



## Legacy Finding Aid for Manuscript and Photograph Collections

801 K Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

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Finding aids are narrative guides to archival collections created by the repository to describe the contents of the material. They often provide much more detailed information than can be found in individual catalog records. Contents of finding aids often include short biographies or histories, processing notes, information about the size, scope, and material types included in the collection, guidance on how to navigate the collection, and an index to box and folder contents.

### What are Legacy Finding Aids?

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# THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FINDING AID

Title: MS 570 The National Bank of Washington Records, 1811-1986 (1950-1970)

Processor: Sherrie Nagin

Date: June 25, 2002

**The National Bank of Washington** was established in 1809 as The Bank of Washington, and first conducted business in a converted house on Carroll's Row in Washington, D.C. (Now the site of the main building of The Library of Congress). In the following year the bank moved to New Jersey Avenue, S.E., between B and C Streets. In 1885, under the National Bank Act, the bank became the National Bank of Washington; and in 1889 the bank built and occupied its own granite and marble structure at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania, N.W. In 1907, The National Bank of Washington purchased the Central National Bank of Washington.

The National Bank of Washington used its history in its corporate image. Printed material had "Washington's Oldest Bank" beneath the bank name. Emphasizing its history, the bank displayed its valuable collection of historical items of engraving plates, ledgers, checks, stamps and letters. This included checks and letters signed by prominent Washington residents. Among the bank's customers were Henry Clay, Francis Scott Key, John Marshall, James Monroe, Roger Taney, Daniel Webster and Eli Whitney. The bank's 150th anniversary, in 1959, provided an opportunity to celebrate the bank's history. The history had been documented in the mid-1950s in a bank issued brochure: "Historic Highlights of Washington's Oldest Bank." An update to the brochure was in progress in 1967 and 1968.

The bank entered a period of expansion in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1954 the bank merged with Hamilton National Bank of Washington, and in 1957 with Liberty National Bank of Washington. The National Bank of Washington's headquarters moved to the former Hamilton National Bank's main office at 14<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, N.W. In 1960 the bank consolidated with Anacostia Bank of Washington. The bank also expanded from 9 branches in 1955 to 19 branches in 1969.

The year 1969 also marked the beginning of a downward trend when some of the bank's policies were questioned; including the low rate loans available to members of Congress, and allegations of inappropriate practices with United Mine Workers' pensions. In 1949, the United Mine Workers, under an assumed name, had purchased a controlling interest in the National Bank of Washington. The bank name was not changed, and there were no management changes, but three members of the bank's Board of Directors had ties to the United Mine Workers; W. A. "Tony" Boyle, President of the United Mine Workers, was a board member from 1968 to 1970.

In 1969, after 20 years as bank president, Barnum M. Colton retired. True Davis, a former U.S. ambassador to Switzerland, succeeded Colton. In the 1970s the bank's profits and deposits

began to drop. In the 1980s, the Washington Bankcorporation was formed, as the holding company for the bank. Luther H. Hodges, Jr., a former Secretary of Labor, served as the corporation's Chairman of the Board. In 1985 the United Mine Workers sold their controlling interest in the Washington Bankcorporation. In August 1990, the Washington Bankcorporation declared bankruptcy. The assets of the National Bank of Washington were sold to Riggs National Bank of Washington, D.C. In April 1991, the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) held an auction of the National Bank of Washington's historical assets.

**Scope and content:** The National Bank of Washington Records, 1811-1986, consist primarily of materials from Kathryn E. Bower, Manager of Business Development and Public Relations, 1963-1965, and Manager of Advertising and Public Relations, 1966-1970, at the National Bank of Washington. The materials in the collection relate to Ms. Bower's areas of responsibility, advertising and public relations. This responsibility extended to updating "Historical Highlights of Washington's Oldest Bank." The collection includes various drafts of the brochure, research materials and notes, and associated correspondence, but no printed edition corresponding to the draft copies. Also included are 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century items from the bank's historical archives, and related correspondence. Other items in the collection are architectural renderings of bank exteriors and photographic materials. Prints and negatives include images of staff members both in groups and individually, and various bank interior and exterior views. Some slide sets apparently were used for group presentations.

The collection includes some photocopies of documents and typescripts dated prior to 1811; these document dates have not been considered in the collection's span dates.

This collection is arranged in five series:

SERIES I, HISTORIES AND EARLY DOCUMENTS, includes histories of the National Bank of Washington as written both by the bank staff and independent writers. Other items are from the bank's archival collection; and photocopies and transcripts predominately dating from the 1800s. The material is arranged by document type and then chronologically.

