

# Capitol Hill Restoration Society

Now in its twenty-first year, the Capitol Hill Restoration Society has grown with the historic community it serves to become an important force for preservation of an architectural heritage and the amenities of urban life. It is an active organization of more than 1,200 members whose talents and interest comprise the diversity of Capitol Hill, but who share in common a commitment to the continued vitality of this residential community. Not all members are residents here, or homeowners, but all have discovered that sense of authenticity which increasingly attracts new residents from other parts of the city and suburbs.

Since 1955, the Society has spoken positively about the importance of Capitol Hill as a place to live. When words alone have failed to dissuade those who would replace streets with highways, open space with parking lots, or homes with highrise office buildings, the Society has sought redress from its city government and the courts. It makes recommendations to the city Zoning Commission on matters which affect the community. It joins like-minded organizations to support initiatives which benefit the entire city, and to oppose those which might impair the residential environment of Washington. In addition, it follows closely Congressional activities which are of interest to the

membership. The Society supports pending legislation to establish a Capitol Hill National Historic District and has completed a survey of buildings on the Hill in connection with nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

In sponsoring an annual House and Garden Tour, the Society seeks to share with its neighbors and friends a glimpse of the charm for which Capitol Hill is acclaimed. Proceeds from the Tour and other activities throughout the year sustain the Capitol Hill Defense Fund, which has been used to promote the Society's objectives.

A monthly newsletter helps to keep members informed of the Society's activities and of current events on Capitol Hill. The Society meets on the second Wednesday of each month at the Capitol Hill United Methodist Church, Fifth and Seward Square, S.E.

We hope you will want to join!

For additional information, write to: Capitol Hill Restoration Society, Inc. P.O. Box 9064 Washington, D.C. 20003

# **Capitol Hill**

by Constance McLaughlin Green

Capitol Hill, including the area sloping down toward the Navy Yard on the "Eastern Branch," is today the oldest residential section of the original city of Washington. Georgetown lay beyond, a separate entity until the 1870's, and the residences that once clustered near the President's House in N.W. Washington have given way to office buildings. Here on the Hill, families had settled into their recently built houses before Treasury and State Department clerks arrived in the summer of 1800's, before President John Adams and the stout-hearted Abigail moved into the drafty Executive Mansion and before Congressmen crowded themselves into the boarding houses erected on New Jersey Avenue for their convenience and the proprietors' profit . . . early comers to the Federal City put faith in the attractions offered by convenience to the Congress House and to the wharves along the deep waters of the Eastern Branch. That building lots nearer the President's House drew speculators and future residents northwestward failed to discourage the families who chose to build on the Hill.

Today houses dating from the 1790's and the early years of the 19th century are extremely few and far between in S.E. and N.E. Washington. What once stood in the low-lying S.W. has largely yielded to the bulldozing of urban renewal. But for over 165 years an unbroken succession of householders have lived on the Hill. If the dwellings they have occupied often lack great architectural distinction, an aura of historical continuity nevertheless still surrounds them. And it is the feeling of a direct tie with the past that

quickly engages the imagination of Capitol Hill dwellers in the 1960's.

Here in the very heart of a great city an enclave has survived where neighbors feel neighborly. Pretentiousness is not an element of life on the Hill. Visitors are prone to exclaim with astonishment at the charming exteriors restoration has effected in the closely built rows of houses lining street after street. Astonishment is likely to turn into admiration, perhaps into envy, when they discover the pleasantness of the interiors. Carefully tended small gardens and well-groomed patios are common adjuncts to Hill residences. Small wonder that here nationally known personages and obscure citizens live side by side with an enjoyment enhanced by the diversity of their backgrounds and occupations. The rigid conformity that critics of modern America attribute to suburban living does not exist on the Hill. A common interest in preserving the good things of the past without imposing a sterilizing standardization gives unity to the Hill community.

Author Constance McLaughlin Green lived on Capitol Hill in a small frame house opposite the Supreme Court until her death this past year. Winner of a Pulitzer prize in 1963 for her book Washington: Village and Capitol, 1800-1878, she prepared this introductory statement about Capitol Hill for the 1964 House and Garden Tour booklet. The 1976 tour chairpersons respectfully dedicate the tour booklet to Constance Green who once wrote our community's history and is now part of that history.

