

**GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL PARKWAY
ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY**

Barry Mackintosh

Park History Program
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INTRODUCTION

The George Washington Memorial Parkway is among the most complex and unusual units of the national park system.

The GWMP encompasses some 7,428 acres in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. For reasons that will later be explained, a small part of this acreage is not administered by its superintendent, and a greater amount of land formerly within GWMP now lies within another national park unit. Some of the GWMP acreage the superintendent administers is commonly known by other names, like Great Falls Park in Virginia and Glen Echo Park in Maryland. While most national park units may be characterized as predominantly natural, historical, or recreational, GWMP comprises such a diverse array of natural, historic, and recreational resources that it defies any such categorization.

Further complicating matters, GWMP's superintendent also administers four other areas classed as discrete national park units—Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, Virginia; Clara Barton National Historic Site, Maryland; and Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac and Theodore Roosevelt Island in Washington, DC—plus Arlington Memorial Bridge and certain other features in National Capital Parks, another park system unit.

George Washington Memorial Parkway is also unusual among national parklands in not being primarily a destination area. People may go to recreate at certain of its features, but they

normally do not set out to visit "the parkway." Even when not using it to commute to and from work, most view it a way of getting somewhere else, such as Washington National Airport or Mount Vernon or Great Falls. Insofar as public use is concerned, this was its chief intent. As John Nolen and Henry V. Hubbard noted in 1937, parkways of its type were "enjoyed mostly by people traveling primarily for other purposes," providing "a quick *and pleasant* channel of traffic between the country or the suburbs and the town—between home and work—for millions of automobile owners, rich and poor."¹

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the GWMP was created solely for transportation—utilitarian or recreational. The destination of Mount Vernon figured prominently in the conception of its initial component, and later road construction was spurred by commuting considerations. But the parkway was conceived primarily as a means to another end: environmental conservation.

A parkway is generally thought of as kind of road. In fact, a parkway of GWMP's character is more properly defined as "an attenuated *park* with a road through it."² What makes the whole a parkway depends largely on the natural and designed landscape through which the road passes. In the case of the GWMP, that landscape is the Potomac River valley above and below Washington,

¹John Nolen and Henry V. Hubbard, *Parkways and Land Values* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), p. xii.

²*Ibid.*

and the parkway was devised as a way of preserving and enhancing it.

Although roads would later lose favor among park proponents, a road was always an integral part of planning for park development of the Potomac riverbanks. Why a parkway rather than a roadless park, a "purer" form of preservation? This course had a pragmatic dimension: a road that would serve practical transportation needs as well as recreational motoring would attract broader public and political support for the project. Governments were not then in the habit of acquiring expensive land for wholly aesthetic or ecological purposes. But a road was also favored on its merits as a park amenity, as a desirable means of maximizing public enjoyment of the acquired park land and adjoining water. Declining to make the valley's scenic and historic attributes easily accessible in this manner would not have occurred to contemporary park planners.

A brief look at the evolution of the parkway idea will put the George Washington Memorial Parkway in context.

Parkways originated in the late 19th century as boulevards adjoining urban parks, such as that proposed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux to link Brooklyn's Prospect Park with the Atlantic Ocean and the East River. The prototype of the GWMP and other "modern" parkways was built in New York's Westchester County between 1916 and 1923. "It was only with completion of New York's Bronx River Parkway after World War I that the modern parkway came into being with its clear set of distinguishing

characteristics," Norman T. Newton has written of this project. "The term now denoted a strip of land dedicated to recreation and the movement of pleasure vehicles The parkway was *not* itself a road, it *contained* a roadway." Like the GWMP, the Bronx River Parkway project had a broader conservation purpose: to clean up the valley through which it ran.³

The most important characteristic distinguishing the Bronx River Parkway from earlier boulevard-type parkways was limited access. There was no median divider, a standard parkway feature later, but the denial of access to abutting private landowners and the separation of crossing traffic via stone-faced concrete arch bridges permitted more unimpeded movement of larger volumes of traffic.⁴ The Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, built 1928-32 as the first component of the GWMP, had occasional grade intersections but otherwise closely followed the Bronx River precedent. This was not surprising given that several designers and builders of the Bronx River and later Westchester County parkways—notably engineer Jay Downer, landscape architects Gilmore D. Clarke and Wilbur H. Simonson, and horticulturalist Henry Nye—worked for or consulted with the Bureau of Public Roads on the Mount Vernon highway project.

³Ian J. W. Firth, "Historic Resources Study, Blue Ridge Parkway," draft for NPS Southeast Region, June 1992, p. 12; Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 597.

⁴Newton, *Design on the Land*, p. 597; Glenn S. Orlin, "The Park and Planning Commissions and the Development of the American Parkway," paper in NPS History Division, Washington, DC, p. 23.

As suburbanization accelerated, so did the need for high-volume traffic movement. According to a recent study of parkway evolution, parkways were becoming "landscaped trafficways" in the mid-1930s, and by the time the GWMP roads in Maryland and above Spout Run in Virginia were designed and begun in the 1950s, "the sole remaining function of parkways was the utilitarian transport of people, particularly commuters, between downtown Washington and the inner suburbs."⁵

This statement does scant justice to the aesthetic and preservation values of the upper GWMP, however. The Virginia road won critical acclaim for showing "a superb handling of the variable median, achieved by a carefully studied interplay of two curvilinear roadways."⁶ Its users can hardly fail to appreciate its remarkably attractive quality, the beauty of its landscaped borders, and the exceptional views of the valley and the city it offers. The Maryland road, now known as the Clara Barton Parkway, is less impressive aesthetically but provides pleasing glimpses of the river and Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and access to the historic waterway at several of its locks. Again, moreover, the parkway on both sides of the river is far more than the roads that run through it. It encompasses much publicly acquired land on which the roads scarcely impinge, ensuring that the Potomac

⁵Glenn S. Orlin, "The Evolution of the American Urban Parkway," Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1992, pp. 174, 246.

⁶Christopher Tunnard and Boris Pushkarev, *Man-Made America: Chaos or Control?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 203.

riverbanks between Washington and Great Falls will remain largely undeveloped.

The GWMP was intended to conserve both banks of the Potomac between Great Falls and Mount Vernon in public ownership. This objective was imperfectly realized, and there is no prospect that it will be completed as envisioned. Even in its incomplete form, however, it is a magnificent achievement. Its story is well worth telling.

CHAPTER I: THE MOUNT VERNON MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

The earliest interest in what ultimately became the George Washington Memorial Parkway focused on a road linking Washington, D.C., with Mount Vernon. In 1887-88 a group of Alexandria residents obtained a Virginia charter for the Mount Vernon Avenue Association. As outlined by E. W. Fox in his *National Republican* newspaper, it sought to receive public and private contributions for a road extending from "a point south of the Aqueduct Bridge or the northern boundary of the government park, reservation or cemetery known as Arlington, on the Potomac River; thence through the county and city of Alexandria, passing through Washington Street . . . , and through the county of Fairfax to the grounds enclosing the tomb of Washington, known as Mount Vernon, over the most practicable route to be selected by the trustees of the Association. . . ."¹

Congress responded promptly to the association's efforts by appropriating \$10,000 for a survey, conducted by Lt. Col. Peter C. Hains of the Corps of Engineers. Hains surveyed several possible routes and reported his findings to Congress in 1890. His report elaborated on the intended purpose and nature of the road:

¹EDAW, Inc., "Cultural Landscape Report, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway: Volume One: History," prepared for NPS National Capital Region, n.d., p. 28. This report, circa 1990, and Timothy Davis's "George Washington Memorial Parkway, HAER Report No. VA-69" (Historic American Engineering Record, 1996) exhaustively document the design and construction of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Only summary treatment is therefore necessary here.

It is to commemorate the virtues of the grandest character in American History. . . . A road, therefore, built from the capital of the nation to the tomb of its founder, would not be such as built for ordinary traffic. It should have the character of a monumental structure, such as would comport with the dignity of this great nation in such an undertaking, and the grandeur of character of the man to whom it is dedicated. . . . The grades should be light, the alignment in graceful curves, and it should pass over some of the high grounds from which the beautiful scenery along the route could be enjoyed, and possibly near the places that Washington himself frequented—places that now have a historical interest because they are associated with him. . . . The roadway should be well paved and well kept. It should be such a work as no American need feel ashamed of.²

Congress took no action on bills introduced soon afterward to fund construction, and interest in the road abated after the Washington, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon Railroad built an electric railway to Mount Vernon in 1892. But the concept was revived a decade later in the report of the Senate Park Commission or McMillan Commission. In 1901 the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, chaired by Sen. James McMillan of Michigan, engaged four distinguished design professionals to study and recommend improvements to Washington's park system. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., the landscape architect on the commission, secured its support for both a Mount Vernon route and a "Potomac Drive" to Great Falls.

The McMillan Commission urged adoption of one of the higher, more inland routes surveyed by Hains: "[I]t would present such a series of beautiful views of the broad portion of the Potomac Valley as would give it a priceless recreative value for the

²*Report of a Survey for a National Road in Virginia*, House Executive Document 106, 51st Congress, 1st Session, 1890.

future population of the District in addition to its sentimental value as linking the nation's capital with the home of its founder." The road would connect with a circle at the end of a proposed new Potomac crossing, the future Arlington Memorial Bridge, rather than the old Aqueduct Bridge as proposed by Hains.³

The commission was equally if not more enthusiastic about park treatment of Great Falls and a suitable access to that destination:

The Great Falls of the Potomac, considering their proximity to the capital, are quite as well worth preservation for their grandeur and natural beauty as the greater passages of scenery in the national parks of the West. . . . Without interfering with the future utilization of the water power, the surroundings of the Great Falls on both sides of the river should, in our opinion, be converted into a national park, to be connected with the city by a continuous river drive.

The beauty of the scenery along the route of this proposed noble river-side improvement is so rare and, in the minds of the Commission, of so great value not only to all Washington, but to all visitors, American and foreign, that it should be safeguarded in every way.

The Potomac Drive to Great Falls would extend along the north bank of the river, and all the land to the top of the bluffs would be taken "to prevent objectionable occupancy."⁴

Another two decades elapsed before significant movement occurred on either parkway proposal. The triggering event was a massive traffic jam on the two existing highway bridges between

³U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia, *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia* (Washington; GPO, 1902), p. 121.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

downtown Washington and Virginia on Armistice Day 1921, delaying President Warren G. Harding's presence at the entombment of the unknown soldier in Arlington National Cemetery for an hour and a half. This episode highlighted the need for another bridge and spurred Congress to provide planning funds to the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission the following spring. Progress toward the bridge in turn stimulated activity on the connecting Mount Vernon road.

The Bureau of Public Roads made another "preliminary reconnaissance survey" for this road in 1922, and Rep. R. Walton Moore of Virginia introduced legislation to direct the secretary of agriculture (then responsible for the BPR) to lay out, construct, and maintain a "Mount Vernon Avenue" with an 80-foot-minimum right-of-way outside corporate limits. The House Committee on Roads heard testimony on Moore's bill in April 1924.

Based on the 1922 survey, Thomas H. MacDonald, BPR chief, proposed to use the existing highway route to the extent possible and make maximum use of easements on adjoining land for landscaping and control purposes. He spoke of plans for a large one-way loop with parking at the entrance to Mount Vernon: "I feel that it is a disgrace to allow the large number of people who annually come from all over the world to visit this national shrine to be dumped into the mud at the entrance gate in the way that they now are." Charles Moore—chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, formerly secretary to the McMillan Commission and

editor of its report—testified that the Mount Vernon highway proposal was “an essential feature of that report.”⁵

Congress took no action on Moore’s bill, but another bill enacted that December advanced toward its objective by creating the United States Commission for the Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington and directing it to consider any plans submitted for the purpose. Representative Moore reintroduced his Mount Vernon Avenue bill in the next Congress, and the House Roads Committee held another hearing on it in February 1926. BPR chief MacDonald promised to move quickly on a committee request that his bureau “furnish full information . . . relative to the desirability of such a road, the character and width of the proposed highway, . . . the probable cost of securing the additional right of way required, the probable cost of the construction of the proposed highway, and such other information as the bureau can obtain.”⁶

Other events moved the highway scheme forward. Arlington Memorial Bridge construction got underway in 1926. That April Congress created the National Capital Park and Planning Commission “to preserve forests and natural scenery in and about Washington, and to provide for the comprehensive, systematic, and

⁵U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Roads, *Roads, Hearings* on H.R. 524, 68th Congress, 1st Session, Apr. 25, 1924 (Washington: GPO, 1924), pp. 6-7, 22.

⁶Public Resolution 38, 68th Congress, Dec. 2, 1924, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 43: 671-72; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Roads, *Roads, Hearing* on H.R. 3923, 69th Congress, 1st Session, Feb. 15, 1926 (Washington: GPO, 1927), p. 3.

continuous development of park, parkway, and playground systems of the National Capital and its environs," among other purposes. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., an NCP&PC member from 1926 to 1932, ensured its support for the parkway plans advanced by the McMillan Commission a quarter-century earlier. In a later study of Washington-area planning, Frederick Gutheim observed that "parkways to and through the city remained the dominant themes in the agency's work program."⁷

MacDonald reported the results of his bureau's latest study to Congress in January 1927. BPR's chief engineer, P. St.J. Wilson, had surveyed a largely inland route extending 12.5 miles, estimated to cost \$3.1 million, and a 14.6-mile route primarily along the river costing \$4.2 million. Wilson opined that "all the memorial, historical, and scenic advantages are in the river route," which would pass through Alexandria with its George Washington connections. The Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission both endorsed this alternative (a shift from the McMillan Commission's favored inland route).⁸

The Senate passed a construction authorization bill without significant opposition in March 1928, but it encountered resistance on the floor of the House. "[T]hat love of Washington

⁷Public Law 69-158, Apr. 30, 1926, U.S. Statutes at Large 44: 374-75; Gutheim, *Worthy of the Nation: The History of Planning for the National Capital* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), p. 171.

⁸Senate Report 469, 70th Congress, Mar. 5, 1928.

that is inherent in . . . the breast of every American everywhere, is being traded upon in an improper way by this proposition to build for local benefit, for one section of one State, the most extravagant piece of road building that this country has ever known," Rep. Louis C. Cramton of Michigan charged. He compared the \$300,000-per-mile cost of the river route, involving extensive fill and elaborate bridges, to the \$125,000-per-mile cost of the Zion National Park road, partly bored through solid rock, then under construction. A strong park supporter, Cramton was championing a plan for park development of both sides of the Potomac between Mount Vernon and Great Falls under which the states or other parties would have to match federal contributions for land acquisition, and he disliked the absence of any such requirement in the Mount Vernon highway bill.⁹

Rep. L. J. Dickinson of Iowa called the bill's provision for perpetual federal maintenance of the road a dangerous precedent. Rep. Ralph J. Lozier of Missouri argued that the road should receive no more federal funds than other state road projects. The eloquent Rep. Fiorello H. LaGuardia of New York deplored the practice of securing federal money for projects of essentially local benefit by making them memorials: "O Memorial, how many appropriations have been passed in thy name? . . . This kind of veneration, this kind of patriotism, this kind of a memorial, is so sordidly material as to disclose its own sordid purpose." In

⁹*Congressional Record* 69: 9380.

the end, however, the House passed the bill by a three-to-one margin, and President Calvin Coolidge signed it into law on May 23, 1928.¹⁰

The law directed the secretary of agriculture, in cooperation with the George Washington bicentennial commission, to plan, construct, control, and maintain "a suitable memorial highway to connect Mount Vernon . . . with the south end of the Arlington Memorial Bridge." Provision was to be made "for the planting of shade trees and shrubbery and for such other landscape treatment, parking, and ornamental structures as he may prescribe." The secretary was authorized to occupy lands belonging to the United States or the District of Columbia for the purpose and to acquire other necessary lands by purchase, condemnation, or donation. Appropriations totaling \$4.5 million through fiscal year 1932 were authorized. The law did not specify the name of the project, but the annotation "Mount Vernon Memorial Highway" accompanied its publication in the statute book, and this designation was readily adopted in practice.¹¹

Although most involved parties had favored the riverbank alignment, the law left final selection of the route to the Washington bicentennial commission. R. E. Toms, the Bureau of Public Roads engineer in charge of the project, refined BPR's previous surveys with the help of a design team assembled from

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 9381-82; Public Law 70-493, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 45: 721.

¹¹U.S. *Statutes at Large* 45: 721-22.

Westchester County's pioneering parkway system. Wilbur H. Simonson was hired as chief landscape architect, and chief engineer Jay Downer, landscape architect Gilmore D. Clarke, and plantsman Henry Nye of the Westchester County Park Commission were engaged as consultants.¹²

BPR's report to the bicentennial commission again described inland and river alternatives. The former took nearly a straight line from Arlington Memorial Bridge to Mount Vernon; the latter followed the Potomac as closely as feasible, using Washington Street through Alexandria. According to the report, the inland route risked becoming a local traffic artery surrounded by subdivisions, whereas the river route would remain largely free from development along one side and would be less affected by cross traffic, making its memorial character easier to maintain.¹³ As expected, the commission approved the river route on January 24, 1929, with the provision that the secretary of agriculture should secure satisfactory agreements with local authorities "respecting the control of traffic on said memorial highway and upon highways or street which will intersect same,

¹²Glenn S. Orlin, "The Evolution of the American Urban Parkway," Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1992, pp. 325-26.

¹³Mount Vernon Memorial Highway file 545-100, National Capital Planning Commission, Record Group 328, National Archives, Washington, DC.

and respecting the zoning and control of the use which may be made of property adjacent to said memorial highway."¹⁴

The provision was aimed particularly at the Washington Street, Alexandria, segment of the highway. In response, the mayor of Alexandria and the acting secretary of agriculture signed a memorandum of agreement on June 20, 1929. The city granted the United States a perpetual easement over Washington Street and agreed to zone it to bar advertising signs (except where attached to buildings serving the advertised businesses) and to restrict it to "residential and business development of such character and of such types of buildings as will be in keeping with the dignity, purpose and memorial character of said highway." The city would give precedence to traffic on Washington Street except where both parties agreed to four-way stoplights. The secretary would have full authority over necessary reconstruction and maintenance of Washington Street; the city would annually reimburse the secretary one-fourth the cost of maintenance and reconstruction between Montgomery and Franklin streets, the portion then paved.¹⁵

In mid-September 1929 BPR let the first Mount Vernon Memorial Highway construction contract, for riprap foundation walls to hold hydraulic fills between Columbia Island and the Railroad Bridge. By January 1930 hydraulic dredges were pumping

¹⁴Quoted in Memorandum of Agreement between City of Alexandria and Secretary of Agriculture, June 20, 1929, Superintendent's Office, George Washington Memorial Parkway.

¹⁵Ibid.

sand and gravel into this area and were filling at the mouth of Four Mile Run. A ceremony marking the beginning of road construction was held at Mount Vernon on March 20.¹⁶

The highway authorizing legislation was soon found to require minor changes. An amendment approved that January brought its land condemnation authority into line with a recent change in Virginia law. Another amendment in April provided for modifying and filling under the south end of the Highway Bridge (as the bridge at 14th Street was then called) to carry the road under that bridge and permit a suitable connection with it.¹⁷

The second enactment also authorized the secretary of agriculture to contract for a restaurant and souvenir concession on land acquired at the entrance to Mount Vernon and required the Fine Arts Commission's approval for the design of the concession building, which was to be erected by January 1, 1932. On the recommendation of Charles Moore, the Fine Arts Commission chairman, the BPR selected Edward W. Donn, Jr., who had recently designed the conjectural reconstruction of George Washington's birthplace, as its architect. The commission approved Donn's

¹⁶Thomas H. MacDonald, "Route of New Mt. Vernon Highway Pictured," *Washington Daily News*, Jan. 29, 1930; *Congressional Record* 72: 6203-04.

¹⁷Public Resolution 34, 71st Congress, Jan. 23, 1930, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 46: 59; Public Law 71-88, Apr. 3, 1930, *ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

design as compatible with Mount Vernon's architecture that November.¹⁸

The Highway Bridge modifications, changes on Columbia Island, and higher-than-expected land expenses led to cost overruns. By the end of 1930 the \$4.5 million authorized for the project had all been appropriated, and more was needed. Sen. Simeon D. Fess of Ohio, a member of the Washington bicentennial commission, pushed for an additional \$2.7 million. Several of his colleagues expressed their displeasure with the original estimate and sought firm assurances that the project could be completed for the 60 percent increase. But Congress could hardly decline to provide the money, and it was included in a deficiency appropriation act in March 1931.¹⁹

The road below Alexandria was opened to traffic that October. BPR completed the remainder of the road and landscaping by June 1932 and, under legislation to be discussed below, transferred the highway to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital on July 1. A dedication ceremony was held at the Mount Vernon terminus on November 15. Secretary of Agriculture Arthur M. Hyde spoke and unveiled a

¹⁸Letters, Moore to Thomas H. MacDonald, July 3 and Nov. 7, 1930, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway project file, Commission of Fine Arts, Record Group 66, National Archives, Washington, DC.

¹⁹*Congressional Record* 74: 2872, 5729; Public Law 71-869, Mar. 4, 1931, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 46: 1563.

plaque mounted on a boulder taken from the Potomac Canal at Great Falls, a project sponsored by George Washington.²⁰

²⁰File 1460/Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, George Washington Memorial Parkway records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.

CHAPTER II: THE CAPPER-CRAMTON ACT

As construction of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway got underway in 1930, Congress endorsed and expanded the McMillan Commission's Potomac Drive concept by authorizing the parkway's extension to Great Falls and Fort Washington. Although the reach of the Capper-Cramton Act exceeded the grasp of those who would implement it, this authority for the George Washington Memorial Parkway would have a profound impact on the Potomac riverscape.

Congress began to seriously consider park development along the Potomac above Washington in 1922. The year before, the Army Corps of Engineers in the person of Maj. M. C. Tyler, district engineer, had recommended a high dam near Chain Bridge that would submerge everything to the top of Great Falls. In response Sen. Bert M. Fernald of Maine, chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, introduced a bill to direct the Army's chief of engineers to survey both banks of the Potomac from Washington to Great Falls and report on the feasibility of extending the national capital's park system there. This broadened the scope of the McMillan Commission's Potomac Drive proposal, which had involved only the north bank.

On the motion of Sen. George W. Norris of Nebraska, a strong proponent of water power development, Fernald's bill was amended on the Senate floor to require the chief of engineers to consider the dam proposal and make no suggestion for a park that would interfere with power development. The amended bill passed the

Senate on April 19 but died in the House.¹ Neither body acted on a similar bill in the next Congress.

The establishment in 1926 of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which was charged with both planning and acquiring land for an expanded regional park system, strengthened the hand of park advocates. NCP&PC comprised the Army's chief of engineers, the director of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, the engineer commissioner of the District of Columbia, the director of the National Park Service, the chief of the U.S. Forest Service, the chairmen of the Senate and House District committees, and four private appointees. Although other interests were represented on the commission, it was weighted to promote park development and oppose conflicting schemes.

When the Federal Power Commission sought NCP&PC's comments on the application of the Potomac River Corporation (Potomac Electric Power Company's predecessor) for a hydroelectric project in 1927, Charles W. Eliot II, NCP&PC's staff planner, reported that the company's proposed dams above Chain Bridge and Great Falls would thwart the park project then under consideration. He noted that the lower dam would flood Plimmers Island, where the Washington Biologists Field Club had maintained a camp for observing wildlife for more than 25 years. He quoted from Lord Bryce's 1913 paper on the nation's capital: "No European city has

¹Senate Joint Resolution 192, 67th Congress; *Congressional Record* 62: 5697, 5700.

so noble a cataract in its vicinity as the Great Falls of the Potomac, a magnificent piece of scenery which you will, of course, always preserve."²

Rep. Louis C. Cramton of Michigan, chairman of the House subcommittee responsible for appropriations to the NCP&PC, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, and Interior Department bureaus including the National Park Service, introduced legislation directing the Federal Power Commission not to issue any permit for water power development in the Potomac between Rock Creek and a point four miles above the Washington Aqueduct intake at Great Falls until Congress received reports by the NCP&PC and the FPC and took further action. Congress passed Cramton's bill, which was signed into law on May 29, 1928.³

Lt. Col. U. S. Grant III, NCP&PC's executive officer, and Maj. Brehon Somervell, district engineer of the Corps of Engineers' Washington District, promptly appointed a committee of two engineers and three landscape architects to study alternatives for this stretch of the Potomac, including park development with and without reservoirs. NCP&PC's committee on parks received its report in August and recommended park

²Eliot, "The Great Falls and Gorge of the Potomac," June 1927, George Washington Memorial Parkway—Upper Potomac Project before 1937 file, Office Files of John Nolen, Jr., National Capital Planning Commission, Record Group 328, National Archives, Washington, DC. Hereinafter cited as Nolen Files, RG 328.

³Public Resolution 67, 70th Congress, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 45: 1012.

treatment of the valley without power development for the present. On December 15 the full commission endorsed this position; only Maj. Gen. Edgar Jadwin, the Army's chief of engineers, dissented. Jadwin advocated a series of dams to Cumberland and ultimate linkage of Potomac navigation with the Monongahela River (the dream of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal's founders). He saw the two dams above Washington as permitting a "high-level park" rather than a "low-level park," which would be "costly to improve as a park, costly to maintain on account of the floods that would ravage it from time to time, and would probably afford less real recreation and enjoyment to the public than would the delightful boating waters and wooded shores incident to the high-level park."⁴

Three days later Cramton introduced a bill he had prepared with Grant's assistance to further NCP&PC's broad parkland acquisition objectives. Among its several provisions, it authorized a George Washington Memorial Parkway on both sides of the Potomac. On the Virginia side it would run from Mount Vernon to a point above Great Falls and would incorporate the recently authorized Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. On the Maryland side it would run from Fort Washington to a corresponding point above Great Falls. Inclusion of the Prince George's County, Maryland, riverbank to Fort Washington marked another expansion of the McMillan Commission's parkway scheme. The cost of land

⁴"The George Washington Memorial Parkway, Descriptive Statement," April 1933, Nolen Files, RG 328; Jadwin quoted in *Congressional Record* 72: 2710.

acquisition would be shared equally by the federal government and the two states.⁵

The federal government was not yet in the habit of appropriating money to acquire lands outside Washington for park purposes, so the bill's proponents had some persuading to do. To obtain the Budget Bureau's support, Grant described the cost-sharing formula as essential for regional cooperation in park development affecting the nation's capital. Testifying before the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds in February 1929, Cramton presented his bill as an emergency measure in view of development pressures and escalating costs. The committee endorsed the bill with specific reference to its George Washington Memorial Parkway component: "This parkway, taking control of the banks of the Potomac from Mount Vernon where Washington lived, through the Capital which he founded, to Great Falls where he had his industrial dreams, has tremendous possibilities for scenic enjoyment and recreation on land and water." The House passed the bill on February 27, as the 70th Congress approached adjournment; the Senate took no action on it.⁶

⁵H.R. 15524, 70th Congress, Dec. 18, 1928.

⁶Letter, Grant to H. M. Lord, Dec. 27, 1928, in House Report 2523, 70th Congress, Feb. 14, 1929; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, *Public Buildings and Grounds, Hearings*, 70th Congress, 2nd Session, on . . . H.R. 15524, Feb. 13-14, 1929 (Washington: GPO, 1929), p. 20; quote from House Report 2523, p. 4; *Congressional Record* 70: 4614.

Cramton reintroduced his bill in the 71st Congress. The House Public Buildings and Grounds Committee again endorsed it in December 1929, but Maj. Brehon Somervell and the Potomac River Corporation viewed it as a threat to power development and lobbied vigorously against it. As the bill moved to the House floor in January 1930, Grant and Frederic A. Delano, now NCP&PC chairman, collaborated with Rep. S. Wallace Dempsey of New York, chairman of the Rivers and Harbors Committee, on an amendment to mollify the power proponents: "[T]he acquisition of any land in the Potomac River Valley for park purposes shall not debar or limit, or abridge its use for such works as Congress may in the future authorize for the improvement and the extension of navigation, including the connecting of the upper Potomac River with the Ohio River, or for flood control or irrigation or drainage, or for the development of hydroelectric power."⁷

The whole House considered the bill on January 30. Rep. John McDuffie of Alabama argued that even with the adopted amendment it tended to preempt desirable navigation and power improvements. He urged waiting for study reports by the Federal Power Commission and the Corps of Engineers. Rep. C. William Ramseyer of Iowa objected to the lack of an authorized area or boundary: "I think we are going far afield when under the indefinite provisions of this bill we go out in the States and buy parkways

⁷H.R. 26, 71st Congress, Apr. 15, 1929; House Report 55, 71st Congress, Dec. 18, 1929; *Congressional Record* 72: 2458, 2465-66.

adjacent to the District. . . . No one has any idea of how many acres or how how much money is involved."⁸

In April 1928 Congress had enacted legislation sponsored by Rep. R. Walton Moore of Virginia authorizing the Great Falls Bridge Company to construct a toll bridge across the Potomac below Great Falls. Thanks to the intercession of U. S. Grant III, the act made its location and design subject to NCP&PC's approval. NCP&PC consulted with the Commission of Fine Arts and got the CFA's architect member, Milton B. Medary, to collaborate on the design. NCP&PC's landscape architect member, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., pressed successfully for a location about a hundred yards below the C & O Canal's Lock 18 and about 350 yards below the falls—further downstream than initially proposed. NCP&PC approved the location and design, incorporating stone-faced piers, that July.⁹

Cramton's bill provided for a road from Fort Washington to Great Falls on the Maryland side of the Potomac. After several congressmen expressed opposition to the idea of building a public road to a private toll bridge, the House amended the bill to

⁸*Congressional Record* 72: 2708-09, 2717-18.

⁹Public Law 70-297, Apr. 21, 1928, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 45: 442; letter, Rep. R. Walton Moore to Rep. Edward E. Denison, Jan. 3, 1928, Great Falls Bridge file 545-8, RG 328; NCP&PC Minutes, May 18-19 and July 6, 1928, RG 328. The bridge would be reached via an extension of Conduit Road (later MacArthur Boulevard) behind Great Falls Tavern down the berm side of the canal past Lock 18.

provide for a free bridge at Great Falls, then passed it by a 199-24 vote.¹⁰

The Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, chaired by Sen. Arthur Capper of Kansas, heard testimony on the bill in March and reported it with further amendments agreeable to NCP&PC and Cramton in April. Its report noted that the Great Falls Bridge Company had begun work on its bridge but had ceased when it appeared that a free bridge might be built by the government. It recommended that the company complete the bridge and allow the government to acquire it under a provision added to the bill for this purpose. Notwithstanding Major Somervell's claim at the hearing that the parkway would forestall \$100 million in benefits from power and navigation development, it concluded that the present need for the former was greater than for the latter: "The committee is certain that Great Falls has great potentialities for hydroelectric development, and feels that when the need for such development arises this bill when enacted will not act as a deterrent to prevent Congress from making the required authorization."¹¹

The Senate passed the amended bill without floor opposition on May 13, the House agreed to the Senate amendments on May 22, and President Herbert Hoover signed it into law on May 29, 1930.

¹⁰Congressional Record 72: 2718-24.

¹¹U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia, *George Washington Memorial Parkway, Hearings on H.R. 26, 71st Congress, Mar. 13 and 21, 1930* (Washington: GPO, 1930); Senate Report 458, 71st Congress, Apr. 17, 1930, pp. 6-7.

Section 1(a) of what became known as the Capper-Cramton Act authorized appropriations totaling \$7.5 million for the George Washington Memorial Parkway, "to include the shores of the Potomac, and adjacent lands, from Mount Vernon to a point above the Great Falls on the Virginia side, except within the city of Alexandria, and from Fort Washington to a similar point above the Great Falls except within the District of Columbia, and including the protection and preservation of the natural scenery of the Gorge and the Great Falls of the Potomac, the preservation of the historic Patowmack Canal, and the acquisition of that portion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal below Point of Rocks."¹²

Lands for the parkway would be acquired for the United States by the NCP&PC and turned over to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital for administration. The Mount Vernon Memorial Highway would become part of the parkway and would be transferred to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks upon its completion. NCP&PC was authorized to occupy federal lands needed for the parkway and to accept the donation of other lands it deemed desirable for the parkway. It was not required to acquire lands along the Potomac that it deemed not essential for the project or that would involve great expense. No money was to be spent for land for any unit until the NCP&PC had received definite commitments from Maryland or Virginia or their political subdivisions or "other responsible sources" for half the cost of land within that unit.

