

D.C HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC LANDMARK

APPLICATION TO:

- x Designate
- Rescind
- Amend

Summary of Amendments _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

Property Name Victor Building

Address 724-726 9th Street, N.W.

Square and Lot Number(s) Square 0375, Lots 120-121 and 817

Present Owner VMS 1986 - 322 Ltd. c/o VMS Investment Ltd.

Owner Address 8700 Bryn Mawr, Chicago, Illinois 60631

Original Use Office Building

Present Use Office Building

Date of Construction 1909, D.C. Permit to Build #4369, 05/14/1909

Date of Major Alteration (s) 1911 (D.C. Permit to Repair #4911, 05/02/1911) and 1925 (D.C. Permit to Repair #171, 06/16/1925)

Architect (s) Appleton P. Clark, Jr. and Waddy Butler Wood

Architectural Style/Period Renaissance Revival

Name of applicant D.C. Preservation League


(If applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.)

Address and Telephone of Applicant 918 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001

(202) 737-1519

Name and Title of Authorized Representative Patricia Wilson, Executive Director

10/15/90
Date

 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR for P.W.
Signature

310.21 A statement of the prehistoric, historic, architectural and/or cultural significance of the property proposed for designation.

The Victor Building at 724-32 9th Street, N.W. was designed by noted Washington architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr. in 1909. The building is an important example of the speculative office buildings which were constructed surrounding and neighboring the Patent Office during the first decades of the 20th century. The original owner, Victor J. Evans was considered one of Washington's leading patent attorneys. Evans' decision to locate his main office at the northwest corner of 9th Street and G Place, N.W. (formerly known as both Grant Alley and Grant Place), signifies the importance of locating near the Old Patent Office Building, and characterizes the major development and concentration of the legal profession in this area. The Victor Building neighbors the Downtown Historic District to the south.

The 8-story Victor Building is a competent expression of the Renaissance Revival style. The building was enlarged for owner Evans in 1911, by the same architect, and a third addition in 1925, was designed by the equally distinguished architect Waddy B. Wood. The two additions altered the size of the building in plan and height. Each addition was integrated into the original design in a highly skilled manner which achieved the increase in space while enhancing the facade composition. The masterful incorporation of new mass and the determination to maintain the architectural imagery of the original design gives this building a substantial historic presence in the Downtown area. In a square that has suffered from many demolitions over the years, the Victor Building remains as a symbol of the success of Victor J. Evans, the development of the area around the Patent Office, and as a representation of two distinguished architects and builders.

The Victor Building located at 724-26 9th Street, N.W., qualifies for landmark status in the District of Columbia because the building meets the following criteria as established by the final rules of the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board appearing in the D.C. Register, April 12, 1985;

Criterion a (1): [Buildings that] are the site of significant events or are associated with persons, groups, institutions or movements that contributed significantly to the heritage, culture or development of the National Capital or the Nation;

The Victor Building meets this criteria because of its association with Victor J. Evans, an important local citizen and leading Washington patent attorney. Reports in the local press suggest he was "one of the world's leading patent attorneys."¹ Evans maintained his main office in the Victor Building from 1910 until his death in 1931. The firm continued under the presidency of Evans' wife at this address until the 1940s. Evans was an eminent legal

¹ "Patent Attorney Victim of Attack After Being Operated On." The Washington Herald. month unknown, 27th day, 1931.

professional in Washington, as well as a locally famous naturalist and an ardent collector of Indian relics.

The Victor J. Evans Company established a strong reputation throughout the country as a reliable and innovative firm that performed outstandingly in the field of patent procurement and patent law. Evans also made significant contributions to the field of aviation, Indian rights, and the acclimatization of rare animals. His knowledge and background of patents involving airplanes and aviation sparked his interest and excitement in the possibilities of flight. He contributed energy and financial support to record breaking flights and the improvement of aviation safety. As a lawyer, Evans provided legal counsel for many American Indian tribes but he went beyond professional service by advancing and promoting the rights and well-being of American Indians. His collection of Indian artifacts and relics was donated to the Smithsonian upon his death and is still considered today one of the most important Indian collection ever received by the museum. Perhaps Evans most ardent cause and the one he entered with the most enthusiasm, was the procurement of rare animals and the acclimatization of animals for habitation in Washington. Evans made numerous significant contributions to the Washington Zoo, and maintained his own acclimatization farm which was purchased by the National Zoo upon his death.

