Window to Washington: The Kiplinger Collection at HSW
Press Kit

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Kiplinger Collection article

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<th>The Society is delighted to present a new exhibit, Window to Washington, featuring the Kiplinger Collection, the most important donation in the organization’s 188-year history. The exhibit explores the development of our nation’s capital, from a sleepy southern town into a modern metropolis, as told through the works of artists who witnessed the city’s changes. The exhibit is currently planned for a six-month run at the Society and will include some of the collection’s rarest and most iconic artworks.</th>
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<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>November 2012 through May 2013 (may be extended depending on demand)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exhibit open Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.</td>
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<td>Docent-led group tours can be arranged most days through our website: <a href="http://www.historydc.org">www.historydc.org</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Admission is free.</td>
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<td>Where</td>
<td>The Carnegie Library at Mt. Vernon Square 801 K Street NW Washington, D.C. 20001</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Street parking available. Closest Metro stations: Gallery Place and Mt. Vernon Square</td>
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<td>About HSW</td>
<td>The Historical Society of Washington, D.C., is a community-supported non-profit organization founded in 1894 that collects, interprets, and shares the history of our nation’s capital city. The Society serves a diverse audience as a window into Washington’s past, present, and future through our collections, publications, exhibitions, and educational programs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Media Contact: Adam Lewis at <a href="mailto:alewis@historydc.org">alewis@historydc.org</a> or phone 202-393-1420</td>
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The Historical Society of Washington, DC
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Join Us!
Please join HSW or make a donation to support our mission of sharing Washington’s history with the world.

Individual members receive:
• A annual subscription to new issues of the Washington History journal;
• Optional online subscription to the complete WH archives;
• Invitations to exhibit openings and programs;
• Participation in members-only programs and meetings; and
• Discounts on services at the Kiplinger Research Library.

Connect with Us
Phone : (202) 393-1420
Online: www.historydc.org
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Parking
Street parking is available and parking garages are located nearby.

Metro
Mount Vernon Sq/7th St-Convention Center Metro Station (yellow and green lines) or Gallery Pl-Chinatown Metro station (red, yellow, and green lines).

Circulator Bus
Georgetown / Union Station Line
The Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

Welcomes

The Kiplinger Collection

In December 2011 the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. received one of its most notable gifts since the organization’s founding in 1894. The Kiplinger family, owners of the Kiplinger Washington Editors, Inc. selected the Historical Society as the recipient of its diverse collection of Washingtoniana. Numbering close to 4,000 pieces, the collection of prints, paintings, maps and photographs dating from the mid-1600s is a unique and engaging visual record of the nation’s capital and serves as an important resource on the city’s development and built environment.

The exhibition Window to Washington marks the beginning of permanent public access to this important collection now on view at the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.
The Kiplinger Washington Collection Finds a New Home: The Historical Society of Washington, D.C., Receives 4,000 Images Documenting the City’s History
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Historical Society of Washington, D.C. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to Washington History.
The Kiplinger Washington Collection Finds a New Home

The Historical Society of Washington, D.C., Receives 4,000 Images Documenting the City's History

by Heather Riggins and Lucinda Prout Janke

On March 28, 2012, at the Historical Society of Washington's annual meeting, Austin and Knight Kiplinger formally presented a monumental gift to the society and the city: the 4,000-item Kiplinger Washington Collection. This generous gift includes funds to process and house the collection in the society's Kiplinger Research Library in the old Carnegie Library building on Mount Vernon Square. Most significantly, it constitutes a vote of confidence in the mission and future of the historical society. Or, as Knight Kiplinger put it, "We couldn't be more pleased that this collection is now in the best hands, and that this gift will be part of the rebirth, and the relaunch, of this invaluable institution, the Historical Society of Washington, D.C."

Before its transfer, the Kiplinger Washington Collection was one of the largest privately held collections of Washingtoniana. Its prints, maps, photographs, and paintings of Washington, some predating Pierre C. L'Enfant's city plan of 1791, portray more than two centuries of the national capital's evolving cityscape. Significantly the collection comprises not only iconic images of monumental Washington, but also images capturing the fabric of daily life and scenes that time has erased. The items had filled the stairwells, offices, and boardrooms of the headquarters of the Kiplinger Washington Editors, a three-generation financial advice and publishing company.

At the annual meeting, Austin Kiplinger, chairman emeritus of the Kiplinger organization, president of the Kiplinger Foundation, and a longtime trustee of the historical society, explained how the collection came into being.