¹²Public Law 71-284, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 46: 482-85.

However, full funding for units could be advanced under agreements with the states or their subdivisions providing for their reimbursement of half the cost within eight years.

The United States was to spend no money for the prescribed road on the Maryland side except as part of the federal-aid highway program; in other words, Maryland would have to pay half its cost. The act said nothing about additional road construction in Virginia because the parkway planners then envisioned using existing roads for most of the distance between the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and Great Falls to avoid costly and damaging construction along the Virginia palisades.¹³ Another section of the act provided that Forts Washington and Foote in Maryland and Fort Hunt in Virginia were to be transferred to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks for the George Washington Memorial Parkway when no longer needed for military purposes.¹⁴

As the Great Depression deepened, the prospect of getting matching funds from the two states for land acquisition and from Maryland for the road dimmed. Cramton and Capper introduced amendatory legislation in the same Congress in an effort to jumpstart the project. Their bills would allow NCP&PC to spend \$3 million of the authorized \$7.5 million to buy key properties,

¹³Charles W. Eliot II, "The George Washington Memorial Parkway," *Landscape Architecture* 22 (April 1932): 200.

¹⁴According to U.S. Grant III, the War Department had drafted a bill authorizing its disposition of these and other obsolete military posts. He persuaded the secretary of war to omit these three forts from that bill and have them included in the Capper-Cramton Act. (NCP&PC Minutes, Mar. 18-19, 1943, RG 328.)

like the Potomac Electric Power Company land at Great Falls and the C & O Canal, without state contributions. The states would still have to match the overall federal appropriation by contributing a larger share for other lands. The bills made specific provision for a federal road in Virginia from Arlington Memorial Bridge to Chain Bridge and provided that if lands within any park unit in Prince George's County were donated, the federal government would build the road there at its own expense.¹⁵

The responsible House and Senate committees reported the bills in February 1931. But three members of the House committee objected to the \$3 million federal appropriation without adequate assurance that the states would ultimately match the total appropriation.¹⁶ They blocked consideration of the House bill at the end of the Congress, and the Senate bill was passed over in that body. The bills were reintroduced in the next Congress, but Cramton, their foremost champion, had not been reelected, and they were never reported from committee. Not until 1946 did Congress amend the Capper-Cramton Act to ease the financial burden on either state.

As noted, the act assigned administrative responsibility for the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, an independent federal agency headed by a Corps of Engineers

¹⁵H.R. 16218 and S. 5740, 71st Congress.

¹⁶House Report 2628, 71st Congress, Feb. 12, 1931; Senate Report 1658, 71st Congress, Feb. 17, 1931.

officer—then U. S. Grant III in another of his several capacities. An executive order by President Franklin D. Roosevelt abolished this office and transferred its functions to the National Park Service on August 10, 1933.¹⁷ Thenceforth the NPS would manage what was collectively called National Capital Parks and its various components, including the parkway.

¹⁷Executive Order 6166, June 10, 1933. The National Park Service was retitled the Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations in the executive order but recovered its old name in a March 2, 1934, appropriations act.

CHAPTER III: EXPANDING THE PARKWAY, 1931-1952

For more than two decades after passage of the Capper-Cramton Act, the George Washington Memorial Parkway proceeded almost imperceptibly beyond the previously authorized Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Its most visible progress was its extension about two miles upriver to Spout Run in Virginia. In Maryland, Fort Washington and Fort Foote were acquired for the parkway under the Capper-Cramton Act, and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was acquired and partly rehabilitated under separate authority, but in the absence of road construction these holdings were not publicly associated with the parkway.

Soon after passage of the Capper-Cramton Act, at the Hoover administration's request, Congress appropriated an additional \$1 million to the National Capital Park and Planning Commission for fiscal year 1931. NCP&PC allocated \$237,700 of this for the George Washington Memorial Parkway and spent it over the next six years; most of the balance went to the stream valley park acquisition program in Maryland that the act also authorized.¹

Conrad L. Wirth, a young landscape architect on the NCP&PC staff from May 1928 to January 1931, later recalled spending several days with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., on the location plans for the parkway:

¹Public Law 71-519, July 30, 1930, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 46: 864; Capper-Cramton Act appropriations for 1931-62 in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1963, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1962), p. 888.

He wanted to be sure the land to be included was adequate, that the parkway roads would take advantage of the vistas with the least possible damage to the rim of the Potomac River Gorge, and that it would provide necessary parking places with the least amount of damage to the scenic values. Olmsted would go into the field and walk the ground; he wanted to see from a height and would shinny up a tree to look in all directions. I would accompany him on these trips, carrying the plans. Climbing the trees, we had to carry the plans in our mouths, as a dog carries a bone. Olmsted was a very thorough and studious man, very perceptive, and a deep thinker.²

Franklin D. Roosevelt took a personal interest in the GWMP project after he became president in March 1933. He made a trip to Great Falls that spring, and at his request the NCP&PC—chaired by his uncle, Frederic A. Delano—prepared an illustrated report for him on the project.³

Initial attention focused on the area from Arlington Memorial Bridge to above Key Bridge in the Rosslyn section of Arlington, Virginia. This area received priority for at least two reasons. It would allow a road to and from the north end of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, something apparently accepted by all concerned even though the proposed Capper-Cramton Act amendment expressly providing for a road in Virginia above

²Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), p. 31.

³Memorandum, John Nolen, Jr., to Arno B. Cammerer, Sept. 22, 1934, GWMP Misc. file, Box 10, Office Files of Frederic A. Delano, National Capital Planning Commission, Record Group 328, National Archives, Washington, DC. Hereinafter cited as Delano Files, RG 328.

Memorial Bridge never passed.⁴ It was also threatened by incompatible development.

In 1930 the Sun Oil Company secured an option to purchase land above Key Bridge for a pier and tank farm. NCP&PC protested, and the secretary of war (overseeing the Corps of Engineers) refused to grant a permit for the pier. This displeased local businessmen promoting commercial development of the Rosslyn waterfront. In response, NCP&PC worked with Arlington County to accommodate a county wharf with railroad access below Key Bridge in its GWMP plan.⁵

In March 1932 NCP&PC allocated \$50,000 from its 1931 appropriation for land acquisition on either side of Key Bridge. Establishing the pattern for later matching contributions from Virginia, the state and Arlington County each put up \$25,000. A June 1934 agreement among the three parties specified how the \$100,000 would be spent, provided for the wharf, and committed

⁴Questioned by a congressman in 1940 about why roads were needed on both sides of the river, NPS associate director Arthur E. Demaray said, "It has been long contemplated and was authorized by the Congress in 1930." (U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department Appropriation Bill for 1941, Hearings* [Washington: GPO, 1940], p. 789.)

⁵"The George Washington Memorial Parkway, Descriptive Statement," April 1933, Box 82, Office Files of John Nolen, Jr., National Capital Planning Commission, Record Group 328, National Archives, Washington, DC. Hereinafter cited as Nolen Files, RG 328.

NCP&PC to cooperate with the county and state in securing necessary legislation for it.⁶

"The state of Maryland has refused to do anything to date," NCP&PC secretary T. S. Settle wrote National Park Service director Arno B. Cammerer that July. "At last, however, we have succeeded in getting a real start in Virginia." Settle urged swift action by the NPS to build the road from Memorial Bridge to Key Bridge and upstream to Spout Run: "If nothing is done now, it will be extremely difficult to ever arouse the interest of Virginia and Arlington County again." Cammerer followed through. On July 20 Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, who also headed the Public Works Administration, approved a \$278,000 PWA allotment for the road from \$5 million granted the NPS for roads and trails in the fiscal 1935 Emergency Appropriations Act.⁷

Here as elsewhere in its park areas, the NPS relied on the Bureau of Public Roads for road design and construction services under an interbureau agreement dating from 1926. The BPR began surveying for the GWMP road between Memorial Bridge and Great Falls, Virginia, in the spring of 1934. Representatives of the NCP&PC, NPS, and Commission of Fine Arts met that April to discuss plans for what was envisioned as a single undivided roadway. Gilmore D. Clarke, now the Fine Arts Commission's

⁶"Agreement Between the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, County Board of Arlington County, Virginia, and the Governor of Virginia," June 23, 1934, GWMP-Misc. file, Box 10, Delano Files, RG 328.

⁷Memorandum, Settle to Cammerer, July 3, 1934, *ibid.*; telegram, Settle to Frederic A. Delano, July 20, 1934, *ibid.*

landscape architect member, recommended two separate drives instead. The northbound road, which would be constructed first and would initially serve two-way traffic, would run near the river's edge; the southbound road would go along the top of the palisades. Clarke felt that these two-lane roadways would fit better into the rugged terrain than one four-lane roadway and that the two levels would afford more varied scenery. The Fine Arts Commission endorsed his recommendation.⁸ (A divided road was ultimately built, but except near Spout Run the two roadways were separated less widely than Clarke proposed.)

Construction of the initial road segment was complicated by several difficulties. Funds were inadequate for a permanent bridge of the proper character across Boundary Channel at the north end of Columbia Island, so arrangements had to be made for a temporary trestle bridge. There was insufficient room for the road along the shore of Little River, opposite Theodore Roosevelt Island, and the Corps of Engineers was loath to allow any filling of the channel that might aggravate flooding. The Corps finally relented and gave BPR permission to fill behind a riprap wall.⁹ A Washington and Old Dominion Railroad transformer building east of Key Bridge had to be demolished and the equipment relocated.

The Rosslyn end of Key Bridge posed the greatest impediment to the low-level road. NCP&PC approved a tunnel to carry the road

⁸Letter, Charles Moore to NCP&PC, June 1, 1934, file 545-100/GWMP, Va., Box 130, RG 328.

⁹Letter, Maj. R. W. Crawford to Chief, BPR, Apr. 15, 1935, *ibid.*

through the massive bridge embankment, but the NPS recommended cutting back the embankment and running the road beneath an added bridge span. This alternative was backed by the Fine Arts Commission, which found the tunnel out of keeping with the parkway.¹⁰ The Interior Department appropriation for 1937 included \$334,000 for the extra span.

One of the greatest floods on record devastated the Potomac Valley in March 1936. It was not an unmitigated disaster insofar as the parkway was concerned, for it tended to discourage riverfront development and depress the value of land needed for the project. "With both banks of the river appropriately cleared and landscaped, Washington will have one of the most beautiful parks in the country," the *Washington Post* editorialized on March 23.

This commentary aroused concern among nature advocates. John Collier, head of Interior's Office of Indian Affairs and a Wilderness Society member, feared that the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway's artificial landscaping would be continued along the Potomac banks above Key Bridge and wrote Secretary Ickes to protest. Ward Shepard, another Indian Affairs official, made a similar protest to Frederic Delano. While assuring Shepard that the kind of development suggested by the *Post* editorial was not contemplated, Delano defended the planned GWMP road as necessary

¹⁰Letter, Arthur E. Demaray to Frederic A. Delano, Oct. 18, 1935, file 1460/GWMP, Va., National Capital Parks records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD. Collection hereinafter cited as NCP, WNRC.

to secure local contributions for public land acquisition to forestall private development. In a meeting with Robert Marshall of the Wilderness Society, John Nolen, Jr., NCP&PC's planning director, found the society and affiliated hiking clubs agreeable to the parkway plans for the more developed Maryland side but still against any road in Virginia.¹¹

The most significant acquisition for the parkway during this period was the Joseph Leiter estate in Fairfax County, Virginia, deeded to the United States by Leiter's heirs in August 1936 for \$1 plus a compromise of unpaid taxes. The river frontage of the 167.5-acre property extended from Turkey Run downstream to a point opposite Sycamore Island. The main portion of the tract, containing a 3-story, 43-room frame house, was connected to Leesburg Pike by a 60-foot road right-of-way. Delano called the donation "the most important thing that the Park and Planning Commission has yet achieved."¹²

NPS director Arno Cammerer promised Leiter's executors that the NPS would promptly develop the property for park use. He asked National Capital Parks superintendent C. Marshall Finnan to

¹¹Memorandum, Collier to Ickes, Mar. 23, 1936, GWMP-MVMH file, Box 10, RG 328; letter, Shepard to Delano, Mar. 24, 1936, *ibid.*; letter, Delano to Shepard, Apr. 21, 1936, *ibid.*; memorandums, Nolen to Delano, Apr. 18 and 23, 1936, *ibid.*

¹²NCP Land Transfer Order No. 272, Nov. 7, 1936, file 1460/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC; GWMP Misc. file, Box 10, Delano Files, RG 328. The deed provided that the government would connect any parkway road it built through the main tract with the access road and that the grantors would receive access to the parkway road in three other places. The government also received a 20-foot easement on each side of the 60-foot right-of-way barring any building there without NCP&PC approval.

send a Civilian Conservation Corps force there to build trails, picnic benches, and fireplaces and advised him to find someone to live in the house to protect it from vandalism. Cammerer's prediction that the house was "liable to go up in smoke" came to pass when it was destroyed by fire in February 1945.¹³ Leiter's heirs retained substantial acreage between the main portion of the tract and Leesburg Pike, but it all came into federal ownership in the 1940s, when BPR—then the Public Roads Administration—developed a research station there.

The GWMP road from Columbia Island to the Rosslyn end of Key Bridge, built by the Corson & Gruman Company, was completed and opened to the public in January 1939. DeLashmutt Brothers of Arlington began constructing the new bridge span at the same time, and the NPS became involved in designing Rosslyn Plaza, the new bridge terminus.¹⁴ The span and the road up to the plaza were completed in 1941.

The federal budget contained no provision for further extension of the road, which made it difficult for NCP&PC to elicit further matching contributions for land acquisition from Virginia and Arlington County. NPS associate director Arthur E. Demaray succeeded in having GWMP road construction included with

¹³Letter, Cammerer to D. B. Fulton and Alfred W. Rogers, July 1, 1936, GWMP—Upper Potomac Project before 1937 file, Box 17, Nolen Files, RG 328; memorandums, Cammerer to Finnan, June 15 and July 18, 1936, *ibid*.

¹⁴"Parkway Link To Be Ready This Week," *Evening Star*, Jan. 4, 1939, clipping in George Washington Memorial Parkway project file, Commission of Fine Arts, Record Group 66, National Archives, Washington, DC.

Blue Ridge and Natchez Trace parkway construction in the fiscal 1942 Interior Department appropriation bill, although with no specific dollar amount; money not spent on the other two projects could be shifted to the GWMP.¹⁵ After America's entry into World War II, however, the \$6 million appropriated for the three parkways in fiscal 1942 was frozen.

The war emergency allowed NCP&PC to make a new case for GWMP land acquisition funds. On December 9, 1941, two days after Pearl Harbor, Frederic Delano appeared before the House Appropriations Committee to request \$200,000 for the Virginia riverfront from Spout Run north to Chain Bridge. Building the parkway road along that 2-1/2-mile stretch would better link Northwest Washington and adjoining areas in Maryland and Virginia with the Pentagon, then under construction. "[W]ar necessities have made this appropriation most imperative," Delano testified.¹⁶

The Public Roads Administration had included money for this road in its budget request for Pentagon road construction. NCP&PC had arranged for the landowner, Smoot Sand & Gravel Company, to sell the property to the government for \$400,000, half of which would be contributed by a stockholder to meet the Capper-Cramton Act's matching requirement. Delano believed that an appraisal justifying the \$400,000 price could be obtained despite the

¹⁵U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department Appropriation Bill for 1942, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1941), p. 543.

¹⁶U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Fourth Supplemental National Defense Appropriation Bill for 1942, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1942), pp. 145-46.

property's much lower valuation for tax purposes. Congress appropriated the \$200,000, but the Smoot deal fell through, and Pentagon commuters were forced to rely on other routes for the duration of the war and most of the next decade.¹⁷

NCP&PC completed land acquisition for the GWMP from Key Bridge west to Spout Run and its Spout Run Parkway branch inland to Lorcum Lane in 1947. Road construction there got underway in January 1948 with the award of a \$408,025 grading contract to the Nello L. Teer Company of Durham, North Carolina. All bids on a paving contract in 1949 were deemed excessive, so a smaller paving job was let to W. H. Scott, Inc., of Franklin, Virginia, in May 1950 and the remaining work was done by BPR day-labor forces. The one-mile road extension to Lorcum Lane opened to traffic on December 16, 1950. (This work did not include the access road and overpass from Rosslyn Plaza to the westbound parkway road, for which a \$347,567 contract was awarded to Humphries and Harding, Inc., of Washington in July 1957.)¹⁸

There were immediate problems with unstable slopes and falling rock, an attractive nuisance posed by "caves" in a former quarry opposite the Three Sisters Islands, and a reverse curve on the eastbound Spout Run Parkway lane west of the Uhle Street bridge that several vehicles failed to negotiate. BPR sought to

¹⁷Ibid.; Public Law 77-630, June 27, 1942, U.S. Statutes at Large 56: 415.

¹⁸File 1460/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC.

resolve the falling rock problem in May 1952 by scaling the slopes.

Some park supporters were unhappy about how the road construction scarred the palisades near Spout Run. Devereux Butcher of the National Parks Association wrote NPS director Newton B. Drury in April 1950 to oppose further parkway road construction on either side of the river. Drury defended the road plans, noting that the GWMP was "in effect a metropolitan or city park development as contrasted to the great wilderness and primeval areas encompassed in some of the national parks." The roads would "permit the viewing of the river scenery by millions of people who would otherwise miss these inspiring sights and sounds." At the same time, there would be "ample provision for nature lovers and the relatively small numbers of people who prefer secluded trails and waterways."¹⁹

NCP&PC obtained another \$200,000 appropriation for GWMP land acquisition in fiscal 1948, \$130,576 of which was for Virginia. With this money forthcoming and a balance remaining from the appropriation for the Smoot land, NCP&PC pressed Arlington County for its share of matching funds to extend the parkway to the Fairfax County line. U. S. Grant III, now NCP&PC chairman, reminded the county manager that the NPS would build and maintain the road after the land was acquired, thereby providing Arlington "a great arterial roadway at a minimum expense to the taxpayers

¹⁹Letter, Drury to Butcher, May 5, 1950, file 1460/GWMP General, NCP, WNRC.

of the County." The Virginia General Assembly voted to contribute \$125,000 in 1948, and in June 1950 the state, the county, and NCP&PC concluded an agreement to spend \$600,000 over the next two years for Arlington's river frontage.²⁰

No such activity occurred in Fairfax County during the postwar years. When Benton MacKaye, father of the Appalachian Trail and president of the Wilderness Society, visited John Nolen in July 1946 to discuss the prospect of extending the parkway to Difficult Run (two miles below Great Falls), Nolen told him that Virginia had exhibited a "total lack of interest" in that part of the parkway. That October Grant wrote a congressman that Fairfax County was where "the least progress has been made and the outlook for local participation is the least hopeful." Nothing had been acquired there since the Leiter donation ten years before.²¹

In Montgomery County, Maryland, NCP&PC acquired a few properties for the parkway during the 1930s without matching contributions from the state or county; private parties donated at least half their value. Hermit Island in the Potomac was acquired in July 1936 for \$800, half given by Ruth Deming Oakleaf

²⁰Letter, Grant to A. T. Lundberg, Apr. 21, 1947, Land Acquisition Program, 1948, GWMP file, Box 48, Nolen Files, RG 328; memorandum, T. S. Settle to Grant and Arthur E. Demaray, Mar. 15, 1948, *ibid.*

²¹Memorandum, Nolen to U. S. Grant III and Arthur E. Demaray, July 30, 1946, file 545-100 GWMP, Va., Box 130, RG 328; letter, Grant to Rep. Hatton W. Sumners, Oct. 28, 1946, *ibid.*

of San Diego. Another private donor contributed half the \$8,000 cost of Sherwin Island in 1939.²²

Local officials displayed far more interest in acquiring the stream valley parks for which the Capper-Cramton Act also authorized funding. In December 1938 NCP&PC member Jesse C. Nichols voiced the commission's disapproval of those priorities in a letter to Chairman Delano intended for circulation to Maryland authorities:

Inasmuch as we are using Federal funds, and inasmuch as the George Washington Memorial Parkway is much more important to the nation than the development of Rock Creek Parkway, Sligo, Cabin John, or even the Anacostia, I feel we are not really carrying out the objectives of the Capper-Cramton law if we continue to devote funds largely to projects of only local benefit and neglect the bigger objectives of developing the parkway to Great Falls. . . . As one member of the Commission, I am not willing to approve any further expenditure of money on these local projects unless they are accompanied with reasonable cooperation for the George Washington Memorial Parkway development. I believe that all the other members feel the same way.²³

A major federal acquisition shortly before, in September 1938, likely did more to stimulate local participation than Nichols' letter. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which owned the defunct Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, was deeply in debt to the federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation. After long negotiations promoted by Frederic Delano (a former railroad president acquainted with B & O's officials), the railroad sold

²²File 1460/GWMP, Md., NCP, WNRC; NCP Land Transfer Order 702, Jan. 23, 1940, file 1460/GWMP General, NCP, WNRC.

²³File 1460/GWMP, Md., NCP, WNRC; letter, Nichols to Delano, Dec. 22, 1938, in NCP&PC Minutes, Jan. 26-27, 1939, Nolen Files, RG 328.

the canal to the government for \$2 million, which was credited against its debt. The payment came from a PWA allotment under the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, which authorized an array of public works activities including the acquisition of property for parkways. The allotment, approved by Harold Ickes as PWA administrator, included an additional \$500,000 for "the construction of a parkway as well as the rehabilitation of the existing canal as an historic site."²⁴

The Capper-Cramton Act had authorized acquisition of the C & O Canal below Point of Rocks for the George Washington Memorial Parkway, that being as much of the canal as the B & O was then interested in selling. The 1938 transaction involved virtually the entire 184.5-mile-long canal property from Rock Creek in Washington to Cumberland, Maryland. Although it was not acquired under the Capper-Cramton Act, the portion of the property from the District of Columbia line to above Great Falls fell within the bounds of the parkway and was treated as part of it in practice.

Largely with Civilian Conservation Corps labor, the NPS promptly set about restoring the 22 miles of the canal below Seneca for historical and recreational purposes. Two CCC camps at Carderock, where NCP&PC had acquired about one hundred acres for

²⁴Public Law 73-67, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 48: 201-02; memorandum, Ickes to Secretary of the Treasury, July 29, 1938, C&O file 650.03, National Capital Parks, National Park Service, Record Group 79, National Archives, College Park, MD. The canal acquisition is more fully discussed in Barry Mackintosh, *C & O Canal: The Making of a Park* (Washington: National Park Service, 1991).

the GWMP in 1935, housed this work force from June 1938 until April 1942. This activity galvanized local interest in the parkway project and helped induce the Maryland General Assembly to authorize a \$150,000 bond issue for land acquisition in Montgomery County in March 1939. Congress followed with a matching appropriation that August. The canal restoration (which John Nolen feared would raise the cost of adjoining property) was largely completed in August 1940, and by early 1941 NCP&PC had spent the available \$300,000. Maryland provided \$200,000 more for Montgomery County that year, which was matched by another federal appropriation for fiscal 1942. Nolen told Congress that this would buy all land still needed for the parkway in the county.²⁵

The idea of a parkway road in Montgomery County did not encounter the same early opposition from wilderness advocates as the road in Virginia, probably because the Maryland riverbank was more highly developed. The specific plan for a four-lane dual highway prepared by BPR in 1939 raised criticism within the NPS, however. National Capital Parks landscape architect Donald L. Kline thought the road would encroach too much on the C & O Canal. He recommended using the parallel Glen Echo trolley right-of-way in places to carry the northbound roadway. The higher elevation would afford better river views, he believed, and the

²⁵Memorandum, Nolen to Frederic A. Delano and Arno B. Cammerer, Nov. 7, 1938, GWMP/C&O file 500-10, RG 328; Public Law 76-361, Aug. 9, 1939, U.S. Statutes at Large 53: 1306; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Independent Offices Appropriation Bill for 1942, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1941), pp. 201, 204.

southbound roadway could be removed further from the canal, leaving room for a bridle trail. Another NPS landscape architect, Henry E. Van Gelder, argued that below the old Cabin John bridge, the proposed road "would be so detrimental to the scenery of the canal and the river gorge that the basic idea of building a parkway on these steep hillsides so close to the canal should be reconsidered, and improvement of existing Conduit Road [MacArthur Boulevard] substituted for it."²⁶ These criticisms would later be echoed by outside conservationists when road construction appeared more imminent than it did in the early 1940s.

The bill that resulted in the Capper-Cramton Act provided for a road only in Maryland; language added by the Senate required the state to pay half its cost. Ironically, the Virginia road was able to proceed entirely at federal expense despite the lack of specific authorization for it, while the Maryland road, although specifically authorized, was effectively stymied by the requirement for state funding.

The NPS and NCP&PC pressed Congress to lift this requirement in 1944 and again in 1946, when U. S. Grant III sent the Senate a bill for the purpose. In his transmittal, Grant said the federal government alone had spent more than \$1 million extending the parkway road in Virginia and building the additional Key Bridge span for it, whereas the law required joint funding for

²⁶"Report, George Washington Parkway, Potomac Ave. to Cropley," January 1940, GWMP Upper Potomac Maryland Memoranda, Reports 1937- file, Box 17, Nolen Files, RG 328; memorandum, Van Gelder to Harry T. Thompson, June 12, 1945, file 1460/C&O-5, NCP, WNRC.

equivalent work in Maryland—"a very unfortunate and unjust discrimination against the State of Maryland." He noted that a 1,637-acre right-of-way in Montgomery County was being acquired at a total cost thus far of \$678,000, half from local government and private contributions, but there was no prospect of building the road without the proposed amendment.²⁷

The floor debates in Congress revealed an imperfect understanding of both the Capper-Cramton Act and the amendment. Senator Theodore F. Green of Rhode Island admitted that his Public Buildings and Grounds Committee had been unable to discover why the act differentiated between Maryland and Virginia. Rep. Pehr G. Holmes of Massachusetts, a member of the corresponding House committee, said the amendment was needed because the act "prohibits the expenditure by the United States of any money for the construction of the George Washington Memorial Parkway on the Maryland side of the Potomac."

"This merely authorizes the acquisition of additional property?" Rep. Joseph W. Martin of Massachusetts asked him.

"The gentleman is correct," Holmes replied.

Thus understood, the amendment passed both houses and received President Harry S Truman's signature on August 8,

²⁷NCP&PC Minutes, June 22-23, 1944, file 545-100/GWMP, Md., Box 129, RG 328; letter, Grant to President of Senate, May 9, 1946, *Congressional Record* 92: 6114.

1946.²⁸ There could now be a road on both sides of the river—when Congress appropriated the money.

Among the proponents of the Maryland road was the U.S. Navy, whose David Taylor Model Basin research facility at Carderock, established in the mid-1930s, would be better served by improved access. The Navy's interest in the road made for a largely cooperative relationship with the NPS. In 1937 the NPS permitted the Navy to construct a drainage tunnel under park land north of the C & O Canal to connect with an existing tunnel under the canal, and the Navy gave the NPS material excavated from its testing basins to fill low points along the projected parkway road right-of-way, reducing the need for cuts. In January 1946 the Navy ceded about 18 acres of the David Taylor property to the NPS for the parkway. Even with the Capper-Cramton Act amendment that August, however, the road remained a distant prospect. More than five years later, amid worsening traffic jams caused by their employees, David Taylor officials were still pressing for its construction.²⁹

The NPS had several dealings with other public agencies in connection with this segment of the GWMP during this period. The Corps of Engineers had a hydroelectric generating plant near the

²⁸*Congressional Record* 92: 10352, 10650; Public Law 79-699, U.S. Statutes at Large 60: 960.

²⁹Letter, C. Marshall Finnan to Capt. G. A. Duncan, June 16, 1937, file 1460/Carderock, GWMP, NCP, WNRC; memorandum, Finnan to Acting Director, NPS, Oct. 25, 1937, *ibid.*; letter, Arthur E. Demaray to U. S. Grant III, Apr. 9, 1946, *ibid.*; memorandum, Harry T. Thompson to John Nolen, Dec. 4, 1951, GWMP Agreement P file, Nolen Files, Box 48, RG 328.

C & O Canal just inside the District line. In 1941, as America appeared likely to enter World War II, the Corps planned to convert the plant to an emergency pumping station for Washington's water supply in case the aqueduct from Great Falls were damaged. For this it obtained NPS permission for a new water intake on the canal bank, but only after agreeing to extend the inlet far enough from the plant building to permit future construction of the southbound parkway road between them.³⁰

In 1942 the NPS permitted the Public Housing Administration to build a sewer line across park property for a defense housing development in Cabin John. (This development, known as Cabin John Gardens, would be sold to a cooperative group in 1956.) In 1946 the NPS agreed to allow the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission to place its planned Potomac Interceptor Sewer beneath the inland or berm side of the canal from Cabin John Creek to the District line.³¹ This 36-inch sewer was installed in the early 1950s.

Two significant land transfers resulted from further negotiations with the Corps of Engineers. In December 1947, under an agreement between the army and interior secretaries, the Corps relinquished much of its Washington Aqueduct property at Great Falls for the parkway while retaining control of all surface and subsurface aqueduct features. The Corps' plans for a new pumping

³⁰Memorandum, Arthur E. Demaray to Secretary of the Interior, July 11, 1941, file 1460/GWMP, Md., NCP, WNRC.

³¹Letter, Irving C. Root to Harry R. Hall, Sept. 23, 1946, *ibid.*

station at Little Falls Dam in 1952 included the transfer of all land acquired for the project except that actually occupied by the station. NCP&PC executive officer Blair Lee III called this "the first financial windfall we have had in the Parkway since the acquisition of the C. & O. Canal property."³²

Prince George's County, Maryland, proved least hospitable to the parkway. As the Capper-Cramton Act directed, two Army properties there, Fort Washington and Fort Foote, would become part of the GWMP when no longer needed for military purposes. So little other land was acquired that the parkway never materialized as such in the county.

The War Department transferred Fort Foote, the smaller of the two military properties, to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks on July 18, 1931. It did not transfer Fort Washington to the National Park Service until July 19, 1940, and soon regretted it.

Just after Pearl Harbor the War Department decided it needed the fort back for an adjutant generals' school, and on December 15, 1941, the Interior Department permitted this use for the duration of the war. In February 1943 Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson asked the secretary of the interior to initiate an executive order returning Fort Washington permanently to his department, which was building a \$2.75 million training facility

³²Letter, Kenneth C. Royall to Secretary of the Interior, Nov. 5, 1947, *ibid.*; letter, Lee to Richard F. Green, Jan. 2, 1953, GWMP Land Acquisition Program file, Box 48, Nolen Files, RG 328.

there. Acting Interior Secretary Abe Fortas told him that legislation would be needed because of the fort's transfer by legislation, and that at least part of the property would need to be retained for the GWMP. By September 1944 the War Department had changed its mind and arranged to turn its Fort Washington facilities over to the Veterans Administration for a soldiers' home and hospital. Fortas permitted this use until the VA vacated the premises in January 1947.³³

In Prince George's County as in the other jurisdictions, Frederic Delano began by encouraging land donations from large property owners who might expect to benefit from the planned parkway road. By early 1934 some had proved receptive, including Maj. Gen. William D. Connor, superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy. Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles, owner of Oxon Hill Manor, a large estate on the bluff across the Potomac from Jones Point, was not among them. "If it is the intention of the Commission that the proposed parkway run across my place or any part of my place, I must definitely refuse to permit the survey to be proceeded with in so far as my property is involved," he wrote Delano that February.³⁴

³³Letter, Stimson to Secretary of the Interior, Feb. 20, 1943, file 1460/Fort Washington, NCP, WNRC; letter, Fortas to Stimson, Mar. 4, 1943, *ibid.*; letter, Frank T. Hines to Harold L. Ickes, Sept. 15, 1944, *ibid.*; letter, Fortas to Hines, Sept. 25, 1944, *ibid.* NPS inherited 38 dwellings and allowed Government Services Inc., National Capital Parks' primary concessioner, to rent them out to alleviate the postwar housing shortage. They were demolished in the 1950s.

³⁴Letter, Welles to Delano, Feb. 1, 1934, GWMP Misc. file, Box 3, Delano Files, RG 328.

