



Legacy Finding Aid for Manuscript and Photograph Collections

801 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

What are Finding Aids?

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?

The following document is a legacy finding aid – a guide which has not been updated recently. Information may be outdated, such as the Historical Society’s contact information or exact box numbers for contents’ location within the collection. Legacy finding aids are a product of their times; language and terms may not reflect the Historical Society’s commitment to culturally sensitive and anti-racist language. This guide is provided in “as is” condition for immediate use by the public. This file will be replaced with an updated version when available.

To learn more, please

Visit [DCHistory.org](https://dchistory.org)

Email the Kiplinger Research Library at Library@DCHistory.org (preferred)

Call the Kiplinger Research Library at 202-516-1363 ext. 302

The Historical Society of Washington, D.C., is a community-supported educational and research organization that collects, interprets, and shares the history of our nation’s capital. Founded in 1894, it serves a diverse audience through its collections, public programs, exhibits, and publications.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FINDING AID

Title: MS 583 Whitelaw Hotel Collection, 1913-1995.

Processor: Colleen M. Moore

Date: February 2001

The **Whitelaw Hotel** was Washington's first hotel and apartment building financed, built, and managed by and for African Americans. John Whitelaw Lewis, a leading entrepreneur of the black community and founder of the Industrial Bank in 1913, created the Whitelaw Apartment House Company and raised the money for the construction of the Whitelaw Hotel. Opening in 1919, the Whitelaw created a place for African Americans to stay when visiting racially-segregated Washington. The Whitelaw was built in the U Street neighborhood now generally known as Shaw. In the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, U Street was known as Washington's "Black Broadway," and the Whitelaw, located only one block away at the corner of 13th and T Streets, NW, provided accommodations for many performers and theatergoers. The Whitelaw building, designed by architect Isaiah T. Hatton, also housed local business on its lower level.

In the early 1960s, under the management of Tally Homes, Jr., the Whitelaw began to deteriorate. In 1968, the neighborhood and the Whitelaw suffered from the effects of the riots following Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. In 1977, the hotel received 351 building code violation citations and was closed. The hotel was further damaged by a series of fires, of which the most devastating occurred in 1981. Holmes had sold the Whitelaw to a developing corporation in 1980. The building was passed from developer to developer until 1991, when the property was sold to the District of Columbia government.

That same year, Manna, Inc., a non-profit housing developer, bought the Whitelaw from the District and helped it achieve its historic recognition. Manna restored the Whitelaw hotel as a low-income housing rental property. Manna also joined with Ronnie McGhee of R. McGhee and Associates to restore the Whitelaw's exterior and ballroom. The renovated Whitelaw was reopened in November 1992.

Scope and Content: The Whitelaw Hotel Collection, 1913-1995, contains mostly reproductions of photographs and newspaper clippings gathered by researchers for Manna, Inc. about the history of the Whitelaw building and the surrounding area. Four of the hotel's original guest registers and four original photographs are located in this collection. The collection files contain legal documents about the historical recognition of the Whitelaw and information pertaining to the exhibition that Manna arranged for the hotel's reopening in 1992. Manna's correspondence and public relations materials regarding the restoration of the Whitelaw are also located within the collection.

This collection is divided into two series:

SERIES I: WHITELAW HOTEL RECORDS, 1930-1948, consists of original hotel registers, photographs, and ephemera.

SERIES II: MANNA, INC. WHITELAW RESTORATION PROJECT RECORDS, 1913-1995, is divided into two sub-series:

Sub-series A: Project Records, 1979-1995, consists of correspondence, public relations materials, and ephemera regarding Manna renovation of the Whitelaw, as well as information about the historical preservation of the building and the screenplay of a documentary filmed about the hotel.

Sub-series B: Research Materials, 1913-1994 consists of items gathered by researchers for Manna about the Whitelaw's past, including newspaper clippings, reprinted photographs, and published materials from books and periodicals.

The collection is arranged in chronological order.

