



Jazz Age Stories of the *Rich and Scandalous!*

BIG READ D.C. 2008
Walking Tour Guide

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS



THE **BIG
READ**



HUMANITIES COUNCIL
OF WASHINGTON, DC



APRIL 24 - MAY 24, 2008
Washington, DC is reading

THE **GREAT GATSBY**
by F. Scott Fitzgerald

BIG READ D.C. 2008 Walking Tour Guide

Jazz Age Stories of the *Rich and Scandalous!*

*Get a glimpse of the world F. Scott Fitzgerald lived in and chronicled in **The Great Gatsby** by viewing the great houses of the Dupont Circle and Kalorama neighborhoods. This tour takes approximately one hour if viewing only the exterior of buildings, more if you decide to take tours of the Mayflower Hotel and Woodrow Wilson House (stops #1 and #8, no reservations needed). You can also opt to add a tour of the National Woman's Democratic Club (stop #5) if you make reservations in advance.*

**START AT THE FARRAGUT NORTH METRO STATION (RED LINE).
HEAD NORTH ON CONNECTICUT AVENUE.**

1. The Mayflower Hotel

1127 Connecticut Ave. NW,
Farragut Square neighborhood.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built in 1925 in time for Calvin Coolidge's inaugural ball, this hotel retains many historic features, including decorative plasterwork, original murals in the Cafe Promenade, and skylights in the Cafe and lobby. The Mayflower, built in the Beaux Arts style, was very modern in the 1920s, with private bathrooms in all suites, and offering an early form of air conditioning in its public rooms--a first for D.C. hotels. The name commemorates the ship carrying Puritan settlers to the new world, and capitalized on a patriotic fervor of the time (1920 was the 300th anniversary of the ship's landing at Plymouth Rock).

The hotel offers a self-guided tour brochure of the premises; copies are available by request from the concierge. A small historical display, in glass cases on the Mezzanine, is especially recommended.

Calvin Coolidge, U.S. President from 1923 to 1929, represented a straight-laced antidote to the scandals of the previous administration, led by Warren Harding (the largest of which was the Teapot Dome Scandal). In a time of changing social roles and loosening morals, Coolidge stood for fiscal restraint and rectitude. He was conservative

and pro-business, instituting tax cuts, reducing federal expenditures, and paying down the nation's debt. Coolidge was also famously taciturn. At a White House party, one story goes, a woman told him that she had made a bet that she could get him to say more than two words. Coolidge replied, "You lose."

CONTINUE NORTH ON CONNECTICUT AVENUE, CROSSING M STREET.

2. Connecticut Avenue Shopping District

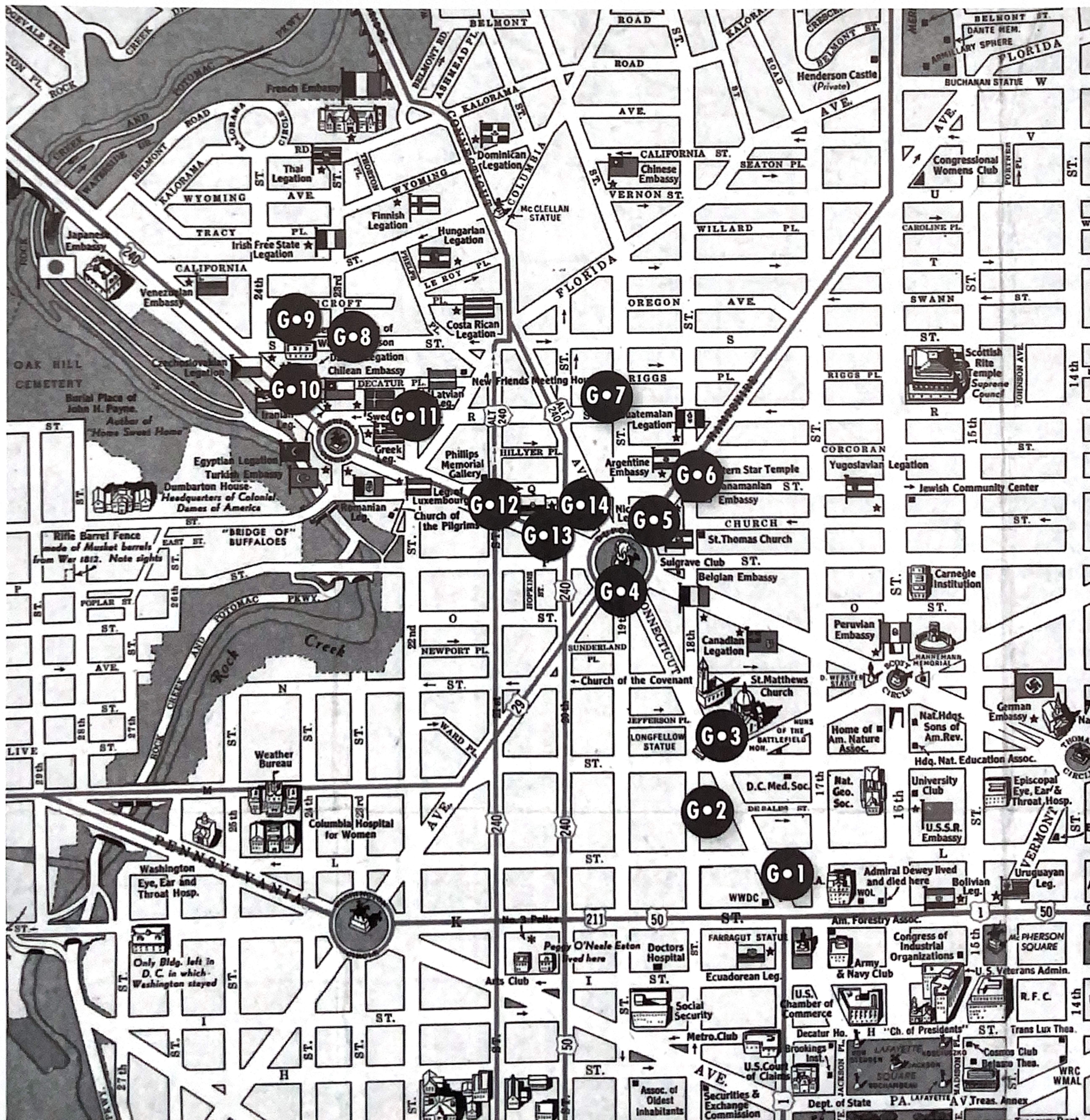
The Connecticut Avenue Association was one of the first merchant's associations in Washington, formed in 1921 to promote "high class business" along this commercial corridor. The Association promoted its member businesses through extensive advertising, as well as an insignia that members could place in their windows "as a mark of quality in merchandise and courtesy in service," and semi-annual fashion shows. The many shops along Connecticut Avenue selling apparel, shoes, hats, antiques, flowers, interior decorating services and beauty salon services were notable for their style and quality, rather than for competitive prices.