Delano told Welles that his neighbors had offered to donate a 200-foot right-of-way, urged him to reconsider, and hinted at condemnation if he did not. Welles remained adamant, arguing that an alternate route existed along riverfront property owned by the Smoot Sand & Gravel Company. But BPR chief Thomas MacDonald deemed this alignment unsatisfactory: "It would be better to abandon the project at this time than to accept such a sacrifice of the high standards this parkway should have," he advised Delano.³⁵

"My reaction is that 'he laughs best who laughs last,'" Delano wrote of Welles' intransigence. "I have not begun to fight."³⁶ But Welles held firm, the prospective land donations—contingent on construction of the road—failed to materialize, and the parkway planners were forced to reroute the road around Oxon Hill Manor. Delano wrote Welles again in March 1941 to urge his support for a bill before the Maryland General Assembly authorizing Prince George's County to match a \$50,000 federal appropriation for parkway land acquisition. Welles continued uncooperative, reiterating his statement to the Prince George's delegation that "the proposed parkway is of no interest

³⁵Letter, Delano to Welles, Feb. 7, 1934, *ibid.*; letter, Welles to Delano, Feb. 9, 1934, *ibid.*; letter, MacDonald to Delano, May 2, 1934, *ibid.*

³⁶Notation on letter, William D. Connor to Delano, Feb. 9, 1934, *ibid.*

to the people of our community nor to the residents of Prince Georges County."³⁷

Welles did not speak for all, but interest was clearly insufficient for the level of success ultimately achieved in Virginia and Montgomery County. Another two decades would elapse before any private land was acquired in Prince George's.

³⁷Letter, Delano to Welles, Mar. 21, 1941, GWMP Misc. file, Box 10, Delano Files, RG 328; letter, Welles to Delano, Mar. 22, 1941, *ibid.*

CHAPTER IV: EXPANDING THE PARKWAY, 1952-1970

Not until the mid-1950s and later—a quarter-century after the Capper-Cramton Act—did the George Washington Memorial Parkway proceed visibly beyond the initial Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and the short extension upriver to Spout Run in Arlington. This belated progress was due less to a revival of interest in the parkway itself than to its usefulness in relation to other developments: new highway construction in Montgomery County, Maryland, and a large new federal agency headquarters in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Congress appropriated \$200,000 for GWMP land acquisition in fiscal 1948, the first appropriation for the purpose since the \$200,000 provided (but not spent) for the Smoot Sand & Gravel Company's riverfront property in Arlington in fiscal 1943. It would be the last until 1954. Congress denied everything the National Capital Park and Planning Commission sought for GWMP and stream valley park acquisition in fiscal 1952. "Since these projects have been authorized for more than twenty years and will require many more years for completion . . . no hardship will result from deferring the appropriation of additional funds until after the present international difficulties have subsided," the House Appropriations Committee reported. Again alluding to the Korean Conflict, the committee rejected another request for land money in fiscal 1953.¹

¹House Report 384, 82nd Congress, Apr. 27, 1951, p. 19; House Report 1517, 82nd Congress, Mar. 14, 1952, p. 16.

The National Capital Planning Commission, as NCP&PC was retitled in 1952, sought \$475,000 for GWMP land acquisition in fiscal 1954. Testifying before the House Appropriations Committee on this request in February 1953, John Nolen said that previous appropriations were sufficient for NCPC to complete acquisition in Virginia as far as the Arlington-Fairfax county line once a condemnation suit filed for the Smoot property in July 1952 had been resolved. Of the \$475,000, \$300,000 was needed to extend parkway holdings to the Bureau of Public Roads tract in Fairfax County and \$175,000 to complete acquisition in Montgomery County (notwithstanding Nolen's prewar assurance that funds then appropriated would suffice for Montgomery).²

The committee again denied NCPC's request, citing "the demand for economy and a balanced budget," and by the time of the Senate Appropriations Committee hearings in April 1953, the new administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower had directed NCPC to delete all land acquisition funds from its budget request. Sen. J. Glenn Beall of Maryland protested, suggesting that perhaps the Capper-Cramton Act should be repealed in view of the repeated failure to fulfill its objectives. The Montgomery County Civic Federation urged funding, the *Washington Evening Star* advocated "at least nominal appropriations . . . as a token of intent to keep alive the fine purposes of the law," and U. S. Grant III,

²U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Independent Offices Appropriations for 1954, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1953), pp. 30, 32-33. The Smoot case was not settled until 1956, when a jury awarded \$324,000 for about a hundred acres valued by NCPC at \$113,000.

now president of the American Planning and Civic Association, made a similar plea to the Senate committee. Congress and the administration ultimately approved \$100,000 for Fairfax County, which was used to acquire land between the county line and Chain Bridge Road (Route 123).³

Henceforth there would be land acquisition appropriations for the parkway each year through fiscal 1963. The \$135,000 that NCPC requested and obtained in 1954 for fiscal 1955 included \$110,000 for land between Route 123 and the Leiter tract in Fairfax County and \$25,000 for land in Montgomery County, most for a 15-acre tract on the river side of MacArthur Boulevard near the Dalecarlia Reservoir and Little Falls Branch Parkway. Coincidentally, the 1954 Federal-Aid Highway Act for the first time provided parkway construction contract authorization for three fiscal years (1955-57), enabling the National Park Service to program parkway construction to an extent impossible under the previous authorization-appropriation process. Citing this new authority, NPS director Conrad L. Wirth asked NCPC chairman Harland Bartholomew to expedite land acquisition for GWMP construction in fiscal 1956 and 1957.⁴

³U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, *First Independent Offices Appropriations, 1954, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1953), pp. 270, 273, 275; Senate Report 237, 83rd Congress, May 12, 1953, p. 9; Public Law 83-176, July 31, 1953, U.S. Statutes at Large 67: 309.

⁴U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Independent Offices Appropriations for 1955, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1954), pp. 70, 75; letter, Wirth to Bartholomew, Nov. 2, 1954, file 545-100/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., Box 129, National Capital Planning Commission, Record Group

In 1955 Wirth readied plans for Mission 66, a ten-year program to acquire park lands, expand and upgrade park facilities, and otherwise improve the national park system by the fiftieth anniversary of the NPS in 1966. As the program got underway the next year, Wirth called the GWMP one of the most important Mission 66 projects in the national capital area and again pressed Harland Bartholomew to seek enough land acquisition money to enable its completion.⁵ Although the goal of completion remained elusive, there was now enough impetus for substantial progress in Montgomery County and Virginia.

In Montgomery County, much of the impetus came from the construction of U.S. Highway 240 (now Interstate 270) between Frederick, Maryland, and Washington. Plans called for this and other components of the nascent interstate highway system to be brought downtown. To avoid the cost of displacing residences and businesses, highway planners sought the use of parkland where possible. For U.S. 240, they favored the western edge of Rock Creek Park. To counter this threatened incursion, the NPS and NCPC now promoted the Montgomery County leg of the GWMP as a way of bringing at least the noncommercial traffic from U.S. 240 into Washington. "It is the Commission's solution of this problem of keeping an expressway out of Rock Creek Park," John Nolen told the House Appropriations Committee in February 1955. Congress

328, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereinafter cited as RG 328).

⁵Letters, Wirth to Bartholomew, July 18 and 25, 1956, file 545-100/GWMP, Fairfax Co., Va., RG 328.

responded favorably, appropriating the \$183,000 that NCPC had requested for Montgomery County land in fiscal 1956 to enable the NPS to begin grading between Cabin John and the District line.⁶

In Virginia, the impetus for the parkway stemmed from the plans of another federal agency to move to Fairfax County. The Military Construction Authorization Act of July 15, 1955, authorized the director of central intelligence to acquire land and construct facilities and access roads for a new Central Intelligence Agency headquarters in the Washington area. If he decided to make use of the Bureau of Public Roads property in Langley, Virginia, the act enabled him to transfer \$8.5 million to NCPC and the Interior Department for land acquisition and road construction needed to extend the parkway to it.⁷ Despite some local opposition, Director Allen W. Dulles' choice of the Langley site held, and the CIA obtained and transferred the \$8.5 million for the parkway in fiscal 1957 and 1958.

Although the CIA acquired most of its acreage at Langley from the BPR, it also obtained 6.6 acres of GWMP land from the

⁶U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1956, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1955), p. 592; Public Law 84-78, June 16, 1955, U.S. Statutes at Large 69: 156. For more on the Rock Creek Park expressway proposal see Barry Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History* (Washington: NPS, 1985), pp. 85-89.

⁷Public Law 84-161, U.S. Statutes at Large 69: 349.

NPS in September 1956. In compensation, the NPS received 11.4 acres of the BPR tract for the parkway in April 1957.⁸

Construction on the Virginia parkway extension got underway in October 1956, when Taylor and Keebler, Inc., of Clinton, Maryland, received a \$1,161,195 contract for grading, drainage, and bridge abutments on a 2.37-mile section between Spout Run and Chain Bridge. Work was briefly delayed by the presence of a squatters' community known as Little Italy above Spout Run; the old Italian men living there were evicted in December. Because subdivision development along the river in Arlington since the 1930s had curtailed what could be acquired for the parkway, the road in this section required more cutting into the bluff and destruction of its large trees than originally planned. As John Nolen predicted, the construction scars prompted much criticism.⁹

Of the \$8.5 million transferred from the CIA, \$8 million went for road construction and \$500,000 for land acquisition. The latter amount was insufficient, so Congress appropriated another \$438,000 to NCPC in fiscal 1957 under the Capper-Cramton Act for parkway land in Virginia. Most was for land between the BPR tract and the projected Capital Beltway; \$24,000 of it partially reimbursed Virginia for the Worthington property, the site of a

⁸Memorandum, Conrad L. Wirth to Secretary of the Interior, Nov. 19, 1956, file 1460/GWMP, Va., National Capital Parks records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD; letter, B. D. Tallamy to Wirth, Mar. 15, 1957, *ibid.* Collection hereinafter cited as NCP, WNRC.

⁹Press release of Oct. 19, 1956, *ibid.*; letters, Harry T. Thompson to Philip Natoli et al., Dec. 6, 1956, *ibid.*; Nolen prediction in NCPC Minutes, Apr. 5-6, 1956, RG 328.

former oil refinery near Key Bridge that had long degraded the parkway before burning in 1953.¹⁰

The \$8 million for road construction also proved insufficient. In October 1957 the NPS asked the CIA to seek an additional \$1,063,000 from Congress to complete the project. But Congress appeared unlikely to give the CIA more money, and Director Wirth arranged to shift funds programmed for the parkway road from Carderock to Great Falls in Maryland.¹¹

Construction proceeded steadily during 1958. The initial grading work was completed, and contracts were let for the Spout Run, Windy Run, Donaldson Run, Gulf Branch, Glebe Road, and Pimmit Run bridges. Most noteworthy was the high-level span carrying the inbound lanes of the parkway over Spout Run and the outbound lanes of Spout Run Parkway, a dramatic open concrete arch structure built by Capital Engineering Company of Washington for \$262,372. Newton Asphalt Company of Alexandria and Contee Sand & Gravel Company of Laurel, Maryland, were awarded contracts totaling \$1,580,462 to pave the five-and-a-half miles of road from Spout Run to the CIA interchange, which was completed the following year.¹²

¹⁰U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1957, Hearings* (Washington; GPO, 1956), pp. 646-47; Public Law 84-573, June 13, 1956, U.S. Statutes at Large 70: 271.

¹¹Memorandum, Henry Langley to Jackson Price, Oct. 15, 1957, file 1460/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC; letter, Eivind T. Scoyen to Allen W. Dulles, Oct. 17, 1957, *ibid.*; memorandum, H. G. Smith to Henry Langley, Nov. 1, 1957, *ibid.*

¹²File 1460/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC.

Wirth learned that President Eisenhower had been invited to lay the cornerstone of the CIA building on November 3, 1959, and would be traveling to the site via the new road. He arranged to have Eisenhower pause en route just past the Spout Run turnoff and cut a ribbon formally opening the road to traffic.¹³ Joining the president at the ceremony were Wirth, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Roger Ernst, Superintendent Harry T. Thompson of National Capital Parks, and Rep. Joel T. Broyhill of Virginia.

This was not the first time a federal parkway was built to serve a major federal installation. The Baltimore-Washington and Suitland parkways, for which the NPS had assumed responsibility in 1949-50, had been built during and after World War II to provide swift access to Fort Meade and Andrews Air Force Base. While they were attractively designed and landscaped, their purpose was expressly utilitarian. The extended GWMP would still serve commemorative and environmental conservation purposes, but its construction with CIA money for travel to and from CIA headquarters meant that its practical function as a commuter road could no longer be discounted.

This new reality was pointedly brought to the parkway custodians' attention a year later. In a letter prepared by the NPS, the Interior Department rejected a request by Representative Broyhill to raise the speed limit on the new road from forty to fifty miles per hour. Broyhill was told that what had been built

¹³Memorandum, Wirth to Secretary of the Interior, Oct. 20, 1959, *ibid.*; memorandum, Elmer F. Bennett to Eisenhower, Oct. 27, 1959, *ibid.*

was a "park road" and that "the primary responsibility of the National Park Service in road construction is to provide means for the park visitor to enjoy the park or parkway characteristics through which the road or roadways traverse, and not primarily to accommodate commuter traffic." Unsurprisingly, Broyhill was not persuaded. "We must frankly be realistic about this matter and recognize that this is not an exclusively 'park road' but was constructed to serve commuters to and from the new CIA building at Langley," he replied.¹⁴ The NPS ultimately yielded on the speed limit.

Both the CIA and the Federal Aviation Administration were eager to have the road extended another two miles to the planned Capital Beltway. In addition to serving more CIA commuters, the parkway would become a vital link to what was then called the Chantilly Airport, scheduled for opening in 1961. While planning the airport access road in 1958, the Civil Aeronautics Administration (FAA's predecessor) had proposed one alignment that would join the GWMP at the Beltway. The NPS successfully opposed any such direct connection, arguing that the parkway road could not handle the full volume of airport traffic.¹⁵

¹⁴Letter, Broyhill to Fred A. Seaton, Oct. 20, 1960, *ibid.*; letter, George W. Abbott to Broyhill, Nov. 25, 1960, *ibid.*; letter, Broyhill to Abbott, Nov. 29, 1960, *ibid.*

¹⁵Letter, B. D. Tallamy to Harland Bartholomew, May 29, 1959, file 545-100/GWMP, Fairfax Co., Va., Box 131, RG 328; memorandum, T. Sutton Jett to Director, NPS, Aug. 19, 1958, file 1460/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC; letter, Eivind T. Scoyen to Herbert H. Howell, Aug. 22, 1958, *ibid.*

The design of the road extension was delayed by disagreement between the NPS and BPR about how much more land needed to be transferred from BPR's Langley property, which abutted GWMP's portion of the former Leiter tract beyond CIA headquarters. The NPS wanted enough acreage to locate the road far enough from the river to develop recreational facilities along the bluffs, there being no room for such facilities anywhere below. At a May 1959 conference, representatives of the two bureaus finally reached agreement on the transfer of 72.7 acres. The under secretary of commerce (in whose department BPR then resided) approved the transfer with the understanding that an interchange serving the remaining BPR property would be provided at or near Turkey Run.¹⁶

Congress gave NCPC \$62,000 in fiscal 1960 for additional land for this section of the GWMP—its last appropriation under the Capper-Cramton Act for the parkway in Virginia. Road construction, entailing bridges over Turkey and Dead runs, got underway the following fiscal year. The paving work, done by Newton Asphalt for \$977,843 in 1961-62, included a mile of road and four parking areas for the planned Turkey Run Recreation Area. The road opened to traffic in December 1962 together with the section of the Beltway that included the Cabin John Bridge and the Dulles Access Road interchange.¹⁷

¹⁶Letter, Conrad L. Wirth to Ellis L. Armstrong, Apr. 29, 1959, file 545-100/GWMP, Fairfax Co., Va., Box 131, RG 328; letter, Roger Ernst to Lewis L. Strauss, June 3, 1959, *ibid.*; letter, F. A. Mueller to Secretary of the Interior, June 24, 1959, *ibid.*

¹⁷File 1460/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC.

Building the parkway road in Montgomery County proved more difficult. The presence of the historic C & O Canal and more extensive suburban development left little room for a four-lane road in places, severely limiting the planners' options. Disagreements with the D.C. Government about extending the road downtown further complicated and delayed its design and completion.

As noted earlier, NPS landscape architects had criticized the destructive effect of BPR's 1939 plan for this road on the canal and the natural landscape, recommending instead the improvement of MacArthur Boulevard and the use of the D.C. Transit Company's Glen Echo trolley right-of-way for portions of the parkway. But MacArthur Boulevard and the trolley line were closely bordered by development in places and could not easily be converted to limited-access, naturally landscaped roads. BPR refined plans for a road generally along the canal, and in early 1955 the House approved a \$655,000 appropriation to grade the section between the District line and Cabin John during fiscal 1956.

In March 1954 Justice William O. Douglas of the U.S. Supreme Court had led a highly publicized hike down the length of the C & O Canal in reaction to an NPS plan to convert much of it beyond Seneca to a parkway. The park service's retreat on the canal parkway scheme, which it soon abandoned, encouraged citizen opposition to the GWMP road plan. Neill Phillips, representing the D.C. Audubon Society, the Progressive Citizens Association of

Georgetown, and the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, appeared before the Senate's Interior Department appropriations subcommittee in April 1955 to fight the grading appropriation. "This proposed section of 4-lane dual highway on the banks of the C. & O. Canal is one more example of the pernicious philosophy that has grown up in some Government circles since the war that an easy solution to Washington's traffic problems lies in shoving superhighways through our magnificent parks," he testified. Howard Zahniser of the Wilderness Society joined Phillips in urging reconsideration of MacArthur Boulevard and the trolley right-of-way.¹⁸

The NPS defended the plan. Acting Director Hillory A. Tolson wrote the Senate committee chairman before the hearing to assure him that the road would not encroach on the canal: "The towpath, the historic lock houses, and the adjoining canal lands along the river will continue to remain, as they now exist, as a recreational waterway." MacArthur Boulevard, a restricted Corps of Engineers work road atop the Washington Aqueduct with subdivisions on both sides, was an unsuitable alternative. At the hearing, Director Wirth testified that the road would come no closer than 125 feet to the canal. He had to correct this claim afterward: of the 10.8 miles of road between the D.C. line and the proposed bridge above Great Falls, 4.1 miles would be less

¹⁸U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1956, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1955), pp. 879, 884.

than 120 feet from the canal; near Brookmont and Glen Echo the pavement would be only 20 feet from it.¹⁹

The Senate committee reported the appropriations bill with a provision that no money could be obligated on the road between the D.C. line and Cabin John, but the House-Senate conference committee on the bill substituted a condition that "maximum possible protection . . . be provided to maintain the C. & O. Canal and the lands bordering it in their natural state." Dissatisfied with the discretion this left the NPS, the parkway opponents continued their campaign. "With curious inconsistency, the NPS still persists in pushing plans for the parkway, which would greatly impair, along the lower canal, the very principles which it has espoused for the upper region," wrote Irston R. Barnes, head of the D.C. Audubon Society and the Potomac Valley Conservation and Recreation Council. "The anomaly is striking, for if it were necessary to single out only one part of the canal for preservation, the area near the city of Washington would clearly be the most significant because it offers natural conditions so close to the city."²⁰

Although outwardly committed to BPR's current four-lane highway plan as an alternative to extending U.S. 240 downtown through Rock Creek Park, the NPS was also troubled about its

¹⁹Letter, Tolson to Sen. Carl Hayden, Apr. 1, 1955, *ibid.*, pp. 674-75; Wirth testimony and statement *ibid.*, pp. 676, 685.

²⁰Senate Report 261, 84th Congress, p. 11; House Report 731, 84th Congress, p. 7; *Survey of the Potomac River Situation* (Washington: Potomac Valley Conservation and Recreation Council, 1956), p. 2.

impact. In December 1955, citing the "maximum possible protection" proviso, Wirth advocated to NCPC chairman Bartholomew a single two-lane roadway in the valley from the D.C. line to just beyond Cabin John Creek. A second roadway could be built later using the higher-level trolley right-of-way. Wirth admitted that the latter alignment would not achieve a park-like setting through the developed sections of Brookmont and Glen Echo but felt that the greater preservation of park values in the valley would offset this shortcoming. Building the lower road first could be justified by the fact that the trolley was still operating and its right-of-way was not yet obtainable.²¹

Wirth's proposal would result in a single two-lane, two-way road for an extended period if not forever—entirely satisfactory from the NPS perspective. But BPR, with its primary concern for transportation requirements, could not acquiesce in this strategy. Given the established need for four lanes, Division Engineer H. J. Spelman was unwilling to divide the project or accept an infeasible alignment. The inadequate width of the right-of-way through Brookmont and Glen Echo would require taking another 35-40 houses at great expense, he wrote Wirth, and the extensive development between the two roadways in those areas "would create an impossible access situation which could not be administered."²²

²¹Letter, Wirth to Bartholomew, Dec. 2, 1955, file 445-100/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., Box 129, RG 328.

²²Memorandum, Ellis F. Price to John Nolen, Jr., Dec. 8, 1955, *ibid.*; letter, Spelman to Wirth, Feb. 5, 1956, *ibid.*

Wirth did not appreciate Spelman's uncooperative attitude.

points which you make . . . have been considered, and there is no doubt but that the adoption of the trolley grade throughout for one roadway will be somewhat more complicated than keeping it at the same elevation . . . ,” he replied.

The problem resolves itself into whether or not the lands acquired for the Parkway are being developed as a park or as a transportation facility. We are of the conclusion that the proper park development is to locate one road at the lower elevation and to run the streetcar right of way.

In response to public protests and doubtless with Wirth's encouragement, the chairman of the Senate Interior and Insular

Murray of Montana, asked NCPC to include MacArthur Boulevard and the trolley right-of-way in May 1957. NCPC held a public hearing and appointed a committee to review three alternatives. The committee, which included Wirth and Spelman, submitted its report on August 1. It found all alternatives to BPR's plan infeasible: they would require the destruction of too many houses and would cost too much. The planned road would be as far from the canal as possible within the land acquired for it.²⁴

²³Letter, Wirth to Spelman, Mar. 5, 1956, *ibid.*

²⁴Letter, Murray to Harland Bartholomew, May 15, 1957, *ibid.*; report with NCPC Minutes, Aug. 1, 1957, RG 328.

NCPC approved the report and sent it to Senator Murray. Anthony Wayne Smith, a conservation activist who had helped defeat the C & O Canal Parkway, complained to Murray that the report ignored practical alternatives prepared by conservation groups. John Nolen responded for NCPC that these alternatives would not ensure the limited access and scenic views essential to a parkway.²⁵ Murray declined to intervene. If Wirth and the NPS still had reservations about the approved plan, they swallowed them and pressed forward to carry it out.

On December 17, 1957, the NPS awarded Wright Construction Company of Odenton, Maryland, a \$1,037,235 contract for grading and drainage of the two lanes intended for inbound traffic between Rock Run, near where the Beltway was projected to cross, and Little Falls Branch, near the D.C. line—a distance of 3.9 miles. This work was completed in July 1959.²⁶

Construction of the outbound lanes was complicated by the presence of the D.C. Transit Company's right-of-way in a narrow area between the canal and MacArthur Boulevard above Brookmont. In August 1958 the NPS obtained legislation to enable land exchanges with D.C. Transit so that the trolley line could be relocated inland. Streetcar service on the line ended January 3,

²⁵Letter, Harland Bartholomew to Murray, Aug. 6, 1957, file 545-100/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., RG 328; letter, Smith to Murray, Sept. 6, 1957, *ibid.*; letter, Nolen to Murray, Nov. 6, 1957, *ibid.*

²⁶Memorandum, Conrad L. Wirth to Director, Division of Budget & Finance, USDI, Jan. 31, 1958, file 1460/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., NCP, WNRC; letter, Robert C. Horne to Rep. Joel T. Broyhill, June 11, 1965, file D24/GWMP, Md., NCP, WNRC.

1960, prompting Wirth to press NCPC to acquire all the right-of-way within the parkway's taking lines. But sufficient funds to persuade O. Roy Chalk, D.C. Transit's owner, were unavailable, and the property was not acquired.²⁷ Largely as a result, except for a half-mile section passing Brookmont, only a single two-lane roadway was built below Glen Echo.

The parkway's connection to the Beltway was the subject of protracted negotiations with the Maryland State Road Commission, initially involving Alden A. Potter. The roads would intersect on Potter's farm at 8400 MacArthur Boulevard, just east of the David Taylor Model Basin. The father of Montgomery County's future chief executive urged in late 1957 that the GWMP road be routed to the inland side of MacArthur Boulevard from below his property west toward Great Falls, with no direct Beltway connection. But the NPS and the SRC agreed in April 1958 that there would be a complete interchange between the roads, that the NPS would shift its outbound roadway toward MacArthur Boulevard to provide room for it, and that the SRC would acquire the necessary land from Potter.²⁸

²⁷Public Law 85-774, Aug. 27, 1958, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 72: 931; memorandum, Wirth to Chairman, NCPC, Dec. 18, 1959, file 545-100/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., RG 328. At one point Chalk spoke of using the right-of-way for a monorail to Dulles Airport (letter to Stewart L. Udall, Oct. 31, 1961, file 1460/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., NCP, WNRC).

²⁸Letter, Potter to Harry T. Thompson, Dec. 17, 1957, file 1460/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., NCP, WNRC; letter, Robert C. Horne to Norman M. Pritchett, Apr. 18, 1958, *ibid*.

That December, the SRC proposed a branch parkway from the Beltway north of Cabin John down Cabin John Creek to the GWMP. This Cabin John Parkway would obviate part of the planned GWMP-Beltway interchange and would reduce by two-and-a-quarter miles the travel distance between Washington and points north on the Beltway. In the opinion of NPS parkway planners Robert C. Horne and Dudley Bayliss, it would also destroy the Cabin John Valley. If a road were brought down the valley, they wanted to divert it before it passed under the historic Washington Aqueduct bridge and link it to the planned GWMP-MacArthur Boulevard interchange just west of the valley in Cabin John.²⁹

Norman M. Pritchett, the SRC's chief engineer, deemed the NPS alternative infeasible. In addition to saving travel time, he argued in March 1959, the proposed Cabin John Parkway would open up the valley to the public and enhance public appreciation of the aqueduct bridge: "The opportunity of exposing to view this historically important and architecturally pleasing structure should not be missed." He reminded Horne that the SRC's proposal had been unanimously endorsed by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (which had acquired the valley with the aid of Capper-Cramton funds), and that the SRC could not design the Beltway bridge across the Potomac—a matter of great urgency—until the interchange configuration was settled.³⁰

²⁹Minutes of Dec. 16, 1958, SRC-BPR-NPS meeting, *ibid.*; letter, Horne to Norman M. Pritchett, Feb. 11, 1959, *ibid.*

³⁰Letter, Pritchett to Horne, Mar. 13, 1959, *ibid.*

Under this pressure, the NPS yielded on the abridged Beltway interchange in April, thereby committing itself to support the Cabin John Parkway or its functional equivalent. After trying again to work something out in connection with the Cabin John interchange, it agreed to the Cabin John Parkway shifted slightly east of the SRC's proposed alignment. The SRC assumed responsibility for all work on GWMP land associated with the parkway.³¹

The NPS was more successful in opposing the SRC's plan to carry the Beltway bridge approach across the parkway and C & O Canal on fill. The Washington Biologists' Field Club had recently donated Plummer's Island and 41.2 adjoining acres to NCPC for the parkway under an agreement giving it continued use of the undisturbed island. Because the fill would occupy part of the island and block the channel separating it from the mainland, the NPS used this agreement in June 1959 to insist on a more costly bridge structure. It exhibited less concern the following year for the original stone lockhouse at Lock 13 on the canal, allowing the SRC to demolish it for a construction access road across the lock before building the outer loop bridge approach directly overhead.³²

³¹Minutes of Apr. 16, 1959, SRC-BPR-NPS meeting, *ibid.*; letter, William E. Finley to Jesse F. Nicholson, June 12, 1959, *ibid.*; memorandum, Elwood E. Rensch to files, June 30, 1959, *ibid.*

³²Letter, Harry T. Thompson to Norman M. Pritchett, June 10, 1959, *ibid.*; letter, William M. Haussmann to Haines B. Felter, Feb. 23, 1960, *ibid.*; NCP Land Record No. 283, July 8, 1958; NCPC Minutes, Feb. 5, 1959, RG 328. Vaso and Herzog islands were acquired simultaneously with Plummer's Island.

As GWMP construction proceeded to the Beltway in Montgomery County, the NPS included \$887,800 in its fiscal 1960 budget request in January 1959 to begin extending the road to Great Falls. BPR's plans had the road crossing the Washington Aqueduct conduits at three places between the David Taylor Model Basin and Old Angler's Inn on MacArthur Boulevard. Because this would require expensive modifications to the conduits, Wirth decided in February to temporarily terminate the road at MacArthur Boulevard just west of David Taylor and east of the first conduit crossing point.³³

The budget request fell under the unsympathetic scrutiny of Rep. Michael J. Kirwan of Ohio, chairman of the House subcommittee on Interior Department appropriations. His committee deleted the \$877,800 and expressed displeasure with the entire project: "The Committee sees no necessity to construct this six mile scenic portion, involving four lanes, at a cost in excess of \$10,000,000" Although the Senate appropriations committee subsequently endorsed the road from the Beltway to Great Falls "as originally authorized," Wirth could not persuade Kirwan to support more than his immediate mile-and-a-half extension to MacArthur Boulevard. The House-Senate conference committee report on the appropriations bill expressly disallowed any expenditures to extend the road "from the vicinity of Brickyard Road at MacArthur Boulevard to Great Falls, Md." This prohibition was

³³Memorandum, Robert C. Horne to files, Feb. 10, 1959, file 1460/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., NCP, WNRC.

reiterated in the appropriations act itself that year and in successive acts through the 1960s.³⁴

The extension to MacArthur Boulevard included construction of an interchange with overpass at David Taylor and an access road from the interchange through a canal underpass to a recreation area on the river at Carderock. Grading for the project was accomplished between June 1959 and June 1961. The presence of a black cemetery near the "temporary" MacArthur Boulevard terminus and plans to run the new Potomac Interceptor Sewer beneath that portion of the road delayed further progress. NCPC acquired Mt. Glory Cemetery by condemnation for the D.C. Government in connection with the sewer project in July 1962, and the NPS contracted with a funeral home to relocate its 113 burials to a Rockville cemetery the following summer.³⁵

Completion of the GWMP road at the downstream end was also delayed by the sewer project and was further complicated by the uncertain status of the Potomac Palisades Parkway, the park property along the river above Key Bridge in Washington. This land was acquired for the national capital park system beginning in the 1920s and treated as a de facto part of the GWMP after

³⁴House Report 237, 86th Congress, Mar. 20, 1959, p. 9; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1960, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1959), p. 594; Senate Report 345, 86th Congress, June 5, 1959, p. 15; House Report 545, 86th Congress, June 12, 1959, p. 6; Public Law 86-60, June 23, 1959, U.S. Statutes at Large 73: 98.

³⁵Letter, C. P. Montgomery to Paul F. Royster, Oct. 31, 1961, file 1460/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., NCP, WNRC; letter, James W. Head, Jr., to Raymond L. Freeman, July 17, 1963, *ibid*.

1930; the different name was retained because the Capper-Cramton Act did not authorize land acquisition for the GWMP in the District.³⁶

There were longstanding plans for the GWMP road in Montgomery County to be continued downstream through the Palisades Parkway, using or supplementing Canal Road below Chain Bridge. By the mid-1950s the D.C. Government wanted the parkway to become part of U.S. 240, with four lanes carrying commercial traffic. The NPS strongly opposed this conversion; the NCP&C's 1957 report on GWMP alternatives instead favored bringing U.S. 240 downtown along Wisconsin Avenue and through Glover-Archbold Park to the river, where the parkway road would join it. Pending resolution of the disagreement, the D.C. Highway Department resisted any connection of the GWMP road to Canal Road at Chain Bridge.³⁷

Reflecting this conflict and Representative Kirwan's general attitude toward Washington-area park and parkway projects, the House Appropriations Committee disapproved an NPS request for

³⁶NCP&C Minutes, Mar. 17-19, 1932, RG 328. Although in D.C., the parkland on Columbia Island was considered part of the GWMP. NPS attorney A. J. Knox justified this by the Capper-Cramton Act provision authorizing NCP&C to occupy federal lands needed for the GWMP on the Virginia side of the river, under which it occupied the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway including the portion on Columbia Island (memorandum to Robert C. Horne, Feb. 14, 1949, file 1460/Columbia Island, NCP, WNRC).