My father [Willard M. Kiplinger] began acquiring various engravings, photographs, maps, other works of mainly art, but representational things, not for
the purpose of collecting, but because he was interested in the subject. I think the important thing about any collection is not the tangible thing, but the subject that it reflects, the thoughts that it promotes, and the ideas that it represents. The first item that my father bought was a print of Washington, D.C., to have something to hang on the wall. Our offices opened in 1920 [in the Albee Building] on 15th Street, right across from the Treasury, and then we had a few more offices. And they required a few more prints, maps, engravings, and photos, and gradually it became what we began to call a collection.

Willard Monroe Kiplinger (1891–1967), founder of the Kiplinger Washington Editors, was a journalist who moved from Ohio to Washington in 1916 and worked as a reporter covering the U.S. Treasury. Within a few years he formed his own company, the Kiplinger


As the company grew, so too did the art collection. In 1950 the Kiplinger organization moved into the Editors Building, its own ten-story building at 1729 H Street, NW, with even more walls to fill. Willard's son Austin and grandson Knight succeeded him as editors-in-chief. In addition to journalistic talent, Willard's heirs share his enthusiasm for history and art, especially where their native city is concerned. They continued expanding, organizing, and sharing the collection with historians, scholars, and the public.

These efforts to turn the decorations into a collection began in the mid-1950s, when Austin recognized the need for a curator and assigned longtime editor Jack Hazard to be the first steward of the collection. In 1956, the company for the first time invited the public to an exhibit in its building on H Street. In the late 1980s the collection was professionally catalogued, and unframed works were stored in archival housing. Eventually dedicated gallery space on the Editors Building's first floor showcased a succession of exhibits, including Views of Washington, Washington During the Civil War, and bicentennial displays of the White House (1992) and the Capitol (1993). Early in the twenty-first century, images were digitized, and the Kiplinger Collection went online.

Unlike many recent American corporate
art collections that focus on contemporary subjects, the Kiplinger Washington Collection falls primarily into three categories: nineteenth- and early twentieth-century prints, mid-twentieth century paintings, and photography. Notable original works of art include an 1858 watercolor of the U.S. Capitol by Henry Sartain (on which later engravings were based), Walter Paris’s watercolor of the eighteenth-century cottage of David Burnes (owner of the land given for the White House and much of downtown), and late-nineteenth-century oils by Max Weyl.

The nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century graphic art features historically rich bird’s-eye views, maps, scenes of daily life and wartime events. These appear as etchings, wood and metal engravings, and lithographs by publishers such as Currier and Ives, Harper’s Weekly, and Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, as well as lithographers Charles Magnus, Edward Sachse, Casimir Bohn, and August Kollner.

In the early 1950s, Willard Kiplinger, always the reporter and close observer of the nation’s capital, took note of the rapidly changing streetscape. Residential areas fell to commercial development, and modern architecture replaced vintage buildings. The historic preservation movement was just beginning. From the National Trust for Historic Preservation, founded in 1949, Willard obtained a list of local landmarks and began to collect and commission images of what became known as “Vanishing Washington.” The result is a large array of mid-twentieth-century paintings, etchings, and drawings of individual buildings as well as street scenes by local artists includ-
Among many long-gone D.C. landmarks, the Western Market, a produce and meat emporium that stood at 21st and K Streets until the mid-1960s, lives on in a painting by John A. Bryans. After a 1963 Washington Post article described the Vanishing Washington project, more artists, including the watercolorist Lily Spandorf (known for her illustrations for the Evening Star newspaper) joined the effort. In the 1970s, Leo Hershfield and Ken Frye created a unique group of watercolors showing the construction of Metro on and under the city streets of the District. “I’m not really against progress,” Willard Kiplinger once told a reporter, “I just want to catch the old sights and scenes before they vanish.”*

Complementing the prints and paintings are close to 2,500 photographs dating from the Civil War to the present. They include stereoviews, cartes de visite, silver gelatin prints, and five imperial portrait photographs by Mathew Brady. Some photographers, such as Brady, Alexander Gardner, Underwood and Underwood, and Volkmar Wentzel, are well known. Others, including James Meek (whose 1887 photo of the Burnes cottage complements Walter Paris’s watercolor), C. O. Buckingham, and Joseph Baylor Rob-

The 1858 watercolor of the U.S. Capitol by Henry Sartain was based on Walter’s architectural designs before the dome was completed in 1863.

Experts, are less famous; nonetheless, they created noteworthy, memorable photographs. Local photography studios operated by T. W. Smillie, J. H. Jarvis, and Bell and Brothers contributed to the many stereoviews, cards with two slightly different photographs that, when seen through a stereopticon viewer, create a three-dimensional image.