Women shoppers often moved from store to store on foot, with chauffeurs trailing behind in their automobiles. Shopping in this area became a social event, and a place for the elite to be seen. As early as 1908, the *Washington Post* claimed, "Connecticut Avenue in a few years will be the Fifth Avenue of Washington."

The years following World War I mark the beginnings of a new age of advertising. Mass production and growing efficiency in industry meant more products were readily available. Massive ad campaigns resulted to encourage consumers to buy more. In addition, new forms of credit were developed at this time, the most important of which was installment buying, which enabled even consumers with modest incomes to afford larger purchases such as automobiles, refrigerators, sewing machines, radios, and washing machines.

PHOTO CREDIT: Evalyn Walsh McLean, wearing the Hope Diamond, Library of Congress

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- G • 2. **Connecticut Avenue Shopping District**
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3. Mayflower Club

MCCXXIII Club

1223 Connecticut Ave. NW

Dupont Circle neighborhood.

Considered the swankiest Prohibition-era speakeasy in D.C., the Mayflower Club offered patrons liquor and gambling.

The alcohol ban was imposed in D.C. earlier than in the rest of the U.S., in 1917, three years prior to the enactment of the 18th Amendment. D.C. served as a temperance proving ground for the movement.

According to an article in the *Washington Post*, there were over 2,000 speakeasies in the city, and the ban was only sporadically enforced. The *Post* reports: "One speak-easy was on a 25-foot motor launch anchored in the Potomac River about 15 feet from shore. Customers reached the boat by a gangplank. When police were sighted, the boat simply moved."

Some historians believe Prohibition actually increased alcohol consumption. For the first time, women who were not prostitutes regularly attended clubs. The country also experienced a sharp rise in illness and death from the consumption of amateur-manufactured "moonshine," using unsafe products such as wood alcohol, iodine, and other contaminants.

4. Du Pont Memorial Fountain

Dupont Circle, at the intersection of

Massachusetts Ave. and Connecticut Ave. NW

This beautiful marble fountain was created in 1921 by one of the greatest American sculptors of the 20th century, Daniel Chester French. It memorializes Rear Admiral Samuel Francis Du Pont, the first naval hero of the Civil War. The three figures on the shaft of the fountain represent the Arts of Ocean Navigation: the Sea is a female figure holding a boat in one hand; Wind is a male figure draped by a ship's sail, holding a conch shell; and the Stars are represented by a female holding a globe.

The 1920s was a time of active monument building in D.C. Other public sculpture installed during the period includes: the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial at the base of Capitol Hill (1921), the Lincoln Memorial anchoring the west end of the National Mall (1922), the statue of Alexander Hamilton at the south entrance to the U.S. Treasury (1923), the John Ericsson Memorial at the entrance to West Potomac Park (1926), and the statues of Dante (1920), Joan of Arc (1922), and Serenity (1925), all in Malcolm X Park. Prominent buildings erected during the period include the Freer Gallery (1923), the Federal Triangle complex (1926), and the National Academy of Sciences (1924).