SERIES II, RECORDS OF MERGED BANKS, 1931, 1943-1960, 1984, and undated, consists of documents from the Hamilton Bank of Washington, the Liberty Bank of Washington, and the Anacostia Bank that predate their consolidation with The National Bank of Washington. The material is arranged by bank in order of the date of consolidation and then chronologically within files.

SERIES III, 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY BANK DOCUMENTS, 1950-1970, 1976, 1980, 1983-1985, and undated, including business ephemera, correspondence, printed materials, publications and reports. The materials are arranged in alphabetical order by document type, and then chronologically.

SERIES IV, MANUSCRIPTS, DRAFTS, AND RESEARCH NOTES, 1958-1960, and 1967-1968, "Historical Highlights of Washington's Oldest Bank."

SERIES V, ARCHITECTURAL RENDERINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS, 1950s-1980s, include architectural renderings of bank exteriors; and photographic prints, negatives, slides, and positive transparencies depicting bank exteriors and interiors, groups and individuals and advertising and display subjects. The materials are arranged by architectural or photographic type, then by subject, and then chronologically.

Processor's notes:

The processor has identified some individuals in the collection's photographs; from other labeled photographs and by personal knowledge.

Photographic slides have been maintained in the apparent intended groupings; the slides have been numbered and placed in slide holders for cataloging and preservation purposes.

**Donors:** National Bank of Washington, 1991.129

Lemuel Dawson Beall [former National Bank of Washington employee], 2000.069  
(Includes an 1837 booklet, and eight 19<sup>th</sup> century Bank of Washington checks and drafts)

Howard Sharlach, 2001.054 (a National Bank of Washington Christmas card)

**Size:** 2.0 cubic ft. (6 containers)

**Restrictions:** None

**Related Materials:**

Removed from MS 570 The National Bank of Washington Records, 1811-1986 (1950-1970):

MS 249 – Diploma, Master of Laws, 1917, National University of the District of Columbia, awarded to Roger Whiteford. Collection materials identified Roger Whiteford as a Member, Board of Directors, National Bank of Washington, 1955 and 1958.

Two 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary National Bank of Washington metal stamps. Historical Society of Washington, D.C., Object Collection #1991.129.001 and #1991.129.002.

Two plaques, 1959, and undated, awarded to the National Bank of Washington from the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade. Historical Society of Washington, D.C., Object Collection.

## Container List

### SERIES I: HISTORIES AND EARLY DOCUMENTS

#### Container 1

**Folder 1:** Histories of the bank, consisting of a one page printed history of the bank before 1908; a 1909 brochure written on the occasion of the bank's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary; "Early banks in the District of Columbia 1792-1818," a dissertation [for the complete dissertation, see Historical Society of Washington, D.C., Library, HG2613.W2W27 (1940)]; "Salute to the National Bank of Washington," 1953; "Historic Highlights of Washington's Oldest Bank," an annotated brochure and a photocopied brochure, 1955[?]; "The National Bank of Washington," a research paper prepared for a 1957 American History class; and "The National Bank of Washington (A Case Study)," prepared for a 1967 graduate school class.

**Folder 2:** Early documents, including *A Discourse pronounced at the Capitol of the United States before the American Historical Society*, 1837, by the Hon. Levi Woodbury, and financial documents, consisting of checks and drafts drawn on the bank, dated 185[?], 1856-1858, 1861, 1899, and 1915. Also includes an 1872 bill to the bank from Hall & Hume, Fine Family Grocers. 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century document copies include: *National Intelligencer*, June 27, 1811; *Laws of the Corporation of the City of Washington*, 1833; *Excerpts from Minute Book, typewritten selections*, 1841-1874; See Folder 7 for correspondence of March 19, 1957 and March 21, 1957 pertaining to the 1833 document above.

### SERIES II: RECORDS OF MERGED BANKS

**Folder 3:** Hamilton National Bank documents, 1943-1954, 1984, and undated, consisting of financial reports, correspondence, newspaper clippings, advertisements, an architectural drawing and photographic negative of the bank's exterior, and a press release regarding the impending merger with National Bank of Washington; also reminiscences by Brookland residents requested by a Brookland branch vice-president of the National Bank of Washington; formerly the Hamilton National Bank.

**Folder 4:** Liberty National Bank of Washington documents, consisting of 1931 newspaper clippings of the "Report of Condition of the Liberty National Bank," a 1931[?] newspaper photocopy with an 1870s [?] photograph of the future site of Liberty National Bank at Fifteenth and I Streets, N.W.; and two copies of a Liberty National Bank exterior photograph with the corresponding negative, 1957.

**Folder 5:** Anacostia Bank documents, 1943-1960, and undated, consisting of financial reports, advertisements and U.S. Department of Treasury certificates. The certificates here are photocopies; the original certificates are in Folder 39 (Oversize).

