

PH 035-4678

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY		DATA SHEET
RECEIVED	JUN 28 1977	
DATE ENTERED	AUG 29 1977	

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC ****** The Belvedere Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

The Belvedere

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER One East Chase Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Seventh

STATE

Maryland

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Baltimore City 510

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME One East Chase Street Associates

STREET & NUMBER

4417 Colmar Gardens Drive

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 21211

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Land Records of Baltimore City

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse 5th Floor

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

Maryland ^{STATE} 21202

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Baltimore City Landmark

DATE

1903

City

— FEDERAL — STATE ~~COUNTY~~ — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Baltimore City Commission on Historic & Architectural Preservation

CITY, TOWN

STATE

vation

7-DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

General Information

Location: South east corner of Charles and Chase Streets
Architects: Parker & Thomas, Boston
Designed: 1902
Opened: December 1903
Structural System: Steel frame with steel beams and joists supporting concrete floors.
Size: Sixteen floors including sub-basement, basement and two mechanical floors. Overall height 188' typical floor area: 15,100 sq. ft.
Original Cost: \$1,750,000

The Belyedere was built at the top of a rise in the elegant and historic Mt. Vernon district of Baltimore. It is approximately nine blocks from the central business district. The building was originally a hotel built in the grand style of the French Beaux Arts. The exterior is of an unusual brownish-pink color brick with quoins and other embellishments of terra cotta and iron formed in careful simulation of stonework. The 188' high building has a two-story high rusticated base with a cornice at the third floor level, a main body of embellished brickwork, terminating with a massive cornice at the eleventh floor, and a 35' high slate-covered mansard roof.

In plan the building is a shallow "U" shape, opening to the south and views of the downtown and inner harbor areas. The building is slightly asymmetrical, the west wing (Charles Street side) being 15' broader than the east wing. The main entrance is in the center of the north (Chase Street) side, and the center section of the north elevation is recessed four feet from the flanking wings. At the first floor, the "U" shape is completed to form a rectangle. Two passenger elevators are located at the west side of the lobby and two service elevators and one additional passenger elevator are on the east side. Overall, the building is 185' east-to-west (across the "U"), by 100' north-to-south.

Inventory:	The original uses of the building were as follows:
Sub-Basement:	Mechanical equipment
Basement:	Concessions, kitchens and service
First Floor:	Public lobby, dining and banquetting rooms, bar and grill
Second Floor:	Small banquet and reception rooms, hotel offices
Floors 3 thr 10:	Hotel rooms
Eleventh Floor:	Mechanical equipment and service
Twelfth Floor:	Ballroom, banquet hall, foyer and food service areas

See continuation sheet #1

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1903

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Parker & Thomas, Boston

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Belvedere Hotel is a notable representation of the architectural creativity of the Boston firm of Parker & Thomas (later Parker, Thomas and Rice), which shaped a great deal of the Baltimore City skyline during the first twenty years of this century. In this respect, it shares the spotlight with The Savings Bank of Baltimore, the group plan for the Johns Hopkins University and the downtown home of the Baltimore Museum of Art (originally, the North German Lloyd Steamship Office, later the Hansa Haus).

The Hotel, is, also, a notable representation of that grand and glorious era, the New Twentieth Century, whose "luxuries and vanities of life occasion/ed/ the principal expense of the rich" (Adam Smith). Not only is the structure characteristic of the style which drew so many young architects to L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris in the late 1800's, but the handsomeness of its configuration is exemplary of the mannerisms peculiar to that age. Its public rooms and private chambers entertained royalty, celebrities from every imagined art form, even sweaty Democrats. As confirmed by the attached chronology, the Belvedere has, from the outset, been a cultural matrix of the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland, attracting an eclectic assemblage of people, tastes and philosophies. The Queen of Rumania stayed at the Belvedere, the Democrats held their 1912 national convention at the Hotel, American presidents held court there. . . the list goes on and on. Its success was recognized in 1913:

A hotel is, after all, a domestic building, and like other domestic buildings it should present an inviting appearance to the public. It should even more than other domestic buildings tempt the guest to enter. Not very many modern American hotels have succeeded in creating this impressionBut in the Hotel Belvedere this very impression was produced with eminent success. . . . (The Architectural Record, August 1913)

See Continuation Sheet 4

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet 9

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	360-660	3, 6, 1, 2, 4, 0	4, 3, 5, 1, 3, 6, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
C					D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Glenn Bristow/Coates Nelson, Architect

Jan 7, 1977

ORGANIZATION

One East Chase Street Associates/Cochran, Stephenson & Donkervoet, Inc.