PHOTO CREDIT: Dupont Circle Fountain, Library of Congress



5. Cissy Patterson Mansion

The Washington Club,
15 Dupont Circle NW
Dupont Circle neighborhood.

Now a private club; listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built in 1902 by the owner of the *Chicago Tribune* and his wife, this mansion is the only intact building in D.C. designed by the noted American architect Sanford White. In the 1920s, this house was occupied by the Patterson's daughter, the Countess Gizycki, also known as Eleanor "Cissy" Medill Patterson, the owner and editor of the *Washington Times-Herald*. The Countess entertained an elite international crowd in the mansion, despite the scandal of her divorce and the ugly custody battle over her only child Felicia (which was only settled when President Taft intervened with Tsar Nicolas II, who ordered the Count to return the child to her mother).

In 1927, while she was living in New York, Patterson loaned this house to President and Mrs. Coolidge as a temporary White House while the Presidential mansion was undergoing renovations. The Coolidges entertained Charles A. Lindbergh here after his famous trans-Atlantic flight. Lindbergh was the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, from New York to Paris, in 1927. He became a national hero who was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor.

Lindbergh's plane is on display at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air & Space Museum. If it's been awhile since you've seen it, it's worth going again! The plane looks remarkably small and unprotected. To save gas, Lindbergh made his airplane as light as possible, stripping everything inessential, even a radio. In a grueling flight of 33.5 hours, Lindbergh wrote that at one point he intentionally skimmed the surface of the Atlantic Ocean so the splash of the water would help keep him awake.

HEAD NORTH ON NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE.

6. Woman's National Democratic Club

The Whittemore House
1526 New Hampshire Ave. NW
Dupont Circle neighborhood.

Open to the public by appointment: (202) 232-7363, ext. 3003. On the National Register of Historic Places; marked with a plaque.

Founded in 1922 in response to the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote, the Club purchased this building in 1927, where it hosts twice-weekly public programs for both women and men (who were granted full membership in 1988). The house was built in 1892 by a descendent of President Adams, the opera singer Sarah Whittemore. A small museum, open by appointment, exhibits political campaign memorabilia, art, and antiques.

The Club's building is an unusual example of Craftsman architecture in a city where Beaux Arts and Neo-Classical styles are prominent. The Club owns an eclectic collection of furniture and decorative arts spanning several periods. Many rooms retain original ornate plaster ceilings (the one in the Music Room is stellar). The current exhibit, along the second floor corridor, documents a 1956 mock political convention that nominated a woman presidential candidate. "Jenny for President" will be on display through January 2009. An additional display in the library of photos of Eleanor Roosevelt (a charter member) is also recommended.

Achieving women's right to vote was a long and difficult struggle. Between 1878, when the Amendment was first introduced in Congress, and 1920, when it was finally ratified, generations of women organized, lectured, petitioned, picketed, went on hunger strikes, paraded, and were sent to jail. (2008 marks the 150th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention, the first convention for Women's Rights, organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and other leaders.)

Gaining voting rights also marked a crucial and revolutionary change in women's roles. The 1920s brought American women: dress reform (particularly the shorter skirts, lack of corsets, and bobbed hair associated with flappers), the birth control movement (led by



PHOTO CREDIT: Interior of Whittemore house, with leopard rug, moose head above fireplace, and foliage., Library of Congress

Margaret Sanger), changes in courtship and marriage (including a greater incidence of divorce), and greater participation both in the workforce (which had begun in the war years), and in political and civic engagement.

TURN LEFT ON Q STREET AND GO TWO BLOCKS; CROSS CONNECTICUT AVENUE AND GO NORTH (RIGHT) TWO BLOCKS; TURN LEFT ON R STREET AND GO TWO BLOCKS.

7. A. Mitchell Palmer House

2132 R Street NW

Dupont Circle neighborhood (private).

The Attorney General lived with his family in this Classical Revival townhouse, which was bombed June 2, 1919 at the height of the "Red Scare" following WWI. The front of the house was blown apart from the blast, but the only person killed was the bomber himself, Carlo Valdonoci, who was identified by fragments of pamphlets by The Anarchist Fighters he had on him at the time of the attack.

Bombs were also exploded at the homes of judges and lawyers in Boston, New York, and Pittsburgh. Convinced that an international Bolshevik conspiracy was in progress, Palmer led a nation-wide rout of radicals and leftists that led to the formation of the General Intelligence Division (forerunner of the FBI, led by J. Edgar Hoover), a series of raids and arrests (culminating in a coordinated series on January 2, 1920 in 33 mid-western and eastern cities), and trials leading to the eventual deportation of 591 citizens. Palmer's legal justification was the Sedition Act of 1918, a wartime measure forbidding Americans to use "disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language" about the U.S. government. For two years, Palmer's raids had wide popular support, until prominent citizens (such as Senator Warren Harding) began to question his suppression of freedom of speech.

