

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8-86)

1376  
RECEIVED  
AUG 8 1990

OMB No. 1024-0018  
NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Steedman-Ray House  
Other names/site number F Street Club

2. Location

Street & Number 1925 F Street, N.W. [ ] Not for Publication  
City, town Washington [ ] Vicinity N/A  
State District of Columbia Code DC County Code 001 Zip Code 20006

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. Resources w/in Prop.	
		Contr.	Noncontrib.
[ x ] Private	[ x ] Building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Buildings
[ ] Public-Local	[ ] District	<u>   </u>	<u>0</u> Sites
[ ] Public-State	[ ] Site	<u>   </u>	<u>0</u> Structure
[ ] Public-Federal	[ ] Structure	<u>   </u>	<u>0</u> Objects
	[ ] Object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Carol B. Thompson  
Signature of certifying official S.H.P.O.

8/3/90  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
( ) see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register. (see continuation sheet).
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain:)

Patrick Andrews 9/21/90

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
GOVERNMENT/government office

SOCIAL/clubhouse

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories  
from instructions)

foundation: brick

walls: brick

roof: METAL/tin

other: asphalt (addition)

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The structure at 1925 F Street, N.W. is a two-and-a-half story, side-gabled, five-bay brick house with decorative terra-cotta cornice and a wide frieze punctuated by attic windows (see Figure 1). Constructed in 1849, the house is Greek Revival in style, with c. 1868-69 additions to its front and side elevations. The structure is raised from the street level by two sets of brown sandstone steps. There is a side garden, to the east of the house, enclosed on its southern side by an elegant cast-iron fence set in a low brick retaining wall, and on its eastern side by both the iron fence and a newer brick wall. A low stone retaining wall with sandstone coping surrounds the entire lot on the F Street and 20th Street perimeters.

The house's clearly discernible Greek Revival appearance, coupled with the retention of its integral side garden, invest it with integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

#### EXTERIOR

The structure is located on the northeast corner of 20th and F Streets, N.W. (see Figures 2 and 3). It is one of two remaining, originally-residential structures on the block. It is surrounded today by large, modern office buildings, and several early-to-mid-20th-century apartment buildings which currently house George Washington University students. The offices of the World Bank, immediately to the east, are quite large in comparison to the Steedman-Ray House, despite its impressiveness. The embassy housed in an 1850s rowhouse across the street, the late 19th-century church on the corner of G and 20th Streets, N.W., and a few 19th-century rowhouses on G Street, are some of the neighboring structures which remain from the residential neighborhood known as the "West End."

The house is situated on the southwest corner of its large lot (on Square 121, Lot 4--old Lots 3 and 4), and is elevated from street level by two sets of brownstone steps with iron handrails. The plan of the house has consistently been L-shaped, although over the years the house has received a number of additions to its rear. The dimensions of the structure are

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally                       statewide                       locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A    B    C    D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E  
F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>	<u>1849-1933</u>	<u>1849</u>
<u>MILITARY</u>	<u>1862-1867</u>	<u>1933</u>
<u>SOCIAL HISTORY</u>		
	Cultural Affiliation	
	<u>N/A</u>	
	Architect/Builder	
	<u>Unknown</u>	
Significant Person		
<u>N/A</u>		

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and period of significance noted above.

Introduction

The Steedman-Ray house at 1925 F Street, N.W. (Square 121, Lot 18; house, old Lot 4; garden, old Lot 3) is an important extant example of Greek Revival architecture in Washington, D.C. and served as the residence of military and social elite throughout the 19th and into the early 20th centuries. The house, built in 1849 on the corner of F and 20th Streets, N.W., was in keeping with the earlier substantial, freestanding brick  
 See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

---

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

[NA] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)

[NA] previously listed in the NR

[NA] previously determined eligible by the National Register

[NA] designated a National Historic Landmark

[X] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # DC-44

[NA] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

[X] See continuation sheet

Primary location of add. data:

[X] State SHPO office

[ ] Other State agency

[ ] Federal agency

[ ] Local government

[ ] University

[ ] Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

---

Acreeage of property \_\_\_\_\_  
Less than one acre

UTM References

A 1 / 8 / 3 / 2 / 2 / 6 / 6 / 0 / 4 / 3 / 0 / 7 / 1 / 6 / 0 /

Zone Easting Northing

B    /    /    /    /    /    /    /    /    /    /    /    /    /    /

Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

---

This property is located at 1925 F Street, N.W. on Lot 18 (old Lot 4), Square 121 in the City of Washington.

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes all of the original Lot 4 (the house site) and the majority of the original Lot 3 (the garden site). These two lots have, since 1873, been associated with the property.

[ ] See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

Name/title Elizabeth Jo Lampl, Judith Helm Robinson

Organization Traceries Date October 1988

Street & Number 1606 20th Street, N.W. Telephone 202-462-0333

City or Town Washington State District of Columbia

Zip code 20009

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   7   Page   2  

---

44'7" wide x 75' deep (including the 38' ell, but not including the smaller additions). The construction method is brick bearing wall.

Constructed in 1849, the house is Greek Revival in style, with c. 1868-69 alterations to its front and side elevations. The building is horizontal in its massing and symmetrical in the composition of its facade. The alterations made c. 1868-69 include the addition of the polygonal bay windows on the side elevations and of the pedimented hood over the front entrance, the changing of the window sash from six-over-six to two-over-two, and the erection of a rear addition to the original ell. Despite these mid 19th-century alterations, the structure remains recognizably Greek Revival in its proportions and cornice detailing.

Permits reveal that the land to the north and east of the house, which is today the garden, has been a part of the property since at least 1873 (see Figure 4). The garden today is enclosed on its south perimeter by an elegant cast-iron fence on a low brick wall,<sup>1</sup> and enclosed on its east perimeter by both the iron fence and a newer brick wall. Visible in the garden is an old wooden fence, which projects from the one-story clapboard addition added to the north wall of the house c. 1910. Today, the garden is orderly in its appearance, with several large trees planted on the garden borders, a brick patio to the north, and shrubs and perennial plantings to the east. The eastern portion of the garden contains brick walkways and cast-iron furniture.

Primary Facade: F Street, South Elevation

The primary facade of the house faces south and is a symmetrical five-bay composition of pressed brick with a centrally-located entrance. Supported by a brick foundation, the white-painted structure is pressed brick on this facade, laid in common bond.

The entrance in the center bay was modified in the Victorian era from a simple Greek Revival frontispiece to a more elaborate entrance, composed of a pediment supported by consoles (see Figure 5). A pilastered door

---

<sup>1</sup> The erection date of the cast-iron fence is unknown, but it can be seen in a 1910 photograph.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 7 Page 3

---

frame, with a rectangular, glazed transom above, leads to the outer entrance area. What may have been a shallow vestibule at the time of construction was probably also modified in Victorian times to the deeply recessed exterior vestibule that exists today. This vestibule is open to the street, but set into the exterior plane of the facade of the house. Its walls are sheathed in wood panelling. Doors on its sides can be used to close the vestibule from the street. Within this entry area is the main door to the interior of the house. It is double-leafed, with its own rectangular transom, raised up a step from the black and white marble tile floor. Each door leaf holds an elongated octagonal light with a squarish octagonal raised panel below. The ceiling in this recessed entrance area is coffered.

The symmetrical fenestration of the F Street facade is largely responsible for the total design impact of the structure. There are four small, above-ground basement windows on the facade which are covered in iron grilles decorated in a star and arrow motif. At the first and second stories, are double-hung rectangular windows with two-over-two sash, wooden frames and shutters, and flat stone sills and lintels. At the third-story level, are Greek Revival-style frieze windows. These are separated from the second-story windows by several rows of molding, the uppermost of which is decorative. Four out of five of these small rectangular windows are equipped with air-conditioning units.

A notable feature of the house is the elaborate terra-cotta cornice, rare for a structure of such early date<sup>2</sup> (see Figure 6). The original design impact of the cornice is seen clearly in Figure 9, which shows the contrast of the strikingly white cornice against the red brick facade. At the lowest level of the cornice is a band of simple fretwork. Above this is a cyma reversa molding of leaf-and-dart motif. At the soffit are mutules with four guttae. The fascia is decorated with an ovolo molding of egg-and-dart motif.

---

<sup>2</sup> The house is "particularly noteworthy for its early use of terracotta ornament . . ." according to Nancy Schwartz's Addendum to Steedman-Ray House, HABS No. DC-44.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   7   Page   4  

---

The low, side-gable roof of the main block of the house is sheathed in tin.

Secondary Elevations

The secondary elevations of the house are laid in common bond brick. The east elevation is centered around a three-sided bay window, its major design feature. This bay consists of three double-hung, round-headed lights of two-over-two sash, separated from one another by wooden pilasters and capped by a modillion cornice and a flat roof. Two rectangular, six-over-six sash, double-hung second-story windows are located above the bay. Two third-story windows are directly above, also six-over-six sash, but more square in proportion. Flanking the windows are two brick end chimneys. There is a fire escape on this elevation.

The west elevation is, for the most part, regular in its appearance (see Figure 7). At the south end of the basement level of this elevation is a coal scuttle. There is a three-sided oriel window at the south end of the first story which, like the bay on the east elevation, contains three round-headed lights of two-over-two sash and is capped with a modillion cornice and flat roof. There is a six-over-six window to the north of the bay. At the second story level, three rectangular, six-over-six windows are set very close together. At the third-story level are two, smaller, square-like windows. There is one brick end chimney on this elevation.

Visible on this elevation are multiple rear additions (which are described in more detail under the discussion of the north elevation). The west elevation of the main brick ell (constructed in two stages) has orderly fenestration. A wooden stockade fence runs flush with this elevation from the rear of the ell to the point where the short driveway projects into the property from 20th Street.

The north elevation is irregular in massing and fenestration (see Figure 8). The original fenestration pattern of the main block has been slightly altered and there are multiple rear additions to the house. In the center bay of the main block, one window was newly cut in the north wall, second story, in 1914 (D.C. Building Permit #902, August 10, 1909).



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   7   Page   5  

---

It would appear that the frieze window, above it, was also altered at some point into the rectangular, six-over-six sash that exists today.

There is a two-story brick ell projecting from the northwest corner of the main rectangular block of the house. The front half of the ell is original to the house, while the rear half was probably added by Alexander Ray c. 1869. A break in the brickwork, visible on the west elevation, shows the two stages of construction. The ell is finished at the top in a denticulated cornice. The roof of this ell is tin. There are two small flues projecting from the roof of the ell.

This two-story, brick ell is connected to a one-story brick addition with a tin shed roof (added 1910). This small addition contains one window on its west elevation. Finally, behind it to the north is a metal refrigeration unit designed to accommodate the building's present function as a dining club.

There is a one-story wooden addition behind the northeast section of the main block of the house. This addition is clapboard and has an asphalt roof. On the west elevation are three, rectangular, double-hung two-over-two sash windows. On the north elevation are two double-hung, two-over-two sash windows separated by French glazed double-doors which open onto the patio. To the east, the addition is joined by a party wall to the two-story brick ell.