³⁷U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1959, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1958), p. 841; memorandum, Harry T. Thompson to Conrad L. Wirth, Aug. 12, 1958, file 1460/Potomac Palisades Parkway, NCP, WNRC.

\$165,000 in fiscal 1960 to grade the half-mile section between the D.C. line and Canal Road "pending further study." The Senate was more supportive, and Congress ultimately voted the money with the understanding that it was approving only that section of the Palisades Parkway road. When Wirth returned to the House committee to seek \$175,000 for paving this section in fiscal 1961, he noted that the trolley right-of-way would be needed to complete the Palisades Parkway project and spoke of it in long-range terms: "I know it will go through someday."³⁸

The NPS got the paving appropriation, but it could not proceed with the work. The D.C. Highway Department continued to argue that a connection at the angled intersection of Canal Road with Chain Bridge would produce a bad traffic situation and insisted on reaching a final solution before approving any such interim arrangement.³⁹

The NPS struggled to come up with an acceptable design. In 1962 William M. Haussmann, chief of its National Capital Office of Design and Construction, proposed what was the eleventh Palisades Parkway scheme: the inbound roadway would cross the C & O Canal 2,000 feet above Chain Bridge, run beneath the bridge and along the river for about two-and-a-half miles, and recross the canal about 1,500 feet before Glover-Archbold Park; the

³⁸House Report 237; House Report 545; Public Law 86-60; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1961, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1960), p. 971.

³⁹Letter, F. W. Cron to Robert C. Horne, Apr. 4, 1960, file 1460/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., NCP, WNRC.

outbound roadway would generally occupy Canal Road. But NPS regional director T. Sutton Jett (National Capital Parks became National Capital Region in 1962) thought the canal's historic ambiance would be destroyed if it were "sandwiched between two high-speed roadways" and declared that "[t]he value of the wooded land between the canal and the river cannot be over-estimated." He suggested a single two-lane roadway on the inland side with reversible traffic during rush hours—a solution then unacceptable to the D.C. Government (but essentially the ultimate outcome using Canal Road).⁴⁰

While the Palisades Parkway remained unsettled, work proceeded slowly on the GWMP road across the line in Montgomery County. Unstable slopes along Ridge Road in Brookmont required construction of a large retaining wall there in 1960-61. Originally scheduled for completion in 1962, the work in progress was halted to allow installation of the sewer in 1963.

Completion of this work would result in a road reaching neither its planned Great Falls destination upstream nor Canal Road or other existing routes downstream. Outbound traffic beyond the Beltway would have to exit at Cropley, just past Carderock, and continue to Great Falls on MacArthur Boulevard; inbound traffic would have to exit at Glen Echo and continue downtown on MacArthur Boulevard. The Corps of Engineers was reluctant to burden its road with the expected traffic volumes, especially

⁴⁰Memorandum, Jett to Director, NPS, Nov. 30, 1962, file 1460/Potomac Palisades Parkway, NCP, WNRC.

below Glen Echo, and set difficult conditions for what were described as temporary connections at the two points.⁴¹

In September 1963 after more than a year of negotiations, the Corps agreed to permit these connections if the NPS would pay for reinforcing the old conduit beneath MacArthur Boulevard between Glen Echo and Brookmont and for improving and maintaining the road. The NPS argued that it lacked authority to assume those responsibilities and that the parkway would relieve the burden on the longer stretch of MacArthur Boulevard that it paralleled. The Corps yielded in the spring of 1964, permitting the two connections without NPS responsibilities for MacArthur Boulevard and the conduit. The NPS agreed to keep inbound parkway traffic from exiting at Glen Echo once the parkway road was completed to Washington and to discontinue the connection at Cropley when the road was extended beyond that point.⁴² But the road was never "completed" to Washington and never extended beyond Cropley, saving the NPS from meeting those terms.

The GWMP road from the Beltway to Cropley opened to traffic November 20, 1964 (nearly two years after the Beltway's Cabin John Bridge opened and three months after the Beltway was completed). The section between the Beltway and Glen Echo opened

⁴¹Memorandum for record, J. C. Smith, July 18, 1962, file GWMP/Montgomery Co., Md., NCP, WNRC.

⁴²Letter, Col. Roy S. Kelley to T. Sutton Jett, Sept. 30, 1963, file D24/GWMP, Md., NCP, WNRC; letter, Jett to Kelley, Oct. 11, 1963, *ibid.*; letter, Maj. Gen. Jackson Graham to Hillory A. Tolson, Mar. 13, 1964, *ibid.*

January 8, 1965. Paving from the Glen Echo exit to a quarter-mile inside the District line was completed that summer, leaving a graded but unpaved quarter-mile gap to the end of Canal Road at Chain Bridge.⁴³ While this paved section remained officially closed to through traffic, the NPS built two spiraling pedestrian bridges overhead at Brookmont and Sycamore Island in 1966-68.

In May 1966 the NPS agreed with the D.C. and Virginia highway departments that when the planned Three Sisters Bridge was built across the Potomac and linked to the planned Potomac River Freeway along the Georgetown waterfront, it would build the Palisades Parkway road down to their junction using the Canal Road right-of-way, which the District would transfer to the NPS, and portions of the trolley right-of-way, still to be acquired from O. Roy Chalk. In March 1967 George B. Hartzog, Jr., Wirth's successor as NPS director, informed his Senate appropriations subcommittee of this plan and expressed the hope that the D.C. Highway Department would allow a temporary connection at the end of Canal Road until it could be realized.⁴⁴

The highway department continued to resist, fearing that such a connection would reduce pressure for the planned major highway improvements, which were becoming increasingly controversial. Highway supporters inserted a provision in what

⁴³National Capital Region press release, Jan. 6, 1965, *ibid.*; letter, Robert C. Horne to Rep. Joel T. Broyhill, June 11, 1965, *ibid.*

⁴⁴U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1968, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1967), p. 552.

became the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 directing construction of the Three Sisters Bridge and the Palisades Parkway connection, but opponents succeeded in stalling and ultimately killing both projects.

Meanwhile, the NPS did little to prevent some through traffic from traversing the unpaved quarter-mile gap. When the D.C. Highway Department periodically tried to barricade the unofficial connection at Canal Road, particularly during morning rush hours, protests naturally ensued. Ultimately, as pressures from commuters mounted and prospects for the Palisades Parkway dimmed, the highway department threw in the towel. In 1970 the NPS paved the gap, the highway department installed a signal at the Canal Road-Chain Bridge junction, and the parkway was officially opened to through traffic, one-way during morning and evening rush hours.⁴⁵

That proved to be the end of parkway road construction (except for later rehabilitation) on the Maryland-District side of the Potomac. Four lanes having been planned but incompletely realized, the road below Cabin John makes three transitions between two and four lanes that make no sense to anyone unfamiliar with its peculiar history. The transition at the Glen Echo exit, where a bridge was constructed but never used to carry

⁴⁵Letter, Floyd B. Taylor to George R. Hammond, May 17, 1967, file 1460/GWMP, Montgomery Co., Md., NCP, WNRC; letter, T. G. Airis to Alan S. Whelihan, Oct. 11, 1968, *ibid.*; NPS press release, July 9, 1970, GWMP, Md., correspondence file, Office of Land Use Coordination, National Capital Regional Office, NPS. Rep. Gilbert Gude of Maryland cut a ribbon opening the completed link on June 16, 1970.

one of the unbuilt roadway segments, is particularly awkward. The "temporary" connection at Canal Road, resisted for good reason by the highway engineers, likewise retains a makeshift character.

Where the road was four-laned below Cabin John, its environmental impact was much as its opponents predicted. Notwithstanding NPS assurances that all the historic canal lockhouses would remain, the frame lockhouse at Lock 5—built in 1853 and rehabilitated for continued occupancy when the NPS restored the canal in 1939—was razed in 1957 to make way for the road. The stone lockhouse at Lock 7, the canal's oldest, was saved only by cantilevering the outbound roadway over the inbound one in the tight space between the house and the Glen Echo bluff. Visually and audibly, the road impinges on the canal and dominates the palisades for much of its length.

Even before the road was opened, some foresaw confusion arising from two unconnected George Washington Memorial Parkways on opposite banks of the river. In November 1962 the Palisades Citizens Association in Washington suggested that the entire Maryland-District portion be titled Palisades Parkway. NPS associate regional director Robert Horne discouraged the idea, citing the commemorative and unitary intent of the parkway legislation and predicting that the completed roads would be adequately signed to avoid confusion.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Letter, Ruth Aull to A. M. Woodruff, Nov. 15, 1962, file D24/GWMP General, NCP, WNRC; letter, Robert C. Horne to Aull, Jan. 17, 1963, *ibid*.

Despite Horne's prediction, the concern proved valid when the Maryland road was largely opened in 1965. One NPS official suggested that it be renamed Martha Washington Memorial Parkway, thereby retaining at least a familial tie to the first president.⁴⁷ Without advocating redesignation, Rep. John O. Marsh, Jr., of Virginia brought the problem to George Hartzog's attention at a February 1966 appropriations hearing: "Could your office give some consideration to possible driver confusion that results from the user of the circumferential [Beltway] seeing signs on both sides of the Potomac that relate to the George Washington Parkway access, and yet you find these are entirely two different road systems and that you may go to two entirely different destinations?"

"Personally, sir, I was returning for a very important meeting with the Secretary and I took the wrong one and went the wrong way," the director replied. "It so happened I was late and this has been forcibly brought to the attention of all people concerned. . . . I have the deepest sympathy for the visitor." He blamed inadequate signing on the Beltway, for which Maryland and Virginia were responsible.⁴⁸

Signing improvements failed to eliminate the confusion entirely, however, and by the mid-1980s NPS officials and

⁴⁷Memorandum, Edward B. Willard to Assistant Regional Director, Operations, Sept. 16, 1965, *ibid.*

⁴⁸U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1967, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1966), p. 675.

concerned citizens generally agreed that the Maryland road should be renamed. Martha Washington was again suggested as the honoree, but Clara Barton, whose house in Glen Echo adjoined the parkway, was ultimately favored. Rep. Constance A. Morella of Maryland shepherded the necessary legislation through Congress, and on November 28, 1989, the road from MacArthur Boulevard to Canal Road was officially redesignated "Clara Barton Parkway."⁴⁹

⁴⁹Public Law 101-177, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 103: 1296. Reflecting the common equation of "parkway" with "road," the language of the act appears to redesignate only the road, leaving "George Washington Memorial Parkway" applicable to the land through which it runs.

CHAPTER V: THE UNFINISHED PARKWAY

The George Washington Memorial Parkway was supposed to encompass nearly all riverfront land from Mount Vernon to just above Great Falls in Virginia and from Fort Washington to just above Great Falls in Maryland, with a full-length road on both sides of the river crossing the Potomac at Great Falls. In Virginia this plan was largely realized as far as the Capital Beltway, beyond which much land remained in nonfederal ownership and no parkway road was built. In Montgomery County, Maryland, virtually all riverfront land and most river islands were acquired, but the road terminated more than three miles short of Great Falls. In Prince George's County, Maryland, only isolated tracts were acquired and no road was built, so that nothing resembling a parkway ever materialized. Why did the GWMP fall short of its planners' vision?

In Montgomery County, as noted in the last chapter, Congress expressly prohibited extending the parkway road to Great Falls in appropriations acts from 1959 through the next decade. By then this prohibition came as no great blow to the parkway's patrons. The primary objective of protecting the riverbank in this area by land acquisition had been largely achieved. Efforts beginning in 1958 to acquire an outstanding private holding, a 338-acre tract near Great Falls between the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and MacArthur Boulevard containing the abandoned Maryland Gold Mine,

culminated in its condemnation in 1965.¹ Most of the land on the river side of MacArthur Boulevard between the parkway road terminus at Croyley and Great Falls was now under National Park Service control, minimizing the need to supplant or parallel MacArthur Boulevard with a parkway road extension.

Even without the express congressional prohibition, appropriations to extend the parkway road to Great Falls would have been unlikely. The demise of the proposed C & O Canal Parkway from Great Falls to Cumberland in 1955-56 removed the need for a connection to that road. The projected Capital Beltway undermined whatever rationale for the extension remained. While the Beltway stimulated construction of the GWMP road as far as it went, it was also a logical terminus for it. And the Beltway's Cabin John Bridge practically obviated the proposed GWMP bridge above Great Falls, the road's planned destination.²

The incomplete status of the GWMP across the river in Fairfax County was of greater concern to its proponents, because much of the riverbank there remained unprotected. By far the

¹Memorandum, Conrad L. Wirth to Chairman, National Capital Planning Commission, May 2, 1958, C & O Canal-Great Falls Park file, Office of Land Use Coordination, National Capital Regional Office, NPS; GWMP-Gold Mine Tract file, *ibid.* The parkway road had been planned to cross this tract, part of which was considered for a new U.S. Geological Survey headquarters in the late 1950s.

²By 1932 the location favored for the Great Falls bridge had shifted from below the falls to above the falls. Even before the Cabin John Bridge was conceived, the cost of the Great Falls bridge and more pressing parkway needs caused parkway planners to assign it a low priority. (File 545-8/Great Falls Bridge, Box 25, National Capital Planning Commission, Record Group 328, National Archives, Washington, DC [hereinafter cited as RG 328].)

least progress had been made in Prince George's County, where only Fort Washington and Fort Foote were acquired by the mid-1950s.

In September 1956, the Prince George's County commissioners voted for the first time to participate in funding GWMP land acquisition under the Capper-Cramton Act. The Maryland General Assembly responded in 1957 by authorizing a \$1 million county bond issue. Early that year the National Capital Planning Commission asked Congress for \$3,475,000 in fiscal 1958 to complete all parkway land acquisition—\$1.9 million for Prince George's, \$1.5 million for Fairfax between the Cabin John Bridge and Great Falls, \$75,000 for Montgomery—so that the National Park Service could complete road construction under its Mission 66 program.³

The House approved the full request, and the appropriations bill went to the Senate. Appearing before the Senate subcommittee on Interior Department appropriations in April 1957, NCPC's John Nolen portrayed the situation in Fairfax County as especially critical given the increase in land values stimulated by the new CIA installation. "[T]his is about the last call on that area," he testified. "The subdividers are moving in. And another year

³File 545-100/GWMP, Prince George's Co., Md., Box 130, RG 328; U.S Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1958, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1957), p. 744.

might even make the difference, as to whether we could then afford to go up there and buy any land.”⁴

But the Senate hearing also became a forum for opposing voices. Scott Seegers of the Virginia Potomac Valley Association, citing the “callous and shocking destruction of natural beauty that is now being carried on right this day on the palisades in Arlington County just across the river from Canal Road in the District,” hoped the committee would “not give the Park and Planning Commission the means to destroy that part of the river [beyond the Beltway] as they have defiled and desecrated the palisades.” Edward B. Burling of the prominent Covington & Burling law firm, owner of a large riverfront tract just outside the projected Beltway, questioned whether Fairfax County could legally borrow without a referendum to contribute to a destructive highway project rather than a park. Fontaine C. Bradley, a member of the Madeira School’s board of directors, objected to use of the school property for the parkway road. Burling and Bradley urged that the parkway plan, dating from 1939, be restudied with a view to improving State Route 193 rather than building a new road through the area.⁵

Seeking a compromise after the hearing, NPS director Conrad Wirth suggested to Nolen that the road be scaled down from four to two lanes: “It seems to me that the position of both the

⁴U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1958, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1957), p. 586.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 787, 794, 796-97.

Planning Commission and this Service will be strengthened if the Parkway beyond the Cabin John Bridge is considered in the nature of a scenic and historic park with a park type of road to provide public access." But the Senate Appropriations Committee found the opposition sufficient cause to strike the funds requested for both Fairfax and Prince George's. Noting that the parkway authorization was 27 years old and that the areas in question had meanwhile undergone development, it went on to declare that "the desirability and need for the extension of the parkway into these areas should be reviewed by the appropriate legislative committees."⁶ The House concurred.

The Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee scheduled a hearing on the subject in July 1957. In preparation, NCPC engaged Charles W. Eliot II, who had served as its planning director in the early 1930s, to restudy the projected parkway. Eliot concluded that the road alignment along the river in Fairfax County proposed in the 1939 plan would indeed be destructive. He recommended instead a park-like treatment for the Beltway segment between the Cabin John Bridge and Route 193 and a new two-lane roadway paralleling Route 193 that would convert it to a divided parkway with a broad median between the Beltway and

⁶Memorandum, Wirth to Director, NCPC, Apr. 23, 1957, file 1460/GWMP, Va., National Capital Parks records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD (hereinafter cited as NCP, WNRC); Senate Report 476, 85th Congress, June 20, 1957, p. 28.

Madeira School. Edward Burling encouraged this scheme by offering to donate land along his Route 193 frontage.⁷

At the hearing, Eliot cited the scenic and historical significance of the unacquired parkway lands and declared, "Much of the value of what has been done will be jeopardized by failure to complete the job." Wirth and Nolen disavowed the 1939 plan and spoke positively of Eliot's alternative for the road extension in Fairfax County. Wirth emphasized the importance of land acquisition while minimizing the present need for a road: "Sufficient land back from the river is included between the Cabin John Bridge and the Madeira School property which would permit later construction, if it should ever become needed, of a single park-type 2-lane road further inland from the 4-lane road previously proposed under the 1939 plan." Nolen stated NCPC's intent not to acquire any of the school's land.⁸

But the hearing exposed further dissent, this time from local government. The parkway plan entailed federal acquisition of 16 acres at Great Falls that the Fairfax County Park Authority had acquired from the Washington and Old Dominion Railway's receivers in 1952 and nearly eight hundred acres surrounding this Great Falls Park owned by the Potomac Electric Power Company

⁷U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *George Washington Memorial Parkway, A Review of the Capper-Cramton Act Authorization, Hearings*, 85th Congress, 1st Session, July 11-12, 1957 (Washington: GPO, 1957), pp. 18-19; letter, Burling to John Nolen, Jr., July 8, 1957, file 545-100/GWMP, Fairfax Co., Va., Box 130, RG 328.

⁸*George Washington Memorial Parkway Review Hearings*, pp. 9, 28, 29.

(PEPCO). Charles C. Robinson, the park authority's chairman, favored continued local management of its park and the PEPCO tract, sixty acres of which the authority leased for park purposes. Unpersuaded by the federal officials' testimony, he asked that further parkway appropriations be withheld pending official adoption of a revised plan responding to the authority's concerns, which Eliot's proposal fell short of doing.⁹

On the other side, H. J. Spelman, the Bureau of Public Roads' regional engineer, opposed the federal compromise effort. "It seems to me that the [Eliot] report would mean the abandonment of the 'grand conception' of a parkway upon both sides of the river from Mount Vernon to Great Falls that we have been working on for many years, and to my mind that is a distinct loss," he wrote Nolen after the hearing. "The use of Route 193 as an alternate proposal is not in my mind a satisfactory alternative." NCPC nevertheless proceeded to formally approve the Eliot plan in August.¹⁰

The compromise failed to mollify the opposition in Fairfax County, and in June 1958 the Board of County Supervisors voted to oppose any federal land acquisition beyond the Beltway. The Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee advised NCPC to hold the parkway extension there in abeyance "until the local situation clarifies." Prince George's County appeared receptive,

⁹Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁰Letter, Spelman to Nolen, July 29, 1957, file 545-100/GWMP, Fairfax Co., Va., RG 328; NCPC Minutes, Aug. 1-2, 1957, RG 328.

on the other hand, and the committee recommended proceeding with that section before the riverbank was subdivided and while BPR was acquiring land for the Maryland approach to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Thus armed, NCPC director William E. Finley returned to the House Appropriations Committee on June 25 to seek \$2 million for Prince George's land (half of which would be advanced to the county and reimbursed from its bond sales) in a supplemental appropriation for fiscal 1959.¹¹

Unfortunately for Finley's cause, Rep. Michael J. Kirwan of Ohio, chairman of the Interior Department appropriations subcommittee, had soured on the parkway. Kirwan grilled Finley on its costs, eliciting his estimate that another \$8 million would be needed to build the road once the land was acquired. Kirwan then welcomed opposing testimony from William O. Tufts of the Broad Creek Citizens Association. Its members, property owners in the recently approved Broadwater Estates subdivision on Broad Creek Bay, had been unpleasantly surprised to learn that Eliot's 1957 plan had relocated the parkway road from a causeway across the bay to pass through their land. Tufts complained that NCPC had failed to inform them of this change and the July 1957 Senate hearing, that its land cost estimates were unreasonably low, and

¹¹Letter, Carlton C. Massey to William E. Finley, June 6, 1958, file 545-100/GWMP, Fairfax Co., Va., Box 131, RG 328; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, *The Supplemental Appropriation Bill, 1959, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1958), pp. 709-10; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *The Supplemental Appropriation Bill, 1959, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1958), p. 340.

that the road was unnecessary because existing roads adequately served Fort Washington.¹²

Given Kirwan's attitude, the committee's disapproval of the parkway appropriation was foreordained. "Although such a Parkway would be desirable from an aesthetic standpoint, adequate roads now service this general area and the Committee feels strongly that the Federal expenditure of over \$10,000,000 that would be required to complete the project cannot be justified in the light of the many essential demands on the Federal treasury," it reported. "The Committee is concerned over the confusion and unsettled conditions that have prevailed among the property owners in the area during the period that Federal appropriations have been under consideration and wishes it clearly understood that it does not plan to consider any further request for appropriations for this purpose." An effort to restore the money in the Senate failed.¹³

Despite these setbacks, NCPC returned to the House subcommittee on Interior Department appropriations in February 1959 to request \$500,000 for parkway land at Great Falls in Fairfax County and \$1 million for land in Prince George's in fiscal 1960. The Great Falls acreage included the 16-acre Great Falls Park held by the Fairfax County Park Authority and the surrounding PEPCO tract. NCPC and the Park Service viewed recent

¹²House Supplemental Appropriation Hearings, 1959, pp. 345, 371-73.

¹³House Report 2221, 85th Congress, July 18, 1958, p. 33; Senate Report 2350, 85th Congress, Aug. 13, 1958, p. 24.

efforts by local authorities to acquire the PEPCO tract as a threat to the parkway and wanted to beat them to the punch. They hoped that the park authority might be induced to donate its holding, valued at \$200,000, and that the Nature Conservancy might contribute \$300,000 to match the \$500,000 federal appropriation. To ease local opposition, Conrad Wirth now disclaimed any intention to build any parkway road from the Beltway to Great Falls. The appropriation request for Prince George's had been halved because the county was willing to forego the \$1 million advance.¹⁴

NCPC contended that Congress had denied the Prince George's appropriation the previous year "through a misunderstanding of the original purpose of the George Washington Memorial Parkway," having evaluated the parkway as a transportation corridor rather than as a means of protecting and ensuring public access to the Potomac riverbank. The NPS and NCPC had rejected an alternate inland alignment proposed by the Broad Creek Citizens Association, even though one of its members had offered to donate

¹⁴U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1960, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1959), pp. 1117, 1126, 1294; memorandum, Raymond L. Freeman to Superintendent, National Capital Parks, Apr. 1, 1958, file 1460/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC; NCPC Minutes, Sept. 4, 1958, RG 328; letter, Wirth to Carlton C. Massey, Jan. 6, 1959, file 545-100/GWMP, Fairfax Co., Va., Box 131, RG 328.

a right-of-way through his property, because it reflected the same misunderstanding.¹⁵

Chairman Kirwan did not appreciate this line of reasoning. Venting his growing displeasure with the volume of federal park and parkway projects in the Washington area, he suggested that Maryland could assume responsibility for the Prince George's leg if necessary. When Finley pleaded with him to "agree with this parkway in principle as does everyone else in the region," Kirwan cut him off: "Mr. Finley, I do not doubt that everybody in this region will agree with you. They are not insane in Ohio either. If they could ever get Federal money for a parkway like this in Ohio, that is one thing we would get something like an Ivory soap vote on. . . . Why would they not want it if they are going to get a soft touch from Uncle Sam?"¹⁶

Kirwan was no more enthusiastic about the Fairfax appropriation, suggesting that Virginia could acquire the Great Falls acreage as a state park. Opposing witnesses included Rep. Joel T. Broyhill, the local congressman, and Scott Seegers, who saw federal acquisition of the Great Falls land as the opening wedge in a drive to acquire the intervening property.¹⁷

¹⁵House *Interior Appropriations Hearings*, 1960, p. 1118; letter, Conrad L. Wirth to Harland Bartholomew, Jan. 7, 1959, file 545-100/GWMP, Prince George's Co., Md., Box 130, RG 328.

¹⁶House *Interior Appropriations Hearings*, 1960, pp. 1121, 1129-30.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 1125, 1292, 1297.

The committee disapproved both requests, finding "no justification for making Federal appropriations for non-essential projects of this nature at a time when the Nation is faced with a critical budgetary situation." Noting that there were already more than 42,000 acres of federal parkland in the Washington area, it concluded that additional park projects "should be the financial responsibility of the local jurisdictions involved."¹⁸

Rep. Richard E. Lankford of Maryland, representing Prince George's County, introduced an amendment to restore the Prince George's appropriation on the House floor. He read a letter from Louis Cramton, now 84 and a member of the Michigan legislature, urging completion of the project. Kirwan held firm. The only parkway components then underway were needed for transportation purposes between the Beltway and Washington, he noted. There was no such utilitarian need in southern Prince George's, which was adequately served by the Indian Head Highway. Kirwan also found Fort Washington an unworthy destination for the parkway on historical grounds: U.S. forces had ignominiously abandoned the site when the British advanced on Washington in 1814. The House rejected Lankford's amendment, and an effort by Sen. J. Glenn Beall of Maryland to restore the money in the Senate failed as well.¹⁹

¹⁸House Report 237, 86th Congress, Mar. 20, 1959, p. 16.

¹⁹*Congressional Record* 105: 4970-72, 10120-22; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1960, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1959), p. 180; Senate Report 345, 86th Congress, June 5, 1959, p. 28.

The NPS did acquire some land in Prince George's in 1959. On June 4 the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, which administered St. Elizabeth's Hospital, signed an agreement with NCPC and the Interior Department transferring St. Elizabeth's Farm under the GWMP authority.²⁰ The NPS renamed this property between the D.C. boundary and the Beltway Oxon Hill Farm and opened it to the public in 1967 as a "living history" demonstration of early-20th-century farm life.

In January 1960 William Finley returned to Kirwan's subcommittee to request \$250,000 under the Capper-Cramton Act in fiscal 1961 for three tracts comprising 240 acres around the Prince George's end of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, adjoining the St. Elizabeth's Farm acquisition. Assuring the subcommittee that NCPC had given up the parkway to Fort Washington on its advice, Finley described the purchase as necessary to prevent undesirable development of the highly visible shoreline acreage. The county commissioners had agreed to match the appropriation.²¹ Congress readily approved the request.

Following the change of administrations from Dwight D. Eisenhower to John F. Kennedy in January 1961, NCPC sought a \$200,000 appropriation for fiscal 1962 to acquire about 160 acres of the Madeira School property in Fairfax County. The school was

²⁰Copy in file 545-100/GWMP, Prince George's Co., Md., Box 130, RG 328.

²¹U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1961, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1960), pp. 183-84, 199.

interested in selling this acreage, adjoining the PEPCO tract south of Difficult Run, to raise teachers' salaries. NCPC's statement to the House Appropriations Committee described the property as including 5,500 feet of river frontage, a house "with a commanding view down the river . . . easily adaptable to a park nature center, being in the heart of the largest natural growth of botanic specimens in the National Capital area," and Black Pond, "one of the finest recreation sites along the river."²²

Despite further grumbling by Kirwan, the House committee recommended the \$200,000 appropriation with the express understanding that it would not be used to extend the parkway road beyond the Beltway. But NCPC's stated expectation that matching funds would be forthcoming from Fairfax County proved invalid when the county supervisors voted not to contribute. NCPC chairman A. M. Woodruff and NPS director Wirth urged Sen. Carl Hayden of Arizona, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, to retain the \$200,000 so they could use it in further negotiations, but they failed to persuade the supervisors, and the Senate committee deleted the money in June.²³

²²U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1962, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1961), p. 1280.

²³House Report 233, 87th Congress, Apr. 14, 1961, p. 22; letter, Woodruff to Hayden, May 5, 1961, in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1962, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1961), p. 1206; letter, Wirth to Hayden, May 9, 1961, *ibid.*; Senate Report 294, 87th Congress, June 2, 1961, p. 22. Wirth subsequently tried but failed to interest Paul Mellon in purchasing the Madeira School tract (letter of Oct. 26, 1961, in file 1460/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC).

At the same time, the Senate committee added \$1.5 million for the parkway in Prince George's. Charles B. MacDonald of the Swan Creek Citizens Association, a leader of the pro-parkway forces in the county, had met with Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall in May and persuaded him to go to bat for the project. In turn, Udall elicited a supporting letter from President Kennedy:

I am hopeful that this year—before it is too late—Congress will provide sufficient matching funds so that this Administration can commence acquisition of the lands needed for the remaining 7.5 mile section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway on the Maryland side of the Potomac. I wholeheartedly support the efforts of your Department to secure the monies required to commence this acquisition program, and I hope that you will make a final, strenuous effort to secure the necessary Congressional action this year.

Udall publicized Kennedy's letter and wrote all Senate and House appropriations committee members to urge their support for the addition in the upcoming conference to reconcile the different versions passed by the two bodies.²⁴

The conference upheld the Senate's deletion of the \$200,000 for Fairfax County and slashed the \$1.5 million for Prince George's to \$500,000. This money, matched by the county, was to be used to extend the Fort Foote holding north to the Smoot Bay area, to purchase the Harmony Hall historic area between the Indian Queen Estates and Broadwater Estates subdivisions, and to extend Fort Washington Park north to Swan Creek. These three

²⁴Letter, Udall to Frederick G. Dutton, June 6, 1961, file 545-100/GWMP, Prince George's Co., Md., Box 130, RG 328; letter, Kennedy to Udall, June 19, 1961, *ibid.*; letters, Udall to Hayden et al., June 28, 1961, *ibid.*

acquisitions, totaling some 416 acres, could not be used for a parkway road, nor could any NPS money be used for planning or building one in the county. In addition, no money could be used to acquire improved property—defined as a house and up to three surrounding acres—without its owner's consent.²⁵

On the House floor, Representative Lankford said he was "keenly disappointed that the conferees . . . have chosen to disregard the often-expressed intent of Congress to complete the magnificent scenic drive here in the Nation's Capital in memory of George Washington. The splendidly envisioned Capper-Cramton Act of 31 years' standing is now only a partially fulfilled dream." Both houses approved the amended bill, however, and Kennedy signed it on August 3.²⁶ Congress repeated the prohibition against GWMP road planning or construction in Prince George's in subsequent Interior Department appropriations acts through the 1960s.

Meanwhile, NPS negotiations with PEPCO to acquire its property at Great Falls, Virginia, had led to an agreement between the secretary of the interior and PEPCO's president in March 1960. PEPCO would lease its land to the NPS for fifty years for an annual rental fee of \$3,000, and the NPS would grant PEPCO a transmission line easement for fifty years through the 385-acre Blue Ponds area in Prince George's County, which it had acquired

²⁵House Report 797, 87th Congress, July 26, 1961, p. 9.

²⁶*Congressional Record* 107: 13744; Public Law 87-122, U.S. Statutes at Large 75: 261.

from the Agriculture Department in connection with the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, for an annual fee of \$1,500. The two parties agreed to have the tracts appraised and seek legislation authorizing their exchange. Writing PEPCO's president after the agreement, Wirth called the Great Falls tract "the most important potential park property in the Washington metropolitan area."²⁷

The NPS drafted the exchange legislation and sent it to Congress in January 1962, but both houses did not act on it until 1965. By then appraisals had determined that PEPCO should receive \$975,000 for the difference in values of the two tracts, and the bill authorized an appropriation for this purpose. By then, too, the NPS had come to terms with the Fairfax County Park Authority on its 16-acre Great Falls Park. In line with their agreement, the bill was amended to authorize the NPS to accept this property while allowing the park authority to collect parking fees until it had recovered the land's value. All the Great Falls land was to be administered "in connection with the George Washington Memorial Parkway, pursuant to the Act of May 29, 1930 [the Capper-Cramton Act]." The legislation received President Lyndon B. Johnson's signature on October 10, 1965; the lands, totaling some eight hundred acres, were transferred the following year.²⁸

²⁷Agreement in file 1460/GWMP, Va.—PEPCO Agreement, NCP, WNRC; letter, Wirth to R. Roy Dunn, Apr. 1, 1960, *ibid*.

²⁸Letter, John A. Carver, Jr., to Lyndon B. Johnson, Jan. 25, 1962, in Senate Report 289, 88th Congress, June 20, 1963; House Report 986, 89th Congress, Sept. 14, 1965; Public Law 89-255, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 79: 981. PEPCO exchange deed dated

In February 1965, at Secretary Udall's instigation, President Johnson sent a message to Congress in which he called for action to clean up the Potomac River, protect its natural beauty by land controls, provide recreational facilities, and "complete the presently authorized George Washington Memorial Parkway on both banks." When NPS director George Hartzog appeared before the House subcommittee on Interior Department appropriations in February 1966, Rep. Winfield K. Denton of Indiana, Kirwan's successor as chairman, asked how much had been spent on GWMP land and construction to date and how much would be needed to complete the parkway as originally authorized. According to Hartzog's figures, the total spent through fiscal 1966—not counting the \$8 million from the CIA—was \$25,980,271 (\$14,440,626 in Virginia, \$11,539,645 in Maryland). The balance needed was \$19,189,100 (\$11,512,500 in Virginia, \$7,676,600 in Maryland), for an estimated total cost of \$45,169,371.²⁹

Hartzog was now most concerned about the parkway in Prince George's because of the Smithsonian Institution's plans for an armed forces museum there. In 1961 Congress had charged the Smithsonian with establishing such a museum in the Washington area, and by 1964 the Smithsonian was planning to appropriate

Nov. 17, 1966, in file L1425/Great Falls, Va., NCP, WNRC. It was agreed that the park authority would operate the parking until it had collected \$600,000 or for twenty years, whichever came first.

²⁹*Natural Beauty of Our Country*, House Document 78, 89th Congress, Feb. 8, 1965, p. 6; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1967, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1966), p. 645.

Fort Washington for the purpose. Belatedly informed of the Smithsonian's intentions, the NPS resisted, proposing instead the use of Fort Foote. By December 1965 the two parties had compromised on Fort Foote for the bulk of the museum with satellite exhibits at Fort Washington. While loathe to concede anything to its rival, the NPS believed that the museum development could further its own parkway objectives.³⁰

Hartzog told the subcommittee that all parties concerned with the parkway in Prince George's had finally reached agreement on its location "except for a few people whose properties are involved." The alignment had been modified to avoid taking any homes from Broad Creek to Fort Washington; those whose homes would be taken elsewhere would be offered life estates. "I believe for the preservation of the scenic and historic values of the Potomac River Basin, for the beauty, for the development, for the integrity of our Nation's Capital, this parkway is desperately needed from 495 [the Beltway] to Fort Washington," Hartzog testified.³¹

Hartzog now wanted \$525,000 to build a 2,500-seat covered amphitheater at Fort Washington for a historical drama on the

³⁰Public Law 87-186, Aug. 30, 1961, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 75: 414; letter, S. Dillon Ripley to Hartzog, Mar. 23, 1964, Armed Forces Museum project file, Office of Land Use Coordination, National Capital Regional Office, NPS; letter, Stewart L. Udall to Sen. Clinton P. Anderson, Jan. 15, 1965, *ibid.* After several more military museum concepts, including a "Bicentennial Park" occupying lands at Fort Foote and Jones Point across the Potomac, plans for the museum were abandoned in the early 1970s.

³¹House Interior Appropriations Hearings, 1967, pp. 646, 691.

location and development of the nation's capital. This added attraction at the parkway's destination became another argument for the parkway: "A scenic drive along the waterfront is part of the story," NPS regional director T. Sutton Jett told the subcommittee. When a clearly unimpressed Denton expressed doubt that the Capper-Cramton Act authorized an amphitheater, Jett cited the Park Service's general authority to build such facilities.³²

NCPC representatives appeared before the subcommittee a month later seeking \$6.1 million in fiscal 1967 to complete GWMP land acquisition: \$3.2 million for Fairfax County, \$2.9 million for Prince George's. The 790 acres sought in Fairfax extended from the Beltway to the PEPCO tract, including the Madeira School's river frontage, and above the PEPCO tract to River Bend. In Prince George's NCPC wanted 660 acres: 330 between the Beltway and Fort Foote, 150 between Fort Foote and Broad Creek, 180 between Broad Creek and Fort Washington.³³

The Capper-Cramton Act had authorized \$7.5 million for GWMP land. Congress had appropriated \$3,125,364 through fiscal 1962—the last year of GWMP appropriations under the act—and shifted \$750,000 of the authorization to stream valley park acquisition in 1958, leaving an authorized but unappropriated balance of \$3,624,636. Because the requested \$6.1 million exceeded this

³²Ibid., pp. 649–50. Jett testified that the state and county had agreed to underwrite the costs of the pageant, which was to be written by Paul Greene.

³³Ibid., pp. 662–63.

figure, NCPC sought the appropriation under the 1924 act establishing its predecessor National Capital Park Commission, which contained a general land acquisition authority with no dollar ceiling.³⁴

Denton was unreceptive to this maneuver. "You have asked for more than you should have," he told NCPC general counsel Daniel H. Shear. "I don't think it is appropriate . . . to take a general act of 1924 and use it to get around a limitation established specifically by Congress in 1930." Shear responded with the suggestion that the 1924 act could be used for the \$3.2 million Fairfax appropriation because a riverfront road was no longer planned for the area to be acquired there, making it something other than the envisioned parkway. The Capper-Cramton Act would then cover the \$2.9 million for Prince George's, where a road was still on the drawing board.³⁵

Denton remained unpersuaded. Like Kirwan, he opposed building more roads in the wealthy Washington area with all federal money: "It just isn't fair to the rest of the taxpayers of the United States." Reflecting his views, the House Appropriations Committee disapproved both the Park Service's amphitheater request and NCPC's land acquisition request. Its report was not calculated to cheer parkway supporters:

Coupled with the proposal for the acquisition of park land in Prince George's County, Maryland, was the proposal to eventually build a parkway from the Wilson Bridge to Fort

³⁴Ibid., pp. 666, 670.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 670, 675.

Washington. The Committee received assurances from the National Capital Planning Commission and the National Park Service that the proposed parkway would not be another express highway, but it was not convinced that this would not be the eventual outcome. The National Park Service is already responsible for the maintenance of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia, the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and the Suitland Parkway. As it has developed, the Committee can see little difference between the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the Suitland Parkway, and the express turnpikes that are being built with contributions from gasoline taxes. Likewise with the completion of the Beltway, the George Washington Memorial Parkway has also become a commuters' expressway. The Committee is in favor of the construction of scenic parkways in our National Parks that can be enjoyed by park visitors, but it opposes the construction with National Park Service funds of roads that will be used in the main part for commuting and transportation.³⁶

Recalling its Senate counterpart's action in 1957, the committee declared that any further extension of the GWMP should be taken up with the appropriate legislative committees considering present-day circumstances, rather than depending on the old Capper-Cramton Act authority:

Such action would resolve many of the questions and doubts now attendant to this proposed extension, and would serve to clarify the intent of Congress with regard to the extent the National Park Service should participate in the building of roads and highways in this area that eventually will be used mainly by commuters. Until such legislation is obtained, this Committee will not be inclined to give favorable consideration to the funding of any proposed extension of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.³⁷

Simultaneous with the House committee's report, in March 1966, the Maryland General Assembly authorized Prince George's to issue bonds to match the federal contribution for parkway land

³⁶Ibid., p. 678; House Report 1405, 89th Congress, Mar. 31, 1966, p. 34.

³⁷House Report 1405, p. 34.

acquisition but specified that none of the proceeds could be used for riverfront land between Broad Creek and Fort Washington. An alternative inland alignment was unacceptable to NCPC and the NPS. Noting this disagreement, the Senate Appropriations Committee concurred in the House committee's disapproval of the parkway land appropriation (as well as the Fort Washington amphitheater).³⁸

Citing the House Appropriations Committee's position and the alignment dispute, Rep. Hervey G. Machen of Maryland introduced legislation that August to authorize completion of the parkway in Prince George's. Machen's remarks on the House floor reflected his bitterness toward the 29 property owners in the Broadwater Estates subdivision who had refused to accept the route agreed upon in January: "We have been foiled again by a limited number of diehard parkway opponents and their thousands of dollars for lobbyists, their utter disregard for the public interest, their design to despoil the Potomac River shoreline and profit by their landholdings, their vendetta against everyone who backs the parkway, their provincialism and their own selfish interests."³⁹

Machen succeeded in having his bill referred to the House Public Works Committee, chaired by his Maryland colleague George H. Fallon, rather than to the Interior and Insular Affairs

³⁸Letter, Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr., to Sen. Carl Hayden, Mar. 30, 1966, file 545-100/GWMP, Prince George's Co., Md., Box 130, RG 328; Senate Report 1154, 89th Congress, May 10, 1966, p. 32.

³⁹*Congressional Record* 112: 19112.

Committee, which considered most park-related legislation. The committee heard testimony on the bill in March 1968, then included its substance in the general bill authorizing federal highway appropriations for fiscal 1970 and 1971.⁴⁰

The committee report cited "the years of inaction, indecision, discord, and frustration that have characterized the inability of the National Capital Planning Commission, the National Park Service, Prince George's County officials, and the affected landowners to come to reasonably acceptable agreement as to what lands along the Potomac River would be acquired and where this last segment of the parkway would be located." It recognized that with the extensive development since 1930, "[s]horeline lands are no longer available for fee acquisition by the Federal Government at the 'not very expensive' cost envisioned by the Capper-Cramton Act."⁴¹

The bill reserved to Prince George's the entire unappropriated balance of some \$3.6 million from the GWMP authorization in the Capper-Cramton Act, and it made the secretary of the interior rather than NCPC the receiving party. Most significant was the emphasis on acquiring scenic easements rather than fee title to protect the shoreline without displacing existing residents. The bill referenced an NPS map showing the 636 acres already in federal ownership, 706 acres to be acquired

⁴⁰U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Public Works, *Completion of George Washington Memorial Parkway, Hearing* (Washington: GPO, 1968); House Report 1584, 90th Congress, June 25, 1968.

⁴¹House Report 1584, p. 14.

in fee, and 757 acres over which scenic easements would be acquired. Much of the river frontage fell in the last category and would remain privately occupied—a major retreat from the original parkway concept. The fundamental objective was now shoreline protection, the committee report declared; the parkway road and public access to the shoreline had become less important.⁴²

“Considerable confusion for motorists has been created by the fact that the parkway exists under the same name on both sides of the river,” the report stated. “To eliminate that confusion, the committee recommends that the parkway in Prince George’s County be named the Fort Washington Parkway.”⁴³ The new name was also an attempt to circumvent the continuing prohibition in the annual Interior Department appropriations acts against planning and building the GWMP in Prince George’s, and to reinforce the distinction between the Prince George’s project and the all-fee parkway elsewhere.

The House-Senate conference on the federal-aid highway bill reduced the local share of the land acquisition cost from one-half to one-third so the county could meet its obligation under its existing authority from the Maryland General Assembly. “The committee cannot overemphasize the urgency of the Park Service’s proceeding immediately to acquisition of those lands which it is to acquire in fee,” the conference report stated. The Fort

⁴²Ibid., pp. 15-16.

⁴³Ibid., p. 17.

Washington Parkway authorization was enacted in August as part of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968.⁴⁴

The following March George Hartzog asked the Interior Department appropriations subcommittees for \$300,000 in fiscal 1970 to buy 13 acres for the Fort Washington Parkway. "Isn't that an old chestnut under a new name?" inquired Sen. Alan Bible of Nevada, the Senate subcommittee chairman.

"Yes, sir, I think it is," Hartzog replied. "This is the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Prince George's County, which was reauthorized last year. . . . Basically what we wound up getting is a right-of-way through a subdivision, which will permit us to build a road, a parkway, between a county road and Indian Head Highway [north of Harmony Hall]. The rest of this area will simply be for protection of the riverfront, the shoreland."⁴⁵

But the Prince George's delegation in the Maryland General Assembly declined to support the bond issue needed for the local share, causing the appropriations committees to deny the requested money. On June 19, 1969, Hartzog publicly announced

⁴⁴House Report 1799, 90th Congress, July 25, 1968, p. 32; Public Law 90-495, Aug. 23, 1968, U.S. Statutes at Large 82: 824-25.

⁴⁵U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1970, Hearings* (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 104.

that the NPS was abandoning efforts to acquire land for the Fort Washington Parkway.⁴⁶

No serious attempt was made thereafter to revive the parkway, under either name, in the county. The NPS has only the discontinuous tracts containing Oxon Hill Farm, Fort Foote, Harmony Hall, and Fort Washington to show for the forty-year effort to realize it. While officially parts of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, designated Reservation 404 in the national capital park land records, those holdings have no evident relationship to it. They are not administered by its superintendent but by the superintendent of National Capital Parks-East, the office overseeing NPS lands in eastern Washington and southern Prince George's.

Why did the parkway fail in Prince George's? At the end, having received insufficient local support to counter persistent local opposition, it had degenerated to something that its proponents were no longer willing to fight for. More fundamentally, however, its failure may be attributed to its relative uselessness. Functional transportation needs associated with the CIA headquarters and the Beltway and U.S. 240 caused the GWMP to be completed as far as it was in Virginia and Montgomery County. Both of those legs became links between the Beltway and downtown Washington. In Prince George's, on the other hand, the projected parkway lay almost entirely outside the Beltway and

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 1847; Hartzog statement in National Capital Region-Fort Washington file, NCPC records, WNRC.

would serve no major commuter destination. Its scenic preservation benefits were never joined by sufficient utilitarian benefits to justify its cost.

The mid-1960s effort to revive the GWMP in Prince George's coincided with another effort to acquire the property between the Beltway and Great Falls in Fairfax County. The latter was stimulated not only by President Johnson's 1965 message urging completion of the parkway but by the subsequent acquisition of Great Falls Park, which created a gap begging to be filled.

Among several more ambitious plans affecting the Potomac Valley during the Johnson-Udall administration was one for a George Washington Country Parkway. The subject of two bills in Congress in 1966, it would incorporate the GWMP, the Skyline Drive, and the Blue Ridge Parkway down to the James River in a huge loop extending northwest to Harpers Ferry and southeast to Yorktown. John W. Bright, the NPS planner in charge of the project, briefed Hartzog on the status of his efforts that February:

You should be aware of the tremendously important public relations program which we are carrying out here regarding the extension of the George Washington Memorial Parkway . . . to Great Falls. . . . [I]n this short three-mile parkway segment lies the probable success or failure of the entire George Washington Country Parkway. If our adversaries kill us here, it could well kill the whole loop parkway concept. The group which successfully fought the parkway in 1957 is the same group with which we are currently dealing. We will continue our day-to-day contact and consultation in order that we may, at the most, win them

to our point of view or, at the least, gain their silent concurrence.⁴⁷

The George Washington Country Parkway failed to materialize, however, and the Fort Washington Parkway authorization in 1968 removed all remaining land acquisition appropriations authority for the GWMP elsewhere. Fairfax County authorities still preferred to maintain local control, and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority launched a program of acquiring voluntary scenic easements on riverfront properties between the Beltway and Great Falls Park. The Madeira School granted such an easement in September 1966, but the NPS deemed it inadequate because it allowed for visible construction above the 200-foot contour line, expired when the property ceased to be used for school purposes, and did not ensure public access along the river as desired for the planned Potomac Heritage Trail.⁴⁸

At the downstream end of the gap, Edward Burling owned 336 acres with nearly a mile of riverfront. Burling died in 1967, and the Miller & Smith development firm contracted with his heirs to purchase the tract. The NPS consulted with the firm in an effort to limit its development, and in December 1969 Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel wrote the head of the Fairfax County Planning Commission to express the federal government's preference that it remain undeveloped. A year later the county

⁴⁷Memorandum of Feb. 21, 1966, in file D30/George Washington Country Parkway, NCP, WNRC.

⁴⁸Letter, Stewart L. Udall to Stuart Symington, Mar. 26, 1968, GWMP, Va.—Madeira School file, Land Use Coordination.

acquired the Burling tract with bond revenue and assigned it to the Fairfax County Park Authority as a Dranesville Magisterial District park.⁴⁹

The NPS did hold one property in the middle of the gap, midway between the Madeira School and the Burling tract: a 14.7-acre tract atop the riverfront bluffs where the GWMP road was to go, transferred from the federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation in 1948. Lacking river frontage and public access, the tract became useless for park purposes when the parkway's extension through the area was shelved. After neighboring landowners pressed to acquire or gain access across it in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the NPS stood ready to relinquish it under terms precluding its development. In 1987 the NPS deeded the property with prohibitions against subdivision, building, and tree cutting to Charlotte Eagle, a neighboring owner, in exchange for development restrictions on 20.7 acres of her property.⁵⁰

Divestiture of this GWMP foothold in a key area long coveted by the parkway's sponsors occurred with little publicity and without recorded opposition. The parkway had gone as far as it was going some twenty years before. This transaction represented final acceptance and confirmation of that practical reality.

⁴⁹Letter, Hickel to George Lilly, Dec. 12, 1969, GWMP, Va.—Burling Tract file, Land Use Coordination; memorandum, John F. Rick to James D. Bell, Feb. 1, 1973, *ibid*.

⁵⁰Letter, J. Robinson West to Glen T. Urquhart, June 29, 1982, GWMP, Va.—Gold Mine Tract file, Land Use Coordination; memorandum, Herbert Rothenberg to Regional Director, National Capital Region, NPS, Feb. 11, 1987, *ibid*.

CHAPTER VI: ARLINGTON HOUSE

Several places outside the boundaries of the George Washington Memorial Parkway are managed by GWMP's superintendent in conjunction with the parkway. The most prominent of these is Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, a discrete unit of the national park system.

Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., the foremost historian of the historic preservation movement, called Arlington "[t]he first important post-Mount Vernon preservation in the South," notwithstanding the fact that the War Department confiscated it in 1864 more to punish Robert E. Lee than to preserve it. Lee's son, George Washington Custis Lee, won his suit for the estate's return in 1882 but accepted \$150,000 in exchange for title the following year.¹

Arlington National Cemetery was established on the grounds in 1864, and the cemetery superintendent and staff, who came under the Army's quartermaster general, used the mansion for offices and living quarters during the postwar decades. After the Commission of Fine Arts was formed (in 1910), Charles Moore, its long-time chairman (1915-37), and James L. Greenleaf, its landscape architect member (1918-27), took considerable interest in the house and advised the cemetery superintendent on its proper treatment.

¹Hosmer, *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 19650, pp. 63-64.

"The box hedges which were used invariably for their architectural effect in the foregrounds of Colonial houses should be restored, taking the place of flower beds which are of no effect during much of the year, and which are quite trivial and out of character when at their best," Moore wrote Maj. H. R. Lemley in January 1919. Col. C. S. Ridley, the commission's secretary, relayed Greenleaf's advice to Lemley that April:

Adequate parking space is not available close to the house even if more areas of sun-baked macadam and granolithic were made than even now exists. What is now there is an unfortunate sacrifice of the quiet surroundings to apparent necessity. In view of this it is recommended that the rear of the house be restored to quiet grass land except for a minor drive, and that the back drive, toward the cemetery gate, be widened so as to allow parking on each side of it for a considerable stretch. . . . [A]ll that clutters the view [toward Washington] in the immediate foreground should be swept away,—the flag staff, the cast iron vases, and the flower beds. Even Major L'Enfant's tomb should be removed.²

D. H. Rhodes, the cemetery's landscape gardener, was less than enthusiastic about the Fine Arts Commission's intervention and apparently had the ear of the quartermaster general. "I imagine our policy is not to antagonize him unless his attitude is one of radical opposition," Greenleaf wrote Ridley in May.³

In November 1920 the commission approved plans prepared by the Depot Quartermaster's Office with Greenleaf's input to restore the house and grounds to their "original character." "The mansion house needs new floors, woodwork, and paint; and,

²Letter, Moore to Lemley, Jan. 29, 1919, Arlington Mansion project file, Commission of Fine Arts, Record Group 66, National Archives, Washington, DC; letter, Ridley to Lemley, Apr. 18, 1919, *ibid.* (Collection hereinafter cited as RG 66.)

³Letter, May 20, 1919. *ibid.*

especially, the present barn-like appearance of the rooms devoted to the public should be changed for the better," Moore advised the quartermaster general. Frances Parkinson Keyes, wife of Sen. Henry W. Keyes of New Hampshire and a Virginia-born member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, led private support for the restoration effort. With the commission's backing, she arranged for the donation of some furnishings for the vacant first-floor rooms in 1923, but the Quartermaster General's Office declined them because they had no historic relationship to the house, nor were they needed in the part of the house used as the cemetery superintendent's quarters.⁴

Moore appealed to Acting Secretary of War Dwight F. Davis, urging that the War Department not confine acquisitions to Lee furnishings: "There was no Lee furniture in the house,—it was all Custis furniture and it came largely from Mount Vernon. . . . The general lines of restoration that will be entirely satisfactory to the southern people as well as to the northern people are the restoration of the house as a Custis Mansion representing the first fifty years of the Republic." But he received little satisfaction from the War Department. "No steps whatever have been taken toward putting the Mansion House at Arlington in shape to receive gifts, and I see no immediate prospect of anything

⁴Letter, Charles Moore to Maj. Gen. Harry L. Rogers, Nov. 1, 1920, *ibid.*; letter, C. S. Ridley to Col. F. H. Lawton, Nov. 16, 1920, *ibid.*; letter, Maj. Gen. William H. Hart to Charles Moore, Mar. 20, 1923, *ibid.*

being done in that direction," Moore wrote a prospective donor of plates and engravings in January 1924.⁵

Congressional action proved necessary to move the War Department in the desired direction. Rep. Louis C. Cramton of Michigan (son of a Union veteran) introduced a resolution directing the secretary of war to undertake the restoration. William Tyler Page, clerk of the House and author of "The American's Creed," supplied its preamble justifying federal commemoration of Lee:

Whereas the era of internecine strife among the States having yielded to one of better understanding, of common loyalty, and of a more perfect union; and

Whereas, now honor is accorded Robert E. Lee as one of the great military leaders of history, whose exalted character, noble life, and eminent services are recognized and esteemed, and whose manly attributes of precept and example were compelling factors in cementing the American people in bonds of patriotic devotion and action against common external enemies in the war with Spain and in the World War, thus consummating the hope of a reunited country that would again swell the chorus of the Union. . . .

The resolution directed the secretary:

as nearly as may be practicable, to restore the Lee Mansion . . . to the condition in which it existed immediately prior to the Civil War and to procure, if possible, articles of furniture and equipment which were then in the mansion and in use by the occupants thereof. He is also authorized, in his discretion, to procure replicas of the furniture and other articles in use in the mansion during the period mentioned, with a view to restoring, as far as may be practicable, the appearance of the interior of the mansion to the condition of its occupancy by the Lee family.⁶

⁵Letter, Moore to Davis, May 31, 1923, *ibid.*; letter, Moore to Mrs. Horace Tarr, Jan. 21, 1924, *ibid.*

⁶House Joint Resolution 264, 68th Congress.

At a Senate committee hearing in May 1924, Moore testified in support of the resolution while recommending that the restoration period be broadened to include Arlington's occupancy by George Washington Parke Custis, Lee's father-in-law and the mansion's builder. Cramton expressed his willingness to delete "immediately" before "prior to the Civil War," although this was not done. Moore foresaw assistance from the UDC provided that two tablets on one of the mantels containing some objectionable words by President Grover Cleveland's secretary of war, Daniel Lamont, and Robert Ingersoll were removed. The resolution sailed through Congress without difficulty and was enacted March 4, 1925.⁷

That August Acting Secretary Davis informed Moore that the War Department was receiving offers of furnishings for the Lee Mansion and asked the Fine Arts Commission to pass on their appropriateness. In agreeing to do so, Moore repeated his view that the furnishings should represent "the first fifty years of the Republic," notwithstanding the language of the law. He went even further in September in response to an offer of a bed said to have been owned by a colonial governor of Georgia. "The proposed gift clearly falls within the scope of the restoration as proposed by Congress," he advised Rep. Thomas W. Harrison of Virginia.⁸

⁷"Hearing Before the Joint Committee on the Library, U.S. Senate, on H.J. Res. 264," May 28, 1924, typed transcript in RG 66; Public Resolution 74, 68th Congress.

⁸Letter, Davis to Moore, Aug. 15, 1925, RG 66; letter, Moore to Davis, Aug. 24, 1925, *ibid.*; letter, Moore to Harrison, Sept. 10, 1925, *ibid.*

Moore began pushing in 1924 to have a flagstaff removed from the front of the house; this was done in 1928, despite some protests. Little further progress was made until Representative Cramton, using language Moore supplied, obtained a \$90,000 appropriation in March 1929 for restoration and furnishing with articles or replicas of articles formerly at Arlington, "or other furniture and equipment of the period," subject to Fine Arts Commission approval.⁹

Moore's personal involvement continued. "Every time the members of the Commission of Fine Arts go to the Arlington Mansion they ask when the mantels in the south room are to be changed to make them harmonious with the rest of the house," he wrote the Quartermaster General's Office in July 1930. "Just at present they are rather a ghastly piece of Mid-Victorian." When he restated his unhappiness with the mantels the following year, he was told that new replacements had been ordered. In November 1930 he expressed pleasure with the restoration work on the house but objected to its floodlighting, which he thought should be limited to the Capitol dome and the Washington Monument.¹⁰

The executive order transferring the responsibilities of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, including the George Washington Memorial Parkway, to the

⁹Public Law 70-1035, Mar. 4, 1929, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 45: 1666.

¹⁰letter, Moore to Brig. Gen. Louis H. Bash, July 17, 1930, Arlington Mansion project file, RG 66; letter, Moore to Bash, Oct. 1, 1931, *ibid.*; letter, Bash to Moore, Oct. 2, 1931, *ibid.*; letter, Moore to Col. Charles G. Mortimer, Nov. 12, 1930, *ibid.*

National Park Service on August 10, 1933, did the same for certain historic properties under the War Department, including the Lee Mansion. Before the transfer, Assistant Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring complained to President Franklin D. Roosevelt about the inefficiency of separating the Lee Mansion's administration from that of the cemetery surrounding it. Moore, noting that the War Department had restored the house "with dignity, historical accuracy and a certain elegance," also wrote the president to protest what he foresaw would be unnecessary expense from additional employees and "a host of petty conflicts of authority."¹¹

Responding for Roosevelt in February 1934, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes declared that the transfer would proceed: "There is no conflict between the War Department and the Department of the Interior and I think that if you will give the Interior Department a reasonable time you will have no cause to complain of the way in which the Mansion is being taken care of." An effort by the quartermaster general in October 1935 to recover the house, which he called an integral part of Arlington National Cemetery, failed. Not until 1947, however, did the secretary of

¹¹Executive Order 6166, June 10, 1933, as interpreted by Executive Order 6228, July 28, 1933; letter, Woodring to Roosevelt, Dec. 27, 1933, Arlington Mansion project file, RG 66; letter, Moore to Roosevelt, Jan. 25, 1934, *ibid*.

the Army approve a survey plat delineating the 2.73 acres transferred to the NPS.¹²

When NPS historian Murray H. Nelligan conducted research on Arlington House after 1948, he found that the War Department had strayed from generally accepted restoration standards. Nelligan discovered that the "ghastly" mantels replaced at Moore's prodding had been selected and installed by Lee in 1855 and that most of the acquired furnishings predated 1830. Personal taste had overridden historical accuracy and the legal mandate to restore the house to the period immediately before the Civil War. On Nelligan's recommendation, the Lee mantels, which had been stored in the basement, were returned to their rightful place in 1952.¹³

In June 1955 Congress passed a resolution designating the house "Custis-Lee Mansion" and declaring it "a permanent memorial to Robert E. Lee . . . a great military figure, a great educator, a great American, and a truly great man through the simple heritage of his personal traits of high character, his grandeur of soul, his unflinching strength of heart." "Custis-Lee Mansion"

¹²Letter, Ickes to Moore, Feb. 2, 1934, Arlington Mansion project file, RG 66; memorandum, Maj. Gen. Louis H. Bash to Assistant Secretary of War, Oct. 24, 1935, *ibid.*; memorandum, Maj. Gen. A. W. Brown to Assistant Secretary of War, Nov. 7, 1935, *ibid.*; letter, Wesley A. D'Ewart to Wilbur M. Bruckner, Nov. 14, 1955, file 1100/338/Lee Mansion, NCP, WNRC.

¹³Memorandum, Nelligan to Superintendent, NCP, Oct. 20, 1952, file 1100/338/Lee Mansion, National Capital Parks records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD; memorandum, Hillory A. Tolson to Superintendent, NCP, Oct. 31, 1952, *ibid.* (Collection hereinafter cited as NCP, WNRC.)

lasted until 1972, when Congress restored the historic name of the property in a new designation: "Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial."¹⁴

In November 1955 the NPS requested another .76 acre from Arlington National Cemetery containing the site of the flower garden just south of the mansion. Reluctant to alienate potential grave space and the Temple of Fame, which commemorated heroes buried elsewhere on the site of a Custis-Lee gazebo or summer house, the Army declined. The NPS thereupon drafted legislation, introduced by Rep. Joel T. Broyhill of Virginia and enacted in 1959, directing the Army to transfer the land "to make possible the restoration and preservation of a portion of the historic grounds associated with the Custis-Lee Mansion." As plans for restoring the flower garden proceeded in 1964, NPS preservation professionals seeking to enclose it with a historically accurate board fence lost out to Fine Arts Commission members who preferred a hedge like that surrounding the garden north of the house for aesthetic reasons.¹⁵

The Army was then planning to cut old trees and fill a ravine on some 28 acres northwest of the mansion for more

¹⁴Public Law 84-107, June 29, 1955, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 69: 190; Public Law 92-333, June 30, 1972, *ibid.* 86: 401.

¹⁵Letter, Wesley A. D'Ewart to Wilbur M. Bruckner, Nov. 14, 1955, file 1100/338/Lee Mansion, NCP, WNRC; letter, George H. Roderick to Douglas McKay, Dec. 15, 1955, *ibid.*; Public Law 86-170, Aug. 18, 1959, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 73: 390; letter, William Walton to Geroge B. Hartzog, Jr., Apr. 3, 1964, file D66/Custis-Lee Mansion, NCP, WNRC; memorandum, Task Force for the Restoration of the Custis-Lee Flower Garden to Regional Director, NCR, Apr. 28, 1964, *ibid.*

burials. The NPS, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the Fine Arts Commission protested, whereupon Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall got Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and Secretary of the Army Stephen Ailes to reserve the area in April 1964 "to provide an appropriate setting for the Custis-Lee Mansion." Because the Army secretary's order was not irrevocable, the NPS sought transfer of the area in 1972 as partial compensation for the taking of GWMP land for the Arlington National Cemetery Metro station. Consummated in April 1975 under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act, the excess property transfer of what was known as Section 29 involved 24.44 acres across Sherman Drive extending to Fort Myer.¹⁶

The transfer did not include the cemetery's administrative building complex. Obtaining these buildings for an interpretive and sales facility and restrooms would enable the NPS to demolish the existing museum building at the end of the north garden and the restroom building behind the mansion. A July 1978 memorandum of understanding between the cemetery and GWMP superintendents allowed the NPS to use the "Old Office Annex" for an administrative office but not the "Old Administration Building,"

¹⁶Memorandum, Raymond L. Freeman to Regional Director, NCR, May 23, 1964, GWMP, Va.—Arlington House file, Office of Land Use Coordination, National Capital Regional Office, NPS; letter, Udall to McNamara, Mar. 4, 1964, *ibid.*; memorandum, David A. Ritchie to Director, NCP, Nov. 1, 1972, file L1425/Land Transfer, Arlington NC, Superintendent's Office, GWMP; letter, M. J. Long to John E. Cook, Apr. 21, 1975, *ibid.*

which the cemetery still needed pending completion of its new administrative headquarters near Memorial Drive.¹⁷

A 1977 master plan for Arlington National Cemetery, approved by NCPC, called for a new cemetery visitor center with an adjacent parking structure between its new administration building and Memorial Drive, facing and accessible from the avenue. This would require the transfer of NPS land and the removal of portions of the large holly hedge along the south side of the avenue. In March 1984 NPS regional director Manus J. Fish, Jr., expressed concern about the project's effect on the Memorial Drive axis and recommended moving the visitor center and parking facility to the opposite side of the administration building.¹⁸

Fish was overridden by Assistant Secretary of the Interior G. Ray Arnett, who supported the planned location in a meeting with Army representatives the following month. Assistant Secretary of the Army William R. Gianelli now asked for transfer of the NPS land on both sides of Memorial Drive and the hemicycle at its terminus, declaring that "with the expansion of the cemetery grounds in the mid-60's Memorial Drive is now enveloped by the cemetery and is an integral part of it." Arnett declined to go this far and asked the Army to minimize the impact of its visitor center: "The site design . . . should strongly reinforce the screening function of the holly hedge and the mature tree

¹⁷File L1425/Land Transfer, Arlington NC.

