NOTES FOR
TOUR OF TOWNSEND MANSION
HOME OF THE COSMOS CLUB
July 2015

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FOREWORD & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These notes are for docent training, both background and possible speaking text for a walking tour of the Club. The material is largely taken from notes prepared by Bill Hall (CC: 1995) in 2000, Ed Bowles (CC: 1973) in 2004, and Judy Holoviak (CC: 1999) in 2004 to whom grateful credit is given. Many of the details are from Wilcomb Washburn’s centennial history of the Club. The material on Jules Allard is from the research of Paul Miller, curator of the Newport Preservation Society. The material was assembled by Jack Mansfield (CC: 1998), to whom thanks are given. Members Jean Taylor Federico and Betty Monkman with curatorial assistant, Peggy Newman updated the tour and added references to notable objects and paintings in the Cosmos Club collection in August, 2009. This material was revised in 2010 and 2013 to note location changes. Assistance has been provided by our Associate Curators: Leslie Jones, Maggie Dimmock, and Yve Colby.


The notes are divided into two parts. The first is an overview of the Club’s history. The second part is tour background. The portion in bold is recommended as speaking notes for tour guides followed by information that will be useful for elaboration and answering questions. The notes are organized by floor, room and section of the Club, not necessarily in the order tours may take. This document is a work in progress and will be revised as we learn more.
OVERVIEW

Brief History of the Cosmos Club Homes

Items in italic pertain to the Townsend Mansion before acquisition by the Club.

1871 Curtis J. Hillyer acquires the now Cosmos Club land plot as part of a real-estate venture with California Senator William M. Steward.

1873 Hillyer built a 50 by 50 foot brick house on the property.

1878 Organizational meeting of what became the Cosmos Club was held at the home of John Wesley Powell, 910 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Rough draft of constitution of the Club presented. Admission fees proposed to be $25 (using Consumer Price Index = $557.00 in today’s dollars) for resident members with annual dues of $20.

Critical conflict averted when members of the existing Philosophical Society of Washington were invited to join the new club.

1879 First meeting of the Club held at its initial headquarters, 3 rooms leased in the Corcoran Building at 15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Rent for the space was $53 per month, which included lights, heat, and the services of a watchman.

1882 Committee of five was selected to assure the future well-being of the Club; a subcommittee of three was charged to determine whether a suitable building could be obtained. Club agrees to rent No. 23 Lafayette Square or Madison Place for 1 year at a fee not to exceed $1680. End of year reception held in Club’s new home.

1886 Club purchases house on Lafayette Square at corner of H Street and Madison Place. This house, built in 1818, was purchased in 1828 by President James Madison, and was the home of his widow Dolley until her death in 1849.

1892 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Townsend move to D.C., to 22 Lafayette Square N. Jackson Place.

1893 Two additional floors added to the Club.

1898 The Hillyer property was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Townsend, for $65,000, which is the equivalent of $1,788,474.35 today.

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1This summary is based on The Cosmos Club History—A Centennial History 1878-1978 and its supplement Beginning the Second Century 1979-1994 both written by Wilcomb E. Washburn (CC: 1965-1997) and available in the Club Library for interested members. The summary is from notes prepared by Judy Holoviak (CC: 1999).
1899  Mrs. Townsend directed the reconstruction and renovation of the old house, converting it to something resembling a French townhouse.

1901  The family moved into the Mansion in December 1900.

1902  In November, Mr. Townsend was thrown from a horse and died soon after of a skull fracture.

1904  Leased No. 25 Lafayette Square, next to the existing Club in order to obtain additional space.

1906  Purchased No. 25 Lafayette Square.

1907  Purchased No. 23 Lafayette Square, adjacent to existing Club space.

1909  Tore down Nos. 23 and 25 Lafayette Square and began construction on a new building to abut with other Club property.

1910  Housewarming for the newly constructed addition to the house.

1910  *The Townsend*s daughter Mathilde married Rhode Island Senator Peter Goelet Gerry in the ballroom of the mansion (now the Warne Ballroom).* This marriage ended in divorce and Mathilde married Sumner Welles in 1925. He later served as Under Secretary of State (1937-1943) during the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration.

1917  Purchased No. 21 Lafayette Square.

Between 1878 and 1922, nine different times the Club found it necessary to increase its facilities in order to accommodate growth.

1928  Purchased 1516 H Street to east of existing property for a price of $80,000.

1930  Congress passed an act directing the Secretary of the Treasury to acquire all privately owned land on the Madison Place side of Lafayette Square but set no time limits on the action.

1931  Death of Mary Scott Townsend; house inherited by Mathilde Townsend Welles.

1939  U.S. government offers Club $1,000,000 for its property, $62,000 below the assessed value.

1940  At a general meeting of the Club the membership accepted the government’s $1,000,000 offer (attempts to raise the amount having failed) and authorized the Board of Management to take necessary actions for housing the Club at a new location. They limited total expenditure to the net proceeds on the sale of the Club property.

1940  Continued to occupy the buildings on Lafayette Square through a lease arrangement with the government until 1952.

1952  During this period, architect members of the Club, the Board of Management, and other interested members, worked to find a suitable location within the constraints imposed by
the membership. Acrimony developed as different groups pushed for their own resolution to the space problem.

Also during this time money was being raised through Building and Endowment funds amounting to $583,000. Construction of a 10-story building on property owned by the Club on H Street between 17th and 18th Street was among the plans; the Club would occupy the top 3 floors and lease the remaining.

1941 The Club made plans to assure that its current “oldest living member” could move with it to a new location by obtaining permission from the government for the removal of the wisteria vine that adorned the Lafayette Square property. At the time the vine was 200 feet long and its twisted trunk was more than 40 inches in circumference near the ground. The magnificent wisteria outside the Warne Ballroom and in the West Garden is a surviving portion of the Lafayette Square vine.

1941 During World War II the stable of the Townsend Mansion was the home for the American Women Volunteers and the house proper was leased to the Canadian Women’s Army Corps, which housed 150 in the facility.²

1949 Mrs. Mathilde Townsend Welles died and the property passed to her husband, Sumner Welles

1949 The Board of Management approved negotiations for the Welles property (2121 Massachusetts Avenue) at the corner of Florida and Massachusetts Avenues and directed the securing of a 60-day option for purchase. There were still efforts being made by some members to proceed with the erection of a new building for the Club.

1950 At a special meeting of the Club, members voted 377 to 56 to acquire the Welles property for $364,635 (or $3,512,687.21 today) and also voted to sell the property on H Street.

1950 Renovations on the Townsend Mansion proceeded while tripping over government restrictions related to the Korean War and the best efforts of numerous Club committees.

1952 The war and regulations delayed construction and caused added expense. The Building, Finance, and Construction Committees, the Club Executive, the Board of Management, and the membership forced changes on the architect. For example, the location of the billiard room was changed from the 3rd floor to the 2nd floor, then to the east annex, then to the basement, then to the west room, and finally back to the 3rd floor. The architect, when requesting additional payment, listed 26 areas or rooms that had gone through changes from the original plans.

1952 The new Club was occupied by the membership.

1959 Air conditioning was added after considerable debate. When the expenditure was authorized it was noted that the recouping of lost dining room revenue during the four summer months would help defray the costs.

² Washburn’s history of the Club says that 150 were housed in the building, which swells the imagination as to where all the beds were placed and how bath facilities were allocated. Unconfirmed is that the Canadian soldiers used the ballroom (now the Warne lounge) as a recreation hall.
1962  The Members' New Dining Room (now the Crentz Room), then called the East Dining Room, was officially opened. Five properties behind the Mansion were acquired around this time, which provided increased parking.

1999  Powell Room was totally renovated.

2002  Major systems upgrade of the Club was undertaken.

The Hillyer house was purchased in 1898 by Richard and Mary Scott Townsend. She was the granddaughter of Gustavus Scott, one of the original commissioners of the District of Columbia, and daughter of Civil War Colonel William Scott (1828-1891), who had amassed a fortune from extensive holdings in coal mines, iron production, real estate, and shipping. In addition, Scott was president of the 80-mile Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad and served two terms as a representative in Congress. After he died in 1891, Mary was said to have been one of the richest women in America, having received between 20 and 30 million dollars, although much may have been in trust. In 1879, Mary Scott married the 29-year-old Richard Townsend, the manager of her father's brokerage house in Philadelphia and later president of her father's railroad. After he retired from his business ventures in 1892 the couple moved to Washington, occupying Mary’s inherited row house at 22 Lafayette Square (later re-numbered 736 Jackson Place), next door to the Decatur House, across the park from the Cosmos Club. Mary Scott Townsend retained the home at 736 Jackson Place. Following their move to the rebuilt Hillyer house, Mary rented her former row house for the use of Theodore Roosevelt while the White House was being renovated. It is now the home of the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.
In 1899 the Townsends commissioned New York architects John Merven Carrère and Thomas Hastings to carry out renovations in the French style. While this is generally known as a French style, it was indeed international, as many Europeans of significant wealth sought out the best of the designers in Paris to reproduce the latest style in their residences and public buildings.

Both Carrère and Hastings had studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Carrère and Hastings began as draftsmen at the firm of McKim, Mead and White, but soon left in 1886 to form their partnership. Both firms were recognized as near the pinnacle of American formal architecture at the time. For example, Carrère and Hastings designed buildings in Florida for Henry Flagler, such as the Ponce de Léon Hotel (1885). Other examples of their work include the New York Public Library (1897), the U. S. Senate building (1905), the Carnegie Institute and Cannon House Office Building (1906), the Standard Oil Building in New York (1922). Their work on the Townsend additions extended the footprint to include what we now know as the Warne Ballroom, the Library, the complete Long Gallery, and the Members’ Old Dining Room. Mrs. Townsend conferred with Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr. on the design of the gardens, but he was not engaged. Additional research on this subject is currently in process.

The interior of the mansion is among the best preserved work of famous decorator Jules Allard. Carrère and Hastings chose the firm, Jules Allard et fils to execute the interiors. The architects became aware of the Allard firm through its great successes of the French Salon and the “Lady’s Boudoir” in the Vanderbilt houses at 640 and 660 Fifth Avenue, New York. Allard’s work was one of the purest of the formal high style French decorators at the turn of the century, with workshops in Paris and New York.

Jules Allard specialized in bringing the dix-huitième high style French interiors to the American elite. His firm did the interiors for several homes in Newport (The Elms, the Breakers, and Marble House) as well as Whitehall in Palm Beach and the Patterson House in Washington, now the home of the Washington Club. Allard managed to salvage many 18th and 19th century decorative architectural elements from Parisian townhouses being demolished to execute Baron von Haussmann’s plan to widen the grand boulevards.

The style in both the U.S. and Europe was frequently to design ornamentation around such salvaged details. Allard’s artists were able to sketch and copy many other design details, creating a market for unofficial molds that they supplied to restoration workmen. For the Townsend mansion, Allard uses styles which vary from the Henri II Library to the Louis XVI Warne Ballroom. Most of the brass and bronze work in the mansion is very rare; the original ornamental iron-work of the staircase and the bronzes sconces were made by the Bricard Company in Paris.