#### INTERIOR

The house is organized around a center hall plan with doors at either end and rooms opening on either side. Remodeling has altered this plan so that the two rooms on the east have been combined into one large parlor. Arched openings (most likely from the 1869 renovation) lead to the large parlor on the east and a library on the west. These openings are now filled in with mahogany doors. Two English 18th-century pine overdoors now serve as mantelpieces in the parlor. From the parlor on the east, glazed double-doors lead to the c. 1910 dining room where a Federal-era mantelpiece graces the western wall. The library contains a Victorian marble mantelpiece with a convex gilt mirror above it. The library is connected, via another arched opening, to a bar behind it. The ell houses a butler's pantry and a kitchen, with a service stair in between.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 7 Page 6

---

The stairway to the upper floors is unenclosed and decorative, with turned balusters and scroll brackets at step ends. On the second floor, original molding can be seen at the ceiling level in the hallway and in the northeast bedroom. The door leading to the southwest bedroom also maintains its original entablature. There are two Tudor-arched marble mantelpieces in second floor bedrooms, which are typical of the period of construction. Two Victorian marble mantelpieces also can be found in upstairs bedrooms.

THE HISTORY OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOUSE

The Greek Revival Period, 1849-1867

**EXTERIOR**

The house, as it was built in 1849, was in the Greek Revival style. The earliest located photographic images of the house are two 1864 photographs, included in Miller's The Photographic History of the Civil War (see Figures 9 and 10). These photographs best illustrate the house's original Greek Revival character, showing it to be an unpainted brick dwelling, two-and-a-half stories in height, five bays wide, with a terra-cotta cornice and wide frieze. The frieze is punctuated by small, rectangular windows capped with decorative pairs of horseshoe-like grilles. The central doorway, the lintel of which is aligned with the lintels of the first floor windows, originally had a simple frontispiece composed of pilasters supporting an entablature (no longer extant). The windows of the house are six-over-six sash. There are no projections from the house at this date and the adjoining lot (old Lot 3) is enclosed by a brick wall. The house rests directly at street level. The close-up photograph of Brigadier-General William Hoffman (see Figure 10) reveals a decorative wrought-iron stair rail (not the less decorative rail which exists today), which may have been original to the house, and operable window shutters. (The shutters on the house today are new).

Further evidence of the early appearance of the house comes from the Boschke map of 1857, which shows the house to be L-shaped.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 7 Page 7

---

**INTERIOR**

Although no primary evidence of the original layout of the house exists, one can imagine that the floor plan resembled that of other houses of the period. Based on floor plans of extant houses of the period, the original layout would most likely have included a central hall (containing a stairway) flanked by pairs of like-sized rooms on either side. Each of the four rooms would most likely have had its own door.

Likewise, no primary documentation of the interior features is available, but visual analysis suggests that the simple entablature over the door to the second floor southwest bedroom, the cornice moldings in the second-story hall and northeast bedrooms, and two of the mantels in the house probably date from the original construction of the house. These mantels, located in the northeast and southeast second-story rooms, have Tudor-arch openings with simple shelves. Both are white marble painted black.

The Victorian Changes, 1868-69

**EXTERIOR**

In 1869, the tax books record a \$10,000 increase in the assessed valuation of the house, signifying a major renovation. Although this date precedes the earliest date that building permits were archived in the District of Columbia (1877), visual analysis again suggests the changes that probably occurred either in c. 1869 or in the later years of Alexander Ray's occupancy. (Ray lived in the house until 1878.)

On the exterior, it is most likely that the owner of the house in 1869, Alexander Ray, was responsible for the following changes: 1) the transformation of the entry from its Greek Revival frontispiece to its current appearance, with pediment and panelled entry area; 2) the replacement of the window configuration to two-over-two sash; 3) the addition of both the first-floor bay window on the east elevation and the first-floor oriel window on the west elevation (this would have occurred after 1871, the year when building regulations first allowed the construction of projections beyond the building line); and 4) the construction of the rear half of the two-story ell.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   7   Page   8  

---

According to a detailed history of the F Street Club, written by Nancy Schwartz for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in 1976, an 1870s regrading of F Street, N.W. required the addition of the brownstone steps which lead from the current street level to the raised lawn area. Ray was probably responsible for the steps, with their decorative edging, and for the brownstone retaining wall that surrounds the property on its southern and western sides. Ray undoubtedly also added the heavy Victorian balusters and newels, that once graced the brownstone steps at the entrance (replacing the original wrought-iron stair rail). Matching balustrades used to define the roofs of the eastern bay and of the western oriel.<sup>3</sup> Access to these porches was via jib doors below the windows of the southeast and southwest windows (still extant today).

#### INTERIOR

Much of the current interior character of the house also reflects changes made by Ray. As mentioned earlier, the large, eastern, first-floor room wood most likely have been two rooms separated either by a screen or an arched opening (like that which still separates the southwest and northwest first-story rooms). Ray might have joined the rooms at the same time that he added the bay window in its center.

The heavy ceiling moldings of all the main first-story rooms are Victorian in character and were undoubtedly Ray's renovations. Interior window shutters were added, as were a number of mantels which still exist in the house. These Victorian mantels are made of red marble (currently painted black), and are distinguished by large arched openings, heavily-molded spandrels, and a decorative central cartouche.

The second floor does not appear to have received as extensive a remodeling as the first. Room configurations appear to be original, although some contain Victorian marble mantelpieces. At some unknown date, shallow closets were added in the bedrooms.

---

<sup>3</sup> Both the balusters of the stair rail leading to the main entrance of the house and the balusters of the second-story porches above the bay windows are visible in the 1910 photograph given to the F Street Club by Garrison Norton.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 7 Page 9

---

Additions and Remodeling, 1870-1988

**EXTERIOR**

A building permit (D.C. Building Permit #37, July 8, 1899) issued to Mrs. Mayo Hazeltine, calls for a \$200 enlargement of the conservatory. The wording of the permit reads as follows: "enlarge conservatory one way--two sides of conservatory as formed by the two brick walls of old brick building--leaving only two sides to be of glass with sash hinged and to have tin roof." The permit also described wainscotting on the walls and preparation of the ceiling for wallpaper. This description, with its mention of the two existing brick walls, places the conservatory on the location of the present clapboarded addition, at the rear of the house. The words "rear of estate" also support this location. Since the permit is for an "enlargement," we can also assume that some form of porch or conservatory existed during the Ray family's ownership of the house.

In 1909, Augustus P. Gardner was issued a permit (D.C. Building Permit #902, August 10, 1909) to make interior changes and to "enclose and enlarge the rear porch" for the sum of \$1500. The "rear porch" is undoubtedly the old conservatory. Gardner also added a window to the second story, north wall to make a bathroom (or bedroom, according to Nancy Schwartz). Unspecified minor general repairs to the house and fence were also made at this time.

Two permits issued to James W. Norton in March 1910 show that improvements were made to the home during the tenancy of Charles D. Norton (although the relationship between James and Charles has not been determined by this author). The first permit (D.C. Building Permit #4857, March 9, 1910) was issued for the waterproofing of the front and side walls of the house and the installation of a three-inch tile drain. The drain in question still exists at the juncture of the lawn and the top of the sandstone wall, but it has since been changed to concrete.

The second permit (D.C. Building Permit #4881, March 10, 1910) describes a \$350 (or \$300) brick addition to the rear of the home (see Figure 11, a drawing submitted with the permit). This addition is the small, one-story

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 7 Page 10

---

brick shed at the rear of the two-story ell. Norton also added two windows in the north wall and two windows in the east wall to light the cellar. A letter and 1910 photograph from Garrison Norton, son of Charles D. Norton, given as a gift to the F Street Club, also serves as evidence of the house's appearance at the time. The photograph shows the new clapboard addition (now the dining room) to the rear. It also shows the balusters at the front steps and above the east bay window. The decorative grilles which covered the frieze windows are already missing. New trees have been planted in the parking. The letter which accompanies the photograph points out the old horse-car tracks on F Street, "newly electrified."

A 1921 photo from The American University Courier shows the house as it looked when it was acquired by American University (see Figure 12). The Victorian balusters and newel posts at the front stairs are still intact and the balusters above the west oriel can still be discerned. Both features are gone today. In the photograph, the house is painted and the street is lit by gas lamps.

A photograph from 1954 shows the house with a coat of light-colored paint and very dark shutters (see Figure 13). There was simple landscaping close to the house on the south elevation. A 1973 newspaper photo shows the house devoid of shutters, and the iron fence in a state of disrepair (see Figure 14).

Recent repairs to the house have included replacement of all the windows with two-over-two sash to match the post-1869 windows. The fence has also been repaired and painted.

#### INTERIOR

A permit issued in 1914 to Augustus P. Gardner called for substantial interior changes and "necessary light and ventilation" repairs (D.C. Building Permit #292, July 17, 1914). Gardner was responsible for "changing the doors to the parlor and the dining room," moving the door frame from the butler's pantry to the hall, and placing a new door in place of the window in the dining room. He also repaired the shutters and screens, providing "light and ventilation in accordance with Section 112 of the Public Building Regulations."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 7 Page 11

---

According to newspaper accounts of the early 1930s, Laura Curtis made changes to the property when she began renting it in 1924. (These changes seem to have been primarily decorative, as the only structural permit issued to Mrs. Curtis is D.C. Building Permit #186856, dated December 3, 1935 for the repair of the retaining wall adjacent to the back alley). On the interior, Mrs. Curtis is credited with installing the mahogany doors in the previously open arches of the first floor main rooms. These doors still exist today. She also retired two of the Victorian parlor mantels to bedrooms, replacing them with the two English 18th-century pine overdoor mantels, which exist in the room today. It is believed that she brought these mantels to the Steedman-Ray House from her Baltimore townhouse. The Federal-style mantel in the rear dining room was also added by Mrs. Curtis.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   8   Page   2  

---

homes of the neighborhood. Like these predecessors, it was built for a man of stature, a high-ranking Navy captain named Charles Steedman. (variously spelled Stedman or Steadman). During the Civil War years, the structure was used as the Office of the Commissary-General of Prisoners, becoming part of the Union Army headquarters housed in the buildings and houses surrounding the White House. Following the Civil War, it was occupied by a series of socially and politically prominent people. In keeping with its social stature, the building was converted into an elite, private club in 1933. It has served as such since that time.

Thus the house satisfies both Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places. Its significance is threefold: 1) the house, with the military officers, respected businessmen, elected officials, and Presidential appointees who inhabited it, can be viewed as a microcosm of the politically and socially prominent in Washington between the years 1849 and 1933 (Criterion A); 2) the use of the house during the Civil War as the Office of the Commissary-General of Prisoners reflects the overwhelming transformation of this residential neighborhood into wartime headquarters for the Union Army between the years 1861 and 1867 (Criterion A); and 3) the proportions and detailing particular to the Greek Revival style, popular c. 1825-60, are especially significant contributions to the city of Washington, D.C., which has few extant freestanding Greek Revival dwellings (Criterion C).

The Development of the West End, 1798-1860

Various sources reveal a mixture of classes within the neighborhood during the early-to-middle years of the 19th century.<sup>1</sup> Two widely-dated recollections of this period,<sup>2</sup> reprinted in a 1961-63 Columbia Historical

---

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Elden Billings for the Columbia Historical Society, "History of 1925 F Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 1961-63." Mrs. Billings has compiled her paper from various sources.

