



Legacy Finding Aid for Manuscript and Photograph Collections

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What are Legacy Finding Aids?

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FINDING AID

Title: MS 605 The Statler-Hilton Hotel Collection, 1943-1971

Processor: Rebecca Heath

Date: July 17, 2002

On January 18, 1943 the Washington **Statler Hotel** opened its first 250 guest rooms for service. There was no announcement or grand opening day and as the building reached completion a few rooms at a time were opened to meet the needs of an overly crowded Washington during World War II. It was the first hotel constructed since New York's Waldorf-Astoria opened in 1932. Located two blocks from the White House on 16th and K Streets, the Washington Statler soon became an important center of business and social activity in the city. Its innovative organization separated business and social traffic from guest rooms by arranging banquet and meeting rooms only on the first two floors. Guest rooms were designed around new ideas of comfort and were built to function also as a living space by day. Since its initial opening, the hotel has gone through several renovations including enlarged and redecorated guest rooms, new restaurants and banquet rooms, and the addition of a Health Club and the Towers luxury guest suites. In 1958 a merger gave the hotel its new name of the **Statler-Hilton Hotel** and it is now known as The Capital Hilton. The hotel has played host to many important guests throughout the years including the annual dinners of the Gridiron Club and the Alfalfa Club, receptions for every U.S. President since Franklin D. Roosevelt, and host to many foreign leaders and dignitaries.

Scope and Content: The Statler-Hilton Hotel Collection, 1943-1971 contains photographs, scrapbooks, and ephemera relating to the business, political, and social history surrounding the hotel. These materials generally range from 1943 to 1966, when the hotel was under the General Management of Fred Kenny (1943) and Herbert C. Blunck (1944-1966).

The collection is arranged in four series:

SERIES I: HOTEL HISTORY consists of magazine publications from 1943 and a list of General Managers, articles, and correspondence from as recent as 1999 but relating to the early history of the hotel.

SERIES II: PHOTOGRAPHS consists of interior and exterior photographs of the hotel, and black and white photographs of people and events held at the hotel. Subjects of interests include Eleanor Roosevelt, George C. Marshall receiving humanitarian award, AFL-CIO President George Meany, Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower, Then-Princess Elizabeth and Prince Phillip, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Helen Thomas and Ann Landers (or Dear Abby), Perle Mesta, beauty pageants, and assorted receptions and luncheons.

SERIES III: SCRAPBOOKS consists of preserved articles from newspaper clippings found in four 12x15” hardcover scrapbooks on the Statler Hotel from 1950-1960, 1966. The scrapbooks were in poor condition, random order, and with loose clippings. They were dismantled and photocopied onto acid-free paper for preservation and are now in strict chronological order. Folder descriptions include highlights and subjects of interest. One large scrapbook from 1944-1945 can be found in Oversized Container 4. Folder 23 contains one photograph and newspaper clippings from a scrapbook compiled on Tantallon-on-the-Potomac country club and high-rise apartments near Fort Washington, Maryland. The connection between Tantallon and the hotel is unknown.

SERIES IV: EPHEMERA consists of printed materials and ephemera including menus, postcards and brochures, press releases, advertisements, promotions and an artist’s sketchbook. Folders 24-29, 32 are from a scrapbook compiled by Mary Lou Tardis (Earle Browne Associates) – Statler Public Relations Office.

Donor: Frank Otero, General Manager of The Capital Hilton, 2001.132.

Size: 1.28 cubic ft. (4 containers)

Restrictions: None

Removed to HSW original artifact collection:

- Matchbook circa 1946
- Telephone Message Clip
- The Capital Hilton Pencil
- The Capital Hilton Pen

Container List

Container 1

SERIES I: HOTEL HISTORY

Folder 1: Hotel History - list of General Managers, articles, and correspondence.

Folder 2: Magazine Publications – *Hotel Bulletin* February 1943, and reprinted article from *The Hotel Monthly* March 1943, including information on the opening of Washington Statler Hotel and its construction, design, layout, floor plan, and operation.

SERIES II: PHOTOGRAPHS

Folder 3: Exterior/Interior (color) – including transparencies/negatives (4); two reproductions – see Oversized Container 4 for originals.

Folder 4: Exterior/Interior (black and white) – including transparencies/negatives, floor plan (9).

Folder 5: People/Events (black and white), identified and dated:

Mrs. Ellsworth Statler and Board of Directors, 1942 (1)
 Eleanor Roosevelt at Red Cross Luncheon, 1944 (1)
 Presentation of Humanitarian Award by Variety Club to George C. Marshall,
 1947 (2)
 Press Conference, Paul Hoffman ERP Director, 1948 (1)
 Princess Elizabeth Press Reception, 1951 (1)
 Governor's Reception, 1957 (1)
 Zsa Zsa Gabor and "fiancé," 1958 (1)
 President Eisenhower's Conference on Foreign Aid, 1958 (1)
 Women's National Democratic Luncheon, 1958 (1)
 West Point Graduate and Foundation Director open Sister Kenny Foundation
 Fund, 1959 (2)
 Red Cross, 1969 (10)
 Contact sheet – "It's a Whole New Ball Game," 1969 (1)

Folder 6: People/Events (black and white), identified and undated:

General Manager Herbert C. Blunck [1959?] (2)
 Fashion Luncheon – Women's Board of Washington Heart Association - Mrs.
 George Gordon Moore (Mamie Eisenhower's sister) her daughter (1)
 President's Cup Regatta [1959?] (1)
 Hall Syndicate's gala show and dance for ASNE – Perle Mesta [After 1958] (2)
 Marine Corps Birthday Ball [After 1958] (1)
 Affair given in honor of President Kennedy – Diane Lynn, Assistant Secretary of
 State Mennen Williams [1961-1963] (1)
 Togetherness Awards Luncheon – Secretary of Defense Neal McElroy, Motion
 Picture Association Pres. Eric Johnston, Mrs. McElroy, Donna Reed (1)
 Group Photos – Groups at luncheon/gala/ party Events – Including Mrs. Neil
 McElroy and Attorney General Will Rogers, Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower,
 Perle Mesta, Helen Thomas and Ann Landers (or Dear Abby), others (8)
 Portrait – Georgie Meyer and Alexander Brauns (1)

Folder 7: People/Events (black and white) unidentified and undated:

Fashion Show Events/ Cherry Blossom Princesses (5)
 Speaker/Presentation American Hotel Association (1)
 Men in suits, standing and talking (2)
 Men and Women group photos (6)
 Single person photos – man, woman in golf cart, woman with dog (3)
 Staff party (1)
 Boy school group? (2)
 Photos with children – eating ice cream, singing (3)
 Boy's baseball team photo (1)

Folder 8: Contact Sheets – Twigs Restaurant 25th Anniversary (4)

Container 2**SERIES III: SCRAPBOOKS**

Folder 9: Scrapbook, 1950. President Truman, General Manager Herbert C. Blunck.

Folder 10: Scrapbook, 1951. President Truman's Dinner with President of Ecuador Galo Plaza and Senora de Plaza, Princess Elizabeth's Press Reception, D.C.'s Ideal Father, Fashion Shows.

Folder 11: Scrapbook, 1952. Banquets in Presidential Room, Herbert C. Blunck Community Chest Federation Chairman, Election and Presidential hopeful Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Folder 12: Scrapbook, 1953. Eisenhower Inauguration, Parties at Embassy Room, Fashion.

Folder 13: Scrapbook, [1953?]. International Apple Association Convention, March of Dimes Fashion Show to fight Polio, Actress at hotel filming movie.

Folder 14: Scrapbook, 1954. Blunck heads Hotel Association.

Folder 15: Scrapbook, [1950-1954?]. News on staff members; Society – interesting guests, parties, events, fashion shows.

Folder 16: Scrapbook, 1957. Inauguration Folder. President Eisenhower's Inauguration, January, February.

Folder 17: Scrapbook, 1957. Gridiron party, Women's National Press Club Conference, new elegant Embassy Room, Queen Elizabeth Press Reception, King of Morocco Press Reception.

Folder 18: Scrapbook, 1958. [Hereafter sometimes referred to as Statler-Hilton]. Statler chefs train Army cooks, President's Cup Regatta, Queen Frederika of Greece Press Reception.

Folder 19: Scrapbook, 1959. Cherry Blossom Festival – Herbert C. Blunck General Chairman.

Folder 20: Scrapbook, 1960. Society, Fashion.

Folder 21: Scrapbook, [1955-1960?]. Society, Fashion.

Folder 22: Scrapbook, 1966. New Rogue's Manor Lounge, National Teen Road-E-O.

Folder 23: Scrapbook, 1961-1965. Tantallon-on-the-Potomac.

SERIES IV: EPHEMERA

Folder 24: Employee Information, Public Relations Publications – *Statler Salesmanship*, 1932; *The Quarterly Review of Public Relations*, 1960.

Folder 25: Guest Information/Room Cards, [1958-1959?].

Folder 26: Menus – Embassy Room, The Veranda, The Lounge, [1958-1959?].

Folder 27: Menus – Holidays, Specials, [1958-1959?].

Folder 28: Specials Events – Dining specials, Embassy Room specials, announcements, [1958-1959?].

Folder 29: Special Events – Gridiron Club Dinner Seating Chart (1955), Alfalfa Club Dinner Seating Chart (1956), Women’s Board of Washington Heart Association (1959), Plymouth All-Star Salesman’s Club Convention Program Cards (undated).

Folder 30: Press Releases/Inter-Office Correspondence, 1949-1971.

Folder 31: Postcards and Brochures, [1950-1970?].

Folder 32: Newspaper and Magazine Advertisements, [1958-1966?].

Folder 33: Logos/Designs – The Statler Hilton, undated.

Container 3

Folder 34: Sketchbook/Artist’s Planning – Hotel Statler, Washington, D.C., “Guide to Mural Subjects in Private Dining Rooms,” undated.

Container 4 - Oversized

Folder 35: Exterior Tin Photograph of 16th and K Streets before Hotel was built; Exterior Photograph (color).

Folder 36: Floor Plan, undated.

Folder 37: One large scrapbook, maintained in original order, of newspaper clippings from November and December 1944, and January 1945. Includes mostly sections/columns “Town Talk”, “In the Capital Spotlight”, “Society”, “Washington Scene”, and “My Day” by Eleanor Roosevelt. Taken from newspapers *Washington Post*, *Times Herald*, *Star*, *Inquirer*, and others.