There are records of the Townsend project. The partnership operated from 1885 until 1911 when Carrère was killed in an automobile accident. Hastings continued on his own using the same firm name. There are no specific records relating to the decorating except for two early sets of photographs. We know that the later set was by Frances Benjamin Johnston, from 1915. Thus, much of what is known was derived from extensive research done in 2005 by Paul Miller, curator at the Newport Preservation Society.

The Townsend Mansion is best described stylistically as a good example of fin de siècle Beaux-Arts architecture. The principal interiors somewhat freely interpret historic French styles ranging from the reigns of Henri II (1547-1559) through those of Louis XIV (1643-1715), Louis XV (1715-1774), and Louis XVI (1774-1793).
Mary Scott Townsend was known for her lavish hospitality and entertaining. She is said to have spent as much as $20,000 a month to entertain and maintained 30-40 liveried domestics. In today’s dollars, that entertainment would exceed $400,000. The Townsend’s daughter Mathilde was married in the house in 1910 to Sen. Peter Goelet Gerry, great-grandson of Governor (of Massachusetts 1810-1812) Elbridge Gerry for whom the term gerrymandering was coined. Mathilde acquired the mansion on the death of her mother in 1931 and owned it with her second husband Sumner Welles until her death in 1949.

Mr. Welles was Assistant Secretary of State under Cordell Hull during the Franklin Roosevelt administration. They normally lived at their Oxon Hill estate or in their townhome at 736 Jackson Place. They used this property for their larger parties. On Mathilde’s death, the house passed to Sumner Welles, and in 1949 it was purchased by the Club.

Mrs. Townsend drives a buggy in front of her home.
The house was delivered to the Townsends with bare concrete walls and columns. Mr. Allard’s craftsmen and other sub-contractors installed all the coverings for columns and walls. The carved stonework was created and installed by Ellin, Kitson and Co. of New York, and the marble work by Batterson, See, and Eisele of New York.

These interior commissions involved installing all decorative details and wall coverings, as well as a standard domestic inventory of appropriate furniture and carpets. Allard’s business card advertises *Ameublements complets* (complete furnishings). Very few items in houses like this were individually chosen by the owner; they were part of a package. An example is the original marble newspaper table (although now glass-topped), from Naples.

The lobby is noteworthy for its strong horizontal plane, a sign of Carrère and Hastings progressing to an academic approach. Some of what appears to be limestone is actually plaster over concrete with faint quarry marks brushed in.

The Louis XVI décor, with the white marble floor and columns, the “Caen stone” (a fiber-reinforced, perhaps hemp, plaster) staircase with its richly embellished wrought iron railing, and its bronze sconces, gives an immediate impression of grand luxury to the visitor. As you tour the house notice the reproduction Baroque and period lighting fixtures. Most of them are original to the house and represent the taste of the early 1900s.

The lobby now serves as a welcoming space for guests and members. The glass exhibit case to the right of the fireplace holds rotating exhibits of art on loan to the club.

**Painting**

*Sandy Hills, Near Westport, Massachusetts*

William Trost Richards (1833-1905)

Oil on canvas

1889

Gift of Dr. James Gannon, Sr. in 1958

One of the most significant works of art in the Club is in the lobby (to the left of the door to the hall). The artist was one of the New England “luminist” painters. His works are in major museums throughout the country. Richards was an important American landscape artist associated with both the Hudson River School and the American Pre-Raphaelite movement. In the 1870s, he produced many acclaimed watercolor views of the White Mountains, several of which are now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Richards exhibited at the National Academy of Design from 1861 to 1899 and at the Brooklyn Art Association from 1863 to 1885. Richards rejected the romanticized and stylized approach of other Hudson River painters and instead insisted on meticulous factual renderings.

**Painting**

*Simon Newcomb*

H. F. Waltman (1871-1951)

1906

Gift of F. H. Waltman in 1906
The portrait near on the right of the window is of prominent astronomer Simon Newcomb (CC: 1880-1909). Canadian-born, Newcomb was appointed professor of mathematics and astronomer at the Naval Observatory in 1861. His calculations of the motions of the bodies in the Solar System were in use as daily reference all over the world for more than 50 years, and the system of astronomical constants for which he was most responsible is still the standard. From 1884 he was also professor of mathematics and astronomy at Johns Hopkins University. He retired with the rank of rear admiral. Note the particularly attractive frame on this portrait.

Desk or bureau plat  
1850-1875  
Louis XV style

The bureau plat has a kingswood veneered case with three apron drawers. The decorative mounts are brass S and C scrolls with dolphin masks on the cabriole legs.

Table  
Late 19th century or early 20th century  
Fonderia Chiurazzi, Naples, Italy  
After 1st century table

As our guests reach for a newspaper, they encounter a late 1800s white marble table with bases of winged lions. The winged lion design is a copy from the house of Gaius Cornelius Rufus in Pompeii, 1st century A.D. The ancient table was reproduced widely in the 19th century and early 20th century by the firm of Fonderia Chiurazzi in Naples. The original marble top was replaced with 20th century glass. The pedestal supports are one of three items surviving Mrs. Townsend’s original furnishings, probably because the table was too heavy to move.

Painting  
Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872)  
Artist Unknown after original by Alonzo Chappel  
Gift of William Gates (CC:1921-1927) before 1927

The portrait across from Newcomb is artist and inventor Samuel Finley Breese Morse. Born in Charlestown, Massachusetts his earliest paintings were influenced by his Calvinist preacher father. Morse studied painting in England with Washington Allston and Benjamin West. Upon his return to the United States, he worked hard on his technique painting landscapes, historic scenes and portraits. His most notable portraits are of President James Monroe (1820) and Marquis de Lafayette (1825). He may be best known as the American creator of a single-wire telegraph system and Morse Code. Reportedly he passed up no opportunity to wear his medals representing honors from Portugal, Denmark, Austria, Italy and Spain.

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3 National Gallery of Art October 19, 2008 – March 22, 2009 Pompeii and the Roman Villa exhibit brochure fig. 3. This particular table must have been quite common at the time. An announcement of a November 2007 auction (Brunk) lists what appears to be a pair of identical carved marble table supports, 20th century. The auction notice posts an estimated sales price of $1,500 - $2,500 for the pair.
CLUB ROOM

This new space adjacent to the lobby formerly served as a reception space for Mrs. Townsend’s guests. This features fine architectural work, and the mantel which had been in here quite some time ago has been located and there are plans to re-install it. This room can be contrasted to the Gold Room which also is directly on the other side of the Lobby. It also served as a reception area for Mrs. Townsend’s guests. Both rooms are extremely attractive, but this room has more extensive architectural work while the Gold Room has distinctive painted doors and a different style of moldings at the ceiling. This room is for members and guests who wish to have a place for a cup of coffee or a glass of wine with friends.

HALL OF HONORS

The Hall of Honors best represents the Cosmos Club in its role as an “extension of the world.” On its walls hang portraits of Club members who have received Nobel Prizes, Pulitzer Prizes, Presidential Medals of Freedom, and Cosmos Club Awards.

Painting
John Wesley Powell (1834-1902) (CC: 1878-1902)
E. H. Miller (1831-1921) (CC:1893-1899)
Pastel
1893

PASSAGEWAY FROM HALL OF HONORS TO DOLLEY MADISON PARLOR

This small passageway contains a display of members who have been honored on U.S. and foreign country stamps. Notice the newest framed work, a group of John Wesley Powell stamps presented to the Club by the 2008 Cosmos Club Associates.

Console table
French
Late 19th century or early 20th century reproduction
Louis XVI style

This demilune shaped mahogany console table is topped with a gray veined white marble. The apron has an ormolu frieze and mounts.

Watercolor
Mount Fujiyama
Hiroshi Yoshida (1876-1950)
Executed ca.1900

Distant rendering of Mt. Fujiyama covered in snow, with a sprawling landscape beneath it. Small dwellings are seen scattered in the broad scenery. Yoshida was a 20th century Japanese painter and woodblock print maker. He is regarded as one of the greatest artists of the shin hanga style, a type of printmaking that flourished in Japan in the early twentieth century and drew its influences
from Western Impressionism and other European modernist art. Yoshida is known especially for
his excellent landscape prints, and for his images of non-Japanese subjects done in traditional
Japanese woodblock style, including the Taj Mahal, the Swiss Alps, the Grand Canyon and other
National Parks in the USA.

DOLLEY MADISON PARLOR

The third home of the Club was in Dolley Madison’s former house on Lafayette
Square, purchased by the Club in 1886, eight years after the Club’s founding. The
entrance to the west garden from the Dolley Madison Parlor is a modern addition.

What is now called the Dolley Madison Parlor was the original billiard room in the Townsend
mansion. The mantelpiece of marble and alabaster was designed in a 16th century French
Renaissance manner. (This room was redecorated in March 2009.)

Painting
Dolley Madison (1768-1849)
E.F. Andrews (1835-1915)
Oil on canvas
1892
Gift of Mrs. Eliphalet Andrews in 1915

Eliphalet F. Andrews painted this portrait of Dolley Madison with the hope that Congress would
appropriate funds to purchase it for the White House. It was exhibited in the East Room of the
White House for many years in the late 19th century, but it was never purchased. Andrews, who
painted several presidential portraits for the White House, was the first director of the Corcoran
College of Art and a member of the Cosmos Club (1880-1896). The Club owns several other
portraits by this artist.

Painting
Fall Sunset on the Potomac
DeLancey Gill (1859-1940)
Oil on canvas
1919

Gill, a Club member, spent many years in charge of the Illustrations Department of the Bureau
of American Ethnology at the Smithsonian and sketched for the US Geological Survey in Arizona
and the Yellowstone Valley.

Painting
Fall Landscape
Max Weyl (1837-1914)
Oil on canvas
Gift of Dr. Everette James in 1986
Weyl was born in Germany, moved to the U.S. in 1853, and was a watchmaker in Washington, D.C. He and a group of fellow artists formed the Washington Landscape School, which recorded the beauty of Washington and the Potomac. Georgetown and Rock Creek Park were two favorite locations. Called the “American Daubigny,” he was influential, popular and active in Washington art circles for many years. His work is found in many local collections including the White House.

Painting
Beatrice Cenci (1577-1599)
Unknown reproduction artist
Oil on canvas
Gift of Dr. Samuel Dodek in 1988

This work is based on portrait by the Italian baroque painter, Guido Reni (1575-1642). It was donated by Samuel Dodek M.D. in memory of his wife and on the occasion of the admission of women to the Club.

Engraving
Dolley Madison (1768-1849)
Alonzo Chappel (1828-1887)
1872
Gift of John Seldon in 1911

The steel engraving of Dolley Madison includes a note written by her in 1838 declining an invitation. The dress and visage, based on a life portrait by Gilbert Stuart, are truer than Andrews' painting. The engraving was the model for the Dolley Madison portrait in the Club Newspaper Room.

The photograph is the last likeness of Dolley Madison made in her lifetime, taken shortly before her death in 1849, and is a copy of a daguerreotype made by Mathew Brady.

Ur
Made by Rookwood Pottery, Cincinnati, Ohio [marked on bottom]
Kataro Shirayamadani, artist/painter
1882 [marked on bottom]
Gift by an unknown donor, probably in 1936

The large urn with Japanese style decoration was made at Rookwood Pottery, Cincinnati, Ohio. Maria Longworth Nichols Storer and a friend founded Rookwood Pottery in 1880. Designed and painted with the relief dragon, billowing clouds and gilt highlights, it is one of only two. The other is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. Some have credited the urn to Maria Longworth Nichols, but the painting was done by the Rookwood artist from Japan, Kataro Shirayamadani.