<sup>2</sup> James Croggin, "In Old Washington," A series of contributions to the Evening Star. Found in a scrapbook, evidently bound in 1918. Contained in Mrs. Billings's "History of 1925 F Street."



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 3

---

Society history of the Steedman-Ray House, suggest that the majority of residents in the neighborhood were high-ranking military personnel. A separate section of the same Columbia Historical Society research, however, paints a different picture. It cites information from Delano's Directory of 1822, describing the occupations of residents in the vicinity of 1925 F Street as the following: a clerk at an auditor's office, a dry goods salesman, a bricklayer, a clerk at a general land office, a magistrate, and an employee of the British legation.

The first elegant residences west of the White House (the area between 17th and 23rd Streets, N.W., referred to as the "West End") were built primarily for military, Naval, and governmental personnel in the early years of the 19th century. The finest extant example of these dwellings, and the one which best attests to the social standing of some West End residents, is the Octagon, located at 1799 New York Avenue, N.W. Built in 1798-1800 by William Thornton, the architect of the original Capitol building, this Federal-style mansion was the residence of Virginian John Tayloe, a planter and horse breeder. The 1825 Tench Ringgold House, at 1801 F Street, N.W. is another fine mansion of the period. It was originally built for Ringgold, the Marshall of the District, and later was home to Presidents Madison and Van Buren.

There are significantly fewer extant examples of the more modest dwellings that must have stood during the early-to-mid 19th century in the West End. The 1819 Lenthall Houses (originally at 612 and 614 19th Street, N.W.; now moved to 21st Street, N.W., between F and G Streets), built as workers' attached houses, were probably typical in their day.

Serving as a key reminder of the pre-Civil War growth of the neighborhood, the 1849 Steedman-Ray House is the only single-family, freestanding Greek Revival structure extant in this core area of the West

---

Sarah E. Vedder, "Old Neighbors of 1925 F Street," "Reminiscences of the District of Columbia; or, Washington City Seventy-nine years ago, 1830 - 1909" (St. Louis, Missouri: A.R. Fleming Printing Co., 1909), pp. 34-36.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 4

---

End. It is also one of only a few prominent, freestanding Greek Revival dwellings in the entire City of Washington. Furthermore, its cornice is a rare and unusually well-preserved example of the early use of terra-cotta ornament.<sup>3</sup>

Shortly after the construction of the Steedman-Ray House, between 1856 and 1857, F Street was graded and gravelled between 20th and 23rd Streets, N.W., indicating the growing westward expansion of the neighborhood.<sup>4</sup> That same year, the Lawson Whitney double-house was erected at 1916-18 F Street, directly across the street from the Steedman-Ray House. It is the only other remaining Greek Revival-style dwelling in the old West End.

Despite this limited number of extant dwellings in the neighborhood from the period, a detail of the Boschke map of 1859 indicates that the West End was a fairly well-populated neighborhood by the dawn of the Civil War (although still not as dense as the neighborhood, sometimes known as the Ridge, directly to the east of the White House). According to the map, approximately six houses stood on the 1900 block of F Street, N.W. The map also illustrates that the Steedman-Ray house appears to mark the transition between an established urban neighborhood close to the White House and a more undeveloped, industrialized area to its west.

In the January 28, 1858 issue of the National Intelligencer newspaper, rental of a house on F Street was advertised. The number of rooms in the

---

<sup>3</sup> Architectural terra-cotta was not produced in the United States until 1840, when it was first manufactured in Worcester, Massachusetts. Despite attempts by Richard Upjohn and James Renwick to popularize the use of the material in their buildings of the 1850s, terra-cotta was not used widely in this country until the rebuilding of Chicago after the fire of 1871. (H. Ward Jandl, ed., The Technology of Historic American Buildings: Studies of the Materials, Craft Processes, and the Mechanization of Building Construction (Washington, D.C.: Foundation for Preservation Technology for the Association for Preservation Technology, 1983), p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Sessford Annals, Columbia Historical Society Records. Extracts pertaining to 1st Ward. 1824-1860. Contained in Mrs. Elden Billing's history.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 5

---

house points to the element of wealth in the neighborhood. The advertisement reads:

For rent - situated on F Street, West End, between 19th and 20th Streets, a handsome House, containing thirteen rooms, with bathroom and all the modern improvements. To a good tenant terms will be made reasonable. The house can be taken on a lease if preferred. Apply at the Treasury Department, third story, No. 26 Jan. 27 eotf [sic]

The Early History of the House

The Steedman-Ray House can be dated by means of General Assessment records. Ledgers dating between 1849 and 1850 show an increase in the value of the improvement on Lot 4, Square 121 (previously numbered 148 F Street north) from \$100 to \$5,500. This increase is evidence of the construction of a substantial building on that site in 1849. Only three other brick dwellings were built that same year in Ward 1, as compared with 21 wood dwellings, suggesting the extra cost of building in masonry.<sup>5</sup>

While records are clear concerning the 1849 construction date, they offer conflicting accounts of the early ownership of the house. According to deeds, the owner of the property in 1849 was Sarah Steedman, who acquired Lot 4 from Louisa Harrison by a deed signed August 25, 1848.<sup>6</sup> The property was placed in trust for the "separate use and benefit" of Sarah Steedman and managed by her Philadelphia trustee, Mr. William Duane. However, tax books of the period list Louisa Harrison as the owner of the property from 1849-1852. Sarah Steedman is not listed as owner of the property until the 1854 tax book.

---

<sup>5</sup> Sessford Annals, Columbia Historical Records. Extracts pertaining to 1st Ward. 1824-1860. Contained in Mrs. Elden Billing's history.

<sup>6</sup> Deed recorded December 15, 1848 in Liber J.A.S. 1, folio 8.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 6

---

The city directories of 1850 and 1852 list neither Steedman, Harrison, nor Harrison's second husband John Coffin at the property. Only in 1853 does Charles Steedman's name appear for the first time at 148 F Street north, the original address of the Steedman-Ray House. It is, therefore difficult to determine whether the house was built for Louisa Coffin or Sarah Steedman.<sup>7</sup>

If Steedman did build the structure, his choice of the neighborhood would affirm the continuing popularity of the West End as a haven for government-affiliated professionals. Steedman, a Captain in the U.S. Navy, was undoubtedly attracted to the house's proximity to the War, Navy, and Interior Department at the intersection of F and 17th Streets, N.W.

Neighbors residing within several blocks of the Steedmans during these pre-Civil War years included Richard Harrison, a messenger at the State Department; John Coffin, Louisa Harrison's second husband, who was a professor of mathematics, astronomy, and navigation at the Naval Observatory; and Alexander Ray, the wealthy Georgetown coal shipper and the eventual owner of the Steedman-Ray House, who lived on the northwest corner of 20th and G Streets, N.W. between the years 1846 and 1868.<sup>8</sup>

Apparently, in 1859, the City of Washington foreclosed on the property and sold it to collect on 1858 taxes owed by Sarah Steedman's trustee, William Duane. Deed research indicates that Benjamin Ogle Tayloe bought the house

---

<sup>7</sup> In Nancy Schwartz' work for HABS (DC-44), she states (on page 10) that Louisa Coffin inherited the house from her great-uncle, Richard. Her source for this information, however, is not clear. She does state that probate records were consulted for the HABS document, so it seems probable that this piece of information was elicited from that source. The tax books and General Assessments, however, show that during Richard Harrison's ownership of the property (c. 1830), there were no improvements on the lot. The 1849 tax book record which lists the \$5500 improvement shows Louisa Harrison as owner.

<sup>8</sup> City directories from 1850 and 1853.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 7

---

from the City and owned it briefly, between the years 1859 and 1863.<sup>9</sup> Tayloe, the son of John Tayloe, builder of the Octagon, sold the house back to Sarah Steedman's trustee, Duane, in 1863, preferring to build his own house on Lafayette Square.<sup>10</sup> Within two months, Sarah Steedman managed to rid herself of her trustee, so that the property rightfully belonged to her.<sup>11</sup>

The Civil War Years, 1861-1868

By 1861, the country was at war and Washington was transformed overnight from a sleepy, southern town into Union Army headquarters. The residential neighborhoods surrounding the White House became attractive to the Federal government for their location and ample building stock. Homes, stables, and public buildings were pulled into the machinery of war.

On the capital's western limits arose the city's largest accumulation of supplies, storehouses, and barracks in a vacant area still called Foggy Bottom. Beginning about Nineteenth Street it led westward toward the Western wharves at the Potomac end of G Street. . . . Near the downtown area the Washington Monument grounds did wartime duty as a large army slaughterhouse. . . . A block west of the White House, a brand new Art Gallery built by the banker, Mr. W.W. Corcoran, turned overnight into the Army's Depot of Clothing and Equipage. . . . Even more important to the war effort was a number of small buildings and houses in a half-circle close around

---

<sup>9</sup> Deed June 20, 1861, recorded April 24, 1862 in Liber J.A.S. 217, folio 367.

<sup>10</sup> Deed May 18, 1863, recorded August 24, 1863 in Liber U.C.T. 11, folio 80.

<sup>11</sup> Deed July 27, 1863, recorded September 16, 1863 in Liber U.C.T. 12, folio 314.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 8

---

the north, east and west sides of the White House serving as headquarters and offices.<sup>12</sup>

The Office of the Commissary-General of Prisoners (OCGP), which occupied the Steedman-Ray House, was established as an agency of the War Department on June 17, 1862. The Commissary-General was responsible for the supervision of Confederate prisoners of war and for all business related to Union prisoners held in Confederate prisons. The Office was later responsible for the settlement of claims for all prisoners of war. There were two Commissary-Generals of Prisoners: Brigadier-General William Hoffman (1861-65) (see Figure 10) and Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock (1865-67).

Soon after its establishment, the OCGP opened its headquarters in the Steedman-Ray House and occupied it from 1862-67. (See Figure 9.) According to a roster of War Department buildings found in the Quartermaster General's correspondence, dated December 1, 1864, the house at 148 F Street north (now 1925 F Street) was rented from owner Sarah Steedman for \$100 per month, by means of a contract dated July 1, 1863. The rental agent in charge was R.S. Jackson. The remarks column of the ledger state that the rental arrangement was verbal in nature, and renegotiable on a month-to-month basis, "during the pleasure of the U.S."<sup>13</sup> (See Figure 15.)

---

<sup>12</sup> Richard M. Lee, Mr. Lincoln's City, An Illustrated Guide to the Civil War Sites of Washington, (McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, Inc., 1981), pp. 14-17.

<sup>13</sup> Correspondence of the Quartermaster General of the United States, Record 249, Entry 225 (Subject: Washington, D.C.), National Archives. Title of document: "Statement of Buildings, Parts of Buildings, Wharves, Grounds & c. hired by Captain J.H. Crowell, Assistant Quartermaster of Washington, D.C. for use of the different Bureaus of the War Department, with amount of rents which have been paid, and amounts remaining unpaid of the first day of December 1864."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 9

---

Directly next door, on the same block, were the F Street Storehouses.<sup>14</sup> (See Figure 16.) Also within one block of the Steedman-Ray House were messhouses, a wood yard, and a grainery. Other important war headquarters included the Quartermaster General's Office (which was eventually housed in the Corcoran Gallery), and the offices of Major General Hancock, General Grant, the Adjutant General, the Signal Officer, and the Medical Director. Union Army Headquarters were located in the Winder Building, at the corner of 17th and F Streets, N.W.