## Acknowledgements

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The Capitol Hill Restoration Society wishes to express its gratitude to the hundreds of persons who have given so generously of their time, talents, and resources for the Nineteenth Annual House and Garden Tour.

Deserving special praise are the Tour Co-Chairpersons. Edith Howard Hogan and Mary Martha Rockwell are persons with the exceptional organizational ability, sense of humor, and devotion to community, that insure success to an undertaking as extensive as the Tour.



# **Tour Houses** One

Jerome Kashinski 213 Sixth Street, SE

A dark passageway beside this very unpretentious façade leads the visitor to the side entrance that opens into a brightly lit contemporary interior. From the original two-story, 15-foot wide and 30-foot deep building, Architect James D. Wilner developed a new environment which has more than double the old floor space and permits the entire interior to be flooded with natural light. Mr. Kashinski was his own builder.

Rising in the center of the house is a steel selfsupporting staircase laminated in oak. Besides directing the viewer's attention upward, it serves as a division between activity areas on the first two

Contemporary furniture is in keeping with the owner's idea that every line element be tightly controlled with nothing to detract from the designs created by cubes and planes. Splashes of color from Mr. Kashinski's favorite art work and plants play against the understated tones of the walls and furnishings.

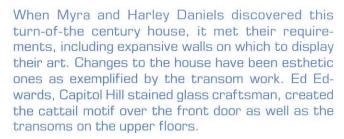
At the front of the second story is an office which occupies a space readily convertible to other uses. In the rear, the master bedroom suite has a wall of windows and doors to the outside. The 60 year old Irish Chain coverlet was guilted by Mr. Kashinski's aunt and is one of his prized possessions.

Essentially a repetition of the second floor bedroom suite, the third floor area has the same type balcony running the width of the room. All exposed exterior wood in the rear is redwood and the glass is thermapane for insulation.

Two geometric patio seating areas linked by a flagstone walk set the theme for the garden. The oval pond softens the geometric effect and the back rank of trees gives an illusion of depth by leading the eve up and out to the large old established trees from surrounding yards. The functional kitchen has a service exit into the front yard.

### Two

Myra and Harley Daniels and their daughter Jessica 6 Seventh Street, SE



Natural finish woodwork and exposed floors add warmth to the interior and act as a foil for both art and Oriental rugs. To take advantage of the shape and dimensions of the living room, the couple chose an eclectic blend of furnishings that are highly moveable and multi-functional, easily rearranged to suit entertaining needs.

Artwork includes a Rouaultand fine examples of the work of Milton Avery and Sam Gilliam in the living room. Graphics and drawings by American and European contemporary artists, including Robert Motherwell, Phillip Pearlstein, and James Rosenquist, appear throughout the house. Flanking the fireplace is an antique tin collection.



Mr. Daniels, a Washington attorney, has his personal study at the rear of the second floor. Ms. Daniels is an associate editor of a psychology journal

In keeping with the couple's desire that their rugs be handmade is the African mat on the guest room floor. Also from Africa is the throw on the sofa. The master bedroom contains photographs from a collection of the 1930s and of their daughter Jessica. The rug is an antique Kilim. Riviera blinds are used here as in the living room. Six-year old Jessica picked her rabbit wallpaper and has some of her favorite art, including a painting done by her school class, in her room. Framed in the adjacent den's bay is an outstanding view of the Capitol. The harpsichord is a handmade virginal.

The Serapi rug and grass cloth wallpaper in the dining room provide texture contrasts. Ample storage space as well as a pass-through between the kitchen and eating areas are significant features as are the antique American sampler collection and the view into the terraced yard.



### **Three**

Mrs. Ruth C. Spangler and her nephew Mr. C. Dudley Brown, ASID 120 Fourth Street, SE

Built in 1876, this "Centennial House" is an excellent example of the high Victorian, bracketed Italianate style. So outstanding is the restoration that the house appears in several publications on Washington architecture. Broken or missing exterior trim has been repaired or meticulously duplicated and trim colors are exact reproductions of those available in 1876.