### SERIES III: 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY BANK DOCUMENTS

**Folder 6:** The National Bank of Washington advertisements, 1957-1970, 1976, and undated; primarily newspaper advertising, and poster advertising for the Washington International Boat Show. Also included are other banks' newspaper advertisements, 1953-1970, and undated.

**Folder 7:** Correspondence and legal documents, 1954-1968, include those pertaining to the Capitol Historical Society and other organizations; the editing of draft copies of "Historic Highlights of Washington's Oldest Bank;" inquiries about the bank and the United Mine Workers; insurance coverage of archival items; Washington Boat and Marine Show leases; and currency or document appraisal requests. See Folder 15 for drafts that correspond to the September 11, 1967, editing requests of the National Bank of Washington board members.

**Folder 8:** Correspondence, 1969, 1970, 1980, 1983, and undated, pertains primarily to documentation of the bank's archival collection, and includes an Historical Society of Washington, D.C. event honoring retiring President Barnum Colton, and the distribution of photographs from the event. See Folder 25 for four photographs of the clock and urns that correspond to the undated written description in this folder.

**Folder 9:** Ephemera, 1957-1968, and undated, includes various National Bank of Washington stationery items: a Christmas card, a blank deposit receipt, a blank stock certificate, envelopes, blank memos, and a report folder. Also here are business cards, certificates and awards from various organizations, and membership seals from the Historic Trust. Two certificates in the folder are reduced size photocopies; the originals are in Folder 42 (Oversize).

#### Container 2

**Folder 10:** Newspaper clippings, 1955-1959, 1963-1970, and undated, pertaining to the National Bank of Washington, and to banking in general. Includes August 6, 1969, *Congressional Quarterly* "Fact Sheet--Banking Lobby, that reported on questionable bank loan rates to members of Congress and the members' stock holdings in various banks; a sample National Bank of Washington loan form is depicted in the article.

**Folder 11:** Publications of the National Bank of Washington, 1959, 1964-1965, 1969-1971, 1984[?], and undated, include two directories of officers, branches, and departments (a proof copy and a printed edition); a notice of annual meeting to stockholders, press releases, several internal publications, and pamphlets directed toward the bank customers.

**Folder 12:** Reports, consisting of the National Bank of Washington annual reports, 1967-1969, and quarterly statements of conditions, 1950, 1953, 1956, 1958, 1967-1969.

**Folder 13:** Reports, consisting of the National Bank of Washington quarterly statements of conditions and quarterly reports of operations, and proofs of a semiannual report of operations, all 1970; also a Washington Bankcorporation annual report, 1986.

## SERIES IV: MANUSCRIPTS, DRAFTS, AND RESEARCH NOTES

**Folder 14:** Manuscripts, final drafts [?], 1958-1960, and 1967-1968 of “Historical Highlights of Washington’s Oldest Bank.”

**Folder 15:** Drafts, 1958-1959, and 1967-1968, of “Historical Highlights of Washington’s Oldest Bank,” including four copies edited by bank officers. See Folder 7 for correspondence pertaining to editing of the manuscripts.

**Folder 16:** Manuscripts, 1958, 1959, and undated, of variations or portions of “Historic Highlights of Washington’s Oldest Bank “ as used for speeches and presentations. A 1958 manuscript concludes with the 1958-1959 activities planned for the bank’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. See Folder 7 for correspondence of March 2, 1959 pertaining to remarks at the Columbia Historical Society on March 10, 1959.

**Folder 17:** Research notes, after 1957, 1959, and 1967, include bibliographical sources and notes about some of the bank’s well-known early 18<sup>th</sup> century customers.

**Folder 18:** Printed materials, 1964[?], and 1966, and undated, pertain to various historic aspects of Washington, D. C.

**Folder 19:** Printed materials 1957[?], 1959, 1961-1970, pertain to histories of banks other than the National Bank of Washington. The folder contains photocopies of the cover pages of “140 Years of Satisfactory Service, The National Metropolitan Bank of Washington,” 1954[?], and “History and Progress of National Permanent Savings and Loan Association, Washington D.C.,” post 1959. The actual booklets are, respectively, in the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. Pamphlet Collection (P2785) and the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. Ephemera Collection.

## SERIES V: GRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS AND PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS

Graphic materials

### Container 3

**Folder 20:** Pencil and pen drawing photocopies of the National Bank of Washington branch exteriors, undated. The identified branches are Dupont Circle, Northeast, Pennsylvania Avenue, Southwest, and Woodridge-Langdon; originals are in Folder 41 (Oversize). The file also contains photocopies of architectural drawings of the Brookland, Chevy Chase, Dupont Circle, Northeast, Pennsylvania Avenue, Shepherd Park and Woodridge-Langdon branches; the originals are in Folders 42 (Oversize) and 43 (Oversize).