William Barrett’s 931 black-and-white photographs, the most by any single photographer in the collection, are part of the Vanishing Washington project. Barrett documented city blocks and individual buildings in every quadrant of the city as vast changes took place in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Because so many buildings were subsequently demolished, the Barrett photographs are a key resource for understanding Washington’s urban transformation. It complements the historical society’s Wymer Collection, a similar undertaking made in 1948–1949, as well as the photo surveys by Emil Press taken from 1959 to 1979.

Over the years numerous historians, museum professionals, and authors have drawn from the Kiplinger Collection to illustrate the city’s history, including the Corcoran Gallery of Art’s 1982 exhibition Washington on the Potomac. Other local institutions that have borrowed Kiplinger Collection material for display include Dumbarton House, Tudor Place, and the National Press Club. Kiplinger Collection images were featured in John Reps’s Washington on View: The Nation’s Capital Since 1790; Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation’s Capital, edited by Kathryn Schneider Smith; the Junior League of Washington’s The City of Washington: An Illustrated History of Washington; and the DC Neighborhood Heritage Trails produced by Cultural Tourism DC, to name a few.
In his remarks, Knight Kiplinger said that the Kiplinger Collection has "the rarities, and we have the mundane. We have the earliest printed map of the District of Columbia, which was published in a magazine in Philadelphia, the first place where Pierre L'Enfant's plan was seen by the general public. And now that belongs to you, as trustees and members of this organization."

In its new home at the Historical Society of Washington, D.C., the Kiplinger Collection will be even more accessible to researchers, historians, students, and residents. As Julie Koczela, president of the historical society's board of trustees told the annual meeting, the Kiplinger Washington Collection is "the best gift that we could ever imagine."

Western Market at 21st and K Streets, NW, in 1962, by John Bryans.
Images from the
Kiplinger Washington Collection

A letter from Nicholas King, surveyor of Washington, to Arthur Jones of Philadelphia concerning land owned by W. Blodgett, 1796.

This watercolor of the burned Capitol, attributed to George Munger, 1814, is thought to be one of the very few painted from life after British troops set fire to the city late in the War of 1812.

Opposite page: Among the Kiplinger Washington Collection's rare maps is Emanuel Bowen's 1752 map of English and Native American settlements.
Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, which would become a vital means of communication during the Civil War, posed for Mathew Brady, ca. 1855. This imperial, or oversized, print was recovered from Brady’s former studio during construction in the 1960s.

Casimir Bohn published and sold this elegant colored lithograph of city landmarks in 1849. Like many city boosters, he presented the city as it was planned, rather than as it looked with unpaved roads and unfinished monuments.
The Great Bakery of the United States Army at the Capitol, a woodcut published by Frank Leslie, shows how military activities took over public buildings during the Civil War. Below: William D. Lydston sketched soldiers at the Union’s Camp Richardson in northern Virginia, with Washington in the background.

M. L. Schreiner’s pen-and-ink drawings include this unique 1867 view of the White House’s iron gates and East Executive Drive from Pennsylvania Avenue.
A rare bit of ephemera is this city Bond of Indebtedness for paving Pennsylvania Avenue, 1870, during the city’s recovery from the damages of the Civil War.

In “View of Farragut Square,” an 1894 watercolor by Raymond Sayer, Governor Alexander Shepherd’s corner rowhouse on K Street is visible in the background.
Landscape artist Max Weyl painted “View of Washington from Roslyn” in oil, ca. 1900.

“Oyster Wharves,” July 9, 1913, by Winfield Scott Clime, is one of fifty drawings and watercolors by the prolific artist. Most feature the Georgetown, Southwest, or Alexandria waterfronts.
Photographer Clifton Adams captured a young girl next to a cast-iron hitching post on Scott Circle as well as children in a sandbox on Dupont Circle as he explored the city in March 1923.
Helen Durston's pencil drawings of city life were featured in the Evening Star. This 1942 scene is of Red Cross volunteers rolling bandages in the Walsh House at Massachusetts Avenue and 21st Street, NW.

Journalist/watercolorist Lily Spandorf's 1963 interpretation of Sheridan Circle.
Among the hundreds of pictures of Vanishing Washington taken by William Barrett is this 1963 view of Rhodes Tavern, 601 15th Street, NW. Preservationists fought for years to save the meeting place of the city’s first elected officials, but they ultimately lost to modern development.

One of several artists who found patrons in the Kiplinger family, Caroline van Hook Bean contributed this oil painting of a press conference at John F. Kennedy’s Georgetown home. The painting, completed in 1964, was done from memory in tribute to the martyred president, Bean’s former neighbor.
Artist Leo Hershfield captures workers near the completion of building the Gallery Place Metro. This is one of series of watercolors that chronicle the construction of Metro stations in the Kiplinger Collection.