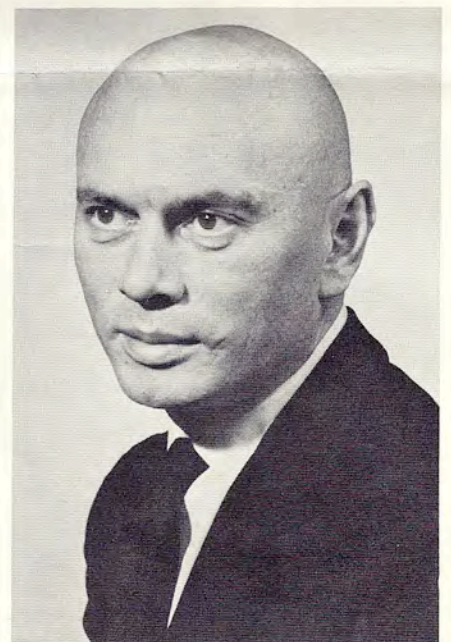


Helmut Schmidt (center), the new Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, was honored at a White House state dinner by this nation's new President, Gerald Ford, and Mrs. Ford. The former minister of Germany's departments of Defense, Finance, and Finance-Economics has been a frequent patron of the Watergate. As a guest of the United States during his December visit, the handsome head of state was accommodated at historic Blair House, across from the Executive Mansion.



Joan Diener, *The Man of La Mancha's* fiery Aldonza/Dulcinea, is the *Odyssey's* gorgeous Penelope...the ever-loving, faithful wife of the wandering Odysseus (Brynner).

Yul Brynner was a gypsy guitarist, trapeze flyer and clown, TV director, and a flop in his first acting role. Then came the stage and film versions of *The King and I*. The rest is history. However, the 54-year-old "symbol of virility and sensuality" is rewriting history as the wandering-hero, singing-warrior and star of *Odyssey*, a new musical that is on nationwide tour before opening on Broadway. Mr. Brynner, and his wife, stayed with us during his six-week engagement at the Kennedy Center.





Charles Veysey (L), Frederick Atkins Inc. president, exchanged greetings in the Bombay tradition with David R. Waters, president of Garfinckel, Brooks Bros., Miller & Rhoads, Inc., the official hosts for an Indian-style "Evening at Garfinckel's" gala held on the premises of the select specialty store.

Another distinguished assemblage was that of store principals and financial officers, and officials of Frederick Atkins Inc., a research-merchandising organization owned by 35 preeminent and independent department store firms. Among them: B. Altman & Co., D.H. Holmes, Liberty House-Mainland, Robert Simpson Co., Ltd., and Trimmingham Brothers Ltd. Many of their executives were here for the annual meeting, as were Robert D. Harrison, president of John Wanamaker, Philadelphia; John W. Sheldon, chairman of the board of Chicago's Chas. A. Stevens & Co.; William M. Sanderson, R.H. Stearns & Co. president, Boston; George M. Ivey, Jr., J.B. Ivey & Co. president, Charlotte, N.C.; L. Tyler Carlisle, president of Carlisle's, Ashtabula; M.W. Proudfoot, Broadway Stores' vice president-finance; and their wives.

Garfinckel president George P. Kelly and publicity director Marjorie Windt devoted much of their time and talents to planning the grand fête that welcomed the coast-to-coast retailers to Washington. Mr. and Mrs. Kelly, local residents, were in the hotel for the four-day meeting, as were the store's executive vice president-treasurer and Mrs. James Branson.