Criterion a (3): [Buildings that] embody the distinguishing characteristics of architectural styles, building types, types or methods of construction, landscape architecture, urban design or other architectural, aesthetic or engineering expressions significant to the appearance and development of the National Capital or the Nation:

The Victor Building meets this criteria as a significant extant example of the speculative office buildings which were constructed adjacent to the Patent Office, forming part of a group of office buildings constructed for and by the legal profession. The construction of the Victor Building by an important Washington patent attorney, the design by a locally significant architect, and the choice of the architectural vocabulary of the Renaissance Revival style characterizes the architecture and development in this area by the legal profession who attempted to construct notable buildings equal to those found in the financial quarter to the west.

Criterion a (4): [Buildings that] have been identified as a notable work of craftsmen artists, sculptors, architects, landscape architects, urban planners, engineers, builders or developers whose work have influenced the evolution of their fields of endeavor or the development of the National Capital or the Nation.

The Victor Building meets this criteria as the work of two of Washington's most celebrated architects: Appleton P. Clark, Jr. and Waddy Butler Wood. Clark was responsible for the original building in 1909 and the addition from 1911. Wood is credited with the design of the 1925 addition. Two prominent Washington building firms were responsible for the construction of the building: Samuel J. Prescott built the original structure and the 1911 addition, and James Baird Company which was responsible for the construction of the addition in 1925. Although

the building was constructed in three distinct design phases, the building continues to represent a unified composition, intentionally remaining a competent and carefully conceived expression of the Renaissance Revival style.

The Victor Building should also be listed on the National Register of Historic Places with architecture as the area of significance because it meets the following National Register Criteria:

(Criterion C) Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

310.22

If property is proposed for designation principally for its architectural significance, a detailed architectural description of the property, including where possible its original and present appearance.

The Victor Building is sited within Square 375, on lots 120 and 121, in the northwest quadrant of the District of Columbia. The square is bounded by 9th, 10th, G and H Streets, and is bisected by G Place. The square is surrounded on three sides by contemporary, large-scale commercial and religious structures. Directly facing Square 375 from the south is the Martin Luther King, Jr. Public Library designed by the office of the noted 20th century architect, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in 1968-72. The First Congregational Church of Christ, at the corner of 10th and G Street, also faces Square 375 from the south. Designed by Virginia architect Milton L. Grigg in 1959, this cut stone and brick church with large tower has a strong presence at this corner. Facing the square from the north is the Washington, D.C. Convention Center built in 1976. This concrete and glass structure occupies the entire block bounded by 9th and 10th Streets and H Street and New York Avenue. To the west directly facing 10th Street, is the Grand Hyatt Hotel, completed in 1988. A parking lot faces the square from the east. The historic Calvary Baptist Church on 8th Street is the closest structure to the east. Presently, there are five extant buildings on Square 375: 746 9th Street, N.W. a modest 2-story brick structure constructed in the early 1870s; the 3-story brick Webster School built in 1881 to the design of Edward Clark; the Victor Building; the 2-story Mercantile Savings Bank Building at 10th and G Place designed in 1912, by Julius Wenig; and the 9-story C and P Telephone Company Building dating from 1927, and designed by Joseph Baumer.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Designed in the Second Renaissance Revival style, the Victor Building was constructed to house the patent law offices of Victor J. Evans. The original permit to build describes the building as a 6-story, steel-framed brick office building with Indiana limestone detailing. The building reflects the massing, architectural embellishments, and tri-partite vertical divisions associated with Italian Renaissance palazzi. This style provided the form and architectural statement befitting a prominent law office in Washington, and was commonly used in office buildings, private clubs and urban residences during the early 1900s. As a style, it presented an association with the Renaissance, a period particularly rich in intellectual investigation and invention. The use of rusticated limestone on the first floor, brick banding to mimic stone rustication on the upper floors, the strong horizontal divisions marked by brick belt courses, the splayed arched lintels, single light sash and the balustraded cornice are character defining features of buildings designed in the Renaissance Revival style.

Although the product of three different building campaigns in 1909, 1911, and 1925, and two different architects, the exterior of the Victor Building is a highly unified composition based on classical precedents. The architects clearly intended to maintain the architectural character of

the original design. A review of the building permits and a preliminary exterior examination indicates that alterations to the building are minor, and in most cases reversible.

ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION -- 1909

The original portion of the Victor Building at 724 9th Street, N.W. was designed by noted Washington architect Appleton P. Clark and constructed by the Samuel J. Prescott Company, Inc., (D.C. Permit to Build #4364, 05/14/1909.) Following the issuance of the building permit, a request was made by the architect and permission was granted to increase the height of the sixth story.² The original permit to build lists the height from the level of the sidewalk to the highest part of the roof at the front as 81'6". The building's original footprint was rectangular and measured 40' by 114' 6".

As originally designed, the base of the Victor Building is faced in rusticated Indiana limestone. The main entrance was originally conceived as a central entrance flanked by two show windows which projected 2' beyond the building line.³ The over-scaled main entrance is marked by two banded Ionic columns that support an entablature inscribed with "Victor Building" framed by carved raised floral motifs and surmounted by a broken pediment that extends up into the zone of the second-story. A stone decorative tablet (now removed) originally highlighted the pediment. (D.C. Permit to Repair #286767, July 2, 1946).

The second story is visually divided from the first by a heavy beltcourse of limestone. Two raised rectangles are set in the frieze indicating the sides of the original building. The second through sixth stories are faced in a white brick with every seventh course slightly recessed creating the appearance of rusticated stone. The fenestration of the second story includes three segmental arched openings each incorporating three one-over-one, double-hung, wooden sash, windows with the central opening larger than the two side windows. The limestone keystone of each opening projects slightly from the brick wall surface. The spandrels are embellished with a raised limestone circle set within a square, and decorated by floral motifs.

The third through sixth stories are visually divided from the second story by a simple stringcourse of limestone. The fenestration on the upper floors includes three bays on each floor with a pair of one-over-one, double-hung, wooden sash windows within each bay. The windows are deeply recessed from the plane of the building with a limestone keystone accenting each pair. The sixth story is adorned with limestone swags of foliage draped between each bay. Historic photographs and correspondence filed with the building permit, show that the office building originally had an attic zone and was crowned by a balustrade. During the construction

² Letter from A.P. Clark, Jr. to Morris Hacker, Inspector of Buildings, July 21, 1909. (Filed with D.C. Permit to Build #4364).

³ Special Application for Projections Beyond the Building Line #8819, May 7, 1909, but have been replaced with storefronts flush with the plane of the building (D.C. Permit #218009, November 4, 1928.)

of the 1925 addition, these elements were removed from the front (eastern) portion of the building.

The south elevation of the Victor Building faces G Place, formerly Grant Alley. The design elements and motifs found on the main facade are continued on this secondary elevation. Eight bays wide, the elevation is organized symmetrically with the two end bays serving as frames to the composition.

The ground floor of the south elevation incorporates eight show windows separated by rusticated piers. The original configuration of some of the show windows has been altered over the years. The limestone on the main facade is carried around to the eastern-most pier and one-half of the adjacent pier; brick is used on the remaining piers. As on the main facade, the second floor is visually divided from the first floor by a heavy limestone beltcourse. A rectangle is inset in the string course above each pier which visually marks each bay.

The second floor differs from that of the main elevation on the two end bays only. Each of these end bays include a one-over-one, double-hung, wooden sash window with a heavy limestone molding. Consoles adorned with triglyph and guttae support heavy projecting lintels. As on the main facade, a limestone stringcourse separates the second floor from the upper floors.

The third through sixth floors on the south elevation, with the exception of the two end bays, are quite different from the front elevation. These center bays are organized vertically by pilasters topped by capitals consisting of a band of anthemion and a band of egg-and-dart molding. Each bay consists of a pair of one-over-one, double-hung, wooden sash windows, that are not recessed as on the main elevation. The third through sixth floors of the two end bays are identical to the front elevation with deeply recessed windows, swags and keystones. These end bays which include a rusticated finish on all floors with the exception of the attic, add variety to the expansive elevation and frame the design composition.

The original attic story which was partially removed with the construction of the 1925 addition, is extant on five of the original eight bays on the south elevation. The attic zone, which is faced in white brick, incorporates a rectangular window framed by a projecting course of brick. A limestone motif of a diamond set within a square is placed over each pilaster. A circle motif is used in the bays which do not include pilasters.