Sculpture
Herself
Frederick Hart (1943-1999)
Lucite
1984
Gift of artist in 1986
This sculpture is of a young woman emerging from “a light within.” Frederick Hart, a Cosmos Club member 1983-1999 was also the sculptor of the West Front of the Washington Cathedral and the group of soldiers adjacent to the Vietnam Memorial.

**Marble-top commode**
c. 1870-1890
French revival style showing transitional style between Louis XV and Louis XVI.

The commode has a mottled marble demilune top, rosewood case, ormolu mounts, and floral marquetry on the exterior and interior features door panels.

**Tall case clock**
Riley Whiting (?-1835), Winchester, Connecticut
c. 1820
Gift of Mrs. William Huff Wagner in 1969

The painted face on this 82” tall case clock features a landscape scene of two houses and a windmill. The maker’s name is centered where the hands are attached. The simple pine waisted case with a cherry stain has a narrow door which is set on a flaring box base with a shaped apron and straight bracket feet. The interior of the case reveals wooden clock works.

**Card Table  [left of fireplace]**
American Federal period
1790-1810

This fold top card table of mahogany has lighter wood inlays of an arrowhead star. There are bull’s-eyes above the turned legs.

**Card Table  (fold-top, swivel back leg)  [right of fireplace]**
British, inlay
Mahogany
c. 1780

The British card table has inlay of a half fan on the top bordered by a more delicate scroll pattern than usually found on American-made examples of the same time period. Inlay paterae are above the front legs.

**Console table**
French
Late 19th century or early 20th century reproduction
Louis XVI style

The *demilune* shaped mahogany console table is topped with a grey veined white marble. The apron has an ormolu frieze and mounts.
GOLD ROOM

This room was formerly Mrs. Townsend's downstairs parlor for receiving visitors well known by the family. Those who knew her well were met in the new Club Room just off the lobby. It is instructive to compare the decoration in both rooms.

Holmes Paintings: Many of these paintings were donated, although some were purchased. William Henry Holmes was a geologist and artist well-known for his panoramic landscape drawings of physiographic features of the Grand Canyon. He was director of the Smithsonian Bureau of American Ethnography and served as the 13th President of the Cosmos Club. There is an impressive collection of Holmes' works at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art. Holmes lent the Club its first pieces of art in 1880.

(These are listed from the left as you go around the room.)

W. H. Holmes (1846-1933) (CC: Founder 1878-1933)

A Woodland Pool
Oil on canvas
1919

The Old Mill
Oil on canvas on board
1933

This was one of the last paintings Holmes completed before his death.

Hauling in the Great Shad Nets
Oil on canvas
1919

This painting depicts a scene on the Potomac River.

Cattle in Rock Creek Park
Oil on canvas
1919

Cattle watering in a stream in Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C.

Country House in Maryland
Oil on canvas
c.a.1928

Several figures are walking through a garden toward a house in rural Maryland

Windstorm with Horses
Oil on canvas
1919

Depicts horsemen struggling in a wind and rain storm
Mirror, oval
English or American
1865-80
French Rococo style
Gift of Henderson B. Gregory in 1952

The frame is gilded with a pieced and carved crest and gadrooned border.

LAFAYETTE SQUARE ROOM
(OLD CLUB ROOM)

Mural
Old Lafayette Square
Everett L. Warner (1877-1963)
Tempera
1952

The mural is a fresco-like depiction of old Lafayette Square residences and St. John’s Church. The mural was done by Everett L. Warner (CC: 1942-1963) in 1952 when the Garden Dining Room was added. Lafayette Square was the location of the Cosmos Club before it moved to the Townsend House. As you enter the dining room and pass the reservation desk the former Club home will be to your right in the illustration of Lafayette Square.

This room was the Club room and cocktail lounge until the present Garden Bar was built in the 1980s.

GARDEN DINING ROOM

The Garden Dining Room occupies the former site of the Townsend’s laundry yard. The view into the West Garden, with its fish pond and bird feeders, is splendid in all seasons. The trees, bushes and plants are tended by a professional gardener under the supervision of the Garden Committee. Just off the east end of the dining room is the Heroy room, named after William B. Heroy (CC: 1914-1941). It occupies the space that had been the servants’ hall and service wing of the old mansion. Note also the area in the east end of the Smith Dining Room which has refreshments for members and their guests. The furnishings, the green upholstered chairs and settees had been in the Warne Ballroom some time ago. This area is a pleasant space and is open from 10am on for coffee, tea, lemonade and in the afternoon cookies are also available.

Architectural element:
Fountain
Marble
1901
Originally in the west garden on the south wall, this arch-topped fountain features a palmetto finial, central mask and eagles supporting the bowl. It was designed in a 15th century Italian Renaissance manner. It was part of the original Townsend renovation.

**Spode Imari-ware table service**
English  
Ca. 1805  
On loan from Scott Schoenfeld (CC:1979)

The English Spode Imari collection belonged to Ambassador Rudolf Schoenfeld (CC: 1952-1981) and descended to his son, Scott who has graciously lent it to the Club on a long term basis. Imari ware refers to Japanese porcelain that featured Chinese designs made for export to Europe and England in the 17th and 18th century. In Great Britain, there were many attempts for over a century to replicate the highly popular hard, high fired porcelain which existed in France and Austria. This collection exemplifies the success of the British maker Spode.

**KITCHEN**

Structural problems and the kitchen equipment being out of code, initiated the renovations by architect member David H. Condon (CC: 1967-1996), which were commenced in 1988 and completed in 1991, with the construction of the present kitchen.

The present kitchen occupies some of the space formerly occupied by the Garden Dining Room and the entire former Fountain Room. The kitchen also was within the north wing added to the house. The Executive Chef Bernard Meehan’s staff prepares approximately 126,000 meals per year from this kitchen.

**POWELL ROOM**

Photographs of 1915 reveal that the Powell Room was the original mansard roofed stable and coach house.

The John Wesley Powell Room is used for Club events, such as the Noon Forums, Thursday Night Lectures, the Anniversary Dinner, New Members’ Reception dinners, the Annual Meeting, and Sunday Brunch. As a private meeting or dining room it can accommodate 30-120 people. The walls and exterior structures are part of the Townsends’ stable and coach house which was converted into the present auditorium by Horace Peaslee (CC: 1926-59) during 1950-52. It has been remodeled several times, most recently under the direction of Janet Norwood (CC: 1988).

**Sculpture**

**Flora Animales**
Mixed media  
1994  
Lent by Ann and Julius Kaplan (CC: 1983)
Often mistaken for living flowers, this 60" high sculpture is a painted composition by Club member, Joan Danziger. Her work is in collections of the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, the National Museum of Women in the Arts and in museums and galleries from New York to California.

SECOND FLOOR

GRAND STAIRCASE

The lobby square pillars and faux stone work above are “Caen Stone,” as is the wall of the staircase. Caen stone is a particularly hard (reinforced) plaster having nothing to do with the quarries that produced true Caen stone. The staircase was originally open to the Long Gallery. A careful inspection of the wood paneling will show where these opening were closed to conform to the fire code during the 1950-1952 renovations.

Tapestry
Oudenaarde, Belgium
17th Century
Gift of Frank A. Vanderlip in 1963

Woven in Oudenaarde, a Belgian municipality in the Flemish province of East Flanders rather than Brussels, this 14' x 12' tapestry features warriors on horseback. The tapestry is 17th century; however, its subject has not been determined.

The 1914 photos by Frances Benjamin Johnston show the stair ending where it does now, on a landing entering the current Newspaper Room, the open arches overlooked the stairway into the lobby.

SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Candelabra
Candelabrum of Three Graces, French bronze
Late 19th Century
Original to Townsend Mansion

The newel post supports an unsigned bronze painted candelabrum of The Three Graces dancing and emanating from a tree trunk. The six lights have been illuminating the staircase since 1901.

Tall Case Clock, British
Ca.1870-1900
James Jones Elliott
Gift of Warren Johnson in 1992

At over eight feet tall, this London-made clock features a mahogany case with fluted columns and beveled glass door. The clock is a Renaissance Revival style. It stands in front of a door that once opened to the Periodical Room.
**Scroll painting**

Chinese
16th Century
Silk
Gift of Mrs. Rufus Hildreth Thayer in 1923

Chinese scroll painting on silk. It depicts a mountainous scene with figures, houses, lush foliage with elaborate calligraphic inscriptions in upper left and right, with numerous seals. This scroll was presented to the Club in 1923 by Mrs. Rufus Hildreth Thayer in honor of her husband, who was president of the Club in 1901 and Judge of the U. S. Court of Claims, 1902-1914.

**Painting**
**Mars and Venus United in Love**
Thomas Beggs (1899-1990) (CC: 1955-1990) after the original by Veronese
Oil on canvas
Gift of the artist in 1963

**MEMBERS’ DINING ROOM**

This room which served as the Townsend’s dining room is in the style of Louis XIV. It is believed that the alcove, which once looked out on the street, was an airy breakfast room. A safe for the family silver is hidden behind a door. There is a small warming kitchen behind the fireplace where many of the Club popovers are made.

**Sideboard**
French
Late 19th Century
Marble

The sideboard is formed from carved, mottled rouge marble in Louis XIV style, with four supporting legs in coupled pairs ending in pedestal bases. The tops of the legs are covered with oversized lion mask brass mounts. Surmounting the legs is a serpentine modified splash board with broken arch back board. In the center of the broken arch is a bronze mask of Maria de Medici surrounded by a scrolled acanthus leaf garland, circa 1900. The sideboard is original to the mansion.

Over the sideboard is a copy of Paolo Veronese's "The Rape of Europa" originally painted in 1580.

**Painting**
**Rape of Europa**
Thomas Beggs (1899-1990)
Gift of artist in 1963

**Painting**
**Yosemite**
Thomas Hill (1829-1908)
1882
Gift of Henry Morris in 1959
The notable painting over the marble mantel is "Yosemite." Hill was born in Birmingham, England in 1829; he studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1853. In the 1850s he painted in the White Mountains of New Hampshire with Albert Bierstadt, George Inness, and Asher Durand. He made his first trip to Yosemite in 1862. In 1871 he relocated to San Francisco and became one of the famous four painters of the Rocky Mountain School: Albert Bierstadt, William Keith and Thomas Moran. Hill was one of the founders of the Bohemian Club and the San Francisco Art Association.

The wall panels were originally covered with silk brocade and are now unadorned wood panels. The capitals, brackets and cornice moldings were originally gilded. The mantelpiece is red Languedoc marble.

Painting
Tree by Stream: Near Old Lyme
William Chadwick (1879-1962)
Oil on canvas
Gift of A. Everette James in 1992

This painting demonstrates Chadwick’s interest in the beauty of a single natural object placed in its environment. Over a decade after Chadwick’s death, his paintings were featured in the important Connecticut Impressionist exhibition involving museums at Storrs, Greenwich, and Old Lyme.