## Container 4

### Photographic prints

**Folder 21:** Photographic prints of architectural drawings of the Brookland, Chevy Chase and Shepherd Park branches, 1958 and undated.

**Folder 22:** Bank exteriors, 1956-1963, and undated. Identified branches are: Chevy Chase, Dupont Circle, Lafayette Square, Main Office at 14<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, Pennsylvania Avenue, Shepherd Park, and Washington. Also includes photocopies of the bank's first site on Carroll's Row, and two views of the Chevy Chase branch; the actual photographs are in Folder 40 (Oversize).

**Folder 23:** Bank interiors, 1954, 1956-1958, and undated, including the Brookland, Dupont Circle, Washington, and probably Chevy Chase branches. Shown are bank vaults, a meeting room, a lunchroom and views of interior display advertising.

**Folder 24:** Chevy Chase branch opening, undated.

**Folder 25:** Individual studio photographs of President Barnum Colton and other bank officials, 1958, and undated; and a clock and urns from the bank's archival collection, undated; a written description of the clock and urns photograph is in Folder 8. Also here, are photocopies of three photographs placed in the Historical Society of Washington, D. C., General Photograph Collection (Each photograph description is followed by the collection number): Major and Mrs. John S. D. Eisenhower and family, 1956, #09736; the U.S. Capitol, undated, #00874; and the U.S. Capitol with the Gallaudet University tower in the foreground, undated, #07368.

**Folder 26:** Group photographs, 1952-1959, and undated, including the Chevy Chase branch groundbreaking.

**Folder 27:** Group photographs, 1965, 1967, 1970, and undated, including award presentations and a dinner honoring retiring President Colton. Includes a photocopy of a group of men in business attire, undated; the actual photograph is in Folder 42 (Oversize).

**Folder 28:** Women employees involved in various tasks, 1954-1956, 1959, 1965, and undated. Some photographs indicate the bank branch and/or event.

**Folder 29:** Display windows and posters, 1956-1964, 1967, and undated. Interior display window themes include the 1956 Richard M. Nixon inauguration, the bank's archival items, Christmas, and Armed Forces Day. Also here are advertising posters displayed at the Washington Boat and Marine Shows.

### Photographic negatives

**Folder 30:** Bank exteriors, undated. Some of the black and white negatives correspond to the photographic prints in Folder 22.

**Folder 31:** Bank interiors; 1954 and undated; some of these black and white negatives correspond to photographic prints in Folder 23.

**Folder 32:** Two sets of individuals in an office setting; an award [?] presentation with two individuals, undated.

### Photographic proofs

**Folder 33:** Individuals, some identified, undated.

## Container 4

### Photographic slides and transparencies

**Folder 34:** Man in various poses standing or sitting at a desk in a small room, undated (54 images).

**Folder 35:** Individual portraits of men in business attire, including Mr. Gommenger [?], Mr. Henschel, Mr. Jernberg, Executive Vice-President and Trust Officer, and Mr. Pollack [?]. Other images here show bank interiors; slides numbered #1-#133 and stamped Feb '79.

**Folder 36:** Office interiors including mail sorting area, a lunchroom, and site of large computer equipment. Additional subjects include a customer using an ATM machine, views of the bank display window, and exterior views of office buildings; slides numbered #134-#274, and stamped Feb '79.

**Folder 37:** Financial data with comparisons between 1979, 1980, and projected 1981 data; slides numbered #275-#284, and dated 1980[?].

**Folder 38:** Slides presumed used for a presentation on telephone regulation using cartoon-like characters and text; slides numbered #285-#355, and dated after 1976[?].

**Container 5 (Oversize)**

**Folder 39:** Six U.S. Department of Treasury certificates, 1943-1959, issued to the Anacostia National Bank of Washington, conveying authorization for various banking functions. See Folder 5 for other Anacostia Bank documents.

**Folder 40:** Photograph of the bank's first site on Carroll's Row, undated.  
Two color photographs, undated, of the Chevy Chase branch.

**Folder 41:** Pen and pencil depictions of five bank branches, undated: Dupont Circle, Northeast, Pennsylvania Avenue, Southwest, and Woodridge-Langdon.

**Container 6 (Oversize)**

**Folder 42:** Architectural drawings of the Chevy Chase and the Dupont Circle exteriors, undated; two certificates awarded to the National Bank of Washington, 1961 and 1963; and a photograph of a group of men in business attire, undated.

**Folder 43:** Architectural drawings of the following undated bank branch exteriors: Brookland, Northeast, Pennsylvania Avenue, Shepherd Park, and Woodbridge-Langdon.