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Kiplinger Washington Collection to be donated to Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON (Dec. 14, 2011) – The Kiplinger collection of graphic materials depicting the evolving cityscape of the nation’s capital over 200 years—the largest such collection ever assembled in private hands—will soon have a new home: the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

The Kiplinger Washington Collection numbers more than 4,000 prints, photographs, paintings and other items showing the growth of the nation’s capital from its founding in 1791 through the mid-20th century. (See portions of the online catalog at <http://kiplinger.pastperfect-online.com/>)

It includes rare maps and panoramic prints, unique paintings and important portraits by Civil War photographers Mathew Brady and Alexander Gardner. But it also contains such mundane D.C. artifacts as a receipt for the dog licensing fee, personally signed by Thomas Carbery, mayor from 1822 to 1824, and lottery tickets that raised funds for the Washington Canal, which ran the length of the Mall in the 19th century, along the path of today’s Constitution Avenue. There are paintings of distinguished public buildings—and also the Gayety Burlesk Theater, a landmark on the seedy 9th Street strip until gentrification of D.C.’s old downtown.

Assembled since the 1920s by Kiplinger Washington Editors, Inc., the publisher of business forecasts and personal-finance advice, the Kiplinger Collection has long been the most widely exhibited and published private collection of Washingtoniana, with its rare and decorative items appearing in many books and loan exhibits.

In a 1963 issue of *Historic Preservation*, the magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Editor Helen Duprey Bullock called it a “fabulous collection of Washingtoniana,” but also noted, “our colleagues at Kiplinger are known better for their magazine and other publications than for this great collection.”

In size and scope, the Kiplinger Collection is exceeded only by the major public collections of Washingtoniana—for example, at the Library of Congress, the D.C. Public Library (the Peabody Room in Georgetown and archives at the Martin Luther King building downtown), and at the Historical Society of Washington, its new home.

“We have always sought to have our collection seen, enjoyed and used by everyone from scholarly researchers to the general public,” said Knight Kiplinger, editor in chief and chairman of the Kiplinger organization. “The Historical Society of Washington, with its large exhibition galleries in the grand Carnegie Library building on Mount Vernon Square, will be an ideal repository for our pieces.”

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Julie Koczela, board chair of the Historical Society, said, “The Kiplinger family’s entrusting of their superb collection to our organization is a heartening vote of confidence in our future, as we refocus on our core mission of preserving and teaching about Washington history.”

The Historical Society of Washington recently reached an agreement to share the Carnegie Library building—on which it held a 99-year lease since 2000—with Events DC, the official convention and sports authority for the District. Events DC will manage and maintain the building and create a new visitors center there, while the Historical Society will continue to use its current office space, library, exhibit halls and archival storage rooms. Graphic holdings of the Historical Society, including the Kiplinger Collection, will be available for exhibits throughout the building, including the new visitors center.

“The Kiplinger Collection will now be located at the center of the nation’s capital, where visitors from all the 50 states and from other nations will be able to see how Washington has grown into one of the great capital cities of the world,” said Austin Kiplinger, chairman emeritus of the Kiplinger organization, president of The Kiplinger Foundation, and a longtime trustee of the Historical Society.

In the late 1990s, Austin Kiplinger co-chaired (with former D.C. Mayor Walter Washington) the capital campaign that restored the Carnegie Library to be the new home of the Historical Society of Washington. The Kiplinger Research Library, the core of the Society’s mission ever since, was named in recognition of his leadership and The Kiplinger Foundation’s support for the campaign.

Among the institutions where Kiplinger Collection pieces have been displayed over the past 35 years are the Corcoran Gallery of Art, American Institute of Architect’s Octagon House, St. John’s Church on Lafayette Square, Dimock Gallery of George Washington University, National Geographic Society, National Press Club, Dumbarton House, and the Washington Antiques Show. The first public showing of a small portion of the Collection was a 1956 exhibit at the Kiplinger offices on H Street, N.W.

The Kiplinger Washington Collection has long been a favorite of authors, picture editors and publishers producing books and magazine articles about Washington history. For example, when best-selling historian David McCullough needed 19th century views of Washington to accompany a series of lectures at Cornell University in 1989, his staff turned to the Kiplinger Collection.

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About the Kiplinger Washington Collection

Its origins:

The first acquisitions, costing just a few dollars each, were made in the 1920s by journalist W. M. Kiplinger, simply to decorate the walls of his offices at the Albee Building on 15th Street and, soon thereafter, at the National Press Building. Early purchases were made from local peddlers of prints. After buying a dozen or so antique prints, “I heard that I was a collector,” W. M. Kiplinger told a *Washington Post* reporter in a 1963 interview. “It pleased me so much that I got to be one.”

Before long, leading national print dealers began contacting Kiplinger about their interesting finds. Kiplinger and his editorial colleagues—who worked on *The Kiplinger Letter* and the monthly magazine (called *Changing Times* until 1990, and today, *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*)--acquired many more historical pictures than their office walls could hold.

After the company built its Editors Building on H Street in 1950, hundreds of the framed prints and photographs were hung in the stairwells, corridors, offices and exhibition gallery of the 10-story building. But even then, most of the Collection—totaling several thousand pieces--were archived in the basement.