The western portion of the original building maintains the cornice and balustrade as originally designed. These elements were removed from the eastern portion of the building with the construction of the 1925 addition. The limestone denticulated cornice is crowned by a balustrade. The balustrade includes brick piers alternating with limestone panels carved in a lattice motif.

The north (rear) elevation, less formal in treatment, is faced in red brick laid in common bond. The segmental arched openings include two-over-two, double-hung, wooden sash windows. A set-back in the wall provides additional exposure to the east and west. A brick chimney is set in this space.

1911 ADDITION

In 1911, Evans was responsible for an addition to the Victor Building on the lot directly to the west (D.C. Permit to Build #4911, April 8, 1911). The building permit listed Appleton P. Clark, Jr. as the architect and the Samuel J. Prescott Company Inc., as the builders. The 1911 permit to build lists the height from the level of the sidewalk to the highest part of the roof in the front as 82'0". Rectangular in plan, the new addition measured 40' by 50'.

Clark continued the design scheme that he had developed for the original Victor Building, creating a visually unified south elevation. According to the building permit, the material on the south (front) elevation was to be brick and terra cotta; however, it appears that the same Indiana limestone that was used on the original Victor Building was used on the addition.

The south elevation of the addition is four bays in width. With the exception of the infill on the ground floor, the four bays continue the design of the south elevation of the original Victor Building. The three east bays are identical to the center six bays of the original building and the west bay is identical to the original east bay. The attic story and balustrade are virtually indistinguishable from the original.

The limestone detailing, white brick and window arrangement found on the south elevation of the addition extends one bay (southernmost) on to the west elevation. The facing material for the four north bays on the west elevation is a buff-colored brick, with the exception of the ground floor which is faced in red brick. The segmental arched window openings of the four north bays of floors one through six include one-over-one, double-hung, wooden sash window. The fenestration of the attic floor includes two pairs of one-over-one, double-hung, wooden sash windows. All of the window openings on the west elevation have limestone sills. A simple cornice and balustrade cap the west elevation of the new addition.

The north (rear) elevation of the 1911 addition is faced in red brick. The fenestration on each floor includes segmental arched window openings with a larger opening centered in the elevation flanked by smaller openings. The central opening includes a pair of one-over-one, double-hung windows; the smaller openings are filled with a single window. Each window opening has a limestone sill.

1925 ADDITION

In 1925, Evans again expanded his building with an addition to the north and a 2-story rooftop addition to the original 1909 building. According to the building permit (D.C. Permit to Build #171, June 16, 1925), Washington architect Waddy B. Wood was responsible for the design and the James Baird Company was listed as the builder. The 1925 permit to build lists the height from the sidewalk to the highest part of the roof at the front as 104'3". Almost square in plan, the new addition was to be 47' by 50', and constructed of brick, concrete, steel and limestone. No explanation to the choice of architects for the 1925 addition has been located. It is presumed, however, that Clark had retired from active practice at this time, while Wood was at the height of his career.

The main elevation of the 1925 addition is similar to the original building although the details are simplified and in some instances omitted. The ground floor of the addition includes two show windows and a central entrance. It appears that the original windows and doors have been replaced. Floors two through six of the 1925 addition differ from the original building in the following ways: 1) the swags on the sixth floor are omitted; 2) the keystone is flush with the plane of the building rather than projecting; 3) the limestone motif in the spandrels of the second floor is omitted in the addition; 4) the upper floor windows are not as deeply recessed in the addition as they are in the original building; and 5) the windows in the addition are larger.

The seventh and eighth floors of the 1925 addition and the two-story rooftop addition to the original building illustrate the stripped classical style prevalent during the 1920s and 1930s. The east and south elevations of the rooftop addition are finished in white brick laid in common bond. The fenestration includes paired one-over-one, double-hung, wooden sash windows which are deeply recessed. A spandrel of metal with an anthemion motif is set between the seventh and eighth floors. The addition is capped by a limestone cornice with dentils and a copper roof with a green patina. With the absence of the rustication and the arrangement of the fenestration, the rooftop addition has a stronger sense of verticality than the lower floors.