The period following the First World War was a time of American isolationism and nativism. Not only was there a perceived threat from political anarchists, but there was also a fear of immigrants (which led to the harshest new immigration restrictions in the country's history), and a rise in the Ku Klux Klan (whose members, at its height in the early 1920s, numbered approximately 4 million nationwide).

GO TO 22ND STREET AND TURN RIGHT. WHERE THE STREET DEAD-ENDS AT DECATUR PLACE, CONTINUE UP THE STAIRS. TURN LEFT ON S STREET AND GO ONE BLOCK.

8. Herbert Hoover House

Embassy of Myanmar

2300 S St. NW

Kalorama neighborhood.

Hoover lived here while serving as Secretary of Commerce under Presidents Harding and Coolidge. Hoover was known at this time as a Great Humanitarian, for his role in providing food to starving millions in war-ravaged Europe (in particular in Belgium) after WWI. He was also called the Great Engineer for improving government efficiency and solving economic problems. When the Mississippi River Valley experienced devastating floods in the Spring of 1927 (the worst flooding in the nation's history until Hurricane Katrina of 2005), Hoover was appointed to coordinate relief efforts. The overwhelmingly positive reputation he built up in the 1920s led directly to his election as President—and the subsequent downfall of his reputation for his lack of leadership during the Great Depression.

This (along with the site next door, now the Textile Museum) is the location of the original estate in this area, Kalorama (Greek for "beautiful view"), owned by Joel Barlow (1754-1812), a diplomat and published poet. The mansion stood long enough to serve as a Civil War hospital, and was razed in 1888.

9. Woodrow Wilson House

2340 S St. NW

Sheridan Circle neighborhood.

*Open to the public Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Admission fee. A National Historic Landmark; marked with a plaque.*

Woodrow Wilson was President from 1913 to 1921. He led the U.S. involvement in World War I, helped form the League of Nations (which later became the United Nations), enacted Prohibition, established the Internal Revenue Service and began collecting income tax, and signed

the 19th Amendment into law, which gave women the right to vote. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920. Wilson lived at this location until 1924, and the house has been lovingly restored to the way it looked in the 1920s. Designed by architect Waddy Wood in the Georgian Revival style in 1915, the Wilsons added an elevator, billiard room, and garage. Edith Bolling Wilson described the property as "an unpretentious, comfortable, dignified house, fitted to the needs of a gentleman." This is the only presidential museum in D.C.

Like Fitzgerald, Wilson had Princeton University ties (Wilson was university president from 1902-1909). If you take the tour, note the Princeton flag above Wilson's desk. In the kitchen, visitors will see the new electric technology that was becoming common to households in the 1920s, such as the Electrolux vacuum cleaner and the toaster. And in the second floor study, look for the "Graphoscope" film projector, a gift to Wilson from Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. Other museum highlights include flapper dresses and raccoon coats, a pristine 1923 Rolls Royce, and gifts of state from around the world.

This section is often referred to as "Embassy Row," but most of today's embassies were originally built as private houses.

**TURN LEFT ON 24TH STREET AND LEFT ONTO MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE.
CROSS MASSACHUSETTS AND CONTINUE SOUTH TO SHERIDAN CIRCLE.**

10. Alice Pike Barney House

Embassy of Latvia
2306 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Sheridan Circle neighborhood.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places; marked by a plaque.

An ardent arts advocate, Barney lived in this unusual Spanish Mission-style house from 1889 to 1925, hosting a salon on Friday afternoons and Sunday evenings for visual artists, actors, and musicians, and staging a range of professional and amateur productions (including plays, operas, pageants, and concerts). She brought in touring companies (Sarah Bernhardt once performed here), lobbied the government for support of the arts (resulting in the development of the

National Sylvan Theater on the Washington Monument grounds), and created her own paintings and plays. Socially prominent and wealthy, Barney was considered eccentric and was often written up in the gossip sections of east coast papers.

One of her two daughters, Natalie Clifford Barney, became a writer and hosted her own weekly salons in Paris beginning in the 1920s that continued for over 60 years. Influenced by her mother's example, the younger Barney lived an unconventional life (living openly as a lesbian among other things), and F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald attended events at her house in Paris while living abroad.

CROSS THE CIRCLE TO R STREET.

11. Edwin Denby House

Embassy Circle Guest House
2224 R St. NW.

Now a bed and breakfast inn.

Edwin Denby lived in this house when he served as Navy Secretary under President Harding. He is one of two high officials forced to resign in the wake of the Teapot Dome Scandal. (The other, Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall, was the only official ever to be imprisoned for crimes occurring while a Cabinet Member.) Denby released control of the Wyoming oil fields set aside as emergency fuel reserves for the Navy to the Department of the Interior, which allowed Fall to award the rights to drill there (without competitive bidding) to Harry F. Sinclair of Sinclair Oil, in exchange for kickbacks of at least \$100,000. While Harding was probably not aware of the scandal, his administration is notable for appointments of disreputable men. Harding's so-called "Ohio Gang" often met at a speakeasy and brothel on K Street (now demolished) said to be the place to arrange everything from protection for bootleggers to appointments to Federal office to the purchase of pardons and paroles.