¹⁸Letter, Col. Luther B. Ray III to Fish, Jan. 9, 1984, file L30/Lands-Arlington Cemetery, Superintendent's Office, GWMP; letter, Fish to Ray, Mar. 21, 1984, *ibid*.

panels behind the hedge. . . . The building height and entry plazas should be reduced to ensure that the visitors center does not protrude over the hedges and the plaza does not require removal of any of the oaks."¹⁹

Congress authorized construction of the visitor center in November 1985, and the Fine Arts Commission, NCPC, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation approved its design and location in mid-1986. That August the NPS permitted the Army Corps of Engineers to build the visitor center on 2.43 acres of its land pending a land exchange within a year that would give it the cemetery's old administration building and the .17 acre it occupied; the Army would retain use of that building until 1992. In August 1993, having determined that legislation would be needed to authorize the exchange, the two parties agreed to seek it while extending each other's tenancy.²⁰

By this time the Army had come to regret its transfer of Section 29, the 24.44 acres it had relinquished in 1975, and took steps to recover at least half of it for additional burials. Working at the departmental level, the Army induced George T. Frampton, Jr., the assistant interior secretary overseeing the

¹⁹Letter, Gianelli to Arnett, May 3, 1984, *ibid.*; letter, Arnett to Robert Danson, Aug. 28, 1984, *ibid.*

²⁰Public Law 99-160, Nov. 25, 1985, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 99: 914; letter, Manus J. Fish, Jr., to Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, Aug. 28, 1986, file L30/Lands-Arlington NC; memorandum, Kitty L. Roberts to Robert Stanton, Aug. 16, 1993, file L1425/Land Transfer-Arlington NC.

NPS, to sign an interagency agreement to this end on February 22, 1995.

The agreement divided Section 29 into the "Robert E. Lee Memorial Preservation Zone . . . encompassing approximately 12.5 acres upon which there are steep slopes, a high potential for archeological resources pertaining to the significance of Arlington House, and forest cover dating to the Lee occupancy of the mid-1800's which contributes significantly to the setting of Arlington House"; and the "Arlington National Cemetery Interment Zone . . . encompassing approximately 12 acres upon which no known cultural resources are located, slopes are not steep and forest cover is not historically significant." The NPS would undertake National Environmental Policy Act compliance and seek legislation necessary to transfer the interment zone and portions of the preservation zone found suitable for burials to the Army, meanwhile permitting the Army to plan for cemetery use of the area. The old administration building-visitor center land exchange was included in this legislation, which was enacted September 23, 1996.²¹

Arlington House hosted many notable visitors over the years, including one who would be buried nearby a few months later. At 4:05 p.m. on March 3, 1963, President John F. Kennedy arrived unannounced with an unidentified guest. Park Guide Paul Fuqua

²¹Interagency Agreement Between the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and the Department of the Army, Feb. 22, 1995, Superintendent's Office, GWMP; Section 2821 of Public Law 104-201, U.S. Statutes at Large xx: xxx.

escorted him through the mansion. Kennedy asked questions about the sequence of events surrounding Lee's resignation from the Army and the NPS Mission 66 program (then prominently publicized at all NPS areas), and he expressed interest in the story of Arlington Memorial Bridge. He left after about 15 minutes.²²

In the early 1970s numerous private and government parties sought to use Arlington House for social functions. Private requests were refused, but 17 functions were held between 1970 and 1974 under the auspices of the secretary of the interior or the NPS director. Setting up for these functions often required closing the house to the public, and preservation of the building and its contents was ill-served by the movement of historic furnishings, smoking, and the spilling of food and drink. Complaints to and by NPS preservation professionals led Director Gary Everhardt to decide in August 1975 that "requests for use of Arlington House for social functions which might endanger the building and its contents, or substantially interfere with visitor use, should be denied."²³

The policy was generally heeded until December 1981, when Secretary James G. Watt and his wife hosted a breakfast and an evening cocktail party at the house. The events prompted

²²Memorandum, William P. Jones to Cornelius W. Heine, Mar. 4, 1963, file D66/Custis-Lee Mansion, NCP, WNRC.

²³"Use of Arlington House Facilities: Background Summary, 1970-present," Mar. 8, 1991, file H30/Historic Resources-Policy on Use of Arlington House, Superintendent's Office, GWMP; memorandum, Russell E. Dickenson to Gary Everhardt, Aug. 5, 1975, with Everhardt's Aug. 6 approval, *ibid*.

criticism from an Arlington volunteer and a Democratic Congressional subcommittee chairman and became the subject of two articles and an editorial cartoon in the *Washington Post*.²⁴ They were not repeated.

Interpretation of Robert E. Lee at Arlington House long reflected the eulogistic sentiments in the acts of Congress directing restoration of the house and making it a Lee memorial. "[T]he deification of Robert E. Lee has triumphed over any realistic appraisal of the man in the context of his times," Professor Edward T. Linenthal wrote GWMP superintendent Kitty Roberts in 1991. "The tour of the house is almost completely given over to a discussion of 'things' in the house, and there is little evidence that contemporary critical examination of Lee has made its way into the interpretive program."²⁵

Amid this mood, the existence of slavery at Arlington was generally ignored or obscured by references to "servants." As NPS chief historian Edwin C. Bearss said of a proposed film script in 1985, "Persons lacking background information on the Lees and the history of Arlington House . . . would conclude that the Custis-Lee slaves were hired retainers." An NPS handbook published that year for sale at the site devoted two pages to slavery at Arlington House, however, and in 1992 the NPS installed

²⁴Mary Battiata, "Watt Used Lee Mansion For Parties," *Washington Post*, Dec. 31, 1981, p. C1; Philip Smith, "Watt's Use of Donations To Entertain to Be Probed," *ibid.*, Jan. 1, 1982, p. B1; Herblock cartoon Jan. 5, 1982.

²⁵Letter of Dec. 19, 1991, file K14/Interpretation (General), Superintendent's Office, GWMP.

interpretive signing at the slave quarters, issued a handout on slave life, and offered a museum lawn talk on Arlington slaves. In 1994 the NPS commissioned a study of blacks at Arlington by a University of Maryland doctoral student. Although Lee would properly remain the focus of Arlington House interpretation, a broader picture of life there was emerging.²⁶

²⁶Memorandum, Bearss to Winifred Frost, June 20, 1985, Arlington House file, NPS History Division, Washington, DC; *Arlington House*, Handbook 133 (Washington: National Park Service, 1985), pp. 24-25; Statement for Interpretation, 1992, in file K14/Interpretation (General).

CHAPTER VII: THEODORE ROOSEVELT ISLAND

Like Arlington House, Theodore Roosevelt Island is a discrete national park system unit managed by the superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Following Theodore Roosevelt's death on January 6, 1919, the architect Grant LaFarge proposed memorializing him with a lion sculpture in Rock Creek Park. This was an appealing notion given Roosevelt's leonine character and frequent use of the park, but the objective of maintaining the park as a memorial-free zone prevailed. A memorial portal where 16th Street entered Washington from Maryland, favored by the Fine Arts Commission, was also rejected. In 1923 the Roosevelt Memorial Association decided on the site later occupied by the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, and in 1925 Congress authorized it to plan a memorial there. Following a competition, the association selected a design by John Russell Pope featuring a 200-foot water jet rising from a 600-foot-diameter basin flanked by two curving colonnades. But legislation introduced in 1926 to approve the design foundered when others proposed to honor Jefferson in the same location.¹

By 1929 the Roosevelt Memorial Association had turned its attention to Analostan Island, then owned by the Washington Gas Light Company. The National Capital Park and Planning Commission

¹Theodore Roosevelt Memorial project file, Commission of Fine Arts, Record Group 66, National Archives, Washington, DC (collection hereinafter cited as RG 66); Charles Todd Stephenson, "Celebrating American Heroes: The Commemoration of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and Thomas Jefferson, 1832-1943," Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1993, pp. 209-14.

was seeking to acquire the Potomac island for park purposes, and Wilbur H. Simonson included it in his January 1930 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway development plan with an encircling road reached by bridges from Rosslyn and Columbia Island. After the government instituted condemnation proceedings, the gas company sold the island to the Roosevelt association for \$364,000 in 1931. Legislation was then introduced to authorize the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital to accept the island from the association as a memorial to Roosevelt.²

At the Senate committee hearing on the bill, there was some discussion about whether the entire island or a monumental structure on it would constitute the memorial. Hermann Hagedorn of the association said that a majority of his board did not favor anything monumental, but the bill allowed the association to erect a monument approved by the Fine Arts Commission and the NCP&PC if it later wanted one. Further discussion about the association's role led the committee to amend the bill with a proviso "[t]hat no general plan for the development of the island be adopted without the approval of the Roosevelt Memorial Association; and that . . . no development, inconsistent with this plan, be executed without the association's consent."³

²U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Library, *Memorial to Theodore Roosevelt, Hearing on S. 290, 72nd Congress, Jan. 29, 1932* (Washington: GPO, 1932), pp. 1-5.

³*Ibid.*, p. 8; Senate Report 292, 72nd Congress, Feb. 24, 1932.

The corresponding House committee approved the bill with its understanding "that there shall be nothing of a monumental nature erected, but that the island shall be kept as nearly as possible in a wild state, with only such ornamentation as shall not be out of harmony with that purpose." Questions raised on the House floor about giving a private association the right to approve the island's development were answered with further assurances that no monumental treatment was intended.⁴

Enacted May 21, 1932, the law directed that upon its acceptance by Public Buildings and Public Parks, the island would be designated Roosevelt Island and administered "as a natural park for the recreation and enjoyment of the public," with suitable means of access. The island was renamed Theodore Roosevelt Island by another law approved February 11, 1933, to ensure that its honoree would not be confused with the president-elect, Franklin D. Roosevelt.⁵

The National Park Service assumed responsibility for the island when it succeeded Public Buildings and Public Parks in August 1933. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., whom the Roosevelt Memorial Association had engaged to prepare a plan for the island, urged the NPS to act promptly to minimize the fire threat to mature trees by removing deadwood and weedy growth. In May

⁴House Report 1063, 72nd Congress, Apr. 15, 1932; *Congressional Record* 75: 9397.

⁵Public Law 72-146, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 47: 163; *Congressional Record* 76: 3557; Public Law 72-332, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 47: 799.

1934 he submitted a progress report on his plan. He envisioned something akin to a natural primeval forest covering most of the island. There would be two narrow bridges for pedestrians and equestrians near the north and south ends but no automobile access as proposed by Simonson.⁶

Olmsted recommended removing most traces of human occupation, including the remains of the Mason house, a racetrack, and quarrying operations:

These relics of past occupancy and also the mildly picturesque ruins of the old house have a certain kind of interest from the point of view of local history; but so far as we are yet informed there is no historic interest or sentiment attaching to them of sufficient importance to make their obliteration a seriously objectionable matter. And certainly to make a definite point of preserving them would tend to associate the Island with sentiments more or less competitive with its primary memorial sentiment and with the general conception of approximating the landscape of the woodlands to that of a natural primeval forest. It would seem best, therefore, to take down the upstanding parts of the ruins and to obliterate or obscure most of the other traces of former human occupancy. Similarly the few conspicuously exotic and "gardenesque" trees such as Catalpas and Paulownias ought to be weeded out, as long-lived native forest trees are grown to take their place.⁷

Olmsted submitted outlines of work for the CCC, which began in 1935 to remove debris, stumps, and unwanted vegetation; construct trails; and plant desired trees, including flowering dogwoods.

⁶Letter, Olmsted to Arno B. Cammerer, Jan. 17, 1934, Theodore Roosevelt Memorial project file, RG 66; letter, Olmsted to NCP&PC, May 24, 1934, file 545-30/Roosevelt Island, National Capital Planning Commission, Box 56, Record Group 328, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereinafter cited as RG 328).

⁷Olmsted to NCP&PC, May 24, 1934.

In February 1945 Henry V. Hubbard of the Olmsted Brothers firm forwarded plans for a causeway from the Virginia shore to the north end of the island. The Corps of Engineers, concerned about anything that would impede flood waters, was opposed. It wanted the channel between the island and Virginia (Little River) cleared out and an existing subsurface causeway at its north end removed. In lieu of the proposed causeway it suggested a high suspension bridge. Hubbard called this "absurd, both as being out of all reason as to expense, as being almost impossible to handle as to its approaches, and as being hideous in appearance in its relation to the Key Bridge and to the Island."⁸

In response Hubbard proposed a low-level bridge with collapsible railings that would be overtopped during floods, although he now questioned the need to accommodate equestrians via either a causeway or a bridge. Harry T. Thompson of National Capital Parks concurred. "In general, I think that Roosevelt Island presents a unique opportunity to those of us who are working with it to *not* develop but to maintain an area in the heart of Washington exclusively for the use of people who like to, and who should have an opportunity to get away from all manner of urban development," he wrote. "My inclination is to think of Roosevelt Island as a sanctuary for people only—without the intrusion of even horseback riders." NPS associate director Arthur E. Demaray and NCP&PC chairman U. S. Grant III agreed, and

⁸Letter, Hubbard to U. S. Grant III, Feb. 28, 1945, file 545-30/Roosevelt Island; letter, Hubbard to Grant, Mar. 26, 1945 (containing quotation), *ibid*.

in April the NCP&PC endorsed a revised Olmsted Brothers plan providing for access only via a ferry at the south end.⁹

The Olmsted Brothers plan for the general development of Roosevelt Island received the formal approval of the Roosevelt Memorial Association, NCP&PC, and Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes at the end of 1945. Its primary development objective was clearly stated: "Covering most of the Island, and constituting its dominant landscape feature, there should be developed, steadily and progressively through the years and centuries to come, a real forest, closely similar in character to the natural primeval forests which once covered this and others of the Potomac Islands." The plan also called for an overlook at the south end as a memorial feature. "If we can now develop some public opinion behind the Olmsted plan for the Island, we may be able to hold off for an indefinite period the buzzards who will want to make the Island their prey," Hermann Hagedorn wrote Grant afterward.¹⁰

A small floating dock was installed at the south end of the island in the summer of 1946, during which five tour groups of about 160 people disembarked there. GSI (Government Services Inc., the primary National Capital Parks concessioner) operated a

⁹Hubbard to Grant, Mar. 26, 1945; Thompson quoted in memorandum, Demaray to Grant, Apr. 7, 1945, file 545-30/Roosevelt Island; letter, Grant to Hubbard, Apr. 10, 1945, *ibid.*; NCP&PC Minutes, Apr. 19-20, 1945, RG 328.

¹⁰Memorandum, Arthur E. Demaray to Ickes, Nov. 29, 1945, file 545-30/Roosevelt Island; letter, Hagedorn to Grant, Jan. 15, 1946, *ibid.*

toll ferry service from Georgetown to the north end of the island from the early 1950s to 1957, when the NPS assumed the money-losing service and ferried visitors without charge on weekends. The NPS rehabilitated the old causeway across the upstream end of Little River in 1963 as a construction access for the new Theodore Roosevelt Memorial on the island, then built a higher causeway downstream for the public to reach the memorial, completed in 1967. This access allowed the ferry to be discontinued that year, although the Citizens Association of Georgetown succeeded in getting it revived for a short time under GSI auspices with a 25-cent charge each way. Intended to be temporary, the new causeway was replaced by the present pedestrian bridge in 1979.

During the 1950s Theodore Roosevelt Island played a significant role in planning for a new downtown Potomac River crossing, the subject of one of the major highway controversies in the region that decade. Highway planners initially favored a high-level bridge from the end of E Street that would cross above the center of Roosevelt Island. In 1952 the NPS engaged Clarke and Rapuano, a New York planning and design firm including Gilmore Clarke and former National Capital Parks landscape architect Malcolm Kirkpatrick, to weigh the impact of this and other highway proposals on its Washington-area parklands. Buttressed by the firm's assessment, NPS director Conrad L. Wirth vigorously opposed the E Street Bridge, but an alternative

crossing Hains Point to Roaches Run that he and a majority of the NCPC favored won little support.¹¹

In June 1954 Sen. Francis Case of South Dakota, chairman of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, suggested to National Capital Planning Commission chairman Harland Bartholomew a low-level bridge with draw span aligned with New Hampshire Avenue, diagonally crossing the river and the small island at the southern tip of Roosevelt Island. Bartholomew, Wirth, and like-minded NCPC colleagues continued to resist any such span visible from Memorial Bridge, but a majority of NCPC members agreed to support a low-level bridge roughly parallel to Memorial Bridge just below Roosevelt Island. Legislation authorizing the District of Columbia commissioners to construct such a bridge "from the vicinity of Constitution Avenue . . . south of the southern portion of Theodore Roosevelt Island sometimes referred to as 'Small Island'" was enacted that August. The act also authorized construction of a pedestrian access from the bridge to Roosevelt Island subject to the Theodore Roosevelt Association's approval.¹²

Wirth and other opponents got President Eisenhower to accompany his approval of the legislation with a statement noting the adverse effect the new bridge would have on Memorial Bridge,

¹¹NCPC Minutes, Jan. 6, 1954, RG 328.

¹²Letter, Case to John Nolen, Jr., July 1, 1954, file 545-8/Potomac River Crossings, Box 26, RG 328; letter, Bartholomew to Case, July 28, 1954, *ibid.*; Public Law 83-704, Aug. 30, 1954, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 68: 961.

the adjacent watergate, and the Lincoln Memorial and asking the secretary of the interior to submit recommendations for mitigating amendments. They now sought to mobilize support for a four-lane tunnel in lieu of the six-lane bridge. Bartholomew, Clarke, and Fine Arts Commission chairman David Finley were among those endorsing legislation authorizing a tunnel; but the District commissioners and other bridge proponents faulted the tunnel's lower capacity, and the Bureau of the Budget disliked its higher cost.

In April 1957 the Senate District Committee held hearings on the tunnel bill and another bill directing construction of the bridge slightly upstream from the previously planned location, crossing the southern end of Roosevelt Island. The Theodore Roosevelt Association had agreed to this intrusion to lessen the bridge's visual impact on the Memorial Bridge area should it be built, but it favored the tunnel. Representing the association, former NPS director Horace M. Albright wrote the committee to declare that the bridge "would be a calamitous miscarriage of plans for our Nation's Capital." Wirth, representing the NPS and the Interior Department, and Finley, representing the Fine Arts Commission, expressed similar sentiments in oral testimony. On the other side, the District's engineer commissioner, Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Lane, stressed the need for the six traffic lanes that were feasible only with a bridge.¹³

¹³U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia, *Crossing of the Potomac River in the Vicinity of Constitution Avenue, Hearings on S. 944 and S. 1707*, 85th

The committee reported in favor of the tunnel bill by a narrow majority and it passed the Senate in July, only to be buried in the House District Committee. The following spring, realizing that the tunnel was dead and that the District could proceed with bridge construction under the 1954 act, NPS and Interior officials drafted a new bridge bill in collaboration with the Theodore Roosevelt Association containing as much as they could hope for. In endorsing the compromise, the House committee warned that the District commissioners

should no longer be subjected to delaying tactics on the part of the Commission of Fine Arts, Park Service, National Capital Planning Commission, and the Theodore Roosevelt Association. In fact it is only with the understanding that the President will keep the above-listed organizations in support of the bridge project that the committee has expressed a willingness to go along with the proposal to change the location of the structure. . . . [T]he Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia should proceed forthwith with the construction of the bridge already authorized under law in the event that the Congress does not approve this proposed legislation.¹⁴

The compromise bill moved quickly through both houses of Congress and received President Eisenhower's signature on June 4, 1958. The act directed the District commissioners "to construct forthwith . . . a low-level bridge, to be known as the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge . . . , such bridge to cross such portion or portions of the two islands comprising Theodore Roosevelt Island at the location approved in writing on April 30, 1958, by the

Congress, Apr. 11, 17, 25, 1957 (Washington: GPO, 1957), pp. 18-19, 29, 31, 84.

¹⁴Senate Report 477, 85th Congress, June 20, 1957; *Congressional Record* 103: 10891; House Report 1721, 85th Congress, May 14, 1958.

Theodore Roosevelt Association." It also authorized the commissioners to build and maintain pedestrian and vehicular access structures to the island if the secretary of the interior so requested and the Roosevelt association approved the plans—an authority never used.¹⁵ Groundbreaking ceremonies were held in April 1960, and the completed bridge opened to traffic June 23, 1964.

Meanwhile, in July 1955, Congress established the Theodore Roosevelt Centennial Commission to mark the centennial of Roosevelt's birth in 1958 and charged it with making "plans for the completion of the development of Theodore Roosevelt Island." When it became likely that a bridge would be built near or across the southern end of the island, the Roosevelt association and centennial commission scrapped the modest memorial overlook there called for in the Olmsted plan, which Hermann Hagedorn and Harland Bartholomew agreed had "never caught the public imagination." They now felt the need for a "focus of reverence" in the center of the island—"something quite substantial in scale" like the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials that would be visible from the bridge.¹⁶

Commissioned by the Roosevelt groups, architect Eric Gugler and sculptor Paul Manship designed a huge armillary sphere. Hagedorn labored to capture its abstruse symbolism:

¹⁵Public Law 85-446, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 72: 180.

¹⁶Public Law 84-183, July 28, 1955, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 69: 383; letter, Bartholomew to Hagedorn, Nov. 2, 1955, file 545-30/Roosevelt Island, RG 328.

This skeletal globe, consisting of three circular bronze bands, having neither beginning nor end, will symbolize infinity both in space and time. On the broadest of these are to be indicated the signs of the zodiac, the ancient symbols of the constellations, leading the mind to the immutable laws governing alike the celestial bodies and the soul of man. The sphere, as a whole—open to the sun and the moon, the stars, and all the winds of heaven, with bonds suggested but not defined—betokens the free spirit, universal in its nature, timeless in its being, and abiding within the orbit of eternal law.¹⁷

By March 1956 the Roosevelt groups, Fine Arts Commission, NCPC, and NPS had approved the memorial's design and location. The bridge controversy delayed further action until 1960, when Congress considered legislation directing the secretary of the interior to erect a memorial with appropriated funds. The House passed the bill that July despite complaints about the chosen design. Rep. James A. Haley of Florida termed it "a bird roost," and the following month Alice Longworth, Roosevelt's irrepressible daughter, called it a "globular jungle gym [that] would desecrate the memory of anyone." At her request the bill was amended and enacted with a provision making the design subject to the Roosevelt children's approval.¹⁸

With their original scheme thereby consigned to oblivion, Gugler and Manship began anew. The resulting design featured a 17-foot-high bronze statue of Roosevelt and granite shafts inscribed with quotations from his writings and speeches. It won

¹⁷Quote from Theodore Roosevelt Centennial Commission report in House Report 1760, 86th Congress, June 7, 1960, p. 2.

¹⁸NCPC Minutes, Mar. 1-2, 1956, RG 328; *Congressional Record* 106: 15502, 17603, 18543; Public Law 86-764, Sept. 13, 1960, U.S. Statutes at Large 74: 904.

the approvals necessary for construction but was panned by art critics then and thereafter for its bombastic quality and incongruity with its natural setting. Begun in July 1963, the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial was dedicated by President Lyndon B. Johnson on October 27, 1967.

CHAPTER VIII: OTHER ADDITIONS AND SUBTRACTIONS

Several more key areas were added to the George Washington Memorial Parkway or came under the administration of its superintendent even though not parts of the parkway proper. Conversely, a significant portion of the land acquired for the GWMP in Montgomery County, Maryland, was reassigned to another unit of the national park system.

Fort Hunt

The Capper-Cramton Act provided that Fort Hunt, along with Fort Washington and Fort Foote, would become part of the GWMP when no longer needed for military purposes. The late-19th-century river batteries of Fort Hunt, built to complement those installed across the Potomac at Fort Washington, were soon obsolete, and the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway was being built along the post's riverfront when the act was passed in 1930.

In anticipation of Fort Hunt's early transfer, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission approved a plan for its recreational development in July 1931. The plan envisioned the area being used for large group picnics; it also provided for athletic fields and an 18-hole golf course. Three noncommissioned officers' quarters across from the proposed picnic grove were to be retained for police and park maintenance headquarters and living accommodations.¹

¹Charles W. Eliot II, "The Future of Fort Hunt, Virginia," July 31, 1931, file 1460/Fort Hunt, National Capital Parks records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD

Because the federal government had acquired most of the 197-acre post by condemnation on grounds that the land was needed for military purposes, a question arose as to whether it could legally retain the land after the military had departed. The transfer to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital was delayed pending an affirmative legal opinion from the Army's judge advocate general. Public Buildings and Public Parks assumed jurisdiction from the War Department in October 1932 and held it until the following August, when the National Park Service succeeded to its responsibilities.²

The NPS hosted a Civilian Conservation Corps camp at Fort Hunt beginning in October 1933. The CCC enrollees built picnic facilities and worked on museum exhibits for NPS areas in the eastern United States at a museum laboratory operated there until November 1938. Because of its proximity to Washington, the Fort Hunt CCC camp became a showcase for visiting dignitaries interested in the program. Anthony Eden inspected it in December 1938, and King George VI and Queen Elizabeth accompanied President and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt there in June 1939.

From time to time other government agencies sought the transfer or use of Fort Hunt for their own purposes. Unsuccessful applicants included the Public Health Service, the Coast Guard,

(hereinafter cited as NCP, WNRC); NCP&PC Minutes, July 31-Aug. 1, 1931, National Capital Planning Commission, Record Group 328, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereinafter cited as RG 328).

²Letter, U. S. Grant III to Douglas MacArthur, Oct. 31, 1932, file 1460/Fort Hunt, NCP, WNRC.

and Fairfax County, which in 1959 petitioned to take over parts of the property for a golf course and a school. In 1942 the National Archives received permission to store nitrate film in the fort's concrete batteries and powder magazines, and in 1954 the General Services Administration was allowed to use part of the Mount Vernon battery as a civil defense control center. The primary non-park use occurred from July 1942 to November 1946: the War Department repossessed the fort and constructed 150 buildings for wartime intelligence activities, including the interrogation of German prisoners.³

As part of the Mission 66 program, Fort Hunt was closed during most of 1964 for construction of a new roadway, parking area, picnic shelter, and comfort station. A new GWMP maintenance facility with solar heat opened at Fort Hunt in 1979, enabling the maintenance force to vacate an old Army horse barn on Fort Hunt Road. Although historic, the deteriorating barn was deemed a neighborhood nuisance and was subsequently demolished.

A new stable for the U.S. Park Police was completed at Fort Hunt in the spring of 1991.

³Memorandum, C. S. Watson to C. Marshall Finnan, May 28, 1934, *ibid.*; letter, John J. Dempsey to Henry L. Stimson, May 15, 1942, *ibid.*; letter, Irving C. Root to Collas G. Harris, July 22, 1942, *ibid.*; letter, Edward J. Kelly to L. A. Liernicki, Feb. 8, 1954, *ibid.*; letter, T. Sutton Jett to C. C. Robinson, Sept. 4, 1959, GWMP, Va.—Fort Hunt file, Office of Land Use Coordination, National Capital Regional Office, NPS; letter, Roger Ernst to Rep. Joel T. Broyhill, Dec. 15, 1959, *ibid.*

Jones Point

Jones Point, at the southern end of the Alexandria waterfront, was a narrow spit of land in 1791 when the boundaries of the ten-mile-square District of Columbia were surveyed beginning at its tip. In 1855-56 the U.S. Lighthouse Board built a frame lighthouse nearly atop the D.C. cornerstone. The point was broadened to its present configuration by spoil dredged from the river in the early 20th century. The new southeastern corner of the point fell on the Maryland side of the boundary, and in 1924 Maryland deeded this .927 acre to the U.S. Coast Guard, which installed a steel tower containing an automatic light there. In 1926 the Coast Guard gave some 3,000 square feet containing the defunct lighthouse to the Mount Vernon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution under an act of Congress.⁴

During World War II the Battery Cove Military Reservation at Jones Point contained an Army Signal Corps station. After the war the Navy occupied part of the area with a Naval Reserve Training Center. In the late 1950s the Bureau of Public Roads acquired a strip across the point for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, completed in December 1961. Most of the point had now become surplus to military needs, and the National Capital Planning Commission supported its transfer to the National Park Service. In September 1962 the NPS received 49.29 acres from the Army, and in June 1965

⁴Steven H. Lewis, "Historical Report, Jones Point Lighthouse," Oct. 29, 1963, in Jones Point-DAR Agreement file, Land Use Coordination; Public Law 69-276, May 22, 1926, U.S. Statutes at Large 44: 625.

the Coast Guard transferred its .927 acre. The DAR deeded the lighthouse tract to the NPS in October 1964 under an agreement that the NPS would restore the lighthouse.⁵

In 1969 the NPS supported the Smithsonian Institution's proposal to use Jones Point as well as Fort Foote for its planned National Armed Forces Museum (pages 104-05). The plan, revised in 1971 under the name "Bicentennial Park" to focus on the military during the American Revolution, called for a museum building and ship basin at Jones Point with ferry service across the river to Fort Foote. Alexandria officials voiced concern about mass public access to Jones Point, however, and the overall plan failed to receive the necessary Congressional support.⁶

In 1974, after Alexandria expressed interest in acquiring the federal land at Jones Point for a city park, the General Services Administration surveyed the land under an executive order to identify unneeded federal property, found it underutilized, and recommended that it be declared excess. GSA withdrew this recommendation after the NPS moved swiftly in January 1975 to have NCPC add Jones Point Park to the national capital park system as a component of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Jones Point Park comprised 60.6 federal acres:

⁵Jones Point-GSA Proposed Land Surplusing file, Land Use Coordination; Jones Point-DAR Agreement file, *ibid*.

⁶Memorandum, Harthorn L. Bill to Leslie L. Glasgow, Aug. 28, 1969, Armed Forces Museum project file, Land Use Coordination; letter, Nathaniel P. Reed to Sen. B. Everett Jordan, Feb. 24, 1972, *ibid*.; Paul Hodge, "'76 Warfare Parks Planned," *Washington Post*, Nov. 5, 1971, p. B1.