The north elevation of the 1925 addition is finished in red brick laid in common bond. The first and second stories have been altered because of the demolition of an adjacent building on lot 807. The second floor has a pair of three-over-three, double-hung, wooden sash windows centered on the elevation. Floors three through six have three openings per floor. A pair of three-over-three, double-hung, wooden sash windows are centered and flanked by single windows. The seventh and eighth floors have the same fenestration pattern with two-over-two units. Each opening has a limestone sill. A parapet wall with a limestone capping rises above the eighth floor.

The west elevation of the 1925 addition is finished in red brick laid in common bond. A small mechanical room is attached to the ground floor of the west elevation. The fenestration of floors two through eight includes a pair of one-over-one, double-hung, wooden sash windows per bay. The proportions of the windows on the second and third floor are more elongated than those on the upper floors.

310.23 If property is proposed for designation principally for its prehistoric, historic and/or cultural significance, a description of the existing physical condition of the property and its relation to the prehistoric, historic and/or cultural significance of the property.

The Victor Building meets the criteria for landmark status in the District of Columbia for its association with one of Washington's leading patent attorneys and important citizens; as the accomplishment of two distinguished Washington architects and equally respected builders; as an extant example of the 20th century speculative office building constructed in the neighborhood of the Patent Office; and as a fine example of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture.

Historic Context: The Patent Office and Its Influence on Downtown Development

Historically, the area around the Victor Building was dominated by the presence of the Patent Office, constructed in 1836, with various additions through 1869. The construction of the Tariff Commission Building in 1839, provided another strong anchor in the area. This area surrounding the Patent Office including F and G Streets between 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Streets became the heart of the city with professional, commercial and retail businesses providing services to the Patent Office staff, and the Patent Office providing the stability for these businesses to flourish. The professional community in this area was dominated by patent attorneys, legal advisors, and law clerks, with backing from support staff such as draftsmen, stenographers, clerks, typists and office supply companies.

Several of Washington's earliest office buildings were constructed in this area to support the business enterprises demanded and created by the presence of the Patent Office. City Directories listing tenants of some of the earliest buildings including the Le Droit Building, the Warder Building, the Atlantic and Washington Loan and Trust Company Buildings clearly show the strong presence of the legal community in this area. The office buildings constructed around the Patent Office were typically designed by important Washington architects including Jules Henri de Sibour, James Green Hill, Glen Brown, Nicholas T. Haller and Appleton P. Clark.

The Le Droit Building located at 800-12 F Street, N.W., and constructed in 1875, was designed by local architect James McGill and is one of the few remaining examples of a large office building that was constructed without an elevator. The Atlantic Building and the Washington Loan and Trust Building located in the 900 block of F Street were designed by the distinguished Washington architect James G. Hill. The Warder building located at 527 9th Street, N.W. was designed by native Washingtonian Nicholas T. Haller.

Twentieth Century Development

During the beginning decades of the 20th century, Washington emerged as a leading financial and commercial center. Consequently, the construction of large speculative office and financial structures dominated the real estate market. The first three decades of the 20th century saw

the construction of some of the city's tallest and largest buildings. The advances in passenger technology and the introduction of steel frame construction were the foremost developments in architecture at the turn of the century, enabling the economical construction of tall, vertically proportioned buildings, uninhibited by the limitations of load-bearing masonry. In Washington, many 8-9 and 10-story office buildings were designed by nationally prominent and locally important architects, celebrating advancements in technology and design aesthetics of the 20th century.

Washington's downtown building stock was greatly enhanced during the period from 1900-1910 with the construction of many of the city's finest commercial, speculative office buildings. The federal academic expressions and vernacular commercial traditions of the 19th century were succeeded with 20th century buildings distinct in scale, materials, and design vocabulary. The design and materials predominantly reflect the aesthetics and modern movements of the 20th century. In Washington, styles were most strongly inspired by the design philosophies of the French Ecole des Beaux Arts, the City Beautiful Movement and Chicago's commercial architecture.

Construction of speculative office buildings continued around the Patent Office in the twentieth century and can be exemplified by the construction of three buildings in blocks immediately adjacent to the Patent Office: the Ouray Building, the Barrister Building and the Victor Building. These three buildings characterize the 20th-century development around the Patent Office Building, demonstrate the design skills of several of Washington's elite architects, highlight the preference for the Italian Renaissance Revival style, and promoted the most advanced and modern fire protection and structural systems ever seen in the city.