With her husband called away to war and the government occupying her dwelling, Sarah Steedman sold the large house on September 15, 1865 to William and Maria Spaulding. (Spaulding was one of the partners responsible for the rebuilding of the original National Theatre building after fire destroyed it in 1862.)

Even though the Civil War officially ended in May 1865, the government continued to use 1925 F Street, N.W. for the offices of the Commissary General of Prisoners until 1867. Correspondence between Spaulding and the Quartermaster General's Office indicates that Spaulding purchased the house under the impression that the government would be vacating the premises within two to three months of his purchase. A letter of March 12, 1866 to the Assistant Secretary of War states that Spaulding had been evicted from his hotel room, placed his furniture in storage, was burdened with a sick (or pregnant) wife, and that the General, "as a married man," should sympathize with his predicament and arrange his deserved repossession of his home. A later letter indicates that after a brief search for other premises to house the Office of the Commissary-General of Prisoners, the War Department came up empty-handed, writing to Spaulding that "the house referred to cannot be given up to you at the present time." Spaulding's May 31, 1867 letter to the government is thus more aggressive in tone, making the pronouncement that his tenant, the Federal government, has 30 days to vacate the premises. By July 6, 1867, Spaulding had modified his request to either the repossession of the house

---

<sup>14</sup> Map 1, Sequence A, Rg. 92, Card 18 of 29, National Archives Cartographic Division, Title: "Mess and Store Houses, Office of Signal Officer, and Wood Yard, Washington, D.C.," showing 19th through 21st Streets, N.W. between F and G Streets, N.W.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 10

---

or an increase in rent. Within 12 days, the government agreed to increase its own rent to \$150 per month.

By August 1867, the Office of the Commissary-General of Prisoners was dissolved and the house was finally returned to Spaulding. In a letter of August 29, 1867 sent from Spaulding to the Quartermaster General, Spaulding asked that his house be returned to its original condition, prior to the takeover by the government. A letter that same month from Edward Clarke, War Department architect, to Brigadier General McFarran reports that "in compliance with the Department's endorsement of Mr. Spaulding's request," he had assessed the repair work at the cost of \$1,030.<sup>15</sup>

For all his efforts, Spaulding did not reside at the house for more than a year after repossessing it. In 1868 he sold the property to Alexander Ray, a wealthy Georgetown coal shipper and mill owner.<sup>16</sup> On October 25, 1869, Louisa and John Coffin also sold Ray a portion of Lot 3 (the vacant lot adjoining Lot 4), thus providing a garden plot for the house.<sup>17</sup>

Commerce and Congress: 1869-1920

The 1869 tax books assess the value of the improvement on Lot 4 at \$16,000. This figure reflects an increase of \$10,000 from the previous year, pointing to major renovations made by Alexander Ray. These alterations are still visible on both the exterior and interior of the house and include the additions of bay windows, the replacement of the window sash, and renovation of much of the interior. (See Description section of this form.) By 1873, Ray had acquired the remainder of old Lot

---

<sup>15</sup> Correspondence between Spaulding and the War Department also found in Quartermaster General's correspondence at the National Archives.

<sup>16</sup> Deed January 9, 1868, recorded November 17, 1868 in Liber D. 4, folio 46.

<sup>17</sup> Deed October 25, 1869, recorded December 2, 1869 in Liber 605, folio 24.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   8   Page  11 

---

3 from John Coffin,<sup>18</sup> whose wife Louisa had died, and the large property, with its side garden, came to be known as "the Ray Estate."

Ray was a well-to-do coal shipper whose business was located on the corner of Frederick and Water Streets in Georgetown. He also owned a flour-milling operation, managed by his sons, A. Ross and Albert Ray. Upon his death in 1878, the house was inherited by his widow, Susan B. Ray, and subsequently by his children and grandchildren. Each of these generations of owners rented out the house between the years 1879 and 1909.

Finding renters during the post-Civil War period was not difficult in Washington. While the majority of the new population consisted of freed blacks, the challenge of rebuilding both the city and the nation brought with it a different population, comprised primarily of financiers, military personnel, and eager legislators. Many of these professional newcomers were looking to rent or find boarding in the fine homes conveniently situated to the White House and/or the Capitol.

City directories indicate that residents of 1925 F Street, N.W. between the years 1879 and 1920 included: bankers, journalists, Congressmen, military officers, and Cabinet members. (See Known Residents section for further information on selected residents.) During their tenures, these occupants made several renovations to the house. (See Description section on Construction History of House.)

Between 1885 and 1891, the Steedman-Ray House was occupied by Nelson Brown, a banker. The subsequent tenant was Hilary A. Herbert, who lived in the house between 1894 and 1897 while serving as Secretary of the Navy.

In 1899, New York Sun literary journalist Mayo Hazeltine leased the house from Ellen Goldsborough, Alexander Ray's daughter by his first marriage. Following a serious automobile accident, Hazeltine renegotiated his lease in order to sublet the house at 1925 F Street, N.W. City directories for 1904 through 1907 list George Cabot Lodge at the premises. Lodge, son of

---

<sup>18</sup> Deed June 16, 1873, recorded June 28, 1873 in Liber 711, folio 375.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 12

---

prominent Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, worked as his father's secretary and later, as a clerk in the Senate.

A deed of June 18, 1909, shows that the children of Ellen Goldsborough sold the house to Augustus P. Gardner, a Congressman from Massachusetts who served between 1902 and 1917.<sup>19</sup> Gardner had married Constance Lodge, George Cabot Lodge's sister, so he was undoubtedly familiar with the house prior to owning it. After making \$1000 worth of improvements to the dwelling, he continued to rent the property as the Ray family had done.

The 1910 city directory lists Charles D. Norton as resident of 1925 F Street. Norton moved from Chicago to Washington when President Taft appointed him Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

When Norton left the city in 1911, Gardner searched for a new tenant and found one in William Kent, a Republican Congressman from California. Kent occupied the residence from 1912 to 1920, buying it from the Gardner estate in 1918.<sup>20</sup> When Kent returned to California, he rented the house to Willoughby G. Walling, a banker from Chicago who was an official with the Red Cross.

The Beginnings of the F Street Club, 1921-49

The years of relatively rapid turnover in occupancy ended when, in a 1921 deed, William and Elizabeth Thatcher Kent sold the structure<sup>21</sup> to the American University, which had decided to develop a downtown campus (see Figure 12). It appears, however, that the University never made use of the structure for educational purposes. According to city directories,

---

<sup>19</sup> Deed June 18, 1909, recorded July 7, 1909 in Liber 3241, folio 240.

<sup>20</sup> Deed June 3, 1918, recorded July 6, 1918 in Liber 4090, folio 194.

<sup>21</sup> Deed January 4, 1921, recorded February 21, 1921 in Liber 4498, folio 178.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 13

---

the house remained vacant between 1921 and 1922 and the Lithuanian Legation rented the property briefly between 1923 and 1924.

In October of 1924, Mr. and Mrs. James F. Curtis moved into the house, renting it from American University. Curtis had been appointed to replace Norton as Assistant Secretary to the Treasury. Garrison Norton, son of Charles D. Norton, recalls that the Harvard-educated lawyer Curtis was a good friend of his father.

Laura Merriam Curtis apparently became something of a social high priestess overnight. Despite a turbulent marriage (she and her husband separated temporarily a number of times before their actual divorce in 1938), Laura Curtis managed to remain at the core of the Republican social scene throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

In 1932, with her four children in school or out of the house, Laura Curtis decided to return to New York. During her vacancy on F Street, she sublet the house to her good friend, Ruth Sears Baker Pratt, who was serving her second term as Republican Congresswoman from New York.

As several newspaper accounts tell it, the Depression forced Mrs. Curtis to consider selling the house in 1933. Friends, who could not tolerate the loss of such a social institution in Washington, convinced her to turn her house into a social/political club.

The resulting "Curtis Club" (later the Nineteen Twenty-five F Street Club), which opened on April 15, 1933, was patterned after the Algonquin Round Table in New York, where people gathered to discuss political ideas in an informal setting. Several articles in newspapers of the day heralded the opening of the club as the premier social event in Washington.

Important-looking legal papers are about to incorporate a depression project extraordinary, making Mrs. James Freeman Curtis a club hostess in her beautiful . . . home here.

She's the Mrs. Curtis of the Washington, New York and South Carolina society columns. Her hospitable

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   8   Page   14  

---

Washington home has been a gathering place here of that inner circle of Republicans to which the late Nicholas Longworth belonged . . . .<sup>22</sup>

The distinguishing feature of the club was the fact that it was run like a private home. Only a pay telephone for long distance calls and a movable bar betrayed the establishment's more public purpose.

In 1935 American University sold the dwelling to the Nineteen Twenty-five F Street Club, Inc. which managed the property for 10 years.<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Curtis ran the club, advised by a Board of Directors composed of friends and family.

In an agreement of October 1, 1945, Laura Curtis Gross (she had remarried John Gross of the Bethlehem Steel Company) sold the property back to American University.<sup>24</sup> The deed recorded the agreement to sell both original Lots 3 and 4, with the improvements thereon for \$133,750. The transfer of property would occur in one of three ways: 1) within a year after Laura Gross' death; 2) 12 months after a written request by the Club; or 3) six months after a written notice by American University that it needed the land for the purpose of erecting educational buildings.

The Recent History of 1925 F Street, N.W., 1950-88

The February 1950 Washington Post headline, "Swank 1925 F St. Club Harder to Crack than a Chestnut," summed up the mystique the establishment cultivated within its first 15 years. A 1955 Washington Post article

---

<sup>22</sup> "Mrs. J.F. Curtis to Become Club Hostess in F St. Home," (April 1933), The Washington Post.

<sup>23</sup> Deed July 25, 1935, recorded July 29, 1935 in Liber 6910, folio 321.

<sup>24</sup> Agreement October 1, 1945, recorded January 19, 1949 in Liber 8905, folio 278.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 15

---

aiming, once again, to reveal the essence of the exclusive club described it this way:

In this congenial atmosphere political history has been made. Presidential campaigns have been planned; Presidents themselves have "leaked" information, been persuaded into exclusive interviews; United States ministers have been raised to ambassadorial rank; civic doings have been promoted, for instance, the first survey for setting up the Community Chest Fund, was initiated at 1925 F Street.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, the club remained the well-kept secret of the Republican elite. Its privacy was disrupted, however, when American University sold its contract rights (from the October 1, 1945 deed) to George Washington University,<sup>26</sup> which was rapidly transforming the residential West End (now Foggy Bottom) into a major educational institution. The 1925 F Street Club, Inc. responded by filing a civil suit to void its agreement of October 1, 1945 with American University.<sup>27</sup> The action, however, was dismissed.