Painting
Still Life
Ernest L. Major (1864-1950)
Oil on Canvas
Gift of A. Everette James in 1992

Born in Washington, DC in 1864, Ernest L. Major immersed himself into the Boston milieu that orbited around Edmund Tarbell and Frank W. Benson. C. Messer was Major’s first instructor at the Corcoran Gallery of Art and by the early 1880s; he was studying under William Merritt Chase at the Art Students League in New York City. At the age of twenty-one, Major was the first to win the Hallgarten Art Scholarship.

CRENTZ DINING ROOM

This room is used for dinners, meetings, and exhibitions of art and photography. It was formally opened in 1962. In 2004, it was named for the late William Crentz (CC: 1962-2002), a noted engineer and national authority on fossil fuels.

LONG GALLERY

This room was formerly less gallery-like because the two panels between the first three pilasters were absent, so the stairway was open at the top. Evidence of this can be observed from the main staircase. This room served as the private family living room of the Townsends.
There are portraits of distinguished Club members including three U. S. Presidents: Wilson, Taft and Hoover.

The mantel is a remarkable carving from a block of Campan Mélange marble, quarried in the high Pyrenees of France and noted for its strongly veined appearance.

The walls of the Long Gallery were originally covered with red silk brocade between the pilasters, and capitals, cornice brackets and over-the-door ornaments were gilded. The architectural treatment is Louis XIV in style.

**PORTRAITS IN LONG GALLERY**

_**N.B.** The Art Committee rearranges these portraits from time to time, so be sure to check the plaque. (see binder for update information)_

**STARTING AT LEFT OF DOOR TO NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ROOM**

_Henry C. Yarrow_ (CC: Founder-1893) 1840-1929
Unsigned, apparently by Eliphalet F. Andrews, (1835-1915)
1893
Oil on canvas
Gift of Dr. van Renssalaer, 1929

Henry Yarrow served with distinction in the Medical Corps during the Civil War. He was curator of reptiles in the National Museum, 1872-1880, and in the summers of 1886 and 1887 conducted expeditions through the West collecting specimens for the Medical and National Museums.

_Dr. Leland Ossian Howard_ (1857-1950) (CC: 1886-1950)
Edward Lind Morse (1857-1923)
1903
Gift of Edward Morse in 1904

Chief of the Bureau of Etymology, Dr. Howard was a leader in the eradication of Yellow Fever. A member for fifty years, he was Club president in 1909.

_Samuel Wesley Stratton_ (1861-1931)(CC: 1901-1931)
Charles Bittinger (1879-1970)
1937/38
Oil on canvas

Stratton was a physicist and the first head of the National Bureau of Standards. This painting was recently conserved.

_Col. Garrick Mallery_ (1831-1894) (CC: Founder-1878-1894)
Eliphalet F. Andrews (1835-1915)
1882
Gift of Helen Marian Mallery in 1920
Mallery was a noted ethnologist at the Smithsonian, an expert on American Indian culture. He was Club president in 1882. Eliphalet Frazer Andrews (1835-1915) was a noted historical portraitist in Washington and first director of the Corcoran School of Art.

**Henry Clay** (1777-1852)
Samuel Lovett Waldo (1783-1861)
Gift of H. Blackiston Wilkins in 1939

An early and very successful American portrait painter, Waldo was born in Windham, Connecticut into an established family who recognized and encouraged their son's obvious talent. He was sent at the age of sixteen to study art in Hartford with Joseph Steward, a retired minister who did painting. Waldo did some sign painting and then opened a portrait studio in Hartford. He met John Rutledge of South Carolina who invited him to go there to paint commissioned portraits.

**Henry Stevens Washington** (CC:1913-1934)
Edwin Burrage Child (1868-1937)
Oil on canvas
Gift of artist in 1935

Henry Washington was a petrologist, geologist, archaeologist, linguist, raconteur, and a much-loved member of the Club.

**Otto Hilgard Tittman** (1850-1938) (CC: 1878-1938)
John Wycliffe Lewes Forster (1850-1938)
Gift of Charles Tittman in 1962

Tittman, a geodesist, one of the founders and a former president of the National Geographic Society and head of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, was a Club founder and president in 1904. In 1890 he was the squire and protector of the two official meter bars brought from Paris.

**Swan Moses Burnett** (1847-1906) (CC: 1879-1906)
S. Jerome Uhl (1842-1916)
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. S.M. Burnett in 1908

Burnett was a pioneering ophthalmologist and Club President in 1896. His wife Frances wrote *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

**Harvey Washington Wiley, M. D.** (1844-1930) (CC: 1883-1930)
Evastus Livingston Morse (1864-1930)
Early 20th century
Oil on canvas

Wiley was Chief Chemist in the Department of Agriculture, an author of the Pure Food and Drug Act (1906) and Club president 1909 and 1910. His bust is in the library.

**Joseph A. Conry** (1868-1943) (CC: 1935-1943)
Meyer Matzkin (1880-1971)
1920
Oil on canvas
Joseph Conry was appointed as consul of Russia in September 1912 and served until 1919. Conry was decorated by Czar Nicholas II, and was made a member of the Knights of St. Anne. He served as director of the port of Boston 1911-1916 and as special attorney for the United States Maritime Commission in Washington, D.C., in 1938 and 1939.

Simmie Knox (1935-) (CC: 2006)
Oil on canvas

Mayor of Washington and long-time member, he caught the mood of the dramatic membership meeting on June 18, 1988, calling for an early and decisive vote on admission of women. Knox is a noted Washington area portraitist; his works include the White House portraits of President and Mrs. Clinton.

Simmie Knox (1935-)
1996
Oil on canvas
Gift of Marcus Cohn in 1996

Atanasoff and a graduate student built the first digital computer in 1941.

**Woodrow Wilson** (1856-1924) (CC: 1913-1924)
1957
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Huston Thompson in 1958
The 28th President of the United States, 1913-1921

**Herbert Clark Hoover** (1874-1964) (CC: 1921-1964)
John C. Johansen (1876-1964)
1913
Oil on canvas
Gift of artist in 1957
The 31st President of the United States, 1929-1933

**William Howard Taft** (1857-1930) (CC: 1904-1930)
C. Gregory Stapko (1914-2006) after William Valentine Schevill (1864-1951)
1957
Oil on canvas

The 27th President of the United States, 1900-1913. He attended the wedding of Mathilde Townsend here in 1910.

The portraits are also identified in the Art Committee’s loose-leaf book where greater detail is provided. This notebook has been revised in order to provide current location information.
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ROOM

Originally a marble floored open terrace, this room honors the founding of the National Geographic Society at the Cosmos Club in 1888. Busts depict John Wesley Powell and Alexander Graham Bell, both founders of the Society. This room houses the special collection of Powelliana. Shelves hold bound volumes of the National Geographic Magazine, along with a collection of books by and about Powell. Stairs lead down to the East Garden, with its early 20th century reproduction of an Italian fountain sculpted by Pietro Tacca in 1629, in the Piazza della Santissima Annunziata in Florence.

The original Tacca Fountain in Rome.

LIBRARY

This room was the Townsend’s library; most of the bookcases are original to the room. The library is the style of Henri II with the exception of the mantelpiece and over-mantel, which is made of a fiber (perhaps hemp) reinforced plaster finished to resemble stone. The style dates from the preceding reign of François I (1515-1547) and modeled after what is thought to be the original in the Chateau at Blois in France.

Originally, the library contained a carved wooden mantelpiece and paneled over-mantel flanked by wooden Corinthian pilasters. The change occurred sometime after 1915 (when the Johnston photographs were taken) and 1950, when a photo of the room appeared in the Washington Post.
There is a recent photo of the original at the Chateau at Blois to the right of the mantel. The original fireplace in the Chateau has ermine and fire breathing salamanders representing the King of France and Anne, the Duchess of Brittany.

The Library was originally dark green brocaded silk and the original ceiling was off-white. The ceiling is made of “staff,” a hemp-reinforced plaster, carved to resemble timbered plaster.

“The Founding of the National Geographic Society”
Stanley Meltzoff (American, 1917-2006)
Photographic reproduction
Gift of Melville Grosvenor in 1964

The Society was founded in the original Cosmos Club rooms on January 13, 1888. Meltzoff was a pre-eminent painter of game fish in the water. Ours is a photographic reproduction, the original is at the National Geographic Society, Washington, D C. [The notebook in the Long Gallery identifies the participants illustrated in the original painting. In addition there is now a reproduction of the portrait and identifying guide, framed on the adjacent table.]

Massachusetts Ave., or South Wall Paintings:

Lake with Cows Watering (“River Landscape”)
Edmund Darch Lewis (1835-1910)
1884
Gift of Dr. Samuel Dodek in 1991

Sculpture
Leopard
Signed and Copyrighted “SB”
Bronze
Early 20th century

Seascape
Edward Kingsbury (1855-1940)
Circa 1890
Gift of A. Everett James and Family in 1991

Sculpture
Q Street Buffalo
Alexander Phimister Proctor (1862-1950)
Bronze
1912

This sculpture is a scale reproduction of the pair of buffalo that are on the Q Street Bridge that spans Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway.

Florida Ave., or West Wall Paintings:
Lone Plowman
Oil on canvas
Gift of artist in 1921

Norwegian Fjord
C. Berthold von Haller (Swiss, 1878-1942)
Early 20th Century
Gift of H. C. Macatee in 1958

November (Rock Creek Park in the Fall)
Oil on canvas
Gift of artist in 1919


The busts on the top of the bookcases on the west wall are:

Harvey W. Wiley (1844-1930)
Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941)
Gift of Mrs. Harvey Wiley in 1950

Harvey W. Wiley (CC: 1883-1930), father of the Pure Food and Drug Act, by Gutzon Borglum, the American sculptor famed for carving the presidential portraits on Mount Rushmore. Borglum is also the artist responsible for the sculpture of General Sheridan on horseback in the middle of nearby Sheridan circle.

Nathaniel S. Shaler (1841-1906)
Robert Ingersoll Aitken (1878-1949)
Late 19th Century
Bronzed plaster
Gift of R.A.F. Penrose in 1921

Nathaniel S. Shaler (CC: 1885-1906), was a noted geologist who wrote extensively on the theological and scientific implications of the theory of evolution.

Sculpture
Rearing Horse
Late 18th/Early 19th century
Bronze

An example of the neoclassic Roman style, the Rearing Horse is an unsigned work thought to have been made in the early 19th century.
Dr. John McGovern (1921-2007)
Artist unknown
American
20th Century


The Club founders included in the articles of incorporation “the acquisition and maintenance of a library.” At the end of its first year, 1879, the library consisted of 47 volumes and a few periodicals. Today the collection has grown to about eight thousand volumes stored around the Clubhouse, under the care of the Club librarian.

There is a tale, of a visitor commenting on the small size of the library concluding that the Club members do not read much. His guide replied perhaps not, but they write much. To the left of the entrance is a bookcase devoted to recent publications by Club members. A long-standing courtesy is that members donate a copy of their newly published books to the library.

PERIODICAL ROOM

Originally a small salon in the style of Louis XVI, the Periodical Room in 1904 had silk-covered walls stretched over wooden battens; the walls beneath were rough finished. The silk deteriorated from sunlight and around 1915-1920, they were replaced with paintings or plaster; moldings were added inside the painted panels.