Vanishing Washington:

In the 1950s W. M. Kiplinger, concerned about the quickening pace of demolition of commercial and residential blocks in downtown Washington, began commissioning local painters and photographers to capture the appearance of these 19th and early 20th century buildings. He called the project “Vanishing Washington,” and it resulted in more than 120 oil and watercolor paintings, plus hundreds of photographs, most taken by William Edmund Barrett (see below).

Among many long-gone D.C. landmarks, the Western Market, a produce and meat emporium that stood at 21st and K Streets until the early '60s, lives on in a painting by John A. Bryans, one of the most active of Kiplinger's “Vanishing Washington” artists. And in the 1970s, illustrator Leo Hershfield created a unique group of watercolors showing the construction of Metro on and under the city streets of the District.

Its growth:

Expansion of the Kiplinger Washington Collection continued in the 1970s, '80s and '90s under W. M. Kiplinger's son, Austin, and grandsons Knight and Todd, all executives of The Kiplinger Washington Editors, Inc., the publishing company which owned the Collection.

The Collection was managed over the years by curators John Hazard (a senior editor of the monthly Kiplinger magazine), Frandie Turgeon, Lucinda Janke and today's curator, Heather Riggins. In the 1980s Knight Kiplinger engaged James M. Goode, the prominent chronicler of Washington's architectural history, to oversee cataloguing and conservation of the Collection, a task that took several years.

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When the Kiplinger organization decided a year ago to move its media operations to modern office space with contemporary décor, a new home was sought for its vast collection of historical materials. After considering a number of worthy institutions, the Kiplingers selected the Historical Society of Washington.

Highlights of the Collection:

Among the many specialty collections within the Kiplinger Washington Collection are the following:

1) Every early printed map depicting Pierre L'Enfant's plan for the new City of Washington, including the very first public view of the plan--a small, plain engraving published in a Philadelphia magazine in 1792—plus more-detailed maps that were soon published in Philadelphia, Boston and London.

2) Early maps of the Chesapeake region in the century preceding Congress' selection of a site along the Potomac River to be the new national capital. The rarest of them in the Collection is the large (48"), four-plate engraved map of Virginia and Maryland made in the early 1750s by surveyors Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson, father of Thomas Jefferson. (Another impression of this map hangs in the entrance hall at Monticello.)

3) Depictions of the 1814 British invasion of Washington, including a satirical London cartoon deriding President James Madison's fleeing of the city ("Maddy in Full Flight"); a printed map of the Battle of Bladensburg; and rarest of all, a watercolor of the recently burned Capitol, painted on site by George Munger.

4) Extensive holdings on the Civil War in Washington, including lithographs of every military hospital in the District; soldier's drawings of encampments in Arlington; rare maps showing every fort and battery in and around D.C.; and many *Harper's Weekly* depictions of military life in the capital city of the Union. There is also a rare anti-slavery broadside showing slave-trading activity in the District and Alexandria, Va.

5) A wide range of 19th and early 20th century photographs of Washington, ranging from Civil War stereographs to artistic views of 1930s Washington by National Geographic photographer Volkmar Wentzel.

Among the great rarities are large ("imperial") Brady portraits, done at his studio on Pennsylvania Avenue in the 1850s, of such luminaries as inventor and painter Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872); artist Rembrandt Peale (1778-1860); Gallaudet University founder Amos Kendall (1789-1869); Montgomery Blair (1813-1883), Postmaster General in Lincoln's cabinet; and Joseph Gales (1786-1860), co-owner of the *National Intelligencer* newspaper. There is also a rare 1865 group

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photo, by Alexander Gardner, of three early mayors of D.C., Roger Weightman, W. W. Seaton and Peter Force.

6) Many early views of the U.S. Capitol, including a *grisaille* wash painting by John H. B. Latrobe, probably done while he was assisting his father, Architect of the Capitol (1803-1817) Benjamin Latrobe. Also notable is a Civil War-era painting of the Capitol by Henry Sartain, depicting the yet-unbuilt cast iron dome designed by Thomas U. Walter; Sartain adapted this view to be his best-selling 1863 engraving, the first mass-produced depiction of what the Capitol would eventually look like, and still does today.

7) The Barrett photographic archive of Washington's cityscape: As part of W. M. Kiplinger's "Vanishing Washington" project, photographic William Edmund Barrett took more than 900 pictures of city blocks and individual buildings in every quadrant of the city in the late '50s and early '60s. Since many of the blocks were later demolished for modern development, the Barrett photographs in the Kiplinger Washington Collection are today a unique resource for the study of Washington's urban transformation.

8) Many original art works...paintings, drawings and art prints by such notable local artists as Max Weyl, Caroline Bean, E. H. Miller, Winfield Scott Clime, Helen Durston, Walter Paris, Gustave Trois, Alice Acheson, Paul Hoffmaster, Audrey Preissler, Leo Hershfield, and Josef Pielage, among many others.

It also includes several large watercolors by Lily Spandorf, including three she did in 1963 on site in White House rooms recently redecorated under First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's initiative. These will augment an already-large holding of Spandorfs in the Historical Society's collection, depicting outdoor views of notable Washington buildings and squares.

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