A December 2, 1969 Washington Post article described Mrs. Gross' intention of closing the club "within the next few years" and selling the property to George Washington University.<sup>28</sup> Apparently, Mrs. Gross could not tolerate the idea of the club's continuation at a different address--the only alternative at the time, given the demand for the land by George Washington University.

---

<sup>25</sup> Mary Van Rensselaer Thayer, "Though Cozy, It is Important," The Washington Post (March 27, 1955).

<sup>26</sup> Contract December 27, 1966. Letter from Thomas M. Raysor, Ortman, Barbour, Welch and Bell to Samuel Gellman, President, Columbia Real Estate Title Insurance Company, October 8, 1969.

<sup>27</sup> Civil action filed December 16, 1968 in civil action #502-67.

<sup>28</sup> Maxine Chesire, "F Street Club to Close," The Washington Post (December 2, 1969) p. 131.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   8   Page   16  

---

In 1974, 1925 F Street Club, Inc. sold the property back to American University which, in turn, sold it to George Washington University.<sup>29</sup>

In January of 1976, George Washington University announced its plans to demolish the building for the offices of the World Bank. The Club was told to look for a new location. Local preservationists protested the action, citing the city's 1966 designation of the building as a Category II Landmark. The University then began making arrangements to move the structure to the vacant lot at 612 21st Street, N.W.

In 1977 the University was able to acquire the Lenthall Houses on 19th Street, N.W. In 1978, the D.C. Zoning Commission, in hearing the case, required the University to keep both the F Street Club and the Lenthall Houses, but permitted the Lenthall Houses to be moved. The University, in keeping with the Zoning Commission's rulings, revised its scheme, scaling down the World Bank office, leaving the Steedman-Ray House on its original lot next door, and moving the Lenthall Houses. (They stand today at 612 and 614 19th Street, N.W.) The Steedman-Ray House still stands as a fragile reminder of a prestigious residential neighborhood of the nineteenth century.

Known Residents and Occupants of 1925 F Street, N.W.

The Steedman-Ray House has a long history of noteworthy residents. Some of the more prominent residents are listed below. The biographical information was taken from biographical dictionaries and from Nancy Schwartz's Steedman-Ray House history written for HABS in 1976 (DC-44).

**Charles Steedman:** While living in Washington prior to the War, Steedman

---

<sup>29</sup> American University to George Washington University, deed July 2, 1974. Libers not recorded in Nancy Schwartz's chronology.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 17

---

was affiliated with the Naval Observatory.<sup>30</sup> In 1855, he was promoted to Commander of the U.S. Navy and six years later sent to war. During the War, he served as Commander of the iron steamers Maryland and of the Ticonderoga. He headed expeditions of gunboats off the coast of South Carolina, and blockades off the coast of Georgia. Following the war, between 1869 and 1872, he served as head officer of the Boston Navy Yard. In 1872, Steedman became head of the South Pacific Squadron, a position he held for only one year, until his retirement from the Navy in 1873. He spent his last years in Washington, until his death in 1890.

**Office of the Commissary-General of Prisoners**

**Brigadier-General William Hoffman:** Hoffman served as the Commissary-General of Prisoners between 1861 and 1865 and worked out of 1925 F Street, N.W. between 1862 and 1865. His military career began in 1825 when he became a cadet at the Military Academy at West Point. His entire life was spent in the Army, graduating from Lieutenant on up the ranks to Colonel. He was commended in March, 1865 for "faithful, meritorious, and distinguished services as Commissary-General of Prisoners during the Rebellion."<sup>31</sup> He died in 1884 after 40 consecutive years of military service.

**Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock:** Also a graduate of the Military Academy at West Point, Hitchcock, like Hoffman, was a career military man. He succeeded Hoffman as Commissary-General of Prisoners between November 1865 and October 1867 and also had his office at 1925 F Street, N.W. Hitchcock was a noted author as well. His first book, The Doctrines of Spinoza and Swedenborg Identified (1846) discussed the parallels between the two philosophers. Other writing topics revealed the diversity of his interests -- alchemy and alchemists, Shakespeare,

---

<sup>30</sup>It is possible that Steedman knew John Coffin, Louisa Harrison's second husband, who was also affiliated with the Naval Observatory and might have lived in the house prior to Steedman.

<sup>31</sup> Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. From its Establishment, in 1802, to 1890 by Bvt. Major-General George W. Cullum.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   8   Page   18  

---

and Spenser. His autobiographical account, written in 1909 and left unpublished, is titled Fifty Years in Camp and Field.

**Alexander Ray:** Ray bought the house from William E. Spaulding in 1868 and lived in the house until 1878, when he died. Ray, who had been living at the corner of 20th and G Streets, N.W. for over 20 years, was a prominent businessman, successful enough to purchase the large structure at 1925 F Street and make major renovations to it. For years, the house was known as the "Ray Estate."

Ray owned a coal-shipping business in Georgetown, as well as a flour-milling operation run by his two sons, A. Ross and Albert Ray (who were two of the original founders of the Metropolitan Club). Ray's coal docks were located along the canal at 30th and 34th Streets, N.W. By means of an elevated track, Ray would transfer the coal, which came via the C & O Canal, to his wharves and storage areas on the Potomac, where it would then be loaded onto seagoing ships at his wharves.

**Hilary A. Herbert:** Herbert rented the house from Alexander Ray's widow, Susan B. Ray, between 1894 and 1897, during his tenure as Secretary of the Navy. Herbert was a soldier in the Confederate Army who fought at Manassas, Fredericksburg, Antietam, and Gettysburg. After being disabled in the war, he returned to his law practice and, in 1877, was elected to Congress. After 16 years in the Congress, President Cleveland appointed him Secretary of the Navy.

**Mayo D. Hazeltine:** Hazeltine leased the house between 1899 and 1906 from Ray's widow, Susan B. Ray. Educated at Harvard and Oxford, Hazeltine was literary critic for the New York Sun and contributed to many periodicals of the day. Washington city directories also list him as a professor.

**George Cabot Lodge:** City directories list Lodge, the son of Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, at the address between 1904 and 1906. Lodge sublet the house from Hazeltine. In 1897, he came to Washington to serve as his father's secretary. Following service in the Spanish-American War, he returned to Washington, where he found work as a clerk of a Senate committee. Lodge was a published poet who associated with the literary intellectuals of his day (Edith Wharton, Henry Adams, and John Hay).



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   8   Page   19  

---

**Augustus Peabody Gardner:** Gardner purchased the house from the descendants of Alexander Ray in 1909. It appears that he may have bought the house as an investment, as city directories never list him at 1925 F Street, N.W. during his period of ownership (1909 to 1918). Gardner was married to Constance Lodge, George Cabot Lodge's sister.

Gardner was a Captain and Assistant Adjutant General in the Spanish-American War. He served in the Massachusetts Senate between 1899-1901. He was elected to the 57th Congress of the United States in 1902 and served until 1917.

**Charles Dyer Norton:** Norton resided as a tenant at 1925 F Street, N.W. c. 1909-1912. He was a prominent Chicago banker who acted as the first chairman of the Committee on the Plan of Chicago. This committee financed Daniel H. Burnham's plan for the city, published in 1909. That same year, Norton was recruited by President Taft to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under Secretary MacVeagh. In 1917, he was appointed by President Wilson to serve on the five-member Red Cross war council. He was active in the arts, acting as a trustee of the American Academy in Rome and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He also served on the board of several industrial corporations.

**William Kent:** Kent lived at 1925 F Street between 1912 and 1920, renting the house from Augustus P. Gardner for the first six years and finally purchasing it from the Gardner estate in 1918. Kent was also a Chicagoan, who was employed in real estate and the livestock business. He was a member of the Chicago city council between 1895 and 1897 and was active in Illinois civil service reform. He returned to his native California and was elected as a Progressive Republican to the 62nd Congress. While in Congress, he was a member of the public lands committee, lobbying for national ownership of public lands and the creation of a national parks commission. He gave 426 acres of redwood forest to the U.S. Government to establish Muir Woods in California. He also authored several works on the outdoors and on national and municipal affairs.

**Willoughby G. Walling:** Also a Chicago banker, Walling was very possibly an acquaintance of Kent, from whom he rented the house. In addition to his banking career, Walling was extremely active in public welfare issues and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 20

---

in civic organizations. He held a number of positions with the American Red Cross, including Director of Administration and Acting Director General.

**Ruth Sears Baker Pratt:** Pratt sublet the house from Laura Curtis Gross between 1932 and 1933 while serving as Republican Congresswoman from New York's "silk stocking district." Her political career started in 1925, when she was elected the first woman member of the New York City Board of Alderman. She was founder and President of the Women's National Republican Club and a member of the Republican National Committee between 1929 and 1943.

**Laura Merriam Curtis Gross:** Laura Curtis Gross rented the house from American University between 1924 and 1934, when she purchased it from the University through the club she founded. She was the daughter of William R. Merriam, Governor of Minnesota. She married New York attorney James Freeman Curtis in 1913 and had four children by that marriage. During her stay in Washington, she was known as the "uncrowned queen of the Republican Party." Beyond her social capabilities, Mrs. Curtis worked actively for the Community Chest and Children's Hospital. In her later years, she and second husband John Gross lived at the Watergate apartments, where Mrs. Gross operated an antique store on the basement level.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 21

---

**Chronology of Occupancy, The Steedman-Ray House, 1925 F Street, N.W.**

(Due to minor discrepancies in source material, these dates should be viewed as approximate).

DATE	OCCUPANT	OWNER
1849-53	Louisa Coffin or Sarah Steedman	Louisa Harrison Coffin or Sarah Steedman
1853-58	Charles Steedman, Captain, U.S. Navy (with wife Sarah)	Louisa Harrison Coffin or Sarah Steedman
1858-59	Charles Steedman	William Duane, Trustee for Sarah Steedman
1861-63	Benjamin Ogle Tayloe	Benjamin Ogle Tayloe
1863-65	Commissary-General of Prisoners	Sarah Steedman
1865-67	Commissary-General of Prisoners	William E. Spaulding, Owner, National Theatre
1867-68	William E. Spaulding	William E. Spaulding
1869-78	Alexander Ray, coal shipper	Alexander Ray
1879-?	Susan B. Ray, widow of Alexander Ray	Susan B. Ray
1885-91	Nelson Brown, banker	Susan B. Ray
1894-97	Hilary A. Herbert, Secretary of the Navy	Susan B. Ray
1899-1903	Mayo Hazeltine, journalist, <u>New York Sun</u>	Ellen Goldsborough, daughter, A. Ray

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 22

---

1903-1906	George Cabot Lodge, (subleasee) clerk, U.S. Senate	Ellen Goldsborough, (owner) Mayo Hazeltine, (primary leasee)
1909-1911	Charles Dyer Norton, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury and Secretary to the President	Augustus P. Gardner, Congressman
1912-1919	William P. Kent, Congressman	Augustus P. Gardner William Kent (1918)
1920-21	Willoughby G. Walling, Director, American Red Cross	William Kent
1921	Vacant	American University
1922-23	Lithuanian Legation	American University
1924-32	James F. Curtis, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (with wife Laura Curtis)	American University
1932-33	Ruth S. B. Pratt, (subleasee) Congresswoman	American University, (owner) Laura Curtis (primary leasee)
1933-34	F Street Club	American University
1935-74	F Street Club	Nineteen Twenty-five F Street Club, Inc.
1974	F Street Club	American University
1974-88	F Street Club	George Washington University