The changes took place after the Allard firm went out of existence in 1907 and were executed by the Baumgarten firm, to which some of the Allard craftsmen went. Baumgarten changed many moldings in this room and changed the color scheme from French to Georgian. The cornice was altered and some plaster swags were removed. The ceiling is intact as Allard left it; the putti were originally gilded. The Frances Benjamin Johnston photos from 1914 show the large table in the library.

The Periodical Room has one of the most comprehensive collections of magazines and scholarly journals in any private library in the area. It is outstanding in comparison to any similar organization anywhere in the country.

Painting
C.C. Nikiforoff
C. Ferritea
1957
Gift of John Hack in 1958

On the west wall is a portrait of C.C. Nikiforoff (CC: 1933-1979), a soil scientist and one of the first to study Siberian permafrost.
Painting  
**Dolley Madison** (1768-1849)  
Charles Yardley Turner (1850-1919)  
Purchased by the Club in 1932

This portrait of Dolley Madison by Charles Yardley Turner (CC:1910-1918) was inspired by the engraving by Alonzo Chappel in the Dolley Madison Parlor. This painting also had a prominent place in the former club house on Lafayette Square.

Painting  
**Presentation Sketch for mosaic ceiling of chapel, U.S. Military Cemetery, Luxembourg**  
Watercolor on paper  
Acquired by the Club in 1981.

Painting  
**Charles Edward Munroe** (1849-1938)  
H. Ludden  
1931  
Oil on canvas  
Gift of friends of Charles Munroe in 1932

The portrait of Charles Edward Munroe (CC: 1882-1885, 1892-1938) hangs on the north wall. Club president 1913-1914, he is the inventor of the Munroe effect which is the basis for the shaped explosive charge). The witness plates form a fire screen in the main lobby.

Plaque  
**Samuel Hay Kauffman**  
John Michael Kauffman (Subject’s grandson)  
20th century  
Cast bronze

Sculpture  
**The Backpacker**  
Louis McClellan Potter (1873-1912)  
1905  
Cast bronze  
Cast by Gorham Manufacturing Co.
NEWSPAPER ROOM

This room was formerly an anteroom or salon to the Townsend's ballroom with the two mirrored pocket doors in the archways. The wall treatment is 19th century French wallpaper.

Sculpture

Allégorie de la Peinture
Jean-Paul Aube
1850-1875
Bronze and patina
Gift to Club by W. A.De Caidry (CC 1886-1915) in 1889.

Photographic reproduction

Mathilde Townsend (1886-1949) after the original by John Singer Sargent

Over the mantel is a copy of a portrait of Mathilde Townsend (pronounced MATEELD). The painting by John Singer Sargent, is currently in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, a gift of Mathilde Welles. The painting was a birthday present from Mathilde to her mother ca. 1907.

Sculpture

Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834)
Paul Wayland Bartlett (1865-1925)
Late 19th century
Bronze
Gift of Mrs. Armistead Peter III, 1961

The statue of Lafayette on his horse is by Washington sculptor Paul Wayland Bartlett (CC: 1914-1925) after an original in the Louvre. Bartlett studied in Paris with Emmanuel Frémiet and Auguste Rodin, and at the École des Beaux-Arts. It was displayed in the front window of the Club's house on Lafayette Square.

The Newspaper Room is ornamented in the Rococo style prevalent during the first half of Louis XV’s reign (1715-1774) and revived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Originally the panels were filled with silver and gold brocatelle (a variant of damask). The salon has undergone significant changes from its original form. Allard’s approach was for a homey salon of decorative plaster details perhaps made from molds from the Samuel Bernard house in Paris, demolished in the middle 19th century. Noteworthy are the richly molded concave cornice, with putti, seen in the early photos and projecting over doors, with mirrors facing each other. The walls were upholstered with silk. This scheme is still in place in photos from 1907, when the Sargent portrait of Mathilde came to the room. By 1914, photographs show that the Allard plaster ornamentation on the concave cornice and over the doors had been replaced. Also the silk wall coverings were replaced by pastoral oils on canvas glued directly to the walls with white lead. These oils, possibly reused from some earlier house, were extended by strips of new work that can still be distinguished.

The fireplace of Brèche violette marble with mercury gild and bronze ornaments is original and significant. Mercury gilding, also called fire gilding, is a perilous process for gold-plating in which an amalgam of gold is applied to an object and then exposed to heat to vaporize the mercury and leave the gold behind in a thin layer.
WARNE BALLROOM

[Pronounced WARN, named after member Frank Warne, an economist.]

Restoration of the Ballroom

By Andrea F. Schoenfeld

It took 6,000 linear feet of gold, $2 million, eight and a half months of work, and six years of planning to restore the Warne Ballroom to its former glory as one of Washington’s finest Gilded Age salons.

The inspiration for the ballroom was the mid-18th century France of Louis XV. The architects of the Townsend Mansion, built at the turn of the 20th century, were John Merven Carrère and Thomas Hastings, trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. The interior designer, responsible both for the architectural detail and the furnishings, was the renowned Parisian firm, Jules Allard & Fils, with offices in London and New York. Allard collected architectural salvage from chateaux and 18th century townhouses. Allard’s Paris workrooms produced woodwork, cabinetry and chairs, marquetry, paneling, bronze, and other metalwork for an international clientele, including the Rothschilds in London and the Vanderbilts in New York and Newport. Mrs. Richard Townsend, who sometimes summered in Newport, may have been familiar with the Allard interiors at The Breakers and Marble House. At the time Allard designed the Townsend interiors, the firm also installed the interiors of The Elms and Rosecliff.

No Townsend family documentation on the construction of the house survives. In 2003 the Cosmos Club Historic Preservation Foundation learned through Paul Miller ('07), curator of the Preservation Society of Newport County, that Allard had designed the Townsend interiors. This discovery enhanced the Club’s appreciation of the ballroom and the importance of restoring each element to its original appearance in order to achieve the dramatic effect of the design as a whole.

The Foundation, which funded the restoration of the historic plaster, woodwork, painting, gilding, original lighting and floor, decided to restore the ballroom to its appearance in the period 1901-15. These dates were chosen because the only surviving historic photographs of the Townsend Mansion interior are those published in the *Architectural Record* in 1901 and Frances Benjamin Johnston’s photographs circa 1915. They document alterations in the decoration of some rooms. The 1901 photograph of the ballroom shows globe-shaped light fixtures suspended from each of the three sections of the ceiling. By 1915 they had been replaced by large chandeliers in the north and south coves and a mural in the central section. The wall sconces also were installed after 1901.

Planning for the restoration began in earnest in 2006 when the Foundation commissioned Mr. Miller to develop a restoration plan, and he provided informal guidance throughout the project. John Milner Associates, Inc., of Alexandria, Virginia was selected to prepare a detailed rehabilitation/restoration master plan including the updating of heating, air-conditioning, lighting and audio-visual systems. The Foundation received permission from the Internal Revenue Service to spend tax-deductible donations on interior renovations in 2009.

The ballroom closed for renovations on June 15, 2011. Whiting-Turner Contracting Co., which had extensive experience working in the Clubhouse, was selected as the general contractor, and Matthew Whalen as the owner’s representative. John Canning & Co., Ltd., of Cheshire, Connecticut, which has worked on the White House and Capitol, and the Executive Office, Treasury, and Pension buildings, was
chosen to restore the historic fabric. David Riccio was Canning’s project manager for the ballroom. The firm brought in a staff of 18 from around the country and also used two local subcontractors: Page Conservation, Inc., which did the painting restoration, and Gold Leaf Studios, which did the water gilding. At times there were as many as 15 to 17 people working in the room, using nine rolling scaffolds.

Richard C. Wolbers, a professor in Winterthur/University of Delaware master’s-level program in art conservation, tested 40 samples to determine the original paint and gilding materials used in the ballroom. Scientific analysis of the initial paint layers—hidden under 15 to 20 coats of paint on the walls—revealed that the original color was a light warm gray known as “French Gray.” The walls and ceiling are both painted in the same gray tone and the contrast between them is achieved through texture. The walls have a velvety sheen while the ceiling paint is flat. Achieving the soft, smooth enamel finish required many hours of hand sanding before and between coats to eliminate old brush strokes and coats of acrylic paint. On the ceiling, the recessed portions of the diapering around the mural were painted a slightly darker tone of gray to add depth.

For the applied ornament, Allard used a plaster compound that was faster and less expensive to install than traditional carved wood boiserie. Roof leaks and condensation around the air diffusers had caused extensive damage to both ornamental and flat plaster, particularly in the northwest corner of the room and the north coffer of the ceiling. Some could be consolidated and some had to be replaced. Canning cast molds of the ornamentation from sound areas to recreate the plasterwork in damaged areas.

The true nature of the ballroom’s gilding was obscured by years of coats of bronze paint. Much of the bronze paint used on the wall decorations could be cleaned off with solvents but the bronze paint applied to the ceiling cove could not be removed without destroying the original finish underneath. Thus, while it was possible to restore much of the oil-gilded wall decoration, most of the ceiling decoration had to be gilded anew. The chair rail, designed to create a bright unifying band around the room, was badly worn and so was regilded over a coating that preserved what remained of the original finish.

The parquet floor’s old finish was stripped with a citrus compound. Then four coats of tung oil were applied to restore its sheen and protect it from wear.
This early 19th century painting was split into two parts for the lunettes, shown below, on either side of the alcove. Reconstructed composite by Amanda Edwards. Photo by James Blair (’98)
Lunette of putti on a log

Lunette Photos by J. Stephen Huebner ('73)

Lunette of water play
Chandelier in French atelier

Photo by Mathieu Lustrie
The restoration of the paintings in the Warne Ballroom yielded some artistic surprises. Conservator Arthur Page discovered that the image of Apollo driving the chariot of the sun with its spirited white horses was added at the last minute to the ceiling painting. And the lunettes on either side of the alcove were created out of one older painting split in two.

There is no signature on the overhead mural. Such paintings were common in elaborate houses of this period; they were often loose copies of well known master paintings. For instance, the music room of Whitehall, another Carrère and Hastings house of the same date in Palm Beach, has such a ceiling painting based on the famous Baroque picture of Aurora leading Apollo with his chariot.

In general, the subject of the Townsend ceiling mural is a celebration. The putti, or secular cherubs, carry a swag of flowers, a classical symbol of festival ceremony. One putto carries a floral wreath to the seated central figure and one has a tambourine. The meaning of the largest group depends on the identity of the central figure. Perhaps she is Galatea, a Nereid, or sea spirit, or maybe the Nereid Amphitrite, goddess of the sea and wife of Poseidon. The Nereid identity is indicated by multiple details such as paired seals, a crab held in the hands of an attendant, seabirds, a giant shell propelled by a water wheel, and attendants that cavort in the sea around her.

Another possible identification is Aurora, in Greek mythology the harbinger of the dawn who lights the darkness to guide the chariot of the sun. The time of day is dawn, as evidenced by rosy rays streaking across the painting from lower right to upper left, where the clouds are turning a glowing pink. Perhaps the Apollo group was added at the base of the rays on the right to personify the theme of dawn—a most unorthodox version of an activity that commonly takes place in the heavens, not the sea.