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

4417 Colmar Gardens Drive/925 N. Charles Street

TELEPHONE

366-8503/539-2080

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21211/21201

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

John N. Pearce 6/20/77
SHPO

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: <i>Charles G. ...</i>	DATE: 8/29/77
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE: 8-25-77

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The Belvedere Hotel
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION (continued)

Thirteenth Floor: Coat and dressing rooms ancillary to the 12th floor
Fourteenth Floor: Mechanical equipment and servant's overnight rooms

Elevations

The north (entrance) and west elevations are the street facades on Chase and Charles Streets respectively. On these faces there is a smooth granite base to the height of the first floor window sills. Above this point the facades change, via a generous molding, to terra cotta forming horizontal rustications with segmental arches over the openings. The windows are deeply recessed. First floor windows, being on public space, are generous, with 6' or 8' wide casements 12' or 14' high. The smaller and larger windows correspond to the rhythms of pairs and triplets of normal (3' x 6') windows on the floors above. The rustication is continued to the top of the second floor windows where it is terminated by a generous terra cotta cornice with shallow balconies supported on 6' high terra cotta consoles. The first and second floor south and east elevations, which are not fully visible from the streets, are in brick, with corbelling replacing the cornice.

Above this base, the main shaft of the building rises (floors 3 through 10). As these upper floors are visible for several blocks around, they are treated the same on all elevations. This treatment consists of flat brick walls relieved with terra cotta quoins and terra cotta surrounds with keystones at the windows. Horizontal terra cotta moldings accent the fourth and tenth floor levels.

The main shaft is terminated at the eleventh floor level by the upper cornice (4' wide x 5' high), an elegant composition of corbelling, molding and dentils, supported on large (8' high) consoles which bracket the tenth floor windows. Above the cornice is a brick and terra cotta parapet (10' high), into the base of which are cut the small eleventh floor windows and matching ventilation openings; both are hidden from street level viewers by the cornice.

From behind the parapet rises a 35' high mansard roof, covered in slate and having broad iron moldings at the hips. There are ornate terra

See continuation sheet #2

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PAGE 2

DESCRIPTION (continued)

cotta and iron dormers at the twelfth floor and smaller, simpler dormers at the thirteenth floor.

Interior Description

The interiors, done mostly in plasterwork, were described in 1904 as a "free version of Louis XVI."⁴

The first floor is devoted to public rooms. The ceiling heights are generally about 18'. The lobby (approximately 48' x 50') has a marble floor pilastered and panelled walls and a panelled ceiling with appropriate cove moldings and expressed beams modulating the space. In the west wing is the Charles Room, an elegant column-free dining hall (approximately 42' x 96') with an oak floor, 3/4 round paired Ionic pilasters on pedestals bracketing windows and niches, and a panelled ceiling having deep and elaborate cove moldings and broad, expressed beams. South of the lobby is the Palm or Terrace Room (approximately 28' x 48') with a brick floor, pilastered and panelled walls with corner niches, and a coved ceiling (originally skylit).

East of the lobby is the John Eager Howard Room restaurant (approximately 49' x 56' and now called the Jubilee Room), with an oak floor, a superb oak-panelled wainscot with plaster above, and a polished wooded beamed ceiling. The four columns in the space are oak panelled to their full height. Murals were added later (see below). Also in the east wing are the Falstaff Room (a grill room in an eclectic medieval style), and the Owl Bar with intricately patterned brick walls and a beamed ceiling (added later - see below).

The second floor is unusual in that the center section is three feet lower than the wings. The rooms on this floor were intended for smaller banquets and receptions in the west wing and hotel offices in the east wing. There are eight original fireplaces. In addition to the elevators, an open marble staircase connects the first floor to the second.

Floors 3 through 10 comprised the main hotel rooms and suites. The partitions on these floors have wainscot and panel moldings. Ceilings are 10' high. There are eight gas-burning fireplaces with mantels on each floor.

On the twelfth floor is the Ballroom. It is probably the grandest room

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ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

DESCRIPTION (continued)

in Baltimore, being approximately 46' x 76' by 32' high, with additional elevated side aisles, dormers and corner "tete-a-tetes." The floor is oak properly suspended for dancing; the walls are modulated with paired Corinthian pilasters on pedestals and archways to the side aisles, etc. The elaborate cornice has dentils and various shield, scroll and foliage motifs. The ceiling is coved with vaulted recesses for oculi dormers. The center flat area is the skylight.