**GO TO THE END OF THE BLOCK AND TURN RIGHT, THEN MAKE A LEFT ONTO
MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE.**



12. Townsend Mansion

Cosmos Club

2121 Massachusetts Ave. NW

Dupont Circle neighborhood.

Now a private club; listed on the Register of Historic Places.

Built in 1901 in the Beaux Arts style by prominent architects Carrere and Hastings, this mansion was the home of Mary Scott Townsend, daughter of a railroad and coal magnate. As an heiress and widow, Townsend was one of Washington's social leaders and pre-eminent hostesses until her death in 1931. Original surviving features of the interiors include a rococo ballroom and elaborately carved wood-paneled library in the style of Henry II.

The Cosmos Club took over this property in 1952. The Club has not been without public controversy: in the 1960s, over the admission of African American members; and in the 1970s and 1980s, over the admission of women. (In one vote in 1980, a member wrote on his ballot, "If God wanted women to be members, he would have made them men.") The Club now accepts all, and they have lovingly restored the property to its original elegance.

13. Walsh Mansion

Indonesian Embassy Chancery

2020 Massachusetts Ave. NW.

Tours by appointment: (202) 775-5200.

Built as a private residence in 1903, this was nicknamed "the million-dollar house." Throughout the 1920s, this 60-room Beaux Arts mansion was occupied by Carrie Reed Walsh, widow of Thomas F. Walsh, an Irish immigrant who made his fortune operating one of the richest gold mines in the world, located in Colorado. As *nouveau riches*, The Walshes would not have been socially accepted in more established high society in Boston or Philadelphia, but society in D.C. was more forgiving. The Walshes entertained in lavish style in the first decades of the 20th century, entertaining Presidents and foreign dignitaries.

The house was sold to the U.S. government in 1936, and to the Indonesian government in 1951. Remaining features of the Walsh

mansion include a grand Y-shaped staircase, marble statues, a music room with a massive built-in pipe organ, and the Louis XIV salon. You can also see a slab of unrefined gold ore from Walsh's Camp Bird Gold Mine in one section of the foundation, a reminder of how Walsh built his fortune.

Daughter Evalyn Walsh was raised here. She described the house as "a palace that expresses the dreams of my father and mother when they were poor in Colorado." She later married Ned McLean and they built another grand estate, "Friendship," now demolished, on the site of the McLean Gardens Condominiums off Wisconsin Ave. NW in the Cathedral Heights neighborhood. Ned McLean was the publisher of the *Washington Post*, and a notorious alcoholic, playboy, and host of gala parties. McLean purchased the Hope Diamond for his wife soon after they married, and they proceeded to decimate two family fortunes worth millions. Evalyn became addicted to morphine; they had four children, and divorced in 1929. When McLean went bankrupt, the *Post* was auctioned in 1933 to Eugene Meyer (who subsequently restored the paper's reputation and financial health).

Today you can visit the Hope Diamond at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History. An intense blue color, weighing over 45 carats, the diamond was said to curse all its owners with bad luck. Evalyn Walsh McLean was the last private owner.

14. Alice Roosevelt Longworth House

Washington Legal Foundation

2009 Massachusetts Ave. NW

Dupont Circle neighborhood.

The daughter of Theodore Roosevelt, Longworth married Congressman Nicholas Longworth and was a famous socialite. Known for her wild and unconventional ways, she gambled, smoked in public, and had extramarital affairs. Gossip columns of the times reported her antics: plunging into a swimming pool fully clothed, placing bets at the Benning Race Track, wearing a boa constrictor around her neck. An embroidered sofa pillow in her home read: "If you haven't got anything good to say about anybody, come sit next to me."

CONTINUE TO DUPONT CIRCLE.

END AT DUPONT CIRCLE METRO STATION (RED LINE).

Want More?

Here are some additional sites to search out in the area:

FAMILY TIES

Francis Scott Key Memorial Park

M Street NW, at the entrance to Key Bridge
Georgetown neighborhood.

Open to the public 24 hours. Free Admission.

Fitzgerald was named for his famous second cousin three times removed. Key, the author of the "Star Spangled Banner," lived across the street from this park, in a building that no longer exists. Key's poem became the official U.S. anthem in 1931. The park includes a sculptural bust of Key, and a historic marker.

Parents' Wedding Site

1815 N St. NW
Downtown.

Demolished; now the site of a multi-story office tower.

Fitzgerald's parents (Edward and Mollie McQuillan Fitzgerald) were married in the Washington home of his paternal grandparents on Feb. 12, 1890. They subsequently returned to St. Paul, where Fitzgerald was born Sept. 24, 1896. His mother was extremely protective, possibly because two earlier babies (and one after his birth) died. A younger sister Annabel was Fitzgerald's only surviving sibling.

