

219 A St., N.E.

Washington, D.C.



by

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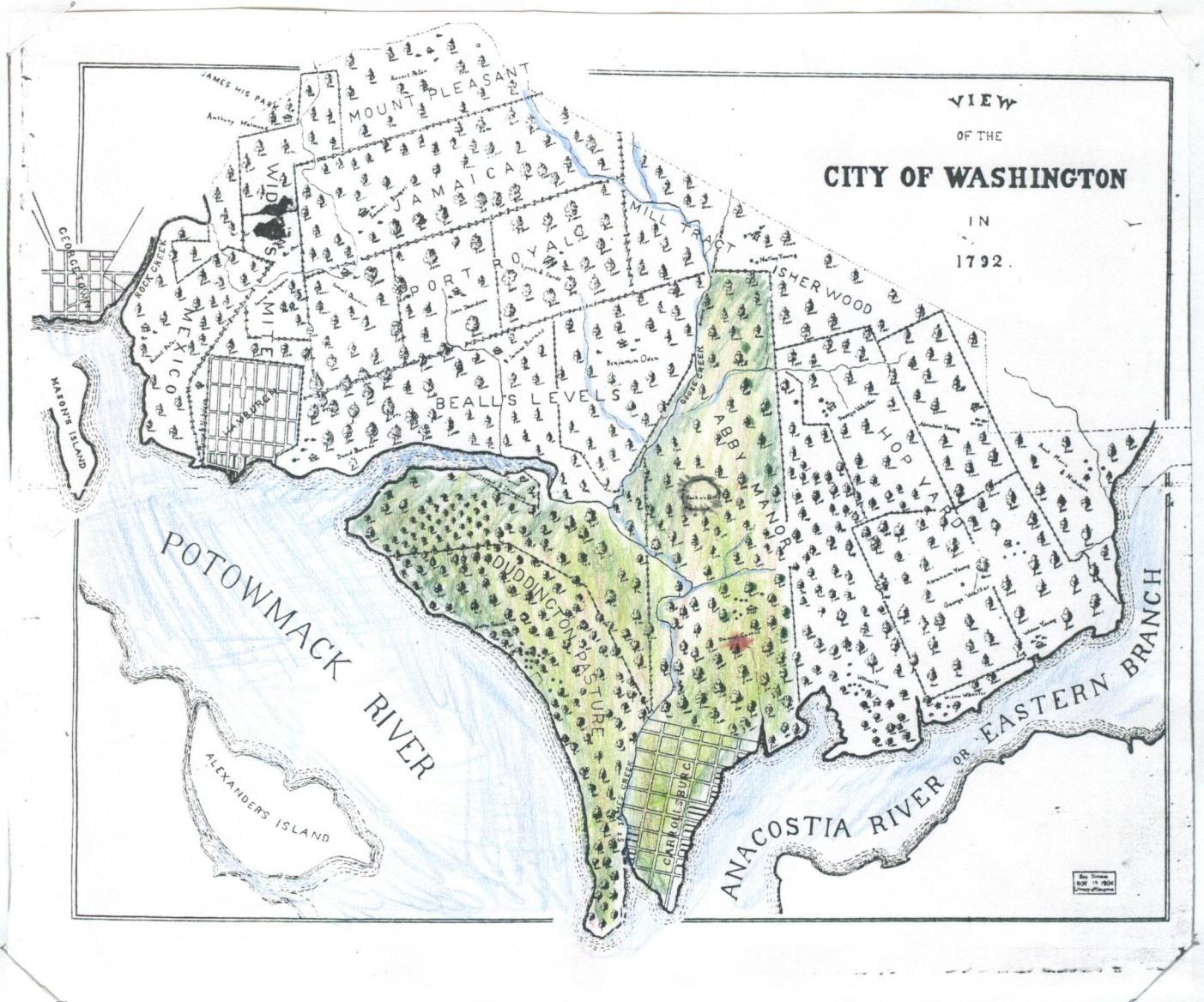
February, 1998