Conservation of the mural required only careful cleaning with swabs and replacement where the paint had flaked off. By contrast, the lunettes and overdoor paintings required quite a lot of work. Interior designer Allard & Fils used earlier 19th century salvaged oil on canvas paintings for the ballroom’s three overdoor panels and two lunettes. Originally rectangular, they were cut down to fit the semicircular frames. As they were too narrow for their new location, side pieces were tacked on. Probably because they were dulled with age, the flesh tones of the putti were deepened by Allard. The craftsmen romanticized the landscapes with additional foliage and craggier rocks to cover the bare wings of the paintings.

These additions largely disappeared in the cleaning process because the over painting had fused with the deteriorated varnish. Underneath were several surprises. The music panel lost its scroll and revealed a dancing dog. Then it was found that the two lunettes were created out of one painting sliced vertically in two.

After the five paintings were cleaned, the Allard additions were largely restored to create the paintings’ 1901 appearance. To ensure consistency, a single restorer, Dana Saxerud, did the work on all five paintings.

The overall theme is putti at play. One scene shows them playing music, one flying a kite, one fishing. Originally one group was seesawing. The seesaw painting was split for the lunettes. Now one half of
that canvas has been turned into a waterplay scene with a new (the left one) putto spitting at another. The other half has several putti sitting on a log.

The music canvas over the south door has a putto playing the tambourine and another playing a wind instrument. The added scroll is in the center. The dancing dog was off to the left of the group. It has been covered up again for another century.

Cynthia R. Field, Ph.D., is adjunct faculty at the University of Maryland and Catholic University Schools of Architecture, and Architectural Historian Emeritus of the Smithsonian Institution.

Chandeliers and Sconces

By Amanda Edwards

The historic lighting fixtures in the Warne Ballroom have been restored to match the historic character of the room, based on 1915 photographs. These show that two chandeliers and twelve sconces, attributed to Maison Bagues of Paris, lit the ornately gilded room. Each chandelier is 7.2 feet high and weighs 363.7 pounds.

The chandeliers were lost during later renovations. One was found recently at a Pennsylvania resort which donated it to the Club. It was restored using as many original elements as possible. The second chandelier is a replication of the original; it was fabricated using traditional techniques. Can you tell which is which?

Mathieu Lustrerie, the French atelier which has restored chandeliers at Versailles and the Opera Garnier in Paris, was tasked with restoring and replicating the chandeliers. During the cleaning of the original chandelier, Mathieu exposed hidden areas showing the intended finish of the metalwork. It was determined that the original finish was electroplated gold over bronze. This traditional technique was hailed in architectural handbooks of the time. The atelier sent samples to the Cosmos Club and the project team approved the finish as it harmonized with the restored gilding in the ballroom.

Amanda Edwards worked closely with Andrea Schoenfeld to accurately identify the shapes and sizes of the crystal pendalogues for the lighting fixtures. The original chandelier featured 12 different shapes of crystals of the highest quality at variable sizes from 6.5” to 8.” Mathieu was able to source nine out of the twelve types for replication. The remaining three were matched as closely as possible, taking into account overall shape, bevels, and facets. The antique chandelier features its original pendalogues and other crystal elements; only 26 were missing, according to Mathieu. The new chandelier has all replicated crystal elements. The bulbs are 40 watts; there is a dimmer to control the brightness.

The crystal components of the lighting fixtures proved to be some of the most difficult to source and replicate, but Czech manufacturers had an incomparable selection to choose from. Cutting and polishing of fine crystal is generally thought to have started in Bohemia, now part of the Czech Republic. The production process for these high-quality Czech crystals has not changed with molding and polishing done mostly by hand.

A New Hampshire firm, Acu-Bright, performed the restoration work for the twelve sconces. The metalwork was largely intact; the challenge lay in finding the right surface finish to blend with the
room. The sconces showed advanced tarnish of the metal under coatings of flaking bronze paint. Acu-Bright removed all previous coatings and lightly polished the metal to remove the tarnish. The surfaces were then patinated and lacquered to achieve a soft, warm gold finish in keeping with the unique finish on the chandeliers and the restored gilding in the ballroom.

Each sconce features 19 pendalogues, or “earrings,” for a total of 228 for the room. The sconces feature original crystal finials but the rest of the crystals are replicated. Only six of the twelve types were required and Acu-Bright was able to source exact matches. The modern crystals were replaced with replicas true to the Bagues design in style and size. *Amanda Edwards is an architectural conservator with John Milner Associates.*

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**Modern Improvements**

_by J. Stephen Huebner ('73)_

In addition to its historic restoration, a number of modern improvements have been made to the century-old Warne Ballroom. Electrical, heating and air conditioning, lighting, and audio systems have all been updated.

New wiring, which required drilling holes in the plaster, was delayed due to the possibility of asbestos. The HVAC was modified so that the ballroom is balanced and does not push air into the rest of the Club. The old track lighting that illuminated the back of the alcove is to be replaced with fixtures that cannot be seen from the ballroom. The original plans called for cutting 16 holes in the ceiling plaster to install boxes containing loudspeakers and lights, but there was not enough room and the fixtures were unsightly. The number of holes was reduced to two for lighting the podium. The intensity of all lights—chandeliers, sconces, alcove, and podium—will be controlled with dimmers.

Improving the audio system was the most difficult task because the ballroom, with its hard walls, ceiling, and floor, is an acoustic challenge and the alcove electrical closet is also not accessible when the stage is set up. The solution was to use a remotely controlled system with two linear array speakers. These radiate most of their sound in a plane toward the audience, minimizing sound energy sent to the hard walls, ceiling, and floor. Additional speakers may be added as needed. Four of the microphones will be wireless and there will be a wireless hearing assist system. Extra audio and Ethernet cables have been installed behind the walls in case the system is changed in the future. The structure of the beams did not permit installation of a screen that could be lowered for illustrated lectures.

The windows have been coated with protective ultraviolet film. Sheer Austrian shades, similar to those in the early 20th century photographs, and blackout roller shades are being installed. Finally, window treatments are being designed. The four pairs of draperies will be a medium rose tone, similar to the Rose du Barry color mentioned in the 1901 *Architectural Record* and rose color in the ceiling painting.
When Caleb McCuller first entered the Warne Ballroom last June, he saw gold in every corner. “I knew I had to take it into smaller bites, break it into sections. Otherwise, it’s overwhelming,” he recalled.

A specialist in decorative restoration, a graduate of the City and Guilds of London satellite school in Asheville, North Carolina, Mr. McCuller worked here both as a gilder and a plasterer for more than four months.

Section by section, he restored lost gilding, both water and oil. Surfaces in the room, like frames of panels, are oil gilded. Surfaces closer to the eye and hand, like chair rails, are water gilded, a deeper luster. He used a gilder’s tip brush made of squirrel hair, lightly touched with Vaseline put on the back of his hand, to pick up gold for application. Ribbons or pages of gold on paper 1/100th the width of ordinary paper are so light they float on the air, so no open windows or air currents were allowed.

A surprise to Mr. McCuller was the “randomness of gilding on the tips of ornamental plaster in the cove.” He recalled, “It was cool, selecting pieces to gild. So much [of my work] is mathematical—straight lines. The cove is different; it was exciting, asymmetrical, fun. I kept wondering who those original plaster workers were, and how they came up with the original designs.”

** * * *

“Wow! This is a beautiful room, well made. When you see something like this, you understand that one of the top makers of the time made it. You can tell the quality.”

That was the impression of Renato Tavecchio, the Italian-trained woodwork specialist when first he viewed the Warne Ballroom. For the restoration, he worked on gouges and water damage on the floor, delaminated wall panels, and windows and doors.

All the week-long floor repairs were by hand, on his knees, with a chisel. Some wall panels, with big thick oak veneer on top, were splitting from water damage. His aim was to use wood glue, old-fashioned materials. “New glues [like epoxy] with chemicals are so strong it is difficult to clean up, and it can damage the original finish.” To apply pressure to the panels, he used an “old-fashioned technique from the 14th and 15th century” with little nails and square pieces of wood, “inch by inch.” “Now [the panels] are really glued down. Veneer will stay there forever. No more delamination.”

A surprise to him was the condition of the windows. They were stuck with caulking and difficult to work. He fixed them without taking them down. He didn’t want to take a chance on breaking the big, heavy glass or disturb the surroundings.

How does Mr. Tavecchio know his methods will work? “I need to know how things were made in the past, their veneer, carving, marquetry, the history of wood, experience.”
The drapery fabric for the Warne Ballroom is on order from France, from the very same factory and using the same order placed originally by Mrs. Townsend. It is expected that they may be reading for hanging by the end of 2013.

The Club wisteria, transplanted from the Tayloe House on Lafayette Square, provides a flowering spring canopy over the Lounge's patio overlooking the West Garden—a lovely venue for entertaining guests.

THE GLASS-WALLED PASSAGEWAY TO THE SECOND FLOOR OFFICES and Hillyer House.

The glass enclosed passageway was designed and built in 1993.

HILLYER HOUSE

This separate structure, joined to the clubhouse by a bridge on the second level, contains 22 guest-rooms, a lounge and a communication room. On the first floor is a business center with computers and printers for the use of our guests and members.

The original building was constructed 1904-1908 probably as a rooming house with shared bathrooms on each level. It was converted into offices sometime in the 1930's. The Club purchased the building from the French Government. The building housed the French Military Purchasing Mission before moving to the present French Embassy on Reservoir Road.

Renovation of the Hillyer house began in 1997 under the direction of Club President Janet Norwood (CC: 1988) and was completed in December 1997. The name Hillyer House was adopted in 1997 following a contest for a name, the original owner of the first building on the property.

THIRD FLOOR MANSION ROOMS

Rooms along the Third Floor include the Front Bedrooms, the Billiard Room (once a bedroom with a sun room), Card Room and the Presidents’ Suite of Meeting Rooms.

ROOM 301: Henderson Gregory Memorial Bedroom. This was one of the original bedrooms of the mansion, furnished with reproduction Art Deco furniture, a gift from James J.B. Simpson (CC: 1991- ), a journalist. The original plaster molding is intact. This room also features, on the far wall near the bathroom two watercolors by Gunnar Widforss of scenes of the Grand Canyon, 1924. This room is one of the 14 in the main building available for overnight visitors (rates on the Club’s web page).

The portrait in the hall outside these rooms is by Edward Emerson Simmons (1852-1931) and is also a gift of A. Everette James. Simmons was known mostly as a muralist and was part a
member of “The Ten,” a group which removed itself from the National Academy of Design in 1898. He was a good friend of Stanford White who provided him with mural commissions. The Library of Congress’ The Nine Muses show a more innovative style.

THE BILLIARD ROOM

Members are invited to play billiards and pool here and the room may be rented for receptions. The marble mantelpiece and plaster paneling are thought to be original and original hardware remains on the door to the restroom. On entry, the glass case on the left contains billiard enthusiast John Wesley Powell’s cue.

The Billiard room was a bedroom with a dressing room on the side when the Townsends lived in the mansion. The back part where the bookshelves are had windows all around and was a sunroom. All drawings, letters, and other memorabilia in the Billiard Room are drawn from the Club’s archives, selected and supplemented by the well known sculptor Frederick Hart (CC: 1983-1999). The books housed in this room have been written by Club members who are no longer living. Note the map case on the wall, a gift from the National Geographic Society commemorating their founding in the Club.