In the east wing is the Banquet Hall. Being approximately 36' x 76' by 28' high, it is ornamented with a pastiche of moldings and wainscoting

Between these rooms is a 14' high foyer with Corinthian pilasters and columns on pedestals and a beamed ceiling.

An open marble staircase connects to the thirteenth floor, where coat and dressing rooms are located. Patrons on arrival rode elevators to the thirteenth floor, where they prepared for their entrances down the staircase to the foyer below.

Later Additions

In about 1907 the basement was extended about 30' to the south across the rear of the building to house storage and service areas. The roof of the extension formed a terrace to the first floor Palm Room. At the east wing, the extension was an additional two floors high, providing the first floor Owl Room Bar and additional second floor offices. At an unknown later date, a canopy with an illuminated sign in Old English style was added over the main entry at second floor level. Neither addition enhances the building, except that the Owl Bar is attractive and was very popular.

In 1936 murals were painted in the John Eager Howard Room by a Philadelphia artist. These murals are enlarged reproductions of prints of early Baltimore scenes, taken from the collections of the Peale Museum, the City Hall and the Enoch Pratt Library.

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As New Yorkers have memorialized the Palm Room in their Plaza Hotel, so, too, could practically every long-time resident of Baltimore (indeed, of Maryland) -- famous or infamous, lofty-minded or meek -- recall without hesitation some pleasurable time spent at the Owl Bar or the Jubilee Room.

Beyond these architectural and sociological reasons, Belvedere is important simply because it still exists, not merely as a remembrance of things past or as an anachronism, but as a solid, tactile structure still useful to its community, still capable of tempting the guest to enter. There are already too many faded photographs in picture books of lost architecture, too many magnificent structures whose epitaphs read "demolished" or "altered beyond recognition". The Sherman House in Chicago, the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga Springs, New York and Boston's Hotel Vendome were the Belvedere's peers and contemporaries. They have all been destroyed. The Belvedere has survived as an example of the luxury possible in the first several decades of the 20th century.

The Hotel Belvedere takes its name from "Belvidere", the estate of John Eager Howard situated at Charles and Chase Streets. The main house of the estate was built in 1794, and was located approximately one block east of the existing hotel.

In 1870, the original Belvidere estate was demolished for an extension of Calvert Street. During the next several years, the land was divided and subdivided until the partnership of Perin, Harvey and Brown purchased the parcel known as "Belvidere".

The partners retained the architectural firm of Parker and Thomas of Baltimore and Boston and the construction firm of W.A. and E.A. Wells of Chicato to design and build the Hotel.²

The design of the Belvedere follows a strong trend of Beaux Arts classicism popular at the turn of the century. Contemporary examples of this style include the Ansonia Apartments by W.E.D. Stokes (New York, ca. 1900); the Senator William A. Clark mansion by Lord, Hewlett & Hull (New York, 1903); the Hotel St. Regis by Trowbridge & Livingston (New York, ca. 1902), which the Belvedere closely resembles; and much of the architecture of the expositions at Chicago (1893), Buffalo (1901) and, most notably, Cass Gilbert's Festival Hall at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904.

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Both then and now, the Beaux Arts style has been variously praised for its ebullience and public popularity and castigated for its facile eclecticism and intellectual vacuity.² Without passing judgment on the use of the style, the Architectural Review in 1904 praised the architects of the Belvedere for their clean yet elegant interpretation of the style and for the ingenious way in which they used the height of 11th floor mechanical space to accommodate the unusually generous but appropriately scaled cornice.³

- 1903: The official opening was celebrated December 14, 1903, and was the social event of the season with leaders of art, fashion, industry, finance and the professions in attendance.³
- 1912: Six hundred guests registered at the Belvedere for the 10-day Democratic National Convention which nominated Woodrow Wilson for President. The hotel was so crowded that cots were set up in the halls.⁴
- 1915: When Charles Schwab came to Baltimore to spend \$22,000,000.00 in expanding Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point plant, he made the Belvedere his headquarters. The patronage of his company continued through the years, including many parties for launchings of Bethlehem's Liberty Ships. Daniel Willard, president of the B & O lived at the Belvedere for the first five years of his long residence in Baltimore.⁵
- 1917: Charles Consolvo assumed control of the hotel in 1917 from the Union Trust Company, paying only \$450,000.00 for it. The genial and picturesque, honorifically titled "Colonel" operated the hotel for 18 years.⁶
- 1919: Mary Pickford, probably the most popular actress in the country at the time, came to the Belvedere in April to speak at the war exhibition at the Fifth Regiment Armory and help sell war bonds. World War I brought many other celebrities and visitors from around the world. After Ft. George Meade opened, a contingent of British and French officers, sent to instruct Americans in the arts of modern warfare, frequented the Belvedere bar in their off-hours every afternoon.⁷