Mr. Brown and Mrs. Spangler occupy the English basement and parlor floor. The upper floors have been converted into two apartments. Proportions in the Brown-Spangler domain are immense. The drawing room's ornamental strap work ceiling has three medallions and eight pendalogues. Matched, walnut framed pier mirrors the exact age of the house surmount original matched Carrara marble mantels. Agnes Ainilian's painting above the pump organ depicts the scene behind the main house. A Chickering "presentation piece" of the Chicago Exposition of 1881, the ebony grand piano has its original finish. Etchings by the Czechoslovakian engraver, T. Francois Simon, are from the collection assembled by Mr. Brown's late parents, Mr. and Mrs. Salmon Brown of Cincinnati.

Both owners have traveled extensively; Mrs. Spangler on the staff of the International Monetary Fund

and World Bank, Mr. Brown on interior design projects. Their travels have yielded splendid additions to their home. Mrs. Spangler's quests found ornaments, paintings, and silk damask for drawing room draperies, while Mr. Brown concentrated on antique furnishings and accessories.

The carriage house serves as Mr. Brown's interior design and restoration studio. Ornamental cast iron brackets under the balcony once were part of architect Stanford White's New York City town house.

All the antique furniture in the kitchen, including the superb cherry corner cupboard, originally belonged to the owners' Pennsylvania ancestors. The hanging lamp is from a late nineteenth century railroad parlor car. Soft paste porcelain, copper and silver luster complement elegant dining room furnishings such as the American Empire style secretary, ca. 1840. Victorian silver and an intriguing cane collection are next to the basement service entrance.

With all his expertise in things Victorian, it is no wonder Mr. Brown is president of the Greater Washington Area Chapter of The Victorian Society in America.

## Four

Charles Venin and John Perkins 821 Independence Avenue, SE

From the exterior, this mid-nineteenth century frame house with Carpenter Gothic trim belies its internal nature. A skillful restoration several years ago by Raymond L. Gooch turned the interior into a highly functional contemporary dwelling.

Charles Venin and John Perkins, the present residents, appreciate the house's strong statement and have chosen furnishings which allow the house to speak for itself. Both Messrs. Venin and Perkins enjoy cooking and the dining room suits their belief that dinners should be for small unhurried gatherings. The collection of American contemporary ceramics is both decorative and functional. A handwoven Turkish table covering adds to the feeling of gracious, but casual living. Highlighting the very workable kitchen is the stained glass window. Intense colors of the upstairs landing provide a contrast to the muted hues of the rest of the house. Mr. Venin acquired the John Ammon watch works Rolls Royce on one of his trips to England. In the bedroom



hangs Mr. Perkins' Peter Milton lithograph from Milton's illustrations for *The Jolly Corner* by Henry James.

Works by favorite artists and wind chimes by Montana potter Bryan Persha accent the study.

Downstairs, the living room has more of the openness to the outdoors that gives the residents a feeling of country living in the city. The ceramics here are more decorative than functional. On the teak chest under the staircase are works by Dave Shaner from Big Fork, Montana. A clay Montana totem chain hangs near the rear doors. Susan Pear Meisal, New York printmaker, is a favorite artist of both Mr. Perkins and Mr. Venin. One of her graphics adds color to this area as others of hers do upstairs. Making the same clean-lined statement as the rest of the furnishings is the unusual wicker chaise. A handsome Ardebil rug ties together the seating area.

The patio echoes the house's exterior heritage. Appropriate in concept is the garden's gazebo—in reality, a handsomely disguised tool shed.



### Five

Don Ellington 401 Sixth Street, SE

The original construction on this site in 1800 was a small frame house owned by James Mead. Around 1850 the Meads added the brick front, the major part of the dwelling. In the living room, dining room, and hall are the original plaster moldings and medallions, designed by Brumidi, contemporary and friend of the Meads, and well-known for his frescoes in the Capitol.

The furnishings of the house are eclectic. In the front hall are an 1868 Victorian what-not and a Goum carpet. Upstairs is the guest suite, complete with its own kitchen and paintings done by friends of Mr. Ellington. The master bedroom has a semi-antique Serapi rug and a candlewick spread covers the antique brass bed. All handmade quilts are from Mr. Ellington's native Oklahoma. Among his favorite possessions are the late Christopher Morley's desk and two Pop Miller primitive oils.

Mr. Ellington's needlework frame is in the library, a comfortable catch-all where the focal point is a ca.1860 Kuba rug.