Size: 0.70 (2 containers)

Donor: Manna, Inc., 1997.001

Restrictions: None

Related Materials: Cook, Patricia M. "Like the Phoenix': The Rebirth of the Whitelaw Hotel." *Washington History* 7:1 (1995): 4-23

Container List

Container 1

SERIES I: WHITELAW HOTEL RECORDS, 1930-1948

Folder 1: Guest Register, April 1935-February 1936.

Folder 2: Guest Register, December 1936-September 1937.

Folder 3: Guest Register, December 1947-September 1948.

Folder 4: Photographs—Four original prints of the hotel's kitchen, dining room, upstairs landing, and first floor lobby.

Folder 5: Whitelaw ephemera—Includes party invitation from Jessie Adelaide Jones, 1930, and a business card for “Tea Street Tourist Home,” undated.

Container 2

SERIES II: MANNA, INC., WHITELAW RESTORATION PROJECT RECORDS, 1913-1995

Sub-Series A: Project Records, 1979-1995

Folder 6: Correspondence, including faxes, letters, and memoranda concerning Manna’s restoration plans for the hotel, December 1992-November 1994.

Folder 7: Public relations materials concerning the Whitelaw’s restoration, including Manna press releases and brochures.

Folder 8: Manna ephemera, including floor plans of the restored hotel, invitations for the Whitelaw’s reopening, and programs for various events held at the Whitelaw.

Folder 9: Whitelaw Historic Preservation project, 1979-1993. Includes legal documents and related correspondence about the historic designation of the Whitelaw hotel.

Folder 10: Whitelaw exhibition, February 1993. Includes floor plans, descriptions of the exhibited items, and related memoranda.

Folder 11: Screenplay for a documentary produced about the Whitelaw hotel, March 1995.

Sub-Series B: Research Materials, 1913-1994

Folder 12: News clippings regarding the history of the Whitelaw Hotel and the Shaw neighborhood, 1913-1925. Includes articles about John W. Lewis, the opening of the hotel in 1919, and events held at the hotel and in the neighborhood.

Folder 13: News clippings regarding the history of the Whitelaw and Shaw, 1927-1941. Includes articles about the owners and guests of the Whitelaw and events held at the hotel and in the neighborhood.

Folder 14: News clippings regarding the restoration of the Whitelaw and events in Shaw, 1983-1994.

Folder 15: Whitelaw Hotel materials, 1918-1948, (photocopies only). Includes building permit, advertisements for events held at the hotel, and a list of Whitelaw residents from the 1920 U.S. Census.

Folder 16: Photographs of the interior and the exterior of the Whitelaw, reproduced by the Library of Congress.

Folder 17: Photographs of the Shaw neighborhood, reproduced by the Library of Congress.

Folder 18: Photographs of individuals and groups involved with the Whitelaw Hotel or Shaw neighborhood, reproduced by the Library of Congress.

Folder 19: Photographs of individuals and of the Shaw neighborhood, reproduced by unidentified sources.

Folder 20: Photographs (oversized), reproduced by unidentified sources.

Folder 21: Photographs (photocopies only). Includes images of the damage done to the building by a series of fires, the process of renovating the building, the neighborhood, the 1968 riots, and of individuals and groups at the Whitelaw hotel.

Folder 22: Published materials concerning the Whitelaw Hotel and the Shaw neighborhood, 1967-1994. Includes copy of an address of Martin Luther King, Jr., articles from the *Georgian* and *Washington History*, excerpts from William Jones's *Housing of Negroes in Washington, D.C.* and Sandra Fitzpatrick and Maria R. Goodwin's *The Guide to Black Washington*, and a student research paper.

Folder 23: Published materials from the *Records of the Columbian Historical Society* regarding the *Washington Bee* newspaper and the development of the business sector in Washington.

Folder 24: Research materials including financial statements, transcripts of oral interviews, and notes from meetings of researchers, 1991-1993.