50.3 acres under the NPS, 9.06 acres (beneath the Woodrow Wilson Bridge) under the Department of Transportation, and 1.25 acres under the Navy.⁷

In October 1981 Rep. Stanford E. Parris of Virginia wrote Secretary of the Interior James G. Watt to again relay Alexandria's interest in acquiring Jones Point. NPS regional director Manus J. Fish, Jr., met with Alexandria city manager Douglas Harmon, and in July 1982 the NPS issued Alexandria a short-term special use permit to operate Jones Point Park.⁸

The city's continuing desire for a permanent transfer led to another GSA survey in early 1983. GSA concluded that Jones Point Park was not properly part of the GWMP because the Capper-Cramton Act had not authorized land acquisition for the parkway in Alexandria. It again found the park underutilized and recommended that it be declared excess. The NPS countered by noting that GSA had accepted Jones Point's inclusion in the national capital park

⁷Letter, R. Carlton Brooks to Charles H. Conrad, Jan. 22, 1975, Jones Point-GSA Proposed Land Surplusing file, Land Use Coordination; letter, Manus J. Fish, Jr., to Charles H. Conrad, Dec. 24, 1974, Jones Point Park file, National Capital Planning Commission records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD (hereinafter cited as NCPC, WNRC); NCPC Minutes, Jan. 9, 1975, *ibid.*

⁸Letter, Parris to Watt, Oct. 21, 1981, Jones Point-GSA Proposed Land Surplusing file, Land Use Coordination; letter, Harmon to Fish, Nov. 2, 1981, *ibid.*; cover letter, *Development Concept Plan and Environmental Assessment for Jones Point Park*, April 1984, *ibid.*

system in 1975 and that it and the city were jointly planning to upgrade the park's recreational potential.⁹

The NPS and the city published their joint development concept plan for public review in April 1984. It called for the park to remain federal property but for the city to manage it and develop recreational amenities, including a bicycle path along the east waterfront, under a 25-year permit. As finally issued by the NPS on September 30, 1986, and signed by the city on November 4, the permit specified that the NPS would retain management responsibility for two community garden plots, the lighthouse, and the D.C. boundary stone.¹⁰

The heightened interest in Jones Point Park was symbolized by the exterior restoration of the lighthouse, accomplished with DAR support in the early 1990s. Following a ceremony on October 29, 1993, a light beamed from its tower for the first time in nearly seven decades.¹¹

Dyke Marsh and Daingerfield Island

Dyke Marsh, on the Potomac River in Fairfax County south of Alexandria, was created or at least abetted in the early 19th century when a gravel dike was constructed out from the shoreline

⁹Letter, R. W. Piasecki to Earl E. Jones, July 25, 1983, *ibid.*

¹⁰Letter, Robert Stanton to Vola Lawson, Sept. 30, 1986, *ibid.*

¹¹Steve Bates, "Jones Point Light Flashes Back On," *Washington Post*, Oct. 30, 1993, p. B3.

to capture silt from the river and Hunting Creek just upstream. This effort to create additional land for agriculture failed, but it produced an expanded marsh with significant wildlife values. The National Capital Park and Planning Commission acquired the northern portion of the marsh for the GWMP in 1933.

By 1940 the Smoot Sand and Gravel Corporation had acquired 260 acres of land and marsh to the south, also bordering the parkway. When Smoot applied to the Corps of Engineers for a dredging permit in the area, the NCP&PC objected on grounds that the parkway's scenic values would be impaired. Aware that its objection was unlikely to be sustained, the NCP&PC negotiated an agreement with Smoot whereby the government would receive Smoot's property in exchange for allowing Smoot to dredge in 150 acres of it (defined as Area D) for thirty years and 85 acres of a 110-acre portion of the government's marshland (Area C) for twenty years. Smoot would also give the government 23.5 acres it held at Daingerfield Island in exchange for dredging rights in an equal area of the adjoining river.¹²

Legislation authorizing these exchanges "to protect more adequately the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and to add further to its memorial character" was introduced in Congress in July 1940. After it failed to pass, the NPS obtained \$70,500 from an old Public Works Administration allotment to buy the Daingerfield

¹²Letter, Arno B. Cammerer to Thomas A. Butt, Mar. 1, 1940, file 545-100/Mt. Vernon Blvd., Box 134, RG 328.

Island acreage in 1942.¹³ Bills authorizing the Dyke Marsh exchange continued to be introduced at the NCP&PC's request without success through 1949, whereupon the transaction languished.

In 1959 the NPS succeeded in reviving the legislation. Testifying for the NPS at a House Public Works Committee hearing, Superintendent Harry T. Thompson of National Capital Parks explained its benefits to the parkway, and a representative of the Interior Department's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries said that the dredging would have little effect on fish and wildlife. But others, including the local Audubon Society and Reps. John Dingell of Michigan, John Saylor of Pennsylvania, and Henry Reuss of Wisconsin, were less pleased about the NPS's apparent willingness to allow Smoot to destroy the marsh.¹⁴

Dingell and Saylor added a further statement of purpose to the bill: "to acquire an area of irreplaceable wet lands near the Nation's Capitol which is valuable for the production and preservation of wildlife." Other amendments allowed the NPS to prescribe "the conduct of dredging operations, the deposition of spoil, and the revegetation of spoil areas, so that these activities will be carried on in such a manner as to provide for the preservation of wildlife values" and directed the secretary of the interior to administer the marshlands "so that fish and

¹³H.R. 10221, 76th Congress, July 25, 1940; NCP&PC Minutes, Apr. 16-17, 1942, RG 328.

¹⁴H.R. 2228, 86th Congress; House Report 33, 86th Congress, Feb. 12, 1959.

wildlife development and their preservation as wet land wildlife habitat shall be paramount” Dingell explained the intent of the amendments on the House floor:

We expect that the Secretary will provide for the deposition of the silt and waste from the dredging operations in such way as to encourage the restoration of the marsh at the earliest possible moment. . . . We assume that in the one area where Smoot is entitled to dredge 85 out of 110 acres, area C, that the selection of the 85 acres to be dredged will be at the discretion of the Secretary, who will use his good judgment for the preservation of the wildlife by retention of a rim around the edge to rebuild the area by siltation and in all other necessary and proper ways.¹⁵

The legislation passed Congress and received President Dwight D. Eisenhower's approval on June 11, 1959. Acting NPS director Hillory A. Tolson signed an agreement with Smoot to implement the act on October 9, Smoot deeded its property to the government the following May, and on June 10, 1960, Secretary Fred A. Seaton formally designated it and redesignated the government's prior Dyke Marsh acreage part of the GWMP, "to be administered so that fish and wildlife development and their preservation as wet land wildlife habitat shall be paramount."¹⁶

The agreement with Smoot failed to serve this purpose, however. It let the company select the 85 acres in Area C to be dredged and required no rim to encourage resedimentation. The NPS exercised so little oversight that the dredgers destroyed five acres of prime marshland in an area off-limits to them before the

¹⁵*Congressional Record* 105: 6031-35.

¹⁶Public Law 86-41, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 73: 71; file 1460/Mount Vernon Memorial Highway Land Acquisition, NCP, WNRC; GWMP, Va.—Dyke Marsh file, Land Use Coordination.

error was noticed. To compensate, another agreement between the NPS and Smoot's successor, the Potomac Sand and Gravel Company, in January 1964 withheld five acres in Area D from dredging, and it belatedly defined the 85 acres to be dredged in Area C with some concern for marsh restoration.¹⁷

As dredging continued, the NPS acquired fill from the Blue Plains sewage treatment plant and the Corps of Engineers dumped material from channel dredging to restore the marsh. The dumping caused extreme sedimentation in the river below. After viewing the scene from the air in December 1972, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel P. Reed sent National Capital Parks superintendent Russell E. Dickenson a strong memorandum:

I was horrified! If the work is legal—and I doubt that—it is immoral. I want to know—

1. How quickly all dredging within Dykes [sic] Marsh can be halted
2. What steps are being undertaken to force the Smoot Co. to "reconstruct" the marsh per the original agreement

I consider this a priority as the present operation borders on a scandal. I do not want another incoherent briefing by a NPS employee who doesn't know what the word "environment" means. I want a rational plan for ending the dredging operation on a priority basis.¹⁸

The company ultimately found dredging uneconomical, and the NPS discontinued efforts to fill the dredged area. When Representative Dingell pressed again for marsh restoration action in 1984, NPS regional director Jack Fish informed him that natural forces were doing the job. Wild rice was growing there

¹⁷GWMP, Va.—Dyke Marsh file, Land Use Coordination.

¹⁸Memorandum, Reed to Dickenson, Dec. 19, 1972, *ibid.*

again, and river otter had reappeared downstream. "[S]uitable habitat is being restored naturally," Fish wrote. "We feel the natural processes whereby Dyke Marsh is being increased in extent are complex and would only be exacerbated by man's attempt at restoration."¹⁹

The Civil Aeronautics Authority had appropriated the northern portion of Daingerfield Island and other Mount Vernon Memorial Highway land to the north in connection with its construction of Washington National Airport in 1939-40. The road past the airport was shifted to the west and reopened to traffic in August 1940. In May 1947 the CAA returned the parkway land it had taken below Four Mile Run to the NPS, which had begun to develop the Washington Sailing Marina on the north end of Daingerfield Island in anticipation of its return. Government Services, Inc., the primary concessioner for National Capital Parks, began operating the marina in May 1948. The NPS established a 25-acre tree and shrub nursery in the center of Daingerfield Island in 1946.

Daingerfield Island became the target of another development proposal, inspired by America's burgeoning space program, in 1962. Edward Teller, serving as chairman of the Washington Planetarium and Space Center, Inc., gained the support of the NPS, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the Commission of Fine Arts for a planetarium on the site. An 85-foot-diameter

¹⁹Letter, Dingell to Russell E. Dickenson, Jan. 17, 1984, *ibid.*; letter, Fish to Dingell, Mar. 8, 1984, *ibid.*

dome would make it the world's largest; a Japanese firm was to donate its projector.²⁰ The sponsors failed to raise the necessary funds, however, and the planetarium never got off the ground.

Charles M. Fairchild, a developer, held 29 acres between the parkway and the river at the south end of Dyke Marsh. After trying unsuccessfully to have this property rezoned for high-rises in 1964, he planned a single-family residential development there. In 1966 he proposed to give the NPS the wooded slopes adjacent to the parkway as a buffer in exchange for part of the fast Dyke Marsh land to the north. The NPS wanted the entire Fairchild property, and that December Fairchild made another offer. He held a 99-year lease on a 42-acre tract across the parkway from Daingerfield Island owned by the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad and was planning a high-rise office complex called Potomac Center there. Because highway access to the tract was inadequate, he needed a direct connection to the parkway road and offered his Dyke Marsh property in exchange.²¹

Regional Director Nash Castro and other NPS officials opposed the deal and urged acquisition of Fairchild's Dyke Marsh property by condemnation if necessary. Secretary of the Interior

²⁰Letter, Teller to Mrs. James H. Rowe, Feb. 28, 1962, GWMP, Va.—Daingerfield Island file, Land Use Coordination; memorandum, Rowe to Conrad L. Wirth, May 10, 1962, *ibid.*

²¹Memorandum, Theodor R. Swem to George B. Hartzog, Jr., Nov. 18, 1966, file L1425/Fairchild Property, MVMH, NCP, WNRC; memorandum for the record, LeRoy A. Rowell, Jan. 4, 1967, *ibid.*

Stewart L. Udall, who had acted to block other high-rise developments along the Potomac, did not wish to be seen as abetting this one. But NPS director George B. Hartzog, Jr., and Udall's successor, Walter J. Hickel, felt otherwise. On June 5, 1970, Hickel signed an agreement with Fairchild and the RF&P Corporation providing for the exchange and requiring Fairchild to build a parkway overpass that would also enable better public access to Daingerfield Island. To comply with the recently enacted National Environmental Policy Act, the NPS justified the transaction with an environmental analysis memorandum citing the benefits of the Dyke Marsh acquisition and the improved Daingerfield Island access and the "minimal adverse environmental impact" from the Potomac Center access.²²

Fairchild conveyed his Dyke Marsh property to the government in August 1971, and after a delay caused by other complications he requested the parkway access easement from the NPS in May 1976. Local opposition to the Potomac Center development had meanwhile grown, and the NPS, realizing the inadequacy of its 1970 environmental analysis, prepared a new environmental assessment that recognized the adverse impact of granting the access easement and recommended against doing so. Regional

²²Memorandum, Castro et al. to George B. Hartzog, Jr., Dec. 26, 1968, GWMP-Fairchild file, Land Use Coordination; memorandum, J. E. N. Jensen to Hartzog, May 13, 1970, *ibid.*

Director Jack Fish hoped the NPS might instead be able to purchase Fairchild's access right, appraised at \$581,000.²³

This hope proved unfounded, and by 1978 the NPS was again working with Fairchild on the interchange design, a prerequisite to the easement. The *Washington Post* responded that July with an editorial titled "Blundering Along the GW Parkway" that deplored the 1970 exchange agreement and urged that parkway access be denied to help kill the Potomac Center "monster." That November, angry with what he termed NPS stalling, Fairchild cut down hundreds of trees on his property bordering the parkway.²⁴

The NPS finally approved the interchange design in 1981, and the Fine Arts Commission and National Capital Planning Commission endorsed it in 1983. By then the RF&P Corporation had terminated Fairchild's lease, so it became the sole grantee of the parkway access easement in August 1984. A year later RF&P formed a partnership with Savage/Fogarty Companies, which in 1986-87 produced plans for a mixed-use development called Potomac Greens. The Daingerfield Island Protective Society sued the secretary of the interior and the NCPC in an effort to block the development, Alexandria's city council and planning commission refused to approve the developer's plans, and Sen. John Warner of Virginia inserted a provision in the Interior Department's fiscal 1988 and

²³"Potomac Center Access to Mount Vernon Memorial Highway Environmental Assessment," Sept. 9, 1976, *ibid.*; memorandum, Fish to Gary Everhardt, Apr. 7, 1977, *ibid.*

²⁴*Washington Post* editorial July 8, 1978; Paul Hodge, "Tree-Cutting Begun at Site of Va. Center," *Washington Post*, Nov. 17, 1978, p. B1.

1989 appropriations acts requiring the NPS to complete and send Congress an environmental impact statement before issuing a construction permit for the Potomac Greens/Daingerfield Island parkway interchange.²⁵

The NPS released its final environmental impact statement, presenting four alternatives, in May 1991. Under the first alternative, it would permit the agreed-upon grade-separated diamond interchange and the Potomac Greens tract would be developed by right under existing zoning. Under the second alternative, it would acquire the parkway access right and Potomac Greens development rights above fifty feet. Under the third alternative, it would also acquire 18 acres of Potomac Greens bordering the parkway for a visual buffer. Under the fourth alternative, it would acquire the entire Potomac Greens site, develop it for public recreational and administrative use (including a new GWMP headquarters and U.S. Park Police substation), and build an at-grade access opposite the Daingerfield Island access.²⁶

²⁵Letter, Russell E. Dickenson to Charles M. Fairchild, Apr. 13, 1981, GWMP-Fairchild file, Land Use Coordination; NCPC Minutes, Nov. 4, 1983, NCPC, WNRC; Mary Jordan, "Plans Filed for Alexandria 'Gateway' Project," *Washington Post*, Sept. 4, 1986, p. C1; Public Law 100-202, Dec. 27, 1987, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 101: 1329-223; Public Law 100-446, Sept. 27, 1988, *ibid.*, 102: 1789.

²⁶"Executive Summary, Final Environmental Statement, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Potomac Greens," file L30 Lands-Potomac Greens Redevelopment Project, Superintendent's Office, GWMP.

The NPS concluded that the first alternative would result in gridlock traffic on the parkway. It was unable to accurately appraise the Potomac Greens tract but estimated its value at between \$16 million and \$64 million. It made no specific recommendation but suggested that the lands and/or rights in the other alternatives might be acquired in exchange for an easement it held restricting development on an RF&P tract near National Airport in Arlington. No access construction or site development occurred as negotiations with RF&P and local officials continued through 1993.²⁷

In 1949 the NPS granted Thomas H. Andrews a lease for a mooring basin on the northern part of the Dyke Marsh shoreline. The lease for Belle Haven Marina was renewed on a monthly basis until July 1960, when the marina, then operated by Andrews' widow and son, became a concession.²⁸

Three decades later the marina was in bad shape, its seawall collapsing and the shoreline behind it eroding. The NPS estimated that \$2.2 million would be needed to properly renovate the facility. Because the concessioner—Belle Haven Marina, Inc., owned by George Stevens—was unable to bear a sufficient share of this expense, the NPS announced its intention to close the marina after the concession contract expired at the end of 1995. The

²⁷John G. Parsons, "Potomac Greens Environmental Impact Briefing Statement," Mar. 22, 1993, *ibid.*; Charles W. Hall, "Park Service to Review Overpass Demand," *Washington Post*, Nov. 13, 1993, p. B2.

²⁸File C3823/Belle Haven Marina, Inc., NCP, WNRC.

marina's patrons raised an outcry, and under pressure from Rep. James P. Moran, Jr., of Virginia and Fairfax County officials, the NPS found that work costing only about \$500,000 was essential to keep the marina open. It agreed to allocate some \$200,000 for the project; the rest would come from a county loan to the concessioner, a state grant, and private donations.²⁹

Arlington Memorial Bridge, Memorial Drive, and Columbia Island

In the late 19th century the Corps of Engineers advanced several plans for a bridge across the Potomac between the existing Long and Aqueduct bridges. In 1900 William H. Burr and Edward Pearce Casey won a design competition for a bridge on the alignment of New York Avenue with a design featuring monumental arches at each end of a central span. Two years later the McMillan Commission recommended extending the Mall westward to what would become the Lincoln Memorial and bridging the Potomac from there toward Arlington, the home of Robert E. Lee. Even after Congress created the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission in 1913 to plan and build such a bridge, the Corps and the War Department favored the New York Avenue alignment and the Burr-Casey design, while the Fine Arts Commission championed the McMillan Commission plan and

²⁹Memorandum, Kitty L. Roberts to Robert G. Stanton, July 24, 1992, file L76/Environmental Policy-Belle Haven, Superintendent's Office, GWMP; Eric Lipton, "Belle Haven Marina Wins Reprieve From Park Service," *Washington Post*, Oct. 31, 1995, p. C3; "Fairfax to Lend Marina \$200,000," *ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1996, p. D3.

called for a new design without towering arches to detract from the Lincoln Memorial.³⁰

The need for the bridge was underscored by a monumental traffic jam on the two existing bridges on Armistice Day 1921 that greatly delayed President Warren G. Harding's arrival at the entombment of the unknown soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. Congress finally appropriated \$25,000 to the bridge commission for planning purposes the following spring. After considering the opposing arguments over location and design, the bridge commission sided with the Fine Arts Commission on the Lincoln Memorial-Arlington alignment and engaged McKim, Mead and White to provide a new design.³¹

Plans submitted by William Mitchell Kendall of the noted architectural firm in October 1923 formed the basis of the bridge commission's 1924 report to Congress, which directed the commission "to proceed at once" with the bridge in February 1925.³² Construction got underway in 1926, and the bridge was opened to traffic January 18, 1932.

The bridge commission had considered the central draw span, constructed of steel rather than stone-faced masonry, an

³⁰Donald Beekman Myer, *Bridges and the City of Washington* (Washington: Commission of Fine Arts, 1974), pp. 17-18; Public Law 62-432, Mar. 4, 1913, U.S. Statutes at Large 37: 885.

³¹Sue A. Kohler, *The Commission of Fine Arts: A Brief History, 1910-1990* (Washington: Commission of Fine Arts, 1991), pp. 16-17.

³²Public Law 68-463, Feb. 24, 1925, U.S. Statutes at Large 43: 974.

unfortunate compromise: "[T]his introduction of a steel arch in a construction designed to be in the highest degree monumental is to be regretted; and as very few ships go above the site up the Potomac, it is to be hoped that the permission of Congress will be granted in the not distant future to replace the draw with a masonry arch like the others in the bridge."³³ The span remained operable until February 28, 1961, when construction on the George Mason Bridge prevented the opening of the swing span on the old Highway Bridge it was replacing. Thereafter vessels too high to pass beneath Memorial Bridge could no longer reach it, so its draw span remained closed. There was no call to surface its steel span with stone, however, because the span had been skillfully designed and painted to blend with the adjoining masonry.

Changes were made in Kendall's plan at both ends of the bridge. At the Lincoln Memorial end, the plan called for a large plaza between the bridge and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway terminus with an unbroken flight of steps down to the river as a ceremonial watergate to the city. In 1927 the NCP&PC determined that a road along the waterfront would be needed for traffic, and Lt. Col. U. S. Grant III, executive officer of both the NCP&PC and the bridge commission, proposed that it be run through arches in the bridge and parkway abutments, interrupting the steps between them. Kendall strongly objected, urging that the road be tunneled beneath the steps instead, but after long deliberation

³³*Report of the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission* (Washington: GPO, 1924), pp. 8-9.

the Fine Arts Commission approved the modification suggested by Grant.³⁴ The road across the steps severely compromised the watergate (whose practical utility was questionable in any event).

Kendall also planned 45-foot-tall pylons flanking the bridge and parkway termini at the Lincoln Memorial. The Fine Arts Commission found them overscaled relative to the memorial, and Kendall replaced them with lower equestrian statues on bases in 1928. The bridge commission held a design competition and in 1931 selected Leo Friedlander for the bridge statues, titled "The Arts of War," and James Earle Fraser for the parkway statues, titled "The Arts of Peace." The Depression and World War II delayed completion of the statues, whose medium was changed from granite to bronze. In 1949 the Italian government offered to cast and gild them, and in 1951 they were installed and dedicated.³⁵

At the other end of the bridge on Columbia Island, Kendall designed an elaborate cross-axial composition. The roadway at the cross-axis would be flanked by 200-foot columns representing the unity of the North and the South and statuary representing the oceans; it would continue on to a formal entrance to Arlington Memorial Cemetery. Circular temples would punctuate *rond points* at each end of the cross-axis. Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and Richmond Boulevard would enter the southern circle; the northward

³⁴Kohler, *Commission of Fine Arts*, pp. 18-22.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 23-24; *Program of Ceremonies Dedicating the Equestrian Statues*, Sept. 26, 1951, copy at GWMP Headquarters.

parkway extension and Lee Boulevard would enter the northern one. But traffic considerations were secondary in this formal composition. "Every effort should be made to facilitate the passage of the utilitarian traffic originating in Virginia to the Key Bridge on the west and the Highway Bridge on the east, thereby keeping the Memorial Bridge to its original purpose as a great memorial structure and not as a traffic convenience," Fine Arts Commission chairman Charles Moore wrote Grant in 1929.³⁶

Grant disliked the aesthetic complexity and practical inconvenience of Kendall's Columbia Island Plaza. "To bring [a ceremonial procession] into the confusion of a large circus, dolled up with meretricious columns, with nude statues (the symbolism of which no ordinary person can guess) lying around, with little grass circles, and a confused vortex of traffic, would be an indignity," he wrote Moore in October 1931. Kendall considered the columns essential to his design and made a personal plea for them to President Herbert Hoover, ex officio chairman of the bridge commission. But Hoover decided to delete them, in part because of concerns that they might interfere with air traffic to the nearby Washington airport (on the future Pentagon site).³⁷

³⁶Letter, Moore to Grant, March 25, 1929, Columbia Island Plaza project file, Commission of Fine Arts, Record Group 66, National Archives, Washington, DC (collection hereinafter cited as RG 66).

³⁷Letter, Grant to Moore, Oct. 21, 1931, *ibid.*; letter, Kendall to Hoover, Oct. 29, 1931, *ibid.*; Kohler, *Commission of Fine Arts*, p. 26.

Amid the deepening Depression, Congress suspended funding for the bridge project in April 1932, but the Fine Arts Commission continued to consult with Kendall on the Columbia Island Plaza design. After Grant was reassigned in 1933, Moore, who referred condescendingly to him as "the military engineer," worked to rescue Kendall's basic plan. But most concerned parties moved toward agreement with Grant. Henry V. Hubbard, landscape architect member of the NCP&PC, deemed Kendall's design "puerile even to the extent of being asinine." By February 1934 a committee including Hubbard and Gilmore D. Clarke, landscape architect member of the Fine Arts Commission, had concluded that the plaza "should be treated in a very simple manner with no high architectural forms whatever. . . . There are already four pylons, which in general mark the limits of the area, and there is no question but that additional dominant architecture would give the space a feeling of being cluttered up."³⁸

The executive order that abolished the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital and transferred its functions to the National Park Service in August 1933 did the same to the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission. During the mid-1930s the NPS permitted several contractors to fill portions of Columbia island with material excavated for new buildings (including the Interior Building). In the absence of a

³⁸Letter, Moore to Kendall, Nov. 20, 1933, *ibid.*; Hubbard quoted in letter, Moore to Clarke, Nov. 23, 1933, *ibid.*; letter, Clarke to Moore, Feb. 13, 1934, *ibid.*

formally approved plan, it built a traffic circle at the end of the bridge.³⁹

The construction of the Pentagon in 1941 entailed a major revision of the road system on and around Columbia Island, including a new road under Memorial Drive next to Boundary Channel. Soon after Pearl Harbor the Army installed a searchlight battery on the island and built a barracks near the channel north of Memorial Bridge (obtaining NPS permission after the fact). Later in 1942 it added a gun battery at the north end of the island. The NPS also permitted buses and trucks on the bridge, a wartime use that proved more difficult to terminate. President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved a plan to discontinue bus traffic on the bridge after the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge was completed, but when the time came in 1964 Arlington successfully resisted, citing the new bridge's inadequate connection with Jefferson Davis Highway.⁴⁰

After the war the Fine Arts Commission and the NCP&PC pressed the NPS to complete the Arlington Memorial Bridge project. In 1947 U. S. Grant III, now NCP&PC chairman, complained that the circle on Columbia Island appeared incongruous and served traffic poorly. Another fifteen years elapsed before the

³⁹File 1460/Columbia Island, NCP, WNRC.

⁴⁰Letter, Frederic A. Delano to Thomas H. MacDonald, Nov. 18, 1941, Columbia Island Bridge project file, RG 66; letter, John J. Dempsey to Henry L. Stimson, Apr. 27, 1942, file 1460/Columbia Island, NCP, WNRC; memorandum, Raymond L. Freeman to Robert C. Horne, Mar. 13, 1964, file 1070-5/Arlington Memorial Bridge, NCP, WNRC.

NPS submitted final plans for the ultimate road configuration on the island, whereby all through GWMP traffic would bypass the circle via underpasses next to the river and Boundary Channel.⁴¹ This work was complete by 1966.

Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, famous for his polar expeditions, was buried in Arlington National Cemetery after his death in 1957. The National Geographic Society, his long-time patron, commissioned a statue of Byrd by Felix W. de Weldon for his grave, but the Army opposed placing it there because it would overshadow the other regulation gravestones in the vicinity. Fine Arts Commission chairman David E. Finley backed the Army and suggested that the statue be placed on Memorial Drive, which extended from the Memorial Bridge circle to the cemetery gates and had been intended for such memorials.⁴²

The National Capital Planning Commission approved this idea in May 1959 and asked the NPS to prepare a general plan for memorial placement on the drive. The National Capital Parks office submitted a site plan in August with niches for ten memorials. In September Congress authorized the National Geographic Society to erect the Byrd memorial and specified a Memorial Drive location. The Fine Arts Commission and the NCPC

⁴¹Letter, Grant to Newton B. Drury, Nov. 17, 1947, file 545-8/Arlington Memorial Bridge, Box 24, RG 328; letter, Robert C. Horne to David E. Finley, Dec. 2, 1962, GWMP/Arlington Memorial Bridge Road Revision to Columbia Island, 1962-63 file, Development, Parkways & Highways files, RG 66.

⁴²Letter, Dewey Short to Finley, Mar. 13, 1959, Byrd Memorial file, Fine Arts Act, Statues, Monuments, & Memorials files, RG 66; letter, Finley to Short, Mar. 19, 1959, *ibid*.

subsequently approved the specific site and the design by de Weldon and landscape architect Elbert Peets. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson was the principal speaker at the memorial's dedication on November 13, 1961.⁴³ Other Memorial Drive niches were later filled by a Spanish-American War memorial, "The Hiker," dedicated in 1965; the Navy Seabees memorial (another de Weldon creation), dedicated in 1974; the 101st Airborne Division memorial, dedicated in 1977; and the Armored Forces memorial, dedicated in 1991.

The Navy-Marine Memorial at the downstream end of Columbia Island long preceded these memorials. In 1924 Congress authorized the Navy and Marine Memorial Association to erect a "Navy and Marine Memorial Dedicated to Americans Lost at Sea" on public ground in Washington following Fine Arts Commission approval of its site and design. Ernesto Begni del Piatta sculpted a dramatic composition of waves and gulls to be cast in aluminum and mounted on a much larger green granite base representing a rippling sea. The association wanted the memorial to go at the end of Hains Point, but the Fine Arts Commission judged the design "romantic rather than monumental in character" and unsuited for such a

⁴³NCPC Minutes, May 7, 1959, and Jan. 7, 1960, RG 328; Memorial Avenue site plan (Aug. 7, 1959) and memorial dedication program in Byrd Memorial file, RG 66; Public Law 86-290, Sept. 21, 1959, U.S. Statutes at Large 73: 569; Fine Arts Commission Minutes, Nov. 17, 1959, RG 66. In response to the Fine Arts Commission's concern that the bronze statue would stain the white marble base (representing the polar ice) green, de Weldon promised to have the statue stand in a depression with holes down through the base so water from the statue would drain inside rather than outside.

prominent site. The parties agreed on a location near the future NPS National Capital Regional Office in 1926 before switching to the Columbia Island site, adjoining the new Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, in 1930.⁴⁴

The association obtained only enough money to cast the sculpture before abandoning its fund-raising efforts at the end of 1933. Because the original legislation had barred any use of federal funds, Congress amended it to authorize a \$13,000 appropriation for transporting the sculpture to Columbia Island and placing it on a temporary concrete base in 1934. "The truncated form in which the Memorial stands now on Memorial Highway is a disgrace to all, a blot on my professional reputation and an injustice to the people who have lavishly contributed to this project . . . ," del Piatta wrote NPS director Arno B. Cammerer in April 1937. He got Rep. Arthur B. Jenks of New Hampshire to introduce a bill that June authorizing a \$189,634 appropriation for the planned base (expected to employ New Hampshire granite) and for part of the fees that the association had failed to pay him and the memorial's architect, Harvey W. Corbett.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Public Resolution 5, 68th Congress, Feb. 16, 1924, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 43: 14; letter, Charles Moore to Bradley A. Fiske, Jan. 19, 1926, Navy & Marine Memorial project file, RG 66; letter, Fiske to Moore, Feb. 1, 1926, *ibid.*; letter, Moore to U. S. Grant III, Nov. 10, 1930, *ibid.*

⁴⁵Letter, William F. Morgan, Jr., to Arno B. Cammerer, Nov. 9, 1936, Navy-Marine Memorial file, National Capital Parks, National Park Service, Record Group 79, National Archives, College Park, MD (collection hereinafter cited as RG 79); Public Law 43-47, June 26, 1934, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 48: 1243;

Jenks' bill failed to pass, and \$100,000 authorized by Congress for these purposes in April 1939 was never appropriated. The Fine Arts Commission disliked the planned base, and the NPS designed a simpler alternative that commission chairman Gilmore Clarke deemed "much more appropriate." In 1940 the NPS obtained \$34,655 from the Work Projects Administration to install the abbreviated base and landscape the area.⁴⁶ The result was generally deemed successful, and the Navy-Marine Memorial is among the parkway's most beloved attractions.

On November 4, 1968, the day before President Lyndon B. Johnson's successor would be elected, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall designated Columbia Island Lady Bird Johnson Park, honoring the First Lady whose beautification campaign had enhanced it and other Washington parklands.⁴⁷

Ex-president Johnson died January 22, 1973 (barely surviving the next presidential term). On a plane from New York to his memorial service in Washington, Laurance S. Rockefeller, Brooke Astor, and former NPS regional director Nash Castro began talking

letter, del Piatta to Cammerer, Apr. 28, 1937, *ibid.*; H. J. Res. 403, 75th Congress, June 8, 1937.

⁴⁶Public Law 76-53, Apr. 26, 1939, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 53: 622; letter, Clarke to Daniel W. Bell, Mar. 25, 1938, in U.S. Congress, House, Committee on the Library, *Completion of the Navy and Marine Memorial, Hearing*, 76th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: GPO, 1939), p. 29; memorandum, S. Herbert Evison to Francis F. Gillen, Aug. 27, 1940, Navy-Marine Memorial file, RG 79.

⁴⁷Memorandum, George B. Hartzog, Jr., to Udall, Nov. 4, 1968, bearing Udall's approval, Columbia Island reservation file, Land Use Coordination.

about a suitable memorial, and Mrs. Astor proposed a grove of trees. In subsequent discussions Lady Bird Johnson Park was suggested as the site. The Committee for a Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac was organized with Mrs. Johnson as honorary chairman, Castro as chairman, and Rockefeller as executive committee chairman. Congress promptly complied with its wishes, and by year's end President Richard Nixon had approved legislation authorizing the secretary of the interior to cooperate in developing "an appropriate memorial in the form of a living grove of trees and related facilities" in Lady Bird Johnson Park.⁴⁸

The committee enlisted Elizabeth Carpenter, Mrs. Johnson's White House press secretary, to lead its fund-raising effort and commissioned Virginia landscape architect Meade Palmer to design the grove. Palmer selected a 17-acre site along Boundary Channel at the southern end of the island to be planted with white pines and dogwoods. Accompanied by Castro, Carpenter, and sculptor Harold C. Vogel, he found the granite monolith he wanted for the memorial's centerpiece in a quarry near the LBJ Ranch. President Gerald R. Ford helped plant the first pine tree at a groundbreaking ceremony in September 1974 and returned to dedicate the completed memorial on April 6, 1976.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Lonnelle Aikman, "The Making of a Memorial," in *The Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac* (Philadelphia: Eastern National Park & Monument Assn., 1977), pp. 19-20; Public Law 93-211, Dec. 28, 1973, U.S. Statutes at Large 87: 909.

⁴⁹Aikman, "The Making of a Memorial," pp. 20-22.

The memorial legislation, which barred any use of federal funds, was amended in December 1975 to authorize federal appropriations of up to \$1 million to "enhance the pedestrian and vehicular access to the memorial."⁵⁰ This was needed to fund a footbridge across Boundary Channel from the Pentagon's north parking area, completed in the fall of 1977.

Although it occupies George Washington Memorial Parkway land, the NPS has listed the Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac as a discrete unit of the national park system, according it the same status as the other major presidential memorials in Washington. It is one of two presidential memorials (with Theodore Roosevelt Island) administered by the parkway's superintendent.

The Nevius Tract

The Nevius tract comprised 25.4 acres in Arlington abutting the west side of the GWMP and the north side of Arlington National Cemetery, directly on axis with the Mall across the Potomac. The prospect of its development in a manner incompatible with the Mall composition made it of particular concern to the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. In 1938 NCP&PC chairman Frederic A. Delano asked the secretary of war to consider

⁵⁰Public Law 94-162, Dec. 20, 1975, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 89: 870.

acquiring the tract for Arlington National Cemetery, but the War Department deemed the \$500,000 asking price exorbitant.⁵¹

In 1947 the Veterans Administration condemned the tract for a veterans' hospital. Congress acted to prohibit this development, but not before the government had taken title to the property. It then became necessary to find another public use to justify retention of the tract. In 1949 Albert P. Greensfelder, a Missourian appointed to the NCP&PC by President Harry S Truman, proposed a grandiose "monument to the nation" including a Liberty Amphitheater and a 150-foot Freedom Tower, star-shaped in plan, housing a carillon and topped by an eternal flame. "I think you have something there," Truman wrote Greensfelder, encouraging the NCP&PC to pursue the concept. Greensfelder had the Boston architectural firm of Perry, Shaw, Hepburn, Kehoe and Dean prepare sketches, which NPS director Conrad L. Wirth and NCP&PC planning director John Nolen, Jr., showed Truman at the White House in January 1952.⁵²

Meanwhile, Rep. Howard W. Smith of Virginia, responding to Arlington officials' concerns about the county's tax base, introduced legislation directing the General Services Administration to sell the Nevius Tract to the highest private

⁵¹Letter, Delano to Secretary of War, July 20, 1938, file 545-100/Lee Blvd. (Nevius Tract), Box 133, RG 328; letter, Louis Johnson to Delano, Aug. 4, 1938, *ibid.*

⁵²Letter, Truman to Greensfelder, Sept. 24, 1949, *ibid.*; file 520/National Monument Commission, Box 10, RG 328. The jury in the condemnation suit awarded the Nevius Tract's owners \$1.6 million plus \$91,748 in court costs.

bidder. The NCP&PC led the opposition. "This bill directs the sale of the only vantage point on the axis of Washington's long famous Mall from which can be seen in formal array two of the Nation's most inspiring monuments against the majestic backdrop of the Capitol," Nolen testified at a House Public Works Committee hearing in August 1951. "If relegated to private use, the opportunity would be lost forever to reserve this site for some great public purpose which should include a promenade from which the millions who pilgrimage to Washington every year could view in peace and quiet the great panorama of their Nation's Capital across the Potomac."⁵³

After considering another bill to reserve the tract for the proposed national monument, the Public Works Committee prepared a new bill to have GSA transfer it to the secretary of the interior for addition to the GWMP. Representative Smith blocked further action on this bill, but President Truman instructed GSA to make the transfer just before he left office in January 1953. The NPS accepted the tract that March.⁵⁴

Another version of the national monument bill was introduced in Congress soon afterward. Enacted without opposition in August 1954, it created a National Monument Commission "to secure plans

⁵³U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Public Works, *Disposal of Nevius Tract; Creating a National Monument Commission, Hearings*, 82nd Congress (Washington: GPO, 1952), p. 16.

⁵⁴House Report 1601, 82nd Congress, Mar. 19, 1952; letter, Truman to Jess Larson, Jan. 9, 1953, file 1460/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC; National Capital Planning Commission Minutes, Jan. 29-30, 1953, RG 328; letter, Conrad L. Wirth to Russell Forbes, Mar. 2, 1953, file 545-100/Lee Blvd. (Nevius Tract), RG 328.

and designs for a useful monument to the Nation symbolizing to the United States and the world, the ideals of a democracy as embodied in the five freedoms . . . ,” to be located on the Nevius Tract. But Congress thereafter provided no financial support to the commission and refused to authorize construction of a design concept approved by the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts in 1957.⁵⁵

Although the national monument was never built, it influenced what was built on the Nevius Tract. Its projected location on the extended Mall axis required the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial to be placed off-axis in the northern portion of the tract.

On March 1, 1945, six days after Joe Rosenthal photographed five Marines and a Navy hospital corpsman raising the American flag on Iwo Jima, Rep. Joseph E. Hendricks of Florida introduced legislation directing the secretary of the navy, with the advice of the Fine Arts Commission, to erect a Marine Corps monument in Washington modeled on the photograph. Fine Arts Commission chairman Gilmore Clarke initially responded favorably: “I have no hesitation in saying that, in the opinion of this Commission, this composition in bronze would form an appropriate and lasting

⁵⁵Public Law 83-742, Aug. 31, 1954, U.S. *Statutes at Large* 68: 1029; NCPC Minutes, Apr. 4, 1957, RG 328; “‘Wall’ Backed in Principle,” *Evening Star*, Sept. 13, 1957. Estimated to cost \$25 million, the roofless “Shrine of Freedom” by architect Eric Gugler featured 90-foot-high walls bearing bas reliefs by sculptor Paul Manship. The Arlington County Board objected to its great size, and *New York Times* architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable later panned the “empty pomposity” of the design. (Five Freedoms Memorial file, RG 66.)

memorial to the United States Marine Corps." Another bill introduced a year later would have added Arlington as a possible location and authorized a \$100,000 appropriation.⁵⁶

When the Fine Arts Commission formally took up the proposal in February 1946, it deferred to the views of its sculptor member, Lee Lawrie, that a competition should be held to design the memorial and that \$100,000 would be inadequate. Neither bill passed Congress, but the Marine Corps League pressed forward with the flag-raising concept and engaged Felix de Weldon to sculpt it.⁵⁷ De Weldon's large-scale model was displayed across Constitution Avenue from the temporary Navy Building (where the Pan American Union Annex was later built) through most of 1947.

The legislation finally approved in July 1947 required the memorial to go on public ground in the District of Columbia but did not specify its design. The Marine Corps League remained committed to de Weldon's Iwo Jima composition, and it wanted to place the memorial at the end of Hains Point (the site initially sought for the Navy-Marine Memorial). Now averse to both the design and the scale of the memorial, which was to rise a hundred feet, Clarke got the Civil Aeronautics Administration to oppose it as a hazard to Washington National Airport traffic. He told the Marine Corps League that there was no appropriate site in

⁵⁶H.R. 2420 and H.R. 5521, 79th Congress; letter, Clarke to Rep. Donald L. O'Toole, Mar. 7, 1945, file 520/U.S. Marine Corps Memorial, Box 9, RG 328.

⁵⁷Letter, Clarke to F. J. Bailey, July 18, 1946, file 520/U.S. Marine Corps Memorial, RG 328; letter, Joe Alvarez to U. S. Grant III, Jan. 14, 1947, *ibid.*

Washington for such a colossal monument and again advised it to hold a competition to develop a smaller one.⁵⁸

Clarke's revised position reflected the Fine Arts Commission's low opinion of de Weldon, who had little standing among the artistic establishment it represented. "[A]rtistically [de Weldon's design] falls far short of the high standards of excellence established for memorials in Washington," Clarke wrote the Marine Corps commandant, adding that if the Iwo Jima episode were chosen to represent the sacrifices of all marines in all wars, "it should be superbly done by an artist of the first rank."⁵⁹ Clarke left the commission in 1950, however, and President Truman simultaneously appointed none other than de Weldon to replace Lee Lawrie as its sculptor member.

Only the location now remained at serious issue. By the end of 1951 de Weldon and the Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation (now the sponsoring organization) were favoring the north end of Columbia Island on the cross-axis through the Arlington Memorial Bridge Circle. After the NPS argued that this site was too small, the sponsors shifted their attention to the Nevius Tract.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Public Law 80-157, July 1, 1947, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 61: 242; letter, B. H. Griffin to Clarke, Sept. 9, 1947, file 520/U.S. Marine Corps Memorial, RG 328; letter, Clarke to Frank Halford, Oct. 30, 1947, *ibid.*

⁵⁹Letter, Clarke to Gen. Alexander A. Vandegrift, Dec. 2, 1947, Marine Corps Memorial project file, RG 66. Donald De Lue, president of the National Sculpture Society, had previously written Clarke to disparage de Weldon (letter of Aug. 15, 1947, *ibid.*)

⁶⁰Memorandum, Merel S. Sager to Harry T. Thompson, Nov. 13, 1951, file 1460/Columbia Island, NCP, WNRC.

There were objections to this site as well. In June 1952 the NCP&PC, which wanted to use the Nevius Tract for the national monument, opposed the memorial's placement there as incompatible with the other structures on the Mall axis. Sentiment against de Weldon's design also persisted. Writing the Fine Arts Commission in March 1953, Clarke called it "grotesque" and expressed disbelief that the commission "would be so gullible as to accept this monstrosity for erection in the nation's capital" despite de Weldon's membership. Legislation enabling use of the Nevius Tract was enacted that June, however, and the Fine Arts Commission promptly approved de Weldon's design for the memorial and its location on the tract but off the Mall axis.⁶¹

Another complication arose in the form of the Netherlands Carillon, which the Dutch government was planning to present to the United States in gratitude for American aid during and after World War II. The Netherlands ambassador wanted it to go on the Nevius Tract. On the recommendation of National Capital Parks associate superintendent Harry T. Thompson, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay declined to approve the Marine Corps memorial's placement there until the location of the carillon was resolved. With McKay's concurrence, the Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation commissioned landscape architect Elbert Peets (a Fine

⁶¹NCP&PC Minutes, June 27, 1952, RG 328; letter, Clarke to H. P. Caemmerer, Mar. 5, 1953, Marine Corps Memorial project file, RG 66; Public Law 83-66, June 16, 1953, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 67: 64; letter, David E. Finley to Merritt A. Edson, June 25, 1953, file 520/U.S. Marine Corps Memorial, RG 328. The legislation was needed because the Nevius Tract lay outside the District of Columbia, the area previously authorized by law.

Arts Commission member) to do an overall plan for the tract with a view to accommodating all proposed features.⁶²

By the beginning of 1954 all concerned parties had approved the Marine Corps memorial's location north of the Mall axis and architect Horace W. Peaslee's site plan for it. Groundbreaking ceremonies were held February 19. The cast bronze sculpture was assembled that September. President Dwight D. Eisenhower attended the dedication of the completed memorial on November 10, the 179th anniversary of the Marine Corps.⁶³

With the Marine Corps memorial underway and the national monument still planned, the Fine Arts Commission initially resisted adding the Netherlands Carillon to the Nevius Tract, and the bells were hung in a temporary tower in West Potomac Park in May 1954. Legislation enacted that August authorized the Netherlands to install the carillon on public ground administered by the secretary of the interior without specifying the site. The Fine Arts Commission became reconciled to the Nevius Tract location by early 1956, but difficulties remained. After a House vote against the national monument in March 1958, Rep. Thomas G. Abernethy of Mississippi introduced legislation to transfer the Nevius Tract to Arlington National Cemetery. Another bill introduced that August would have prohibited the erection of any

⁶²NCPC Minutes, Oct. 29-30, 1953, RG 328; memorandum, Thompson to Director, NPS, July 10, 1953, file 520/U.S. Marine Corps Memorial, RG 328; letter, Merritt A. Edson to Elbert Peets, July 28, 1953, *ibid.*

⁶³Marine Corps Memorial project file, RG 66.

carillon on United States property within three miles of the bell tower at the Arlington National Cemetery Amphitheater.⁶⁴

The NPS assured AMVETS, the donor of Arlington's bells and the primary force behind the latter bill, that the Netherlands Carillon would never be played to conflict with the bells at the cemetery.⁶⁵ Neither bill passed Congress. The way was finally clear for the carillon's installation on the southern edge of the Nevius Tract. It was dedicated May 5, 1960, the 15th anniversary of Dutch liberation in World War II.

Merrywood and the Riverfront Above Chain Bridge

Expensive residential holdings along the Virginia palisades above Chain Bridge had led the parkway planners to turn inland at that point, leaving nearly two miles of riverfront in private hands. The landowners reached their properties from Chain Bridge Road or Crest Lane, a new road built on GWMP land to provide access to the properties northwest of the GWMP-Chain Bridge Road interchange. The government's failure to acquire this valuable riverfront left it vulnerable to development pressures and caused the NPS and the NCPC to seek other means of forestalling adverse development there.

⁶⁴Memorandum, Harry T. Thompson to Conrad L. Wirth, Mar. 16, 1954, file 1460/Nevius Tract, NCP, WNRC; Public Law 83-628, Aug. 23, 1954, U.S. Statutes at Large 68: 769; H.R. 12101, 85th Congress, Apr. 22, 1958; H.R. 13785, 85th Congress, Aug. 15, 1958.

⁶⁵Letter, Roger Ernst to P. E. Howard, Jan. 9, 1959, file 1460/Nevius Tract, NCP, WNRC.

In June 1962 developers purchased the 47-acre Merrywood tract from Hugh D. Auchincloss (Jacqueline Kennedy's stepfather) and got Fairfax County to rezone the land to allow for three 17-story apartment buildings overlooking the Potomac. The McLean Citizens Association, NCPC and NPS officials, and Secretary Udall—a Crest Lane resident—were not pleased. Rep. Henry S. Reuss of Wisconsin introduced a bill that would authorize the secretary of the interior to accept easements on lands within a half-mile of the river between Great Falls and Mount Vernon and direct the NCPC to overturn any local zoning changes in this area since the beginning of the year that would "materially impair the national historic, scenic, conservation, or recreational interest in the Potomac"⁶⁶

Although the latter provision was probably unconstitutional and the bill made no headway in Congress, it signaled the determination of the opposition. Of more practical consequence was Udall's refusal to permit Fairfax County to cross GWMP land with the sewer line needed for the development in February 1963. County Executive Carleton C. Massey challenged Udall's authority to deny the permit under the agreement providing for GWMP land acquisition and declared that the county would proceed with the sewer "at the appropriate time," whereupon NPS regional director T. Sutton Jett alerted the U.S. Park Police and parkway

⁶⁶GWMP, Va.—Merrywood file, Land Use Coordination; H.R. 12137, 87th Congress, June 14, 1962.

maintenance forces to increase their surveillance of the area and report any sign of activity.⁶⁷

The permit denial was a stopgap. To halt the high-rises permanently, the government would have to buy the owners' right to build them. That November the Justice Department filed a declaration of taking in U.S. District Court for scenic easements on the Merrywood tract "in connection with the administration of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the protection of natural features incident thereto." In September 1964 the jury awarded Merrywood's owners, including Wyatt and Nancy Dickerson, \$744,500 for limiting its development to no more than 46 additional units built according to a master plan approved by the secretary of the interior. His designee, Sutton Jett, approved Merrywood's condominium development plan in December 1967.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, Clive L. DuVall II, president of the McLean Citizens Association, led an effort to get easement donations from other owners of the "island" bounded by the GWMP, Chain Bridge Road, and the river. The easements, limiting development to single-family residences no higher than forty feet, cutting to trees under eight inches in diameter and thirty feet high, and

⁶⁷Letter, Udall to Massey, Feb. 15, 1963, file D5039/Merrywood Sewer, NCP, WNRC; letter, Massey to Udall, Feb. 21, 1963, GWMP, Va.—Merrywood file, Land Use Coordination; memorandum, Jett to Acting Chief, U.S. Park Police and Assistant Regional Director, Operations and Maintenance, Feb. 21, 1963, *ibid.*

⁶⁸Interior Department Press Release, "Final Payment Made in Merrywood Acquisition," May 19, 1965, file D24/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC; letter, Jett to The Merrywood Company, Dec. 27, 1967, file L1425/Merrywood Tract, NCP, WNRC.

subdivision to an acre or more, would be effective only if at least ninety percent of the 261 acres were included by September 1966. As of January 1966 about 106 acres (including Merrywood) had been volunteered by about 25 owners (including Udall). But ninety percent proved beyond reach.

The owners of two tracts later came through on their own. In August 1969 Mr. and Mrs. John A. Bross donated an easement on their 9.5 acres abutting Merrywood on the northwest. The next April they invited neighbors to hear a presentation by Richard L. Stanton, an NPS land acquisition official, on the value of easement donations, but it was not immediately productive. Not until the end of 1975 did Mr. and Mrs. Louis Marden donate an easement on two acres just outside the Arlington County line.⁶⁹

Fort Marcy

A 15-acre tract of lesser scenic but greater historical value than the land in the Merrywood "island" lay southeast of the GWMP-Chain Bridge Road interchange, between the two roads. There were located the remains of Fort Marcy, one of the earthworks built to defend Washington during the Civil War. The tract was not within the NCPC's initial taking lines for extending the parkway upriver, but in December 1956 the Northern Virginia Regional Planning and Economic Development Commission urged the NCPC to amend the parkway boundary to include it. After Virginia

⁶⁹NCP Land Record No. 668, Mar. 20, 1970, and No. 728, Jan. 22, 1976, file L1425/Merrywood Tract.

declined to join Fairfax County in paying half the \$75,000 price, the county agreed to match the federal share itself. The NCPC approved the boundary expansion in April 1958 and acquired Fort Marcy a year later.⁷⁰

Following completion of the parkway road, the NPS built an access road from the westbound lanes to a point near the fort remains. At opening ceremonies on May 18, 1963, Regional Director Jett and historical organization representatives viewed a 12-pounder brass howitzer placed in the fort and Park Historian James W. Coleman, Jr., conducted a tour.⁷¹

Thirty years later Fort Marcy achieved national notoriety after the body of Vincent J. Foster, deputy White House counsel and a confidante of President and Mrs. Bill Clinton, was found there on July 20, 1993. Foster's knowledge of the first family's financial dealings and involvement with the Whitewater affair prompted questions about his apparent suicide and kept the site in the news well after the event.

The Langley Tract and Turkey Run Farm

By 1970, 330 of the 362 acres still held by the Federal Highway Administration (formerly the Bureau of Public Roads) near Turkey

⁷⁰Letter, C. C. Robinson to Harland Bartholomew, Dec. 7, 1956, file 545-100/GWMP, Fairfax Co., Va., Box 130, RG 328; letter, Carleton C. Massey to John Nolen, Jr., Mar. 13, 1958, *ibid.*, Box 131; NCPC Minutes, Apr. 3, 1958, and June 4, 1959, RG 328.

⁷¹"Cannon Placed at Civil War Fort Marks Opening of Fort Marcy," NCR News Release, May 15, 1963, file D24/Fort Marcy, NCP, WNRC.

Run at Langley, Virginia, exceeded its needs. Through GSA's auspices, arrangements were made for the GWMP to annex 230 of these acres; the CIA took the rest. On August 16, 1971, First Lady Pat Nixon presented a land transfer certificate to NPS director George Hartzog in a ceremony designed to publicize President Nixon's Legacy of Parks program (although this program was aimed more at transferring excess federal property to state and local jurisdictions for park purposes).⁷²

Hartzog had a special interest in "living historical farms," and GWMP staff responded by developing one on a landfill within the newly acquired Langley Tract. Turkey Run Farm, as it was called, was intended to simulate a low-income 18th-century farm with a log cabin, crops, and livestock representative of the period and costumed employees performing farm tasks.

Constructed hastily, the farm displayed a number of historical inaccuracies and attracted criticism from purists. "What we are hoping to provide at Turkey Run is a general portrayal of early farm life in this country with as much realism as time and budget will permit," National Capital Parks director Russell E. Dickenson wrote one outside critic, who continued to argue that it should be done right if done at all. NPS historic preservation professionals were even more concerned about the inauthenticity of creating something apparently historic where no such thing had ever existed. In 1975 (following Hartzog's

⁷²Letter, Douglas J. Kinsey to Hartzog, June 25, 1971, file L1425/GWMP, Va., NCP, WNRC; GWMP, Va.—Langhirst Subdivision file, Land Use Coordination.

departure) they succeeded in revising the *NPS Management Policies* to bar future developments of the sort: "All reconstructions shall be intended to reproduce structures existing on the site during the historic past. 'Reconstructions' to provide 'typical' or 'commemorative' or 'suggestive' examples of historic structures, or intended primarily to serve as stages for demonstrations or other activities, are not permitted."⁷³

Many nevertheless saw Turkey Run Farm as a worthy educational resource, and the parkway continued to operate it until 1981. An announcement that it would be closed for budgetary reasons that March rallied local supporters, who formed the Friends of Turkey Run and raised money to take over its operation under a 25-year cooperative agreement made with the NPS on June 6. They redesignated it the Claude Moore Colonial Farm in honor of a major local benefactor. Soon afterward, on July 7, the NPS gave the Fairfax County Park Authority a 25-year special use permit for another 53 acres of the Langley Tract, which the county developed as part of its Langley Fork Park.⁷⁴

Glen Echo Park and Clara Barton National Historic Site

Even before it discontinued operation in 1968, the Glen Echo Amusement Park, abutting the GWMP in Glen Echo, Maryland, was

⁷³Letter, Dickenson to John G. Lewis, Feb. 23, 1973, GWMP, Va.—Turkey Run file, Land Use Coordination; letter, Lewis to Dickenson, Feb. 26, 1973, *ibid.*; *NPS Management Policies*, 1975, ch. 5, p. 17.

⁷⁴File L1425/Langley Fork Park Tract, Superintendent's Office, GWMP.

being eyed for redevelopment. In March 1964 Secretary Udall, alluding to measures his department had taken to block high-rises across the river at Merrywood, advised a potential developer that Interior considered the park part of the Potomac Palisades and would oppose plans to build high-rise apartments there. When the owner of the Donohue Construction Company visited Assistant Secretary John A. Carver that September to express a similar interest, he too was discouraged from pursuing it.⁷⁵

Udall's opposition did not deter Montgomery County from approving the park owners' petition to rezone it for major development that December. In January 1966 the owners, Abram and Samuel Baker incorporated as Rekab, requested a building permit for five 16-story apartments. Udall protested, the NPS and the Corps of Engineers threatened to deny construction access via the GWMP and MacArthur Boulevard, and the county council acted to ban high-rise construction within a half-mile of the Potomac.⁷⁶

The Baker brothers then entered into negotiations with the NPS, NCPC, and GSA to have the government acquire their property in exchange for surplus federal land elsewhere. The NPS was initially reluctant to keep the property because its resources were not nationally significant; it preferred to turn it over to the county for recreational development. But GSA was unwilling to trade federal property for land the federal government would not

⁷⁵Memorandum for the record, Raymond L. Freeman and Richard Rodgers, Sept. 23, 1964, GWMP, Md., Correspondence file, Land Use Coordination.

⁷⁶"Glen Echo Amusement Park," GWMP, Md.—Glen Echo file, *ibid.*

retain. In the spring of 1968, after the Bakers announced that the park would close at summer's end, GSA agreed to proceed with a land exchange and NCPC approved the park's addition to the GWMP. On April 1, 1970, the Bakers traded it to GSA for the old Emergency Hospital Building at 1711 New York Avenue NW in Washington. The NPS received temporary custody of the park pending its formal transfer from GSA.⁷⁷

The Park Service's Eastern Service Center simultaneously prepared a development plan for the park. The plan called for eliminating the "garish amusement park facades" from buildings to be retained pending ultimate development. There would be a "lake feature" and a picnic area. Concession facilities would include the existing swimming pool, miniature golf course, and carousel; horseshoes, shuffleboard, a restaurant, and canoes on the nearby C & O Canal, to be reached by a pedestrian bridge. The development cost was estimated at \$6,231,000.⁷⁸

Glen Echo's historic Dentzel carousel, brought there in 1921, was purchased from the Bakers by a collector who planned to remove it from the park. Local citizens led by Nancy Long responded by forming the Town of Glen Echo Carousel Committee to acquire it from the collector. The Cafritz and Alvord foundations contributed most of the \$80,000 price, and the carousel was

⁷⁷"Glen Echo Plan Hits Dead End," *Washington Post*, Mar. 27, 1968; letter, Lawson B. Knott to Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr., Apr. 30, 1968, GWMP, Md.—Glen Echo file, Land Use Coordination; "Glen Echo Amusement Park," *ibid.*

⁷⁸*Design Analysis for Glen Echo*, *ibid.*

transferred to NPS ownership in May 1970. Subsequent contributions enabled the NPS to take title to its Wurlitzer band organ.⁷⁹

By mid-1972 several community organizations were using the park for a range of visual and performing arts programs. Among them were Adventure Theater, Bob Brown Marionettes, Chelsea Court Craftsmen, D.C. Black Repertory Company, Montgomery County Recreation Department, and Arena Stage. Their arts and crafts activities defined Glen Echo's predominant role to the present day.

Differences remained about whether NPS custody of the park should be permanent, delaying its formal transfer from GSA. In 1974 Montgomery County councilman William Sher advocated that it be turned over to the county for a performing arts center, something neighborhood residents generally opposed. The Office of Management and Budget questioned how the property had been acquired for the GWMP without the state paying half its cost and recommended that it be transferred to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission or another state or county agency under the Legacy of Parks program. "We are seeking to preserve the National Park System's role of providing opportunities for experience in unique natural or historical areas of truly national significance," OMB's deputy director wrote the House Government Operations Committee. "Operating small parks for local urban recreation detracts from that role, and

⁷⁹GWMP, Md.—Glen Echo file, Land Use Coordination.

once begun, poses the potential of unlimited expansion into an area traditionally served by local governments."⁸⁰

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission was receptive. "We frankly feel we could do a better job for the public than is currently being done, or than appears projected to be done," its chairman wrote Rep. Gilbert Gude of Maryland. "For the National Park Service it seems to be 'small potatoes' but for us it would be a major element of our park system." On the other side, Glen Echo's mayor and town council opposed this transfer, as did Gude, Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton, and his successor Stanley K. Hathaway. In 1974 the NPS, now committed to keeping the property, succeeded in having its six-acre parking lot—more than a third of its approximately 16.5 acres—included in the new Clara Barton National Historic Site next door, making the property less attractive for redevelopment in other hands. OMB saw the handwriting on the wall and in December 1975 withdrew its objection to the park's formal transfer to the NPS.⁸¹ GSA turned over the deed on February 25, 1976.

Glen Echo was nevertheless a local park in character and patronage. Many of its structures were in poor condition, and federal funds for their rehabilitation were unlikely. The NPS

⁸⁰Memorandum, Sher to Council Members, May 7, 1974, *ibid.*; letter, Russell E. Dickenson to Nancy Long, July 5, 1974, *ibid.*; letter, Paul H. O'Neill to Rep. Jack Brooks, Sept. 17, 1975, *ibid.*

⁸¹Letter, Royce Hanson to Gude, Sept. 29, 1975, *ibid.*; letters, Paul H. O'Neill to Thomas S. Kleppe and Jack Eckerd, Dec. 5, 1975, *ibid.*

therefore turned to others for help. After it announced plans to solicit private development concept proposals in 1986, citizens opposed to "privatization" formed the Glen Echo Park Foundation. In the next few years the foundation raised \$60,000 for a fire detection and suppression system for the carousel and received a \$300,000 matching grant from Montgomery County for restoration of the Spanish Ballroom, where the county recreation department sponsored dancing classes.⁸²

In 1897 Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, built a house at Glen Echo. She used it as Red Cross headquarters until 1904 and continued living there until her death in 1912.

In 1962 the NPS was approached about acquiring the house from its elderly owner, Henrietta Franks, who lived there with her sister and rented out rooms. Randle B. Truett, chief of the National Capital Region's history branch, recommended against the acquisition, noting among other shortcomings that the house was too close to the Glen Echo Amusement Park parking lot and the George Washington Memorial Parkway road alignment. In letters to Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson (then the vice president's wife) and others expressing interest, NPS director Conrad Wirth wrote that the house "does not have national significance and, therefore,

⁸²File H30/Glen Echo Park—Fundraising Proposals, Superintendent's Office, GWMP.

its preservation should not be the responsibility of the Federal Government."⁸³

Proponents of the house, notably the Montgomery County Chapter of the American Red Cross chaired by Lt. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, persisted. In May 1963 they formed the Friends of Clara Barton, Inc., with Hershey as president. The group raised funds to purchase the property in January 1964 and successfully lobbied members of Congress to support its acquisition by the government. In response to this campaign, the National Capital Region assigned another historian, Stephen H. Lewis, to conduct a national historic landmark study of the house. Lewis and Regional Director Sutton Jett both deemed it nationally significant and recommended landmark designation. Secretary Udall conferred the designation on January 12, 1965, and presented the bronze landmark plaque in ceremonies at the house on April 29.⁸⁴

In the early 1970s the Friends of Clara Barton retired the mortgage on the property and prepared to donate it to the NPS, which now welcomed it. Rep. Gilbert Gude introduced the necessary authorizing legislation, which Congress passed and President Ford signed October 26, 1974.⁸⁵ Although Clara Barton National

⁸³Truett, "Clara Barton House," paper dated Dec. 6, 1962, in Barton (Clara) House National Historic Landmark file, National Register, History, and Education Program, NPS, Washington, DC; letter, Wirth to Johnson, June 13, 1963, *ibid.*

⁸⁴"The Friends of Clara Barton, Inc., Accomplishments, 1963," *ibid.*; memorandum, Jett to Director, NPS, Aug. 28, 1964, *ibid.*

⁸⁵Memorandum, A. R. Mortensen to Chief, Division of Legislation, Apr. 3, 1972, *ibid.*; Public Law 93-486, U.S. Statutes at Large 88: 1461.

Historic Site became a discrete unit of the national park system, it was assigned to the GWMP superintendent for administration.

Minnehaha Creek flows through a gorge between Glen Echo Park and Clara Barton National Historic Site. During the amusement park era the creek was run through a culvert and the gorge was filled for a large parking lot. One evening in May 1989 heavy rains flooded the creek and washed out the fill, sweeping several visitors' cars into the Potomac. In 1990-91 the gorge was restored to a semblance of its natural condition, a new parking area was built on its west side, and an attractive wooden bridge was installed across the gorge for pedestrian access to Glen Echo Park.

GWMP Loses Ground

The George Washington Memorial Parkway lost a major ingredient on January 8, 1971, when President Nixon signed legislation establishing the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park.

The C & O Canal in Maryland from the Washington, D.C., boundary to just above Great Falls fell within the GWMP boundary and was treated as part of the parkway after the federal government acquired it in 1938. When GWMP first obtained its own superintendent on May 23, 1965, his jurisdiction encompassed the canal and adjacent park land below Seneca, Maryland, including the canal and riverfront land in Washington officially designated the Palisades Parkway.

The 1971 enactment placed the canal and much of the adjoining land in Maryland and Washington, including all park land between the canal and river, within the new Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. The GWMP superintendent retained responsibility for the portion of this park below Seneca until July 1, 1974, when the new park was administratively unified under its own superintendent. Thereafter on the Maryland side of the river, the GWMP superintendent administered little more than the parkway road and park land on its inland side, including Glen Echo Park and Clara Barton National Historic Site, and some Palisades Parkway land along Canal Road in Washington.

When appointed in 1965, the GWMP superintendent was also responsible for Prince William Forest Park in Prince William County, Virginia. He was given charge of a new park in Virginia, Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts in Fairfax County, after Congress established it on October 15, 1966. These additional responsibilities were short-lived: Prince William Forest Park returned to a superintendent of its own on July 1, 1968, and Wolf Trap received its own superintendent on November 15, 1970.

ibid.

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