Perhaps the most unusual item in the house is the catafalque base cocktail table which, along with

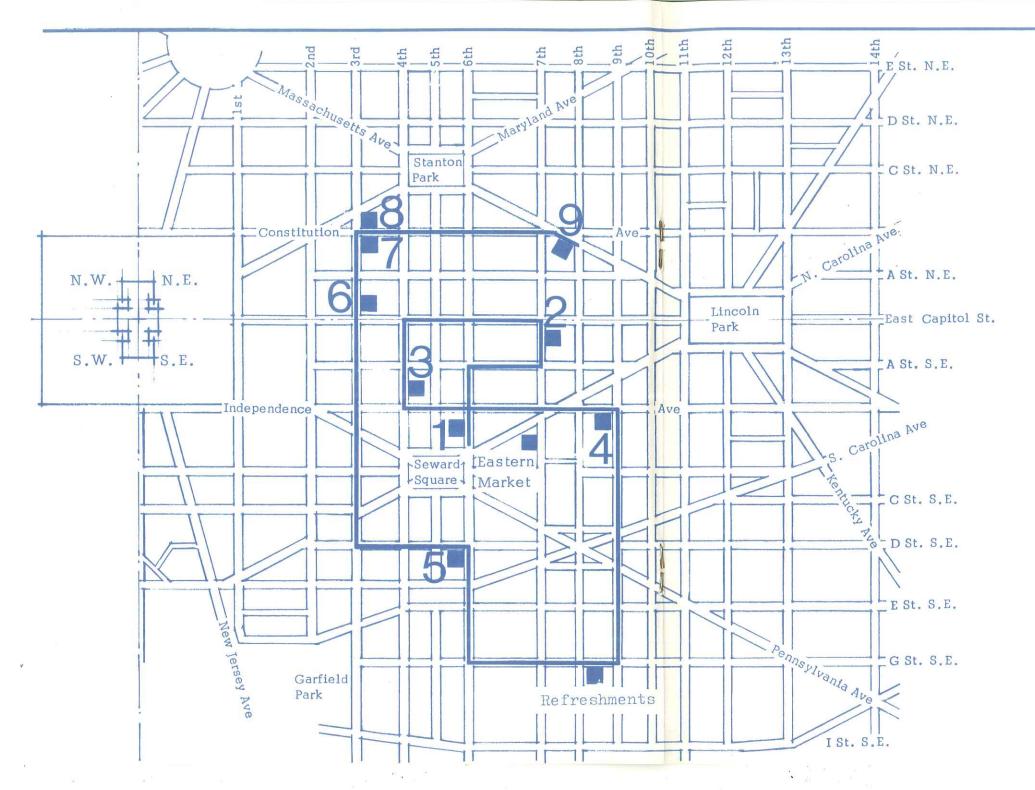
paintings and Steuben and Tiffany glass, all seem at home in the living room with its handsome Kerman rug, Sheraton secretary, the 1740 American Queen Anne side chairs and the antique joined stool near the entry to the dining room.

Heavy crystal candlesticks accent the dining table. From the Scottish estate, Castle Milk, the coffee pot is Victorian as is the tureen with ramshead handles.

The kitchen and guest suite above are the original part of the house. Of particular interest are the copper ware hanging from the old beams, the antique gateleg table, a Kilim rug, and the light fixture from an old Pullman car.

In the sitting area is a 17th century pine corner cupboard and a Little Orphan Annie tea service. A collection of tins sits in the window and a Navajo "Ye" rug is used as a wall hanging.

Notice Mr. Ellington's collection of heat register covers on the side of the house beside the garden walk.



# **Tour Map**

#### **Tour Houses**

- 1 213 Sixth Street, SE
- 2 6 Seventh Street, SE
- 3 120 Fourth Street, SE
- 4 821 Independence Avenue, SE Marine Corps Commandant's House Eighth and G Streets, SE
- 5 401 Sixth Street, SE
- 6 9 Third Street, NE
- 7 305 Constitution Avenue, NE
- 8 308 Constitution Avenue, NE
- 9 727 Massachusetts Avenue, NE



## Six

Jim R. Fairchild 9 Third Street, NE

Predating the Civil War, this charming frame flatfront is the smallest house on the tour. Ideally suited to single or couple living, it contains small-scaled furnishings collected expressly for the house by its previous owner. Mr. Fairchild, then a next-door neighbor, enjoyed the ambiance of the Bigelow Boysen home so much that he bought the property and furnishings when they were offered for sale. Although he has done some rearranging and has added some pieces, Mr. Fairchild feels strongly about perpetuating the Boysen's concept.