219 A Street, N.E.

(in Square 759,
on lot 19,
formerly of lot 13)

The home at 219 A St., N.E., dates from the year 1889, but the lot on which the home sits, and indeed all of Square 759, has a much longer history. The land here was once part of a very large holding belonging to Daniel Carroll of Duddington, an original "proprietor" before the city of Washington existed. Besides tobacco and corn growing, Carroll operated brick kilns and he speculated heavily in land. He eventually became the largest single land owner in what later became the Federal City (i.e., today's 'old town' Washington, D.C., the area below Florida Avenue). His home, "Duddington Manor", was once located south of the U.S. Capitol Building, just above what we call Garfield Park today (the street Duddington Place divides the former grounds).

On October 11, 1792, Carroll turned over the entire Square 759 with its original 18 lots to the U.S. Government. Other proprietors here did much the same thing, expecting the Nation's Capital to develop quickly and produce enormous financial profits for all concerned. This didn't happen. Compared to New York or Philadelphia, the progress of Washington was very poor and experienced various setbacks, disappointing resident and visitor alike.

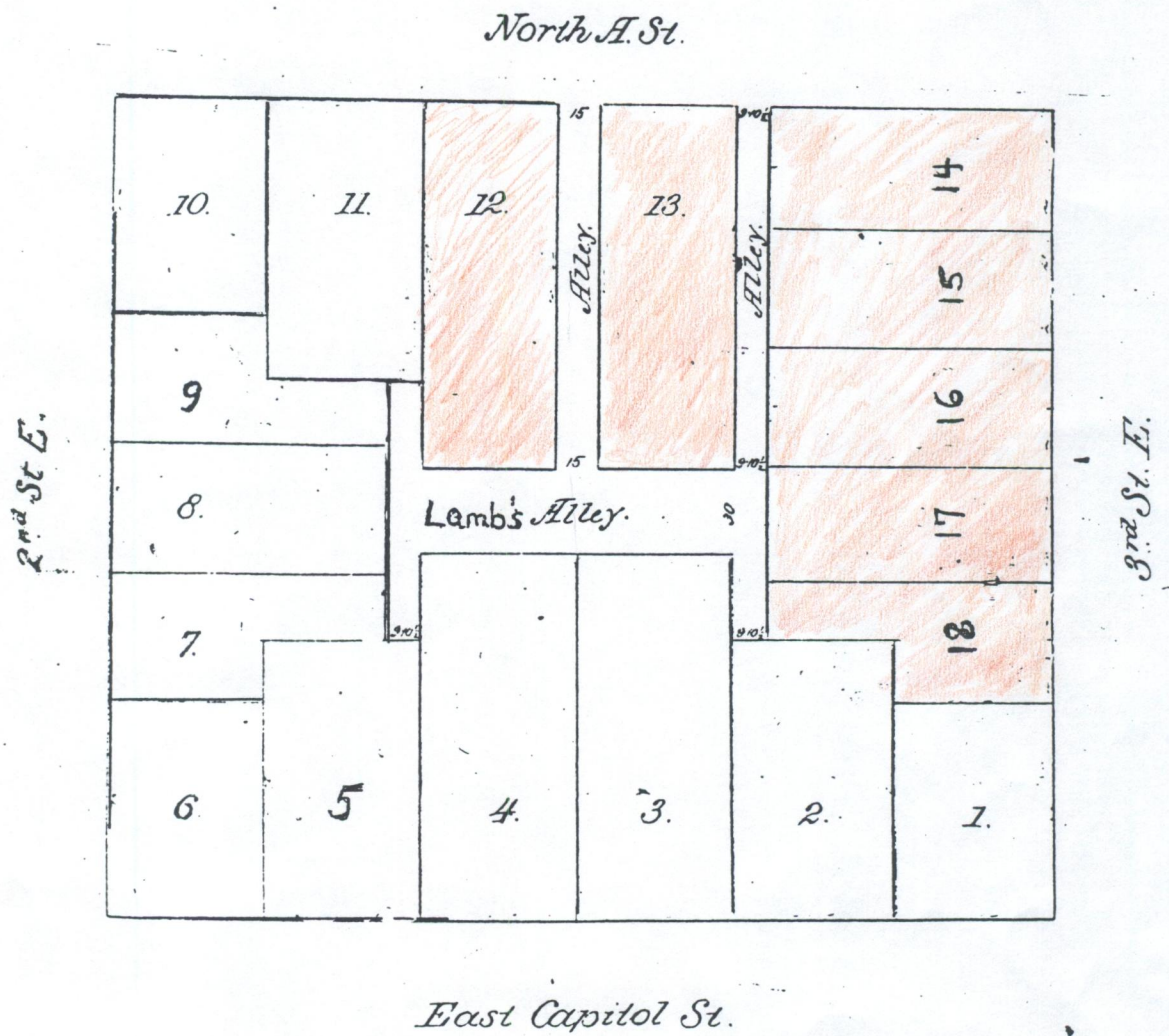


The area shaded in green is the approximate boundaries of the land owned by Daniel Carroll of Duddington. The red dot indicates location of Duddington Manor, the black circle where the U.S. Capitol was eventually built. At a much later time the home at 219 A St., N.E., would be built at about where we read the "M" in Abby Manor on this map. The two towns seen here, Hamburgh and Carrollsburg, existed only on paper, never in fact.

When we refer to Square 759 we are simply talking about the square bounded on the south by East Capitol Street, on the north by A St., N.E., on the west by 2nd and on the east by 3rd St., N.E. Once it was decided to settle the Nation's Capital here in Washington, the Federal Government thought it would be relatively easy to sell tracts of land given to it by the proprietors. But speculation, politics and an unpleasant mix of contrary personalities, not to mention some very suspect financing schemes, brought the entire effort to a near standstill. Square 759 eventually reverted