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- 1926: The hotel outdid itself on the occasion of the Queen of Romania's visit to Baltimore. A canopy of royal purple was hung above the entrance; her suit of rooms was paneled in silk and furnished with Louis XIV pieces, the elevators were draped in the Romanian national colors; the ballroom was banked with flowers, the walls were hung with old tapestries and an ancient throne was provided for the Queen.
- 1933: The hotel was put into receivership for the second time.⁸
- 1935: The hotel's bondholders came to a settlement with Mr. Consolvo. He left the Belvedere after 18 years as its operator.⁹
- 1937: The celebrated Charles Wilson Peale portrait of Colonel John Eager Howard was returned "home" for a visit. It was back at the site of Howard homestead, the original "Belvidere". The canvas, painted in 1780, had been in the possession of the Hampton Ridgelys for generations and was loaned by its owner, Captain John Ridgely, the subject's great grandson, for the opening of the John Eager Howard Room. The Howard portrait was hung over the big stone fireplace mantel, with huge scenes of early Baltimore painted above the restored oak paneling.¹⁰
- 1942: Controlling interest in the Belvedere Hotel was purchased from the Savings Bank of Baltimore by a group of city businessmen.¹¹
- 1946: Controlling interest in the hotel was purchased by United States Realty-Sheraton Corporation and the name was changed to the Sheraton-Belvedere.¹² The decor of the Charles Room was changed from gilt and green to blue and white.¹³
- 1953: In its fiftieth year, the Belvedere decided to air condition all its sleeping rooms. Seven years earlier, the hotel had installed air conditioning in all the functional rooms and on the first three floors of sleeping rooms, but the public at the time was not receptive to sleeping in cooled rooms.¹⁴

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- 1954: The Belvedere was the first major hotel in Baltimore to drop racial barriers, but the breakthrough lasted only one month, due to the Hotel Association of Baltimore's "white only" rule.¹⁵
- 1968: The Sheraton-Belvedere was sold to Wellington Associates of New York. The following year Wellington sold it to Gotham Hotels, Ltd.¹⁶
- 1971: The Snowden Corporation of Baltimore leased the Belvedere from Gotham for use as a dormitory for downtown college students. The Belvedere, vandalized by the student residents was closed June 30 for health, fire and housing code violations. The lease was surrendered back to Gotham in January 1972.¹⁷
- The Owl Room was the only part of the Belvedere unchanged in all its years and was such a long-standing favorite that a group of its regular patrons refused to let it close with the hotel. And so the Owl Club, Inc. was formed and the Snowden Corporation leased a portion of the hotel for the operation of a bar and grill.¹⁸
- 1973: Gotham Hotels, Ltd. placed a \$3,000,000.00 price tag on the Belvedere, but defaulted on its mortgage payments. The Monumental Life Insurance Company, holders of the defaulted mortgage, became the new owners of the Belvedere Hotel after submitting a \$700,000.00 bid at auction.¹⁹
- 1976: Victor Frenkil bought the Belvedere Hotel. Plans call for 116 luxury apartments (one and two bedrooms and efficiencies, some with fireplaces) and office space on the second and third floors. Boutiques will be located at the terrace level and in the lobby, and the celebrated Owl Room will connect with a glassed-roof restaurant. The ballrooms already are accepting bookings for public and private meetings and parties. A four-story parking garage, adjoining the building on the south side, is under construction. The new Belvedere will open formally in the spring of 1977.

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2. The Sun, March 19, 1903.
3. The Belvedere 50th Anniversary Publication, 1953.
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6. The Sun, December 29, 1935.
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12. The Sun, June 25, 1946.
13. Gardens Houses & People, September, 1946.
14. The Sun, June 15, 1955.
15. The Sun, March 9, 1955.
16. The Evening Sun, October 8, 1968.
17. The Evening Sun, June 16, 1971.
18. The Sun, July 8, 1971.
19. The News-American, January 19, 1972.

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