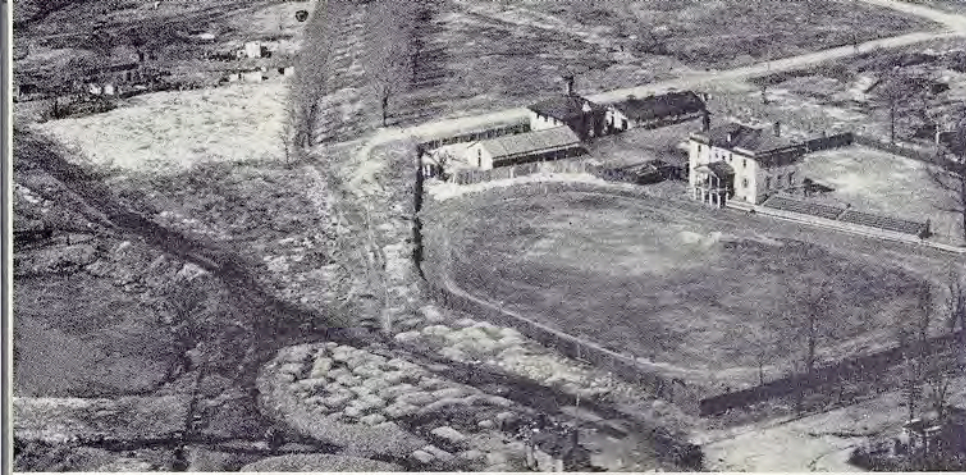


A prominent host, as well as a distinguished guest, was Willard O. Bent, chairman of the board of Garfinckel, Brooks Bros., Miller & Rhoads, Inc. With him are his wife Ruth (R), and Mrs. Peck Klose, Frederick Atkins Inc. director of communications.



Another gala, at the Kennedy Center, was "An Evening with Felix Grant" -- a tribute to the popular Washingtonian for his "devotion to the preservation of jazz and blues." Friends and guests who came from far and near to honor Felix (L) and his "The Album of Sound" (now in its 21st year on WMAL radio) included Ramsey Lewis, Dave Brubeck, Jimmy Witherspoon and Luiz Bonfa (R). The occasion was especially meaningful to the gifted guitarist-composer because Grant is "the man who did the most to bring Brazilian music to the attention of Americans." While Luiz and his wife were here, Felix and his wife June "checked out of their apartment and into the Watergate" for a mini-vacation with their friends from Brazil.





### The Prisoner of Dunbar

The original patentee of the land that brought David Burns wealth was a fellow Scotsman by name of Ninian Beall.

While fighting at the Battle of Dunbar (1650) under Charles I, the 25-year-old Beall was taken prisoner and sentenced to five years of servitude in Barbados. He somehow managed to serve his time in Maryland, where he became a prominent official and landholder.

One of his grants, by order of Queen Ann in 1702, was the 225-acres *Bealls Levells* on the north of Tyber Creek. Part of it, along with acreage on the south shore, was resurveyed in 1769 for James Burns. Five years later *Bealls Levells* passed on to his son and heir-at-law, David, as did a house on the western limit, adjoining Hamburg.

Built around 1750, the dwelling (above right) was a 43' x 20' frame cottage with dining room, three bedrooms and a cellar of "unusual size and depth." The kitchen was a separate structure.

At his death in 1799 David Burns' 17-year-old daughter became the "rich heiress whom many young men were desirous of courting, but most lacked courage to win the prize." The victor was John Peter Van Ness of New York. On a day in May in 1802, Marcia Burns and the "handsome and admired" 33-year-old member of Congress were wed in the cottage.

The young couple lived there until the death of Mrs. Burns in 1807. They built a home at 12th and D, and commissioned Benjamin Latrobe to design one for the land on which the cottage stood.

Completed in May, 1816, the "Van Ness Mansion" was the most costly in the nation and the first to have hot-and-cold running water in every room. In a bower on the equally breathtaking grounds was a mausoleum, similar in design to Rome's Temple of Vesta.

Van Ness was completing his term as mayor when Marcia died in 1832. The city honored her with its first public funeral for a woman. Peter lived on until 1846. The stately residence fell "into strange hands" and soon became the abode of bats and derelicts. Years later, the Van Ness mausoleum was moved to Oak Hill Cemetery on Georgetown Heights, a rolling woodlands that had been part of the 759-acre *Rock of Dunbarton* granted to Ninian Beall at the same time he received *Bealls Levells*.

Historically, Foggy Bottom begins at 17th NW., then west and south to the river, north to Pennsylvania Avenue.

At 1732 G Street is the YMCA, formerly the Columbia Athletic Club, whose playing fields were on Roosevelt Island (from where this issue's masthead-view of the Watergate Complex was taken).

When ferry service to the island ended in 1892, the CAC laid out its field and track at Van Ness Square (above left). Davy Burns' wee home (foreground) also appears in the photo of nine men whose identity is a mystery to us. Most likely, they were among club members who, with others, undertook to preserve the old cottage.

A storm in 1894 battered it beyond hope. On May 23d men encircled it with heavy ropes, and the city's oldest dwelling crumbled into oblivion. One relic remains: a mantle salvaged by the CAC president and donated to the Columbia Historical Society.

### A Renaissance

From 1895 to 1903 Van Ness Square was a florist's nursery, street-cleaners' quarters and German beer garden. Then George Washington University bought the site, and the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution acquired the adjacent one at C and D, between 17th and 18th and neighboring "Old Hamburg." (It no longer had the Scotch-originated spelling of "burgh." In 1894 the U.S. Geographic Board of Names decreed that all place-names drop the final, silent "h." In 1911 it agreed to give the "h" back to Pittsburgh (Pa.), and only to Pittsburgh.)

Also in 1903, the Organization of American States (OAS) approved plans for a Washington center. Andrew Carnegie gave \$900,000 toward the \$1,100,000 project, and the university sold the property at 17th and Constitution to the OAS.

The mansion, barns and stables were razed and, on May 11, 1908, the cornerstone was laid for the Pan American Union, whose romantic, dignified design "symbolizes the amity of republics of the Western Hemisphere." The splendid OAS headquarters, first of the handsome marble structures to grace the avenue's west end, opened in 1910, as did the D.A.R.'s notable Memorial Continental Hall. Later additions were the D.A.R. administration building and Constitution Hall (C, below).

To their north stand the three white-marble American Red Cross buildings. The Corinthian-columned headquarters, begun in 1913, and the D.C. Chapter and the West buildings (1929) occupy the extensive block that had long been the rough and raffish "O'Brien's Court" slum.

When these three organizations chose their sites the area was far from impressive, and magnificent Constitution Avenue didn't exist.

It had been, progressively, the pure-water Tyber Creek, a canal, a dreadful open sewer and, from 1871 to 1931, B Street North, terminating at the foot of 21st Street and the riverfront.

A memento of the canal era remains on the SW corner of 17th and Constitution: a fieldstone, lock-keeper's lodge built in 1833 at what was then the eastern terminal of the C&O Canal. At the NE corner, on the Ellipse, is a gatehouse that had been on the Capitol Grounds from 1817 until 1874.

For many decades it seemed as if the avenue would be forever dis-graced by World War I relics: row upon row of structures put up "temporarily" for the Navy and War departments. When the photo below was taken, in 1946, the "tempo" were slated for demolition. Twenty-seven years later the last of the 50 eyesores disappeared from the Mall.

[To be continued...]



## Kung Hsi Fa Ts'ai

February 11, on the 1975 Gregorian calendar, is the first day of the year 4673 on the Chinese calendar. To all who celebrate the advent of the "Year of the Rabbitt" we extend the time-honored new year wish: *Kung Hsi Fa Ts'ai* (May you prosper).

## Heart-worthy Affair

February is "National Heart Month" and Valentine's Day is the date for the "Affair of the Heart" luncheon—fashion show that has been sponsored by the Washington Heart Association Women's Board for the past 27 years. For reservations call Mrs. Walter Hodges at 931-9440. (This function is not at the Watergate. Our facilities for luncheons and dinners accommodate smaller groups, of up to 200.)

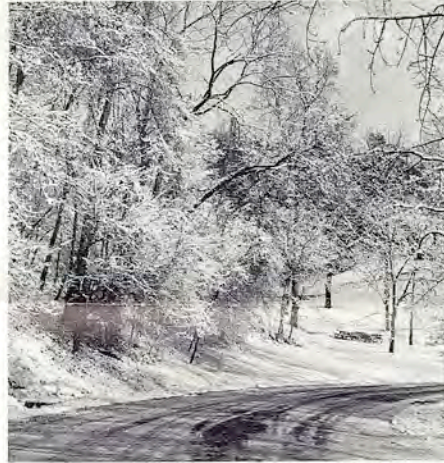
The American Heart Association is one of more than 1700 national and international associations headquartered in Washington. One of the newest is the Holland-American Grains Council. At its first meeting, at the Watergate Hotel, top executives with the fuel compound industry in The Netherlands conferred with U.S. grain industry representatives and government officials.

Other guest-groups included members of the European Parliament; Delegation of European Communities; American Bankers Association; American Academy of Family Physicians; College of Obstetrics and Gynecology; Psychiatric Institute of America; Hillsborough (Calif.) County Government; Tennessee Performing Arts Association; officials from Japan's Defense Ministry; National Medical Association president Dr. Vernal Cave, New York; president-elect Dr. Jasper Williams, Chicago, and other NAM directors and officers.

## Suiting Everyone

...is the title of a fashioning exhibit of 200 years of American clothing and their history. The displays, with something for everyone to enjoy, will be on view through the Bicentennial at the Smithsonian.

A leather product introduced by the Swedes in the Middle Ages was popular with the French, who called it *Suède*, their word for Sweden.



Rock Creek Parkway

## Ah, So.

New-fallen snow is an excellent substitute for the liquid called for in various recipes. Try it in pancakes.

Rubies and sapphires are chemically the same: nothing more than crystals of corundum.  $C_{12}H_{22}O_{11}$  is the formula for a crystalline that originated in southeast Asia. Crusaders and Moors brought it to the West where, until the 19th century, it was a costly luxury. Its name, an Arabic derivative, is *sugar*. In 1973 an Englishman's average consumption was 120 pounds; the American average: 104. Not so now.

## The Guest Register

European Parliament vice-chairman, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, Bt. M.P., had a busy week here, followed by a jolly one at home. A Conservative member of Parliament since 1968, Sir Brandon was up for re-election to the House of Commons...and was victorious.

"Former member of the Swedish Parliament and the United Nations, eminent lawyer - author - professor - sociologist, holder of a Nobel Prize in economics, husband of a noted social-scientist" describes but one man: Gunnar Myrdal who, with his wife, was in for a Pan American Health conference.

U.S. Court of Appeals Chief Judge and Mrs. David L. Bazelon, residents of the Complex, had a truly memorable weekend several months ago. Relatives, friends and many of the Judge's former clerks checked in from near and far for a dinner commemorating His Honor's 25th year on the bench. Guests included their sons: James, and Richard, his wife and two daughters; the Judge's sister, Mrs. Anne Safar; four brothers: Roy, Solly, Mitchell and their wives; Gordon and his daughter, Donna Miller, and Mrs. Bazelon's brother, H.J. Kellner, and Mrs. Kellner.

Also signing in: Agnes de Mille; Goodyear International Corp. president Ib Thomsen; Charlton Heston; International B.F. Goodrich Company president Donald McClusky; sculptor Louise Nevelson; Mergentime Corp. president Charles E. Mergentime of Flemington, N.J.; Ansel Adams; B.F. Goodrich corporate relations vice-president Peter Pestillo; William Fischer, president of Classic Furs by Julio, New York. The names of performing artists again appearing on our roster included Deborah Kerr, Rex Harrison and Julie Harris.

The Watergate Hotel Review is distributed within the Watergate Complex and mailed to individuals, civic and business leaders and firms in North America and overseas. Please address correspondence, news releases and changes of address to

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Gabor Olah-de-Garab

Vice President-General Manager

**Louise's Les Champs Gallery**, in the Watergate 600 arcade, is a favorite with serious collectors, astute designers, decorators and devotees of the rare and beautiful and collectible in fine antiques and works of art. The Gallery's wide and varied selection includes intriguing and interesting items that can certainly make a collector out of the confirmed non-collector. There are some exceptionally fine 18th-century English and French furniture and decorative accessories, each beautifully, painstakingly crafted. And the porcelains! The collection of Meissen, Sevres and Chinese works is especially enchanting. Other selections range from Russian enamels and icons, Georgian silver, and bronze figures to exquisite crystals, French clocks, American pattern glass, stunning lacquer pieces, and antique jewelry and accessories. Noteworthy, too, is the fact that Louise's Gallery is open Sundays (from noon to 6 pm) as well as during the week.

**Shopping Around.** In "these changing times, Watergate Wine & Beverage has made a change." Only in the hours. The schedule is now Monday through Saturday, from 11 am. to 7 pm. ...Some great new additions in gourmet and specialty items, produce and other foods enhance the Safeway's line of products. ...Need a bit of type set quickly? Stop by Watergate Foto in the Mall. They, too, have expanded their line of services. ...Have you become acquainted with the Craftsmen of Chelsea Court? Their handicrafts are works of art for the apartment, office, wardrobe, gift-giving and/or keeping just for yourself.