Throughout the house are its original random-width floors. Also original to the structure is the staircase which is handsomely set off by the Greek key border trim used in the living room and up the stairwell.

Dominant influences are furnishings from the New Hampshire home of Moses and Eliza Nelson Emerson, ca. 1810. In the living room is their pine drop-

leaf table and brass wood bucket. Joining these are an American Chippendale wing chair, ca. 1790-1810, a Shaker arm chair, a pine country Sheraton desk, and the rosewood 8-day cottage or shelf clock which complements the pine mantel original to the house.

Primitive oil portraits of the Emersons, an Empireperiod drop-leaf cherry dining table and a country Chippendale chest decorate the dining room. Perhaps the most unusual of Mr. Fairchild's antiques are the arrowback Windsor chairs with their arrowhead dovecoting. Kitchen furnishings of pine are from the Emerson collection and include country arrowback pine side chairs.

Mr. Fairchild uses the beautifully shaded patio for summer entertaining. The manicured boxwood reflects his interest in gardening as does the carefully scaled planting of the front yard.



### Seven

Alan and Sally Tassler and their son Nathaniel 305 Constitution Avenue. NE

An excellent example of the pressed or cut brick front so popular in late nineteenth century architecture, this house has been owned by only two families. Essentially in its original condition, the house's floor plan and square center staircase appealed to the Tasslers. They have made minimal structural changes and then only to accommodate such modernization as a laundry and to create closet space.

Glazed brick flooring throughout the basement add texture and color. Its highly reflective surface helps to scatter light in an area which so often can be dark and gloomy. The incised mantel is original to the dining room as is the wainscoting. An interesting walnut sideboard with insets of burled walnut and original brasses was covered with white paint when the Tasslers discovered it in Maine. They then drove it, disassembled, back to Washington in their VW beetle.

There are no upper cabinets in the Tassler kitchen as both Sally and Alan prefer pantry style storage and the open feeling of a kitchen without overhead shelves.

Past the brick patio outside the kitchen is an elevated garden and play area for 2 year old Nathaniel.

Nathaniel's bedroom on the third floor has cheerfully illustrated walls and plenty of natural light.

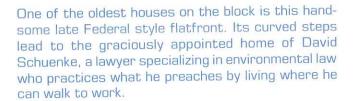
Covering the antique brass bed in the master bedroom is an antique quilt in a variation of the 9 patch pattern. A twentieth century overstuffed chair repeats the scroll work on the Victorian country chestnut dresser and the Baluchistan rug is approximately one hundred years old.

Ample work areas in the study for both of the owners provide Sally space for her free-lance graphic art work. Here the rug is a Hamadan and the one in the hallway is an Ardebil.

To open up the living room the Tasslers removed a hall wall which led to the front door. The wood mantel was in the house when they purchased it and is quite a contrast to the slate one in the dining room below. Contemporary furnishings again blend with antiques.

## **Eight**

David Schuenke 308 Constitution Avenue, NE



Adequate natural light and wall space to hang his art are two "musts" which this house fills for its owner. "Angel Descending" by Robert Schuenke, brother of Mr. Schuenke, hangs in the sidelighted front hall.

Throughout the house is a very effective mix of antiques and contemporary. Fabric on the French Second Empire gilded chairs and the Louis Philippe side chair's blue linen velvet match as closely as possible the chairs' original fabric and reflect the care Mr. Schuenke takes to create a feeling of understated elegance. Also blue is the lovely Chinese rug. Nested tables are English antiques and the small chairs on either side of the Barcelona table are American Federal with a Greek revival motif. "A Moving Force," by Schuenke, completes the grouping. Siamese lacquer

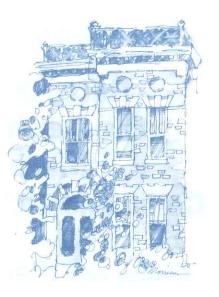


temple offering bowls and other pieces of Chinese, Japanese, and Siamese lacquer ware were collected by Mr. Schuenke during his travels.

Lustrous blue silk moire covers the hall walls. Keynote of the dining room is the handsome Ardebil rug. Victorian silver rests on the burled mahogany sideboard and the wall hanging is a nineteenth century tapestry.

Upstairs, the more casual entertaining area is furnished in cinnabar and beiges. Alongside the portrait gallery of the family is a handwoven Guatemalan huipele (woman's blouse).

Featured above the bedroom mantel is Vida Hackman's lithograph, "Charybdis." The Victorian bed is a long-time resident of Capitol Hill as it spent several generations in a neighbor's home. On the Victorian dresser is a Portuguese Madonna. Mr. Schuenke's use of the already classic Elio Saarinen tables is another example of the skill with which he blends old and new.



### Nine

Myles and Carolyn Doherty and their niece Michelle Karl 727 Massachusetts Avenue, NE

Built during the classic revival era of the early 1900's, the Doherty home has first floor windows with surprisingly contemporary proportions. Classic revival influences are the exterior doors, fan light, and ornamental arch. The doorway contrasts interestingly with that of the Marine Commandant's house whose style the twentieth century revival emulated.

Appreciative of the fine detail work, the Dohertys have retained all of the original ornamentation and proportions possible including the five mantels. Gold and white in the living room set the color scheme for the entire house. A large arch, echoing that of the façade, leads into the reception room with its painstakingly restored chestnut paneling and woodwork trim.

A balcony off Ms. Doherty's fashion design studio looks over the interior of the block and when the trees are bare, provides an interesting view of the Capitol.

Ms. Karl, the Doherty's niece, occupies the octagonal bedroom with its iridescent fireplace tiles and softly colored New England appliquéd quilt. Originally part of the master bedroom suite, the library has paneling made from an old Capitol Hill church's pew ends. The fine Kashmir prayer rug has sentimental significance for the Dohertys.

On cold winter evenings, dinner often is served by the fireplace in the multi-purpose master bedroom. Perfect for the bay area is the American antique armoire from Kentucky.

Painted chestnut paneling in the dining room provides a contrast to the same paneling in natural finish in the hall. Ferns and a silver service grace the 1820 American Sheraton mahogany sideboard.

An oversize door partially conceals the wall pantry, a clever use of often wasted space. Ms. Doherty designed the kitchen, planning it so the self-contained work area does not interfere with the traffic flow. Functional as well as decorative, the gold and white stained glass windows are from an old Capitol Hill church.

On the back porch, the chamfered posts with lamb's tongue detailing offers additional insight into the care which went into the original design of the house.



## Refreshments in the Garden of the Marine Corps Commandant's House 1-6 p.m. Eighth and G Streets, SE

In 1801, President Thomas Jefferson and the Marine Corps' second Commandant, William Ward Burrows, selected this block for the Marine Barracks and the official residence of Marine Corps Commandants. George Hadfield was the buildings' architect.

Completed in 1806, the Federal style house is all that is left of the original construction. The Barracks were replaced 1898-1910. The house measured 25 by 32 feet with four large rooms and a central hall-way on each of two floors. Later additions changed both its size and shape, but the handsome arched entrance remains the same.

Current residents are the twenty-sixth Commandant of the Corps and his family, the Louis H. Wilsons. They bring to the house a strong sense of history and a zest for personal involvement in their surroundings.

Many of the furnishings are heirlooms of previous Commandants. Major redecoration several years ago pulled them together for contemporary use. Furnishings and accessories of the Wilsons' blend with the established decor and Mrs. Wilson's floral

artistry brings the freshness of her Japanese-style arrangements to each room.

Facing the front door is a pier mirror and table from the Wilsons' family home in Mississippi. Oil portraits of the first two Marine Commandants flank it. Portraits of all living former Commandants are on first floor walls. Subtle colors in the music and formal drawings rooms are keyed to the Chinese vase, ca. 1750, on the piano. Imported silk on the walls and American damask draperies provide an elegant backdrop. All of the Imari porcelain has been collected by Mrs. Wilson. Others of the Wilsons' favorite possessions include those in the drawing room's curio cabinet. Among them are Hester Bateman spoons, ancestral cut glass and silver, and the Cybis pieces.

The solarium, an 1891-1907 addition, is a happy transition between indoors and the garden where ceramic turtles made in Taiwan especially for Mrs. Wilson extend a welcome. Several small gardens in one, this area again reflects the Wilsons' tenures in the Orient. Marine Bandsmen, members of the President's Own, play today as they have countless times since their organization in 1798.

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