Painting
Nude
George Luks (1867-1933)
Late 19th or early 20th Century
Gift of Dr. Everette James family in 1992

Luks studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and at the Academy of Art in Dusseldorf. He was a member of “The Eight,” often called the Ashcan school and was included in the New York Armory Show in 1913.

THE CARD ROOM

All of the photographs in this room are the work of Volkmar Wenzel (1915-2006), Cosmos Club member and noted photographer for the National Geographic. There are additional photographs by Fred Maroon on view on the first floor of Hillyer House.

The framed engraving depicting women in a Gothic Revival style church pew, has been a favorite of club members for some time. The image is after A. F. D. Millet, late 19th century.

THIRD FLOOR HALL

Prints of Native Americans are from a series by Biddle and another by Greenough, all based on paintings by Charles Bird King, dating around 1840.

The gold upholstered sofa dates from the end of the 19th century.
The painting over the sofa is Senator Ambrose Hundley Sevier of Arkansas. This had been formerly in the front bedroom on this floor, over the bed. The portrait was recently moved to this location. As Club Members know this floor is used for a variety of committee meetings. Recently Ellen Miles CC ’05, Curator of the National Portrait Gallery, noted it and suggested its possible attribution to George Caleb Bingham who was painting in Washington, DC for a four year period from 1840-44. Sevier was elected to the Senate in 1842. The painting has recently been conserved.

Note the fine collection of 19th century prints of maritime interest as well as the collection of sextants and the print of British Admiral Duncan.

PRESIDENTS’ SUITE OF DINING/MEETING ROOMS, THIRD FLOOR

Three rooms are named for the three Club members who were Presidents of the United States: Hoover, Taft, and Wilson. The Board Room is at the end of the corridor.

Note the display case with a collection of antique sextants. On the wall to the right of the sextants is a very fine engraving of Admiral Adam Duncan, British hero of the Battle of Camperdown [against the Dutch] at the very end of the 18th century. Beyond is the passage to the Annex bedrooms.

FOURTH FLOOR ROOMS

Rooms 401, 402 and 404 contain fine marble mantelpieces in the Louis XVI style.

Show one or two open bedrooms. Mention our reciprocity arrangements with other clubs.

ROOM 402: Portrait of Mathilde Townsend, reproducing the original painting by John Singer Sargent portrait from the National Gallery of Art hangs here (above the fireplace). This painting is by Bradley Stevens, a Washington portrait painter and professor at George Washington University. This portrait was commissioned by the Club as some thought that the photographic reproduction was not particularly attractive.

WRITERS’ ROOM

The Writers’ Room is a little-known jewel of the House and is available for members who seek a relaxed setting for reading, writing or conversation. Framed book jackets of Club members’ works decorate the walls. Personal papers may be displayed in this room.
The Writers’ Room is primarily furnished with the Arts and Crafts Style associated with Gustav Stickley’s oak furniture of the early 20th century including a writing table, two arm chairs and a rocker.
The Renaissance revival library table completes the room.

Painting
**Pirate's Alley**
George Grunblatt (1922-2008)
1963

**FITNESS CENTER**

The newly renovated fitness room is located in the fourth floor annex across from rooms 414 and 416. Six exercise machines, free weights and two televisions are available for our fitness-minded members and guests.

There are 23 guest rooms in the Annex, best accessed through the stair hall on the east side of the building.
Celebrating the New Warne Lounge

The Evolution of "Mrs. Townsend's Ballroom"

An open house, followed by a ball, celebrated in late April the renovation of the Warne Lounge, the Clubhouse's magnificent ballroom. What were the origins of the ballroom? Its history? Daniel Krinsley, chairman of the House Committee, prepared the following article on the evolution of "Mrs. Townsend's Ballroom."

In 1879, Richard Townsend, the manager of a brokerage house in Philadelphia, married his employer's daughter, Mary Scott. Mrs. Richard Townsend's father, William Lawrence Scott, was an American tycoon with extensive holdings in coal, iron, railroads, banking and real estate. He had important political connections, and had been elected to Congress from his Pennsylvania district in 1884 and in 1886.

The Townsends arrived in Washington in 1892 and moved into a fine townhouse that Mrs. Townsend had inherited from her father. That house at 22 Lafayette Square was across the park from the Cosmos Club. The socially ambitious Mrs. Townsend found the house too small for her needs. In a September 1893 letter to John Hay, Henry Adams wrote, "Mrs. Scott Townsend is as usual howling for a house."

Although she could have built a fine new mansion anywhere in Washington, Mrs. Townsend was superstitious about moving into a completely new house, and there was no private structure that met her requirements. At last in 1898 the problem was solved. Mrs.
Townsend purchased the Hillyer Mansion at the Club's current site for $65,000 and an adjacent lot for $15,556 and engaged the prominent architectural firm of Carrere and Hastings. They had won the competition for the design of the New York Public Library which was then under construction. John Carrere, later to become a member of the Club, designed a small French Chateau in the style of the Petite Trianon across and around the foundations and core of the Hillyer Mansion. The construction which had begun in 1899 was completed in 1901 and the Townsends moved in.

In November 1902, while riding in Cleveland Park, Mr. Townsend was thrown from his horse, suffered a fractured skull and died some weeks later. After a decent interval, Mrs. Townsend resumed her social activities. With a staff of 34 servants, Washington's finest mansion, the very best social connections and large financial resources, Townsend became Washington's most lavish hostess and her unchallenged social arbiter. During the social season, there were at least two balls or receptions in the ballroom monthly, with servants in 18th Century style livery.

Guests swept up the Grand Staircase across the Salon and into the ballroom; others promenaded from the ballroom through the two salons, and into the Library. Invitations to the Townsend Mansions were greatly appreciated and as eagerly sought as those to the White House.

After President Theodore Roosevelt's daughter Alice made her debut in the East Room of the White House, Mrs. Townsend followed up with an elaborate ball for Alice in her mansion. President Roosevelt's younger daughter Ethel and, later, President Taft's daughter Helen received the same elegant hospitality.

Mathilde Townsend, the only child of the Townsends was married to Senator Peter Gerry of Rhode Island in the ballroom in 1910. The wedding guests included President Taft and his entire cabinet. It was the social event of the season. The Gerrys, who were childless, were divorced in 1925 and Mathilde married Sumner Welles that same year. He later became Under Secretary of State during the Franklin Roosevelt Administration.

Mrs. Townsend died in 1931 and left the house to Mathilde. In 1935, during the first two weeks in January, prior to his inauguration, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt were the house guests of the Welles in the Townsend Mansion. From 1943 to 1945, the Townsend Mansion was leased by the Welles to the Canadian Women's Army Corp to house 150 women. The ballroom was used as a recreation lounge complete with jukebox. Except for a benefit ball sponsored by the United Nations Club in May, 1946, the mansion was unoccupied.

Mrs. Welles died unexpectedly while on vacation in Switzerland in 1949 and Mr. Welles inherited the mansion. He sold it to the Cosmos Club on January 10, 1950 for $364,635. When the ballroom was visited at that time, one of the chandeliers was missing and one lay on the floor. The two doorways opening into the present Newspaper Room had been sealed and their spaces filled with glass cases. Considerable cleaning, repair and curtains were purchased for the ballroom. The Cosmos Club moved into its new home in 1952.

The ceiling and door top paintings in the ballroom were cleaned in 1958. At a ceremony on December 16, 1959, Mrs. Townsend’s ballroom was named the Warne Lounge to honor Frank J. Warne, a Club member who had been generous of his time and of his purse.
In 1966, Ambassador Rudolf Schoenfeld, a Club member, loaned his magnificent collection of English Spode china to the Club, which displayed it in the glass cases. This collection remains on loan to the Club from Ambassador Schoenfeld’s heir and nephew Scott Schoenfeld, the Club Secretary.

Large Club functions in the Warne Lounge necessitated the movement and removal of furniture from this room into adjacent spaces with the result that many items suffered abrasion, accelerated wear and occasional breakage.

Furthermore, after 40 years of considerable use, the furnishings were obviously in need of replacement. A master plan for the renovation of many of the Club’s principal rooms, including the Warne Lounge, was prepared by the House Committee in December, 1989. However, the considerable expenses associated with the extensive remodeling of the dining areas delayed the Warne Lounge renovation until the fall of 1991.

Sheila Weidenfeld of the House Committee imaginatively and energetically pursued the project and engaged the services of William Tate-Mitros who designed the new redecoration. The completely renovated room contains new lighting, curtains, sofas and chairs in fabrics and in colors similar to those used in 18th Century courts, that enhance the opulence of its gilded moldings and painted ceiling and door tops. The 20 chairs, which were hand-carved in Italy, are reproductions of Louis XV chairs that were sold at Rosenberg and Stievel in New York, the prominent dealers in 18th Century French furniture.

The focal point of the room is a pouf consisting of four sofas surrounding a tall pedestal that serves as a base for displaying a vase. Four concealed lighting fixtures around the pedestal illuminate the central ceiling painting. The pouf’s four sofas, which are mounted on casters, can be rolled quickly to the corners of the room to provide seating during dances and other functions that require the use of the central floor area of the room.

The intricately molded and gilded walls and ceiling at the corners of the room are now enhanced by torchere lighting that can be adjusted to the mood of the occasion. Two brilliant chandeliers, resembling the originals, were also installed along with strengthened supporting attachments and new air diffusers.

Mrs. Townsend, from her perch in that Mansion in the sky, must be delighted to note the care, attention and affection that the Club continues to lavish on her lovely ballroom.
Another Renovation in the Warne Lounge

Restoring the Charm of Mrs. Townsend's Years

A new phase of renovation now going on in the Warne Lounge area promises to restore that vital part of the Club more to its appearance — and usefulness — of the turn of the century.

Involved is the unsealing and refilling of two doors between the Warne Lounge and what is now the newspaper room to permit a freer flow of traffic.

Soon after the Townsend Mansion was completed in 1901, a prominent architectural writer, Percy Stewart, said of its second floor: "As an example of straightforward planning, appropriate for entertaining purposes, Mrs. Townsend's residence is noteworthy. The interior is charming. "The rooms on the second or main floor are large and most convenient of access from a central point of the house — say at the head of the stairway. They all open from a large foyer hall, and those on the front connect with each other, forming a brilliant suite 120 feet in length" — including the library, the second salons (now the periodical room), the first or grand salon (the newspaper room) and its balcony — the Warne Lounge.

During the social season, Mrs. Townsend held two balls or receptions in the ballroom monthly, with servants in 18th century style livery. Two large doorways connected the grand salon with the ballroom. Guests swept up the grand staircase across the salon and into the ballroom, while others promenaded from the ballroom through the two salons and into the library. The perspectives were dramatic and the vista charming.

After the death of Mrs. Townsend in 1931, however, the two large doorways were closed and glass cases were built onto the sealed doors and into the recessed spaces facing the ballroom. In 1966, Ambassador Rudolf Schoenfeld (CC: 1955-81) loaned his collection of English Spode china to the Club, which displayed it in the glass cases until this August, when the Schoenfeld Collection was moved into an elegant cherrywood display case lining the north wall of the passageway connecting the Garden and Smith dining rooms. The collection remains on loan to the Club from Ambassador Schoenfeld's nephew and heir, Scott Schoenfeld (79).