Mary Surratt Boarding House

Wok 'n Roll Restaurant
604 H St. NW
Chinatown neighborhood.

Marked by a historic plaque.

Another prominent relative on his father's side, Surratt was Fitzgerald's second cousin. She was hanged as a conspirator in Lincoln's assassination.

Workplace of Scottie Fitzgerald Smith

Washington Post
1150 15th St. NW

The only child of Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald, Frances Scott Fitzgerald Lanahan Smith, known as "Scottie" (1921-1986), was a writer and political activist who worked as a reporter for *the Washington Post* and

The Northern Virginia Sun, as well as *Time*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times*. She was a founding member of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Washington. Her books include *Don't Quote Me*, about women in the Washington press, and *The Romantic Egotists*, a pictorial biography of her parents.

F. Scott Fitzgerald Grave Site

St. Mary's Cemetery
600 Viers Mill Rd., Rockville, MD

Buried with Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald; the grave marker includes the last sentence from *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald was originally buried at Rockville Union Cemetery in December 1940 when Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Rockville would not allow his burial in the family plot because he was a non-practicing Catholic at the time of his death. His daughter Scottie was able to reverse the Baltimore Diocese's verdict, and in November 1975 Scott and Zelda's graves and marker were moved to Saint Mary's church cemetery. Fifteen members of Fitzgerald's family are buried in the cemetery.

PROMINENT WASHINGTONIANS of the 1920s

Florence Mills House Site

23 Goat Alley NW.
Convention Center neighborhood.

Now the approximate location of McCullough Court, between 6th and 7th Streets and L & M Streets, Mills was born in a house in this location, to parents who were former slaves. A singer, dancer, and comedic actor, Mills (1896 - 1926) was a child vaudeville actor who became a star in 1921 in her performances of "Shuffle Along," the first Broadway musical with an all-Black cast. Although she died at age 31, she is considered the preeminent performer of 1920s musicals, beloved both in the U.S. and Europe.

Alley dwellings were prevalent in the city's early history, but because many lacked indoor plumbing and electricity (even into the 1950s), most were eventually razed. The city began a campaign to depopulate alley dwellings in the 1920s, but they were not successful until the mid-1950s with a city-wide "slum clearance" program. Some alleys were converted into "minor streets" but many were simply eliminated, vastly reducing the city's stock of low-income housing. Many had colorful names (such as: Ambush Alley, Bacon Alley, Baptist Alley, Barefoot Alley, Blood Alley, Butter Alley, Cabbage Alley, Dove Court, Electric Alley, Golden Alley, Grease Alley, Hook and Ladder Alley, Lambs Alley, Moonshine Alley, Peartree Alley, Porksteak Alley, Ray-Ray Alley, Shad Row, Temperance Court, Thimble Alley, Tiger Alley, Tin Cup Alley, Twine Alley, and Zig-Zag Alley).

Duke Ellington House

1212 T St. NW
Greater U Street Historic District (private).

Duke Ellington was raised in this house, one of a number of houses

he occupied with his family in Washington. T Street was a prominent residential street for middle-class African Americans through the first half of the 1900s, and neighbors included doctors, businessmen, and government clerks. Ellington's first gig with his own band, "Duke's Serenaders," took place at the True Reformer's Hall, around the corner, and his subsequent band, the "Washingtonians," was one of the leading society bands in the city. Ellington moved to Harlem in 1923.



PHOTO CREDIT: Florence Mills, Photographs and Prints divisions, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Madame Lillian Evanti House

1910 Vermont Ave. NW

Logan Circle Historic District (private).

Marked with a historic plaque; listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

One of the first African American women to sing opera professionally was born in D.C. and attended Howard University. She made her professional debut in 1925 in France. Other highlights of her career included performing at the White House for President Franklin Roosevelt, and co-founding the National Negro Opera Company

in Pittsburgh. Evanti spoke five languages and was known for a commanding stage presence.

Al Jolson Sites

Jolson, born Asa Yoelson in Lithuania, moved to D.C. at age 8. His father, Moshe Rueben Yoelson, was a rabbi of the Talmud Torah Synagogue, 467 E St. SW, no longer standing (that congregation is now Ohev Sholom Talmud Torah, the oldest Orthodox Jewish synagogue in D.C., located at 1600 Jonquil St. NW). Jolson lived in two D.C. locations: 208 4 1/2 St. SW and 482 School St. SW. Neither still stands. Jolson is remembered for his leading role in the movie *The Jazz Singer*, the first feature-length talking movie, created in 1927.

Addison Scurlock Studio Site

900 U St. NW

Greater U Street Historic District.

Demolished, now the site of Nellie's Sports Bar.