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number 8 Page 23

---

List of Figures

1. 1925 F Street, N.W., facade  
Washington, D.C.  
Traceries 9/1988, Traceries  
Facing north
2. Streetscape, F Street at 20th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.  
Traceries 10/1988, Traceries  
Facing east
3. Streetscape, F Street, mid-block between 19th and 20th, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.  
Traceries 10/1988, Traceries  
Facing west
4. 1925 F Street, N.W., view showing side garden  
Washington, D.C.  
Traceries 9/1988, Traceries  
Facing north
5. 1925 F Street, N.W., entrance detail  
Washington, D.C.  
Traceries 9/1988, Traceries  
Facing north
6. 1925 F Street, N.W., cornice detail  
Washington, D.C.  
Traceries 9/1988, Traceries  
Facing north
7. 1925 F Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.  
Traceries 9/1988, Traceries  
Facing northeast

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   8   Page   24  

---

8. 1925 F Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.  
Traceries 9/1988, Traceries  
Facing south
9. View of 1925 F Street, N.W. during Civil War use as Office of the  
Commissary-General of Prisoners, 1864.  
From: Miller, Francis Trevelyan, ed. The Photographic History of the  
Civil War. Vols 7 & 8. New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1865.
- 10 View of 1925 F Street, N.W. during Civil War use as Office of the  
Commissary-General of Prisoners, 1864, detail of entrance.  
From: Miller, Francis Trevelyan, ed. The Photographic History of the  
Civil War. Vols. 7 & 8. New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1865.
11. Sketch of one-story brick addition to 1925 F Street.  
Filed with March 10, 1910 Permit to Build. (National Archives)
12. View of 1925 F Street, N.W., "The American University Courier," 1921.  
Martin Luther King Library (Washingtoniana Division, Houses File).
13. 1925 F Street, N.W., 1954.  
Historic American Buildings Survey, DC-44.  
Library of Congress (Prints and Photographs Division).
14. 1925 F Street, N.W., 1973.  
Columbia Historical Society (Vertical Files: "F Street").
15. "Statement of Building, Parts of Buildings, Wharves, etc. for  
use of the War Department, December 1864." (Quartermaster General's  
Correspondence, National Archives).
16. "Plan of Mess and Store Houses, Office of Signal Officer and Wood  
Yard." (Civil War records, National Archives Cartographic Division,  
Alexandria, Virginia).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   9   Page   2  

---

Bibliography

Billings, Mrs. Elden. "History of 1925 F Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 1961-63." Paper written for the Columbia Historical Society. In possession of Richard Casiano, General Manager, F Street Club. Mimeographed.

Boyd, William H., compiler. Boyd's City Directory to the District of Columbia. Washington, D.C. By the Author, 1850-1938.

Callahan, Edward W., ed. List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900. New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd. 1969.

Cullum, Bvt. Major-General George. Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. Vol 1. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company. 1891, pp. 433 & 434.

Deeds of the District of Columbia. District of Columbia Recorded of Deeds.

Historic American Buildings Survey, DC-44. Schwartz, Nancy. "Addendum to Steedman-Ray House (Alexander Ray House) (1925 F Street Club)." Edited by Eleni Silverman (1984). Washington, D.C.: HABS, 1976. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Hoagland, Alison Kim. Nineteenth-Century Building Regulations in Washington, D.C. Unpublished manuscript, August 1983.

Jandl, H.Ward, ed. The Technology of Historic American Buildings: Studies of the Materials, Craft Processes, and the Mechanization of Building Construction, p. 118. Washington, D.C.: Foundation for Preservation Technology for the Association for Preservation Technology, 1983.

Junior League of Washington. The City of Washington. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   9   Page   3  

---

Lee, Richard M. Mr. Lincoln's City: An Illustrated Guide to the Civil War Sites of Washington, pp. 14-17. McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, Inc., 1981.

Miller, Francis Trevelyan, ed. The Photographic History of the Civil War. Vols. 7 & 8. New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1865.

Nancy B. Schwartz. "Steedman-Ray House." National Register of Historic Places, draft. March 7, 1968.

National Intelligencer

"For rent-situated on F Street..." January 28, 1858, p. 2

Norton, Garrison. Letter to Richard Casiano, manager of the F Street Club. March 7, 1987. Mimeographed.

Photographic Collections:

Columbia Historical Society  
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division  
James M. Goode Collection  
Washington Collection  
Martin Luther King Public Library, Washingtoniana Division

Record Group 42: District of Columbia Building Permits. National Archives.

Reiff, Daniel. Washington Architecture 1791-1861. Problems in Development. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, 1971.

Schwartz, Nancy B., compiler. Historic American Buildings Survey, District of Columbia Catalog. University Press of Virginia: 1974.

Sherwood, Suzanne Berry. "Foggy Bottom 1800-1975: A Study in the Uses of an Urban Neighborhood." G.W. Washington Studies, Vol. No. 7. Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1978.

Tax Records and General Assessments. National Archives and Martin Luther King Public Library.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   9   Page   4  

---

The Washington Post:

- "Swank '1925 F St. Club' Harder to Crack than a Chestnut."  
Februaru 5, 1950.
- "Though Cozy, It is Important." March 27, 1955.
- "American U. Eyes Site of F St. Club." November 25, 1960.
- "F Street Club to Close." December 2, 1969, p. B1
- "Laura Merriam Curtis Gross Dies." October 31, 1973.
- "F Street Club Sold." August 3, 1974.
- "GW's Continued Demolition Frenzy." January 20, 1976.
- "A House in Search of a Home." Undated (post 1974).

The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography. Vols. VI and XXXIV. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

The Star:

- "Mrs. J.F. Curtis to Become Club Hostess in F St. Home."  
April 1933.
- "F Street Club." January 16, 1938.
- "F Street Club's Home Taking a Trip." July 13, 1976.
- "The F Street Club Can Stay Put." January 16, 1978.

Traceries, Foggy Bottom - West End Survey. Historic Preservation Division, District of Columbia Government, 1982.

Traceries for Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A and Foggy Bottom Association. Application Form for Thematic Group - Foggy Bottom/West End draft. Joint Committee of Landmarks of the National Capital, 1982.

Unidentified Newspaper Clippings:

- "Club Will Occupy Mrs. Curtis' Home." 1933.
- "Name is Number on Her Fine Old Home in F Street." 1933.

Vertical Files

Columbia Historical Society  
Library of Congress  
Martin Luther King Public Library

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

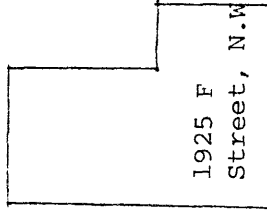
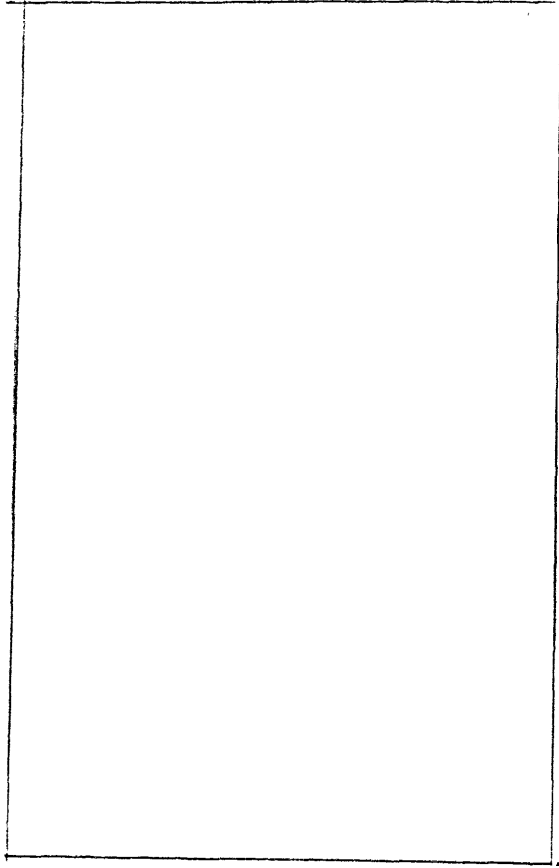
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

F Street Club, 1925 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

Section number   9   Page   5  

---

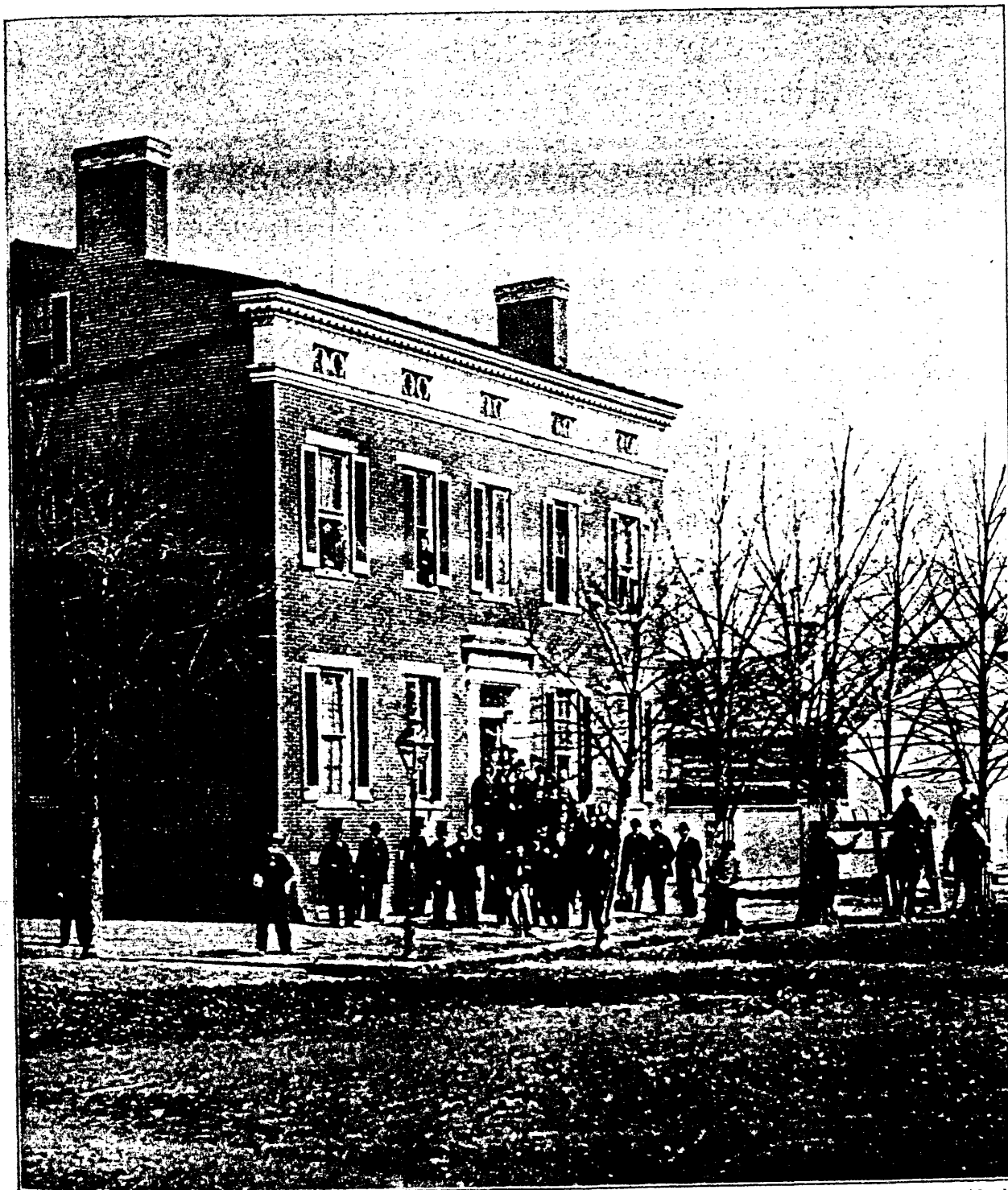
Washington, D.C. National Archives. Record Group 249, Entry 225  
(Subject: Washington, D.C.). "Statement of Buildings, Parts of  
Buildings, Wharves, Grounds, & c. hired by Captain J.H. Crowell,  
Assistant Quartermaster of Washington, D.C. for use as different  
Bureaus of War Department, with etc."