The Board of Management has approved a proposal of the Art and House Committee to seal the doors, remove the glass cases, and refinish the sides of the doors facing the ballroom.

The careful renovation is being done by Christopher Line, master craftsman and chief engineer of the Club. The doors will be transferred to the French Military Mission for renovation and refinishing. If necessary, high-screens will occupy the doorways during the renovation.

The plan is to have the refinished doors installed by Christmas despite some unexpected obstacles, such as the discovery of a brick wall in what was once the doorway between the Warne Lounge and the newspaper room.

Then, the Club will have the option of opening the doors for its many dinner dances, receptions and concert intermissions, or of closing them for smaller, more intimate gatherings — just as in Mrs. Townsend's day.

Daniel B. Krinsley

Sorry, But FDR Did Not Sleep Here

While we are well aware of what befalls the messengers of ill-tidings, the interests of historical accuracy and the maintenance of an unblemished Clubscutcheon must prevail.

Last June, as the result of an exchange of historical information concerning the Club, we were alerted by Benjamin Welles, eldest son of Sumner Welles, that although his father, the owner of the building, had indeed offered the use of the Townsend Mansion to the Franklin D. Roosevelt as a pre-inaugural residence in early 1933, they had decided to stay at the Mayflower Hotel.

This surprising news was confirmed by the Mayflower Hotel, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and several other sources. What is even more amazing than the correction itself is the creation of the FDR legend at the Cosmos Club, a classic case of historical revisionism.

The statement, "President-elect and Mrs. Roosevelt lived in the house in January, 1933, prior to his inauguration," appears on page 60 of the Club's Centennial History — The Cosmos Club in Washington by Wilcomb Washburn in 1978. Additional references to this legend are in at least seven newspapers or other publications where they are stated as fact. Tours of the Clubhouse for new members usually repeated the legend.

When, how and by whom was the legend created? These tidbits of historical sleuthing are currently being conducted by Daniel B. Krinsley for future disclosure.

Daniel B. Krinsley ('89)
Judith Martin ('88)
The Search Goes on

Missing Portrait of Mrs. Richard Townsend

Members interested in the Club building’s past have for some time been conducting a so-far unsuccessful search for two items that mysteriously disappeared at some point before the Club assumed occupancy in 1932. No one seems to know what happened to the original mantel that graced the library and the portrait of a middle-aged woman that hung above it.

Our knowledge of the two missing items comes from one of the 18 photographs of the Townsend Mansion, made in 1915 by Frances Benjamin Johnston, which are now in the Prints and Photographs division of the Library of Congress.

Another of the Johnston photographs of the Grand Salon — the current Newspaper Room — featured a splendid life-size, 3/4-length portrait of a young woman that hung above the mantel. The artist was known to be John Singer Sargent. Because of the portrait’s prominent position near the head of the grand staircase, many Club members assumed that the subject was Mrs. Richard H. Townsend (nee Mary Scott) who, with her husband, built the house subsequently acquired by the Cosmos Club.

In the course of preparing a historical background to be presented at the Open House of the refurbished Warne Lounge on April 25, 1992, Daniel Krimbles (‘80) came upon a brochure of Onslow Hill Manor, built for Summer Welles in 1928, containing the same Sargent portrait. An accompanying letter, dated Nov. 4, 1983, from a staff member of the Onslow Hill Manor Foundation, identified the subject as Mathilde Townsend Welles, daughter of the Richard Townsends, and the date of the painting as 1907. A review of the National Gallery catalogue and a subsequent private viewing of the painting by a small Cosmos Club delegation (the painting is not currently on public display), confirmed the identity of the subject. Mathilde was approximately 33 years old when her portrait was painted by Sargent. A photographic reproduction of that portrait commissioned by the Art Committee now hangs in its original location.

It was reasonable to assume that somewhere in the Townsend Mansion there had to have been a likeness of the chatelaine, who had been Washington’s most prominent social arbiter during the early years of this century. If Mary Scott had been approximately 20 years old (her birthdate is currently unknown) when she married Richard H. Townsend in 1879, she would have been approximately 56 years old in 1915 when the photograph of the portrait was made. Since the portrait predates the photograph, the woman in the library portrait seemed to be a likely candidate for the real Mrs. Townsend.

Copies of the picture were distributed to the Art Committee during its April 1992, meeting. Erasmus Klinux

A miniature portrait of Mary Scott Townsend proved a vital clue.

A 1915 photograph shows painting and mantel that mysteriously disappeared from Townsend Mansion before Club took occupancy.
(’86), now committee chairman, showed the picture to Benjamin Welles, the eldest son of Sumner Welles by a previous marriage, who as a child had come to know Mrs. Townsend, his step-grandmother from 1925 until her death in 1931. He tentatively identified the woman in the photograph as Mrs. Townsend, and suggested that we speak to his younger brother Arnold for any further information.

Arnold Welles subsequently indicated to Mr. Kloman that he agreed with Ben Welles’ conjecture that the subject of the portrait was Mrs. Townsend. He also referred us to Sotheby’s which, in the spring of 1991, had held an auction of the spectacular jewelry collection of Mrs. Townsend’s niece, Thora Ronalds McElroy. Sotheby’s newsletter announcing the auction also featured a miniature portrait of Mary Scott (Mrs. Richard H.) Townsend wearing one part of a famous sapphire and diamond necklace estimated by Sotheby’s to have a value of $1.5 to $2 million. The figure in the miniature and that in the missing portrait are evidently one and the same. Thus we have established the identity of the subject of the missing portrait.

The Welleses moved their prized possessions out of the Townsend Mansion in 1941 and into Oxon Hill Manor and other of their residences. It was considered possible that the Townsend portrait could be traced to Oxon Hill Manor. Mr. Krinsley contacted George Price, a trustee of the Oxon Hill Foundation, and mailed a copy of the Townsend photograph to him on June 25, 1992. Mr. Price reported that there was no record of the Townsend portrait at Oxon Hill Manor, nor was there any record of the library’s original marble mantel.

On Sept. 15, 1992, Mr. Krinsley wrote the trustees of the estate of Thora Ronalds McElroy and enclosed a copy of the Johnston photograph. He explained the eagerness in locating the portrait for its historical interest to the Cosmos Club. After a visit to Sotheby’s in New York and two additional letters, Mr. Krinsley was finally contacted on May 27, 1993, by one of the lawyers for the McElroy estate. He reported that the only Townsend portrait among Mrs. McElroy’s possessions was the one of her cousin Mathilde Townsend (Mrs. Sumner) Welles.

We will continue our search for the missing portrait of Mrs. Richard Townsend, and the splendid marble mantel that once graced our library.

ERASMUS H. KLOMAN (’86)
and DANIEL B. KRINSLEY (’80)
GENEALOGY OF MARY & MATHILDE TOWNSEND

This is an abbreviated account for general interest.

**Great Grandfather Rev. James Scott**, missionary to Virginia, 1735.

**Grandfather Gustavus Scott 1753-1800.** Member Continental Congress, Commissioner of the District of Columbia 1794-1800.

**Son:** Robert L. Scott, West Point, Col. U.S. Army, War of 1812. Had six children.

**Son:** William Lawrence Scott (-1891) married Mary Tracy. b. Washington, DC, attended the common schools and Hampden-Sydney Academy in Virginia; page in the House of Representative 1840-1846; moved to Erie, PA in 1846 and employed as a shipping clerk until 1850; subsequently engaged in shipping coal mining, iron manufacturing, banking and railroad construction. Had extensive land holdings. Mayor of Erie in 1866 and again in 1871. Unsuccessful candidate for election in 1866 and 1871 to Congress. Elected as a Democrat for two terms in Congress 1885-1889. Director of a number of railroad companies and president of the Erie & Pittsburgh Railroad at the time of his death.

**Daughter Annie Wainwright Scott** m. Charles Herot Strong, d. Mathilda Thora m. Reginald Ronald, d. Thora Scott Ronald

**Daughter Mary Tracy Scott**, m. Richard H. Townsend (-1901), d. Annie Scott Townsend (-1901, d Mathilde Scott Townsend, m. Peter Goelet Gerry, m. Sumner Welles)
APPENDIX

HISTORIC HOMES ON LAFAYETTE SQUARE
(sometime between 1885 and 1889)

Key to the Map on Following Page

Nos. 1-5 constitutes what was then the Arlington Hotel. The names indicate former residents. Reverend Johnson, Senator and Minister to England; James Buchanan and Benjamin Harrison; (Adelina?) Patti; Kalakaua; Dom Pedro; the Prince of Wales.

William L. Marcy, Sec. of War and State
Lewis Cass, Secretary of War and State
Sen. Charles Sumner
Sen. Pomeroy
Lord Ashburton; Sir Bulwer Lytton and his son, Robert Bulwer Lytton (a.k.a. Owen Meredith
St. John’s Episcopal Church (architect Benjamin Latrobe)
John Hay, poet and historian, one of Lincoln’s private secretaries and later Sec. of State
Henry Adams, author and grandson of John Quincy Adams
Thomas Ritchie (Pres. Polk’s editor); Sen. John Slidell; Walter A. Wood (industrialist
Daniel Webster; M. Montholon (French Minister); William Corcoran
Adm. Shubrick
Judge Bancroft Davis, Secretary of State and Minister to Germany
George Bancroft
Commodore Stephen Decatur; Henry Clay; Martin Van Buren, Vice Pres.; John Gadsby; Edward Livingston; Sec. of State; George M. Dallas, Vice President; General Beale (house designed by Benjamin Latrobe)
William L. Marcy, Sec. of War; Rep. Newberry (MI); Sen. James G. Blaine; Rep. William L. Scott
Charles C. Glover, banker
William Murtagh, editor; General Frank Steele
Maj. Gen. J. G. Parks
Commodore Stockton; Levi Woodbury, Sec. of the Treasury under Van Buren; John C. Spencer, Sec. Of the Treasury under Tyler; Gen. Daniel E. Sickles; Vice Pres. Schuyler Colfax; Washington McLean, editor Cincinnati Enquirer
Mrs. James Blair, daughter of Gen. Jessup
Sen. Gorman; George F. Appleby
Adm. Aiden; Maj. Henry R. Rathbone; Gen. N.L. Anderson; Sen. Dolph
Mrs. Green (daughter of Adm. Dahlgren); Col. William H. Philip
John McLean, Cincinnati Enquirer
Peter Parker, Minister to China; Bureau of American Republics, William E. Curtis, Chief.
Francis Preston Blair; Montgomery Blair; Thomas Ewing, Sec. Of the Treasury;
(Gener. W. T. Sherman was married in this house. His brother was Senator from Ohio.)
Rev. Smith Pyne; Commodore Morris.
James Madison; Mrs. Dolley Madison; Commodore Wilkes; Gen. McClellan; Cosmos Club
William Windon, Sec. of the Treasury
Col. Robert G. Ingersoll
Ogle Taylor; Adm. Paulding; Sen. Don. Cameron
Henry Clay; John C. Calhoun; Washington Club; William H. Seward, Sec. of State; James G. Blaine, Sec. of State.
U. S. Attorney General's office
Andrew Jackson statue
Lafayette statue and monument
Diagram of Lafayette Square (Jackson Park) and its surroundings.

(from Our Neighbors on Lafayette Square by Benjamin Ogle Tayloe, reprinted by the Washington Junior League 1972)