Scurlock was the premier photographer of African American D.C. in the first half of the 20th century. He photographed most well-known local and national leaders, students at Howard University and other schools, many Black businesses, and events at Griffith Stadium. His studio was at this corner from 1911 to 1964, and he lived in a house at 1202 T Street NW with his wife Mamie and sons Robert and George (now demolished). People who sat for Scurlock portraits include statesman Dr. Ralph Bunche, educator Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, former D.C. Poet Laureate Sterling A. Brown, General Benjamin O. Davis, civil rights activist and scholar Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, civil rights and women's rights activist Mary Church Terrell, historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson, surgeon and scientist Dr. Charles R. Drew, and many others. The Scurlock Collections are now part of the Smithsonian Museum of American History Archives.

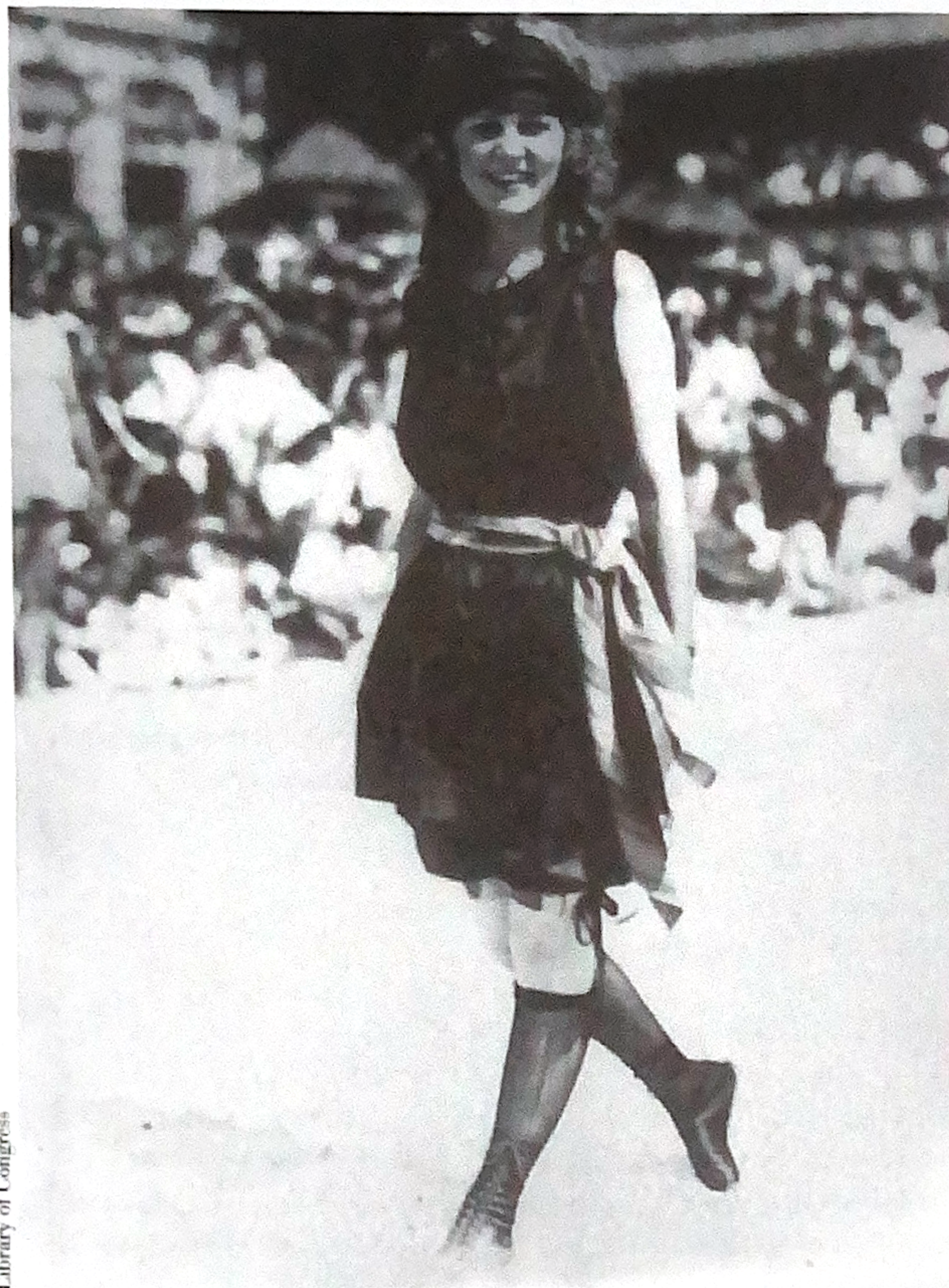
Miss America House

3015 Cambridge Place NW

(off 30th Street, between Q & R)

Georgetown neighborhood.

Margaret Gorman was the very first winner of the Miss America beauty pageant, held in Atlantic City, NJ in 1921. Ms. Gorman was 16 at the time, a student at Western High School. She was 5'1", weighing only 108 lbs, and measuring 30-25-32 (making her the most petite winner in the history of the pageant). She was selected Miss Washington D.C. by the *Washington Herald* prior to winning the national competition. Newspapers at the time noted her similarity to Mary Pickford, the movie star. Gorman lived her entire life in D.C., marrying a real estate agent, Victor Cahill, in 1925, and passing away in 1995 at age 90.



The Charleston

2008 is the 85th anniversary of the famous dance, first popularized in the Broadway musical comedy "Runnin' Wild" (song composed by James P. Johnson, 1923). Popular dance halls in D.C. during the 1920s included Murray's Casino, Stack O'Lee's in Foggy Bottom, the Odd Fellows Hall in Georgetown, the Eye Street Hall in SW, and Woodman's Hall in Anacostia.

U Street Clubs

U Street was a center of nightlife in the 1920s. Clubs included Bohemian Caverns (still standing at 2001 11th St. NW), Republic Gardens (still standing at 1355 U Street NW), the Lincoln Colonnade (located under the Lincoln Theater, at 1215 U Street NW, a favorite dance hall for African Americans that also attracted white patrons, particularly for such events as the annual President's Birthday Ball), and several that no longer exist, including the Bali, the Turf Club, Club Louisiana, the Casbah, and the Brass Rail.

True Reformers Hall

Public Welfare Foundation
1200 U St. NW
Greater U Street Historic District.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built in 1903 as a benevolent society by African American architect John A. Lankford, the building was purchased in 1917 by the Knights of Pythias for use as a temple. The second-floor auditorium, seating over 2,000 people, was a popular dance hall, and was the site of Duke Ellington's first paid, professional gig. Several African-American small businesses and social clubs rented space. The basement was also used as a drill hall and armory for the First Separate Battalion, D.C.'s only African American National Guard unit. Original surviving features include the two-story auditorium on the second floor.

FILM

Knickerbocker Theater Site

SE corner of 18th St. and Columbia Rd. NW
Adams Morgan neighborhood.

Demolished; now a SunTrust Bank branch.

On January 28, 1922, during a screening of the movie *Get Rich Quick Wallingford*, the roof of the theater on this site collapsed under the weight of 26 inches of snow. The snowstorm was the worst in the history of the city. After a rescue operation lasting 32 hours, 98 people were found dead and 136 injured.

Mary Pickford Theater

Library of Congress, Madison Building
101 Independence Ave SE, 3rd floor.

Open to the public during free screenings. For a film schedule, see <http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/pickford/pickford-current.html>

This theater was named for the first international movie screen star, who often portrayed brave heroic young women overcoming obstacles. Although she was ultimately unsuccessful in making the transition from silent films to talkies, Pickford worked as a Hollywood producer, writer, and director, in addition to acting, and later became known for her philanthropy. Although Pickford never lived in D.C., she is memorialized here at the Library of Congress. The theater in her name is now used to present films, panels, readings, and other public forums.

The 1920s were the beginning of what would later be called the "Golden Age" of film, with the star system, an output of approximately 700 films annually, and tight studio controls of all aspects of the process. Movies tended to be large in scale, with historical extravaganzas, biblical epics, melodramas and swashbucklers predominating. The 1920s are also the start of the movies as a shared cultural experience: most Americans (no matter where they lived, what their economic class, race or ethnicity)



PHOTO CREDIT: Knickerbocker Theater disaster, Library of Congress

saw the same films and admired the same stars. Movie stars provided models for American clothing, hairstyles, and mannerisms.

Clare Booth Luce Home

Watergate Apartments
2639 I St. NW (private).

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In his Hollywood years, Fitzgerald worked on the movie script for *The Women*, based on the play by Luce (written in 1936). A published playwright and journalist, Luce also served in the House of Representatives (R-Connecticut). She was later named ambassador to Italy and Brazil. This was her last Washington residence; she died in her Watergate apartment in 1987 at the age of 84.

SPORT

Griffith Stadium Site

Howard University Hospital
2041 Georgia Ave. NW
Pleasant Plains neighborhood.

One of the few integrated places of entertainment in D.C., the stadium was home to both the white baseball team, the Washington Senators, and the Negro League team, the Homestead Grays. Attendance was open to all. The Washington Senators won the World Series in 1924.

The 1920s produced an unprecedented number of sports heroes, including Babe Ruth (baseball), Bill Tildon and Helen Wills (tennis), Johnny Weismuller and Gertrude Ederle (swimming), Bobby Jones (golf), Red Grange and Knute Rockne (football), and Jack Dempsey (boxing). Spectator sports became a national obsession beginning in the 1920s.

Written by Kim Roberts

Kim Roberts is a literary historian and poet, whose most recent book is *The Kinnama* (Vrzh Press, 2007). She is the editor of the acclaimed online journal *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*. For The Big Read 2007, she wrote the "Zora Neale Hurston in Washington" walking tour.

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For More information contact
The Humanities Council of Washington, DC
925 U Street, NW
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dcbigread@wdchumanities.org

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