back to Daniel Carroll who finally began selling off a few lots by the year 1829. When Carroll died twenty years later, that is, in 1849, slightly more than half of the original 18 lots in the Square still belonged to him. As already indicated, the home today at 219 A St., N.E., sits on a lot today numbered 19, which was originally only part of a much larger lot-- lot 13-- a Carroll owned lot. No improvements were ever recorded on this lot while owned by Daniel Carroll or by his descendants following his death.

By the 1850s lots 12 through 18 in the Square were owned by a Mrs. Harriet Fischer. Research to date has not revealed any relationship by either blood or by marriage between the Carroll family and Mrs. Fischer. But like the Carrolls, Mrs. Fischer did not build on these lots; she apparently kept them as investments, hoping land prices

Square 759



would rise as the city's population increased. The little we know about her was found in her will probated in May, 1859. She was of comfortable means, if not wealthy, and with some social standing to own as much property as she did. Among the items bequeathed to her daughter and grandchildren were fine French china, silver, gold eye glasses (theater or opera glasses?), gold spectacles, amethyst jewelry, gold watches, chains and seals, and various properties for residence as well as leasing. Mrs. Fischer also specified that upon her death her gravestone should not exceed \$60 in cost. From the tone of her writing and from the fact she noted this at the very start of her will, one might conclude that her intention here was one of frugality. After her death the Fischer estate was assessed for lots 12 through 18 until at least the year 1869.

By the time we arrive at the tax assessments for the 1870s, we note many changes in Square 759. We know that lots 14 through 18 have passed out of the Fischer estate because these lots now appear under the names of different people acting co-operatively to subdivide lots 14-18 again into smaller lots labeled "C through M". The Faehtz and Pratt Real Estate Directory for the year 1874 shows many of these changes; the Square is now occupied by mostly frame buildings. There are four lots with brick homes and only five lots completely unimproved. As for one of these unimproved lots, lot 13, the one most pertinent