F Street, N.W.

20th Street, N.W.

↙ 2



COPYRIGHT, 1911, PATRIOT PUB. CO.

#### BEFORE THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSARY-GENERAL OF PRISONERS—1864

The work in the office of the commissary-general of prisoners was arduous and important. The reports of all prisons, the requisitions for extraordinary supplies, and every detail of the handling of prisoners passed through his hands. Guided by these records and statistics, he indicated to the provost-marshals of the various armies where the prisoners should be sent. He issued his orders directly to the commanding officers regardless of the departmental commanders; he determined how the prisoners should be clothed and fed, and what accommodations in the way of new buildings and stockades should be prepared for them. Through this systematic method the whereabouts of almost every prisoner taken by the United States troops was at all times a matter of record at headquarters.

#### FIGURE 9

View of 1925 F Street, N.W. as the Office of the Commissary-General of Prisoners during the Civil War. SOURCE: The Photographic History of the Civil War, ed. Francis Trevelyan Miller.

PART I  
PRISONS

---

NORTHERN AND  
SOUTHERN  
PRISONS

---



BRIGADIER-GENERAL WILLIAM HOFFMAN, FEDERAL COMMISSARY-GENERAL OF PRISONERS. TO HIM WAS DUE WHATEVER OF UNIFORMITY THERE WAS IN THE CARE OF PRISONERS.

FIGURE 10  
Detail of 1925 F Street, N.W. as the Office of the Commissary-General of Prisoners. SOURCE: The Photographic History of the Civil War.

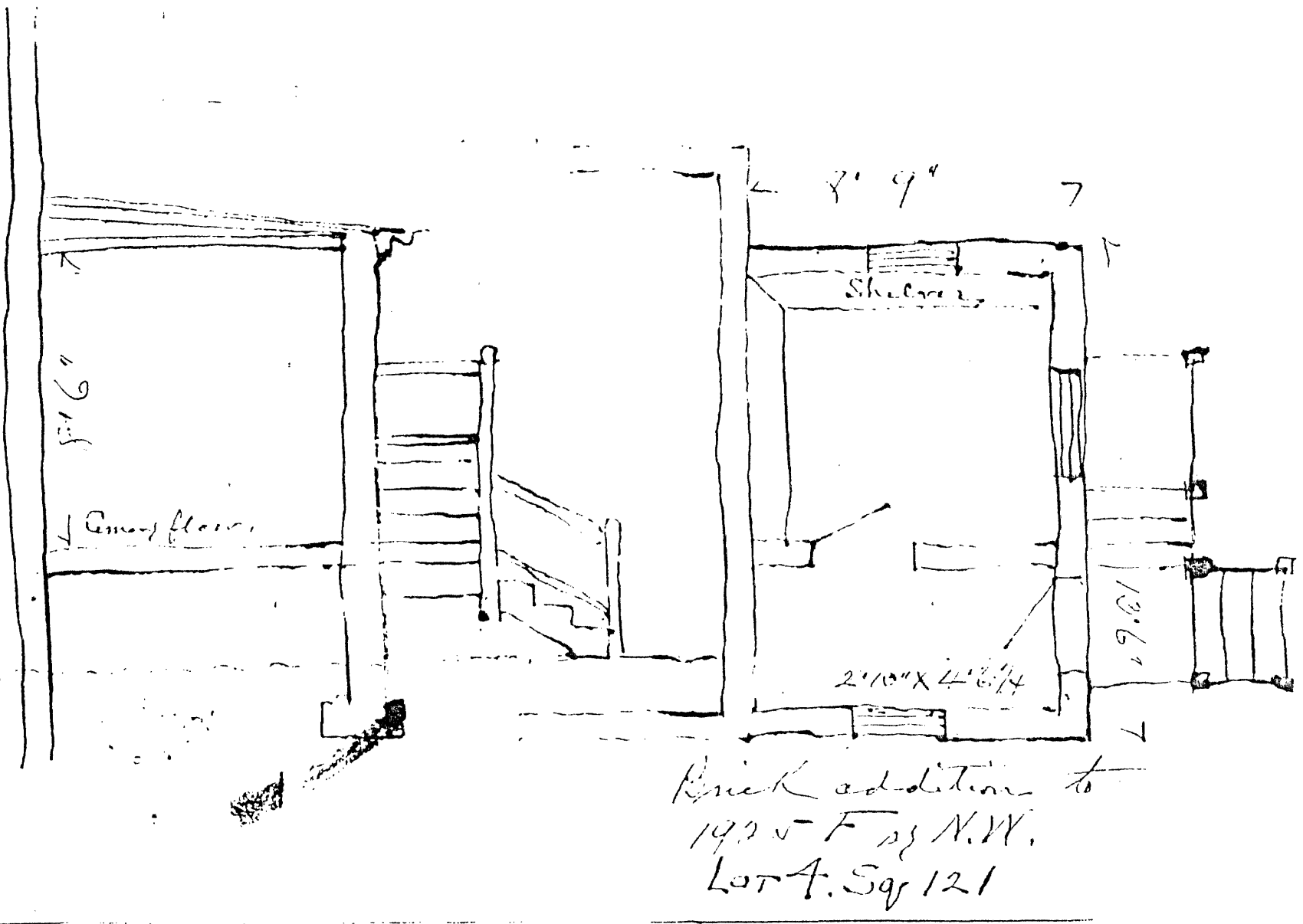


FIGURE 11

Sketch of one-story brick addition to 1925 F Street, N.W. included with D.C. Building Permit #4881, March 10, 1910.  
SOURCE: National Archives.

Houses  
1925 F St. N.W.  
-1971

1925 - F St., N.W.

Box 417

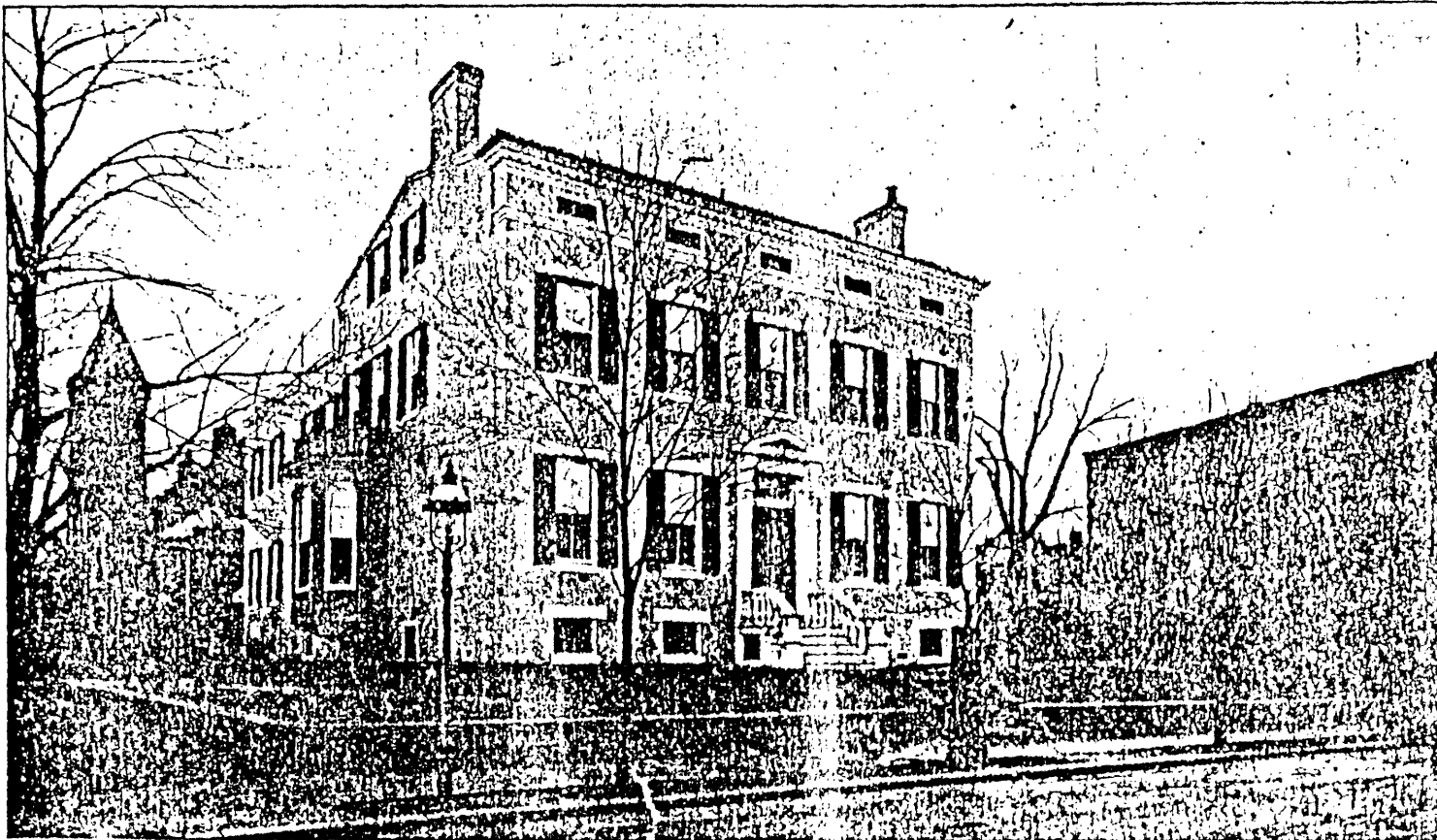
# The American University Courier

Entered as second-class matter February 27, 1909, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under Act of July 16, 1894

Volume XXVII

Washington, D. C., January, 1921

No. 2



NEW PURCHASE OF ADDITION TO DOWN-TOWN BRANCH, F AND 20TH STREETS

FIGURE 12  
View of 1925 F Street, N.W. in 1921, when it was purchased by American University.  
SOURCE: Martin Luther King Library, Washingtoniana Division, Houses file.



FIGURE 13

View of 1925 F Street in 1954.

SOURCE: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (HABS #DC-44)

4666



# A House In Search Of A Home

By William Gildea

Officials of the exclusive 1925 F Street Club are searching for a new headquarters before their 1840s-vintage townhouse is hit by a wrecker's ball.

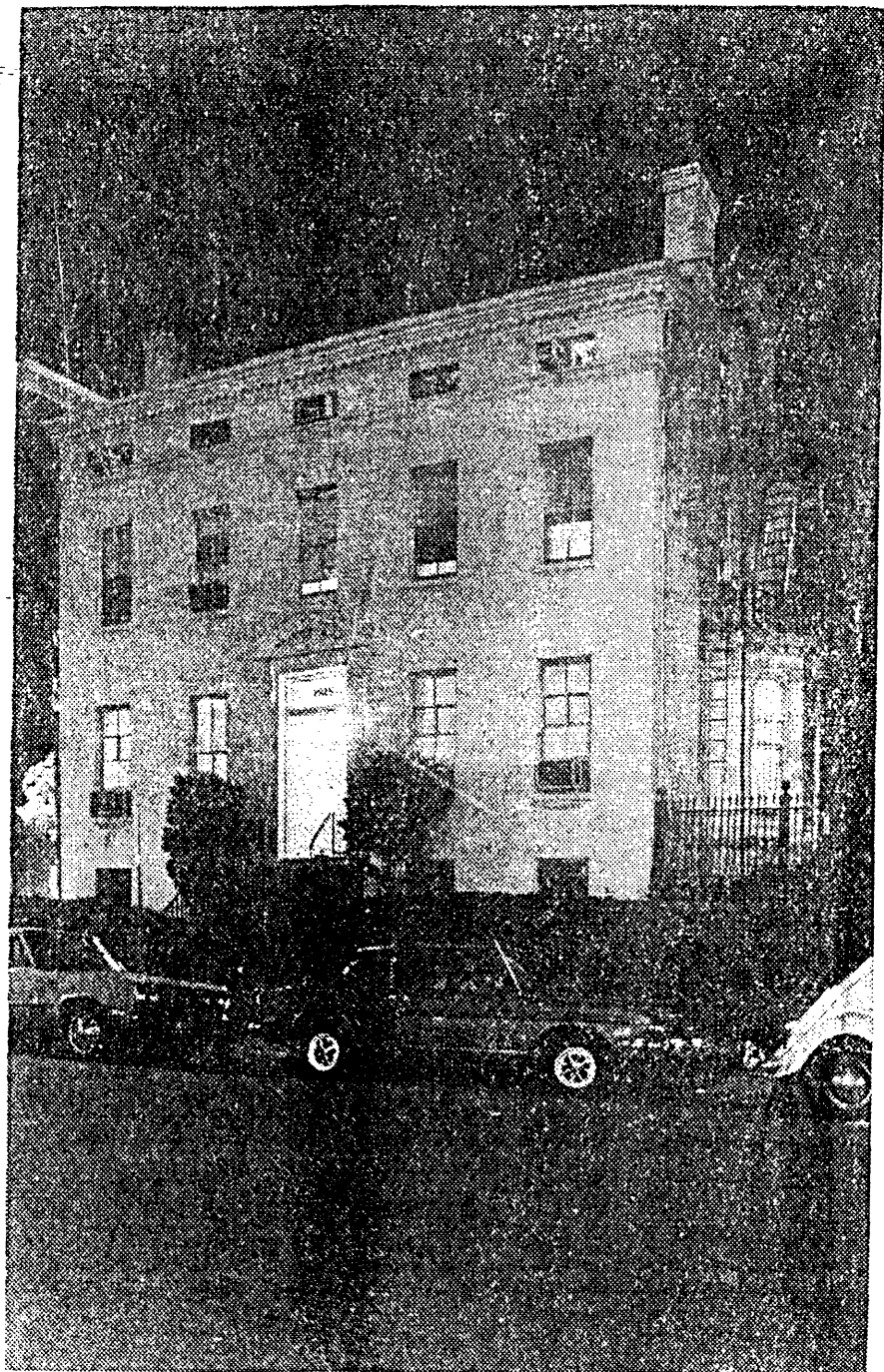
George Washington University, which owns the house, has signed a memorandum of intent with the World Bank that would lead to the construction of an office building to be occupied by the bank.

The F Street Club, known for its sought-after memberships, has been given until Oct. 31 to vacate its house, which has been the site of social gatherings that have included Presidents, the wealthy and numerous diplomats over the years.

The university expects to complete its final agreement with the World Bank by the end of the year, according to a George Washington spokesman. He said it has not been determined whether the building, scheduled for the block bounded by 19th, 20th, F and G Streets NW, would be built by the school and leased to the bank or whether the property would be sold to the bank.

A spokesman for the World Bank, which has its headquarters at 1818 H St., said the new building would be occupied by employees now working in leased space outside its H Street complex. The bank employs more than 4,000 people.

A number of structures in the designated building area would not be affected. These include the Concordia United Church of Christ, not a university holding, at 1920 G St., and two townhouses on 19th Street, which appear on the National Register of Historic Places.



By Douglas Chevalier—The Washington Post

## The 1925 F Street Club.

The F Street Club house, which does not appear on the National Register, was sold in 1974 to George Washington University by American University, which first rented it as a private home in 1923. The club itself was founded in 1933

by the late Laura Merriam Curtis Gross, who lived there briefly.

A club official said a new location with similar "ambience" is being sought in the city.

Nobody tries  
age.

"Our average  
A white-haired  
noddled in agr-

They praise  
they had met  
the Democrat  
personality."

But his plan  
a "giant step"

The retiree  
Thursday night  
reception in  
for delegates  
the American  
Persons-Nat  
Association.

They battle  
House and S  
against the  
illness plan."

Harriet M  
Montana and  
director of t  
claim a com  
million and  
Street, put t  
this:

"The F  
catastrophic  
government  
his proposed  
would cost t  
out of their

As Miller,  
represents,  
conclude the  
Medicare prop  
shell game fo  
older citizens.

The delegates  
day meeting  
officers. J  
Albuquerque  
replace Mary  
Beach, Calif.  
Mrs. Alice  
Morgantown  
president of  
Woodruff, 7

FIGURE 14

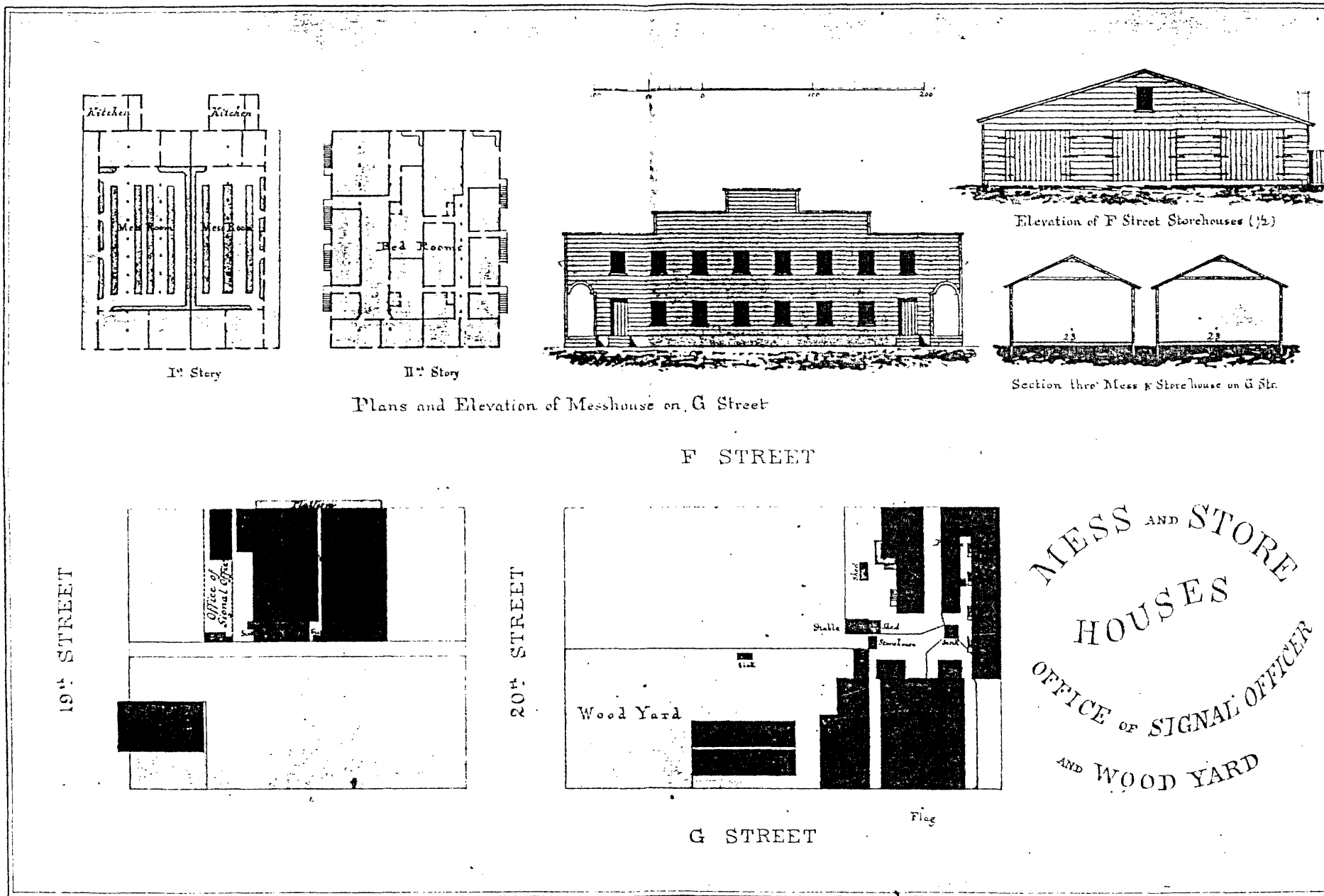
View of 1925 F Street, N.W. in 1973 showing air-conditioning units in windows, no shutters and damaged cast-iron fence.

SOURCE: Columbia Historical Society, Vertical Files

Statement of Buildings, Wharves,  
Grounds, &c. . . . for use of the War Department,  
December 1864.

Book 61, R. 540

FIGURE 15  
Statement of Buildings, Wharves, Grounds, & c. . . . for use of the War Department,  
December 1864.  
SOURCE: Quartermaster General's Correspondence (National Archives).



Plans and Elevation of Messhouse on G Street

F STREET

19th STREET

20th STREET

G STREET

MESS AND STORE  
 HOUSES  
 OFFICE OF SIGNAL OFFICER  
 AND WOOD YARD

1 Messhouse for 1100 Men \$ 6,800  
 1 " " " 600 " " 3,600

2 warehouses of 6 500 2,900  
 2 " " 19 500 2,900

1 warehouse of Signal Office 1,200  
 200 516,600

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FIGURE 16 Plans and Elevations of MESS AND Store Houses

SOURCE: Civil War Files, National Archives  
 Cartographic Division.