The Ouray Building located at 801 G Street, N.W., (now demolished) was designed in 1905, by the architectural firm of Townsend, Steinle and Hakell of New York City. The original owner of the Ouray Building, Senator Thomas Walsh of Vermont, had worked with the New York office of Townsend, Steinle and Hakell on the Colorado Building constructed two years previously. This celebrated New York firm understood the importance of designing a building opposite the landmark Patent Office Building, and presented the 7-story Ouray Building in a skilled interpretation of the Renaissance Revival style. The original permit to build describes the building as a fireproof brick and stone structure with two passenger elevators. The stylistic inspiration and architectural embellishment including the rusticated limestone first and second floor, the delineation of the corner bays with rusticated brick bands and the projected columned entrance of the Ouray Building were also employed by Appleton P. Clark on the neighboring Victor Building. The Ouray Building of 1905, and the completion of the Victor Building in 1910, provided two elegant buildings, similar in scale and design surrounding the Patent Office.

The Barrister Building located at 635 F Street, N.W. (now demolished) was designed in 1909, the same year as the Victor Building, by Appleton P. Clark. The local press heralded the building as a:

"Fire-proof office structure, 9-stories in height with a frontage of 29' and a depth of 120'. The plans call for two electric elevators and an interior arrangement of offices, single or in suites of from 2 to 6 rooms finished in cherry, mahogany, with all other appointments in keeping and such will constitute an up-to-date structure in every respect. The first story will be of marble, above which a light brick will be used, with terra cotta trimmings for quoins, balconies and cornices."⁴

Clark relied on the Renaissance Revival style for stylistic inspiration for both buildings, using equally rich materials and detailing for both buildings. The Barrister Building's narrow street frontage, elaborately detailed roof line, and projecting balconies set the building apart from its neighbor on 9th street. Because of the close proximity to the Patent Office, both buildings were quickly occupied by professionals involved in the patent business.

THE ORIGINAL OWNER

VICTOR JUSTICE EVANS (1865-1931)

Victor J. Evans was the president of the large Washington patent attorney firm known as Victor J. Evans and Company. Evans and his firm were recognized as the leading patent attorneys in the city and achieved a strong and distinguished reputation in international legal circles for their patent work overseas. Evans was also known and respected throughout the city for his interest and devotion to American Indian history and culture; his support and donations of rare animals to the Washington Zoo; and his financial backing and dedication to early aviation efforts in this country.

Victor J. Evans was born in Delaware, Ohio in 1865. He spent his early childhood years in Minnesota. Evans moved to Washington in 1880, and attended the public schools in this city. At the age of 18, he entered the office of J. Henry Kiser, a local patent draftsman. In Kiser's office, Evans developed his drafting skills and was introduced to the difficulties and intrigue of patent law. In the early 1890s, Evans opened and operated for several years a regular drafting business at 21 D Street, S.E., where he nurtured his drafting skills and gained extensive knowledge of patent law and inventions both in this city and abroad. During these years he prepared the drawings for the Lanston and the Rogers typesetting machines.⁵ It is not known

⁴ "Foundation is Being Laid for Big Office Structure." The Evening Star. February 12, 1910.

⁵ entry for Victor J. Evans. National Cyclopedia of American Biography. pp. 424-425, volume 16.

weather Evans studied law formally through a law school or was able to read the bar from his practical experience, as was typical in the early 1900s. His biographical entry in the National Cyclopedia of American Biography suggests that his education was acquired through experience rather than academic studies at a university:

He had charge of the drafting department of the firms of E.M. Marble and John Wedderburn, and by close study and application acquired an extensive knowledge of patent law and the facts pertaining to inventions in this country and abroad.⁶

He organized the firm of Victor J. Evans and Company, patent attorneys in 1898. Evans' firm developed into one of the largest patent and patent soliciting establishments in the world, with large offices and agents in all countries where patents were issued. Evans offered all forms of investigation into the availability of patent applications, protecting the rights of the clients and defending patents from infringement. Contributing to the success of the business Victor Evans offered his clients several practices unique in the patent attorney profession:

The refund system of this firm, founded upon a careful search of the patent office records, generally advertised as "patents secured or fee returned," of which it is the originator, coupled with the most expert services in the preparation and prosecution of patent applications, has resulted in a business which in volume and results obtained is second to none. He numbers among his clients many of the leading and most successful inventors in the Unites States.⁷

In 1909, Victor Evans commissioned one of Washington's premier architects to construct his main office at 724-26 9th Street, N.W. Victor J. Evans and Company was located in the Victor Building from the building's completion in 1910 until 1940. At the time of his death in 1931, his wife Karen Evans assumed the presidency of the company. Victor J. Evans and Company is listed in the Washington City Directories until the early 1970s with Merlin M. Evans, the original founders nephew, as president.

Evans collected Indian artifacts with a passion. His private collection of relics was "recognized as one of the most select in existence."⁸ Victor Evans not only collected Indian relics but was a friend and legal advisor to many Indians tribes in the United States. It is reported that one morning he arrived at his office and about 40 Indians were waiting for him to demand his legal services. They reasoned that a man who collected so many Indian things must be a friend of the Indians. In 1920, Evans established a department within his firm to represent the Indians in

⁶ entry on Victor P. Evans. National Cyclopedia of American Biography p. 424-426. volume 16.

⁷ National Cyclopedia of American Biography entry on Victor P. Evans. p. 424-426. volume 16.

⁸ Victor J. Evans, Patent Attorney Victim of Attack After Being Operated On." The Washington Herald. unknown month, 27th day, 1931.

their cases against the United States government. He subsequently advised and represented Indians in many important and historical cases.⁹ Evans played an active role, in 1923, when the Sioux Indians filed their landmark suit against the United States government for lands and property taken from the Indians, dating back to the gold rush in the Black Hills in South Dakota.¹⁰ In 1922, Victor Evans invited a group of American Indians to perform a selection of rituals and symbolic dances in the lobby of the Victor Building:

Given under the auspices of the of the Archeological Society of Washington, whose President, Robert Lansing introduced the Indians. Mr. Evans collection of Indian relics and trophies of the chase was tastefully displayed about the hall in which the entertainment was shown, presenting a timely setting for the symbolic dances of the Indians.¹¹

Upon his death in 1931, the Evans Indian collection was bequeathed to the National Museum of Natural History. The Assistant Secretary of the Museum accepted the collection on behalf of the museum and expressed the Museum's appreciation in a letter to Evan's wife and brother: "Permit me to say that we greatly appreciate Mr. Evans consideration of this Institution in the gift of such an important collection of its kind."¹² The annual report of the museum outlines the breadth of the collection and the importance of the donation to the museum:

Among these materials especial interest attaches to the bequest of the American Indian Collection of the late Victor Justice Evans, of Washington, D.C. Mr. Evans of many years devoted much effort to bringing together a representative collection illustrative of the life of the American Indian. His collection, deposited by the executors of the Evans estate, Mrs. Victor J. Evans and Arthur L. Evans, numbers approximately 5,300 specimens, comprising costumes, weapons of war and the chase, pottery, basketry, domestic implements, oil paintings, and other valuable materials, comprising one of the largest and most important gatherings collected by one individual.¹³

⁹ "15 Sioux Braves Invade White House Offices." The Sunday Star. February 27, 1921. Part 1, page 18. Legal Counsel for the Sioux Indians in this claim was the law firm of which Charles E. Hughes of New York was the senior member. Evans served as legal advisor and trusted friend of the Indians.

¹⁰ "Indians Sue U.S. for \$750,000,000." The Evening Star. May 7, 1923.

¹¹ "Indians in Rites in Office Building." The Evening Star. January 23, 1922. p. 24.

¹² Letter from A. Wetmore, Assistant Secretary of the National Museum to Arthur L. and Karen Evans, 02/20/1931.

¹³ Report of the National Museum, 1931. in chapter listing Detailed Reports on the Collections, Report of the Department of Anthropology. p. 47-48

Evans was also an amateur naturalist. He maintained a private zoo called Acclimation Park near his home on Ridge Road and Hawthorne Street. The opening of Acclimation Zoo to 100 invited guests in 1928, was a social event that found many of Washington's most elite residents in attendance.¹⁴ His donations to the National Zoological Park of rare animals, birds and reptiles helped make the Washington Zoo one of the strongest Zoo's with rare animal holdings in the country. The local press heralded the generous donations and support of men like Evans who made contributions to the zoo valued in the thousands of dollars.¹⁵ In the early 1910s, he presented the Washington Zoo with an extremely rare blue bear, which was the only animal of its kind in captivity. Among the other donations made by Evans were "a bird of paradise, a baboon, and an 18 month old kadine bear, which came from the Kadine Islands in Alaska."¹⁶

Evans was fascinated and originally drawn to the subject of aviation because of the many achievements made possible by the invention of the airplane, and the patents he saw during his early drafting experience. Evans was aware of and worked on relating to aviation. In 1910, perceiving the great possibilities in the development of the airplane, he became president of the Rex Smith Aeroplane Company of Washington.¹⁷ Evans was the chief promoter and financier of the famed record-breaking Atwood flight in 1911, from St. Louis to New York. Evans added an additional \$10,000 for Atwood as a bonus. Announcements in the local press indicate that Evans offered Atwood prize money on several occasions tempting the aviator to establish new records across the country:

Harry N. Atwood, the aviator announced last night that he had received a telegram from Victor J. Evans of Washington, D.C., offering a prize of \$10,000 for a successful flight from Milwaukee to New York.¹⁸

Evans was active for many years in the local real estate business. He was the developer for several large building projects in the city including the Civil Service Building for the United States government, the Interstate Commerce building at 19th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., and the Ordnance Building.

¹⁴ "100 Make Visit to Private Zoo." The Evening Star. May 7, 1928.

¹⁵ "Government Agent' Aid Asked to Make Zoo the Best in the Country." The Evening Star. July 5, 1925.

¹⁶ "Animals at the Zoo, Kind or Cruel, Mean or Hateful, Much Like Humans." The Washington Post. August 28, 1921.

¹⁷ entry on Victor Justice Evans National Cyclopedia on American Biography. pp. 424-25, volume 16.

¹⁸ "Atwood to Try for Prize." The Evening Star. August 7, 1911. p. 14.

THE ARCHITECT

APPLETON P CLARK, JR. (1865-1955)
Original Building 1909 and Addition 1911

Born in Washington, D.C., Appleton P. Clark, Jr. is recognized as one of the city's most prominent and prolific architects. Although Clark had no formal training in architecture beyond a course in high school, he developed a successful career which spanned more than 60 years. As he stated in his application for membership into the American Institute of Architects in 1916, Clark neither graduated from an architecture school, held a scholarship in architecture, nor completed qualifying examinations of the Royal Institute of British Architects or the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Clark apprenticed in the office of A.B. Mullett in the mid-1880s and, in 1886, established his own architectural office. Clark practiced in Washington, D.C. for over 60 years and designed significant structures such as the Washington Post Building (1893; demolished 1954), the Foundry Methodist Church (1903-04), the 300 block of Maryland Avenue, N.E. (1905), the Jewish Community Center (1910), an apartment house (now offices) at 1424 16th Street, N.W. (1917), and the Presidential Apartments (1922).

Clark served as the President of the Washington Chapter of the A.I.A in 1919. He was also involved with the community and directed a number of local business enterprises including the Washington Hotel Company, Equitable Life Insurance Company, Citizen's Savings Bank, and the Washington Sanitary Housing Company. Clark was active in the Chamber and Commerce and the Board of Trade, and was often called upon to oversee matters of design and architecture. Publications by him include "The History of Architecture in Washington," (published in John Proctor's Washington, Past and Present; a History, 1903) and important and influential writings on institutional homes for children. Through his architectural accomplishments and involvements throughout the city, Clark became one of Washington's most influential architects.

Clark designed an impressive number of buildings in the downtown area. According to the data generated from the 1981 Don't Tear It Down Downtown Survey, Clark designed more buildings in the survey area than any other architect.¹⁹ Of the 20 buildings Clark designed in downtown Washington, eleven have been demolished. Fine examples of his extant buildings include the Victor Building and 901-03 7th Street the Herman and House Building, now known as the Marlo Furniture Store, 1328 G Street, N.W. (in the process of demolition) and the Columbia National Bank at 911 F Street, N.W.

Clark employed the Renaissance Revival style on the commercial building located at 1328 G Street, N.W., designed in 1910. Although smaller in scale than the Victor Building, 1328 G Street, N.W. is a fine illustration of the Renaissance Revival style and demonstrates Clark's ability to skillfully transfer the grand details of the style to a small, commercial structure. Clark

¹⁹ Tracerics 1990 Downtown Survey and Historic Context Report of the 1981 Don't Tear it Down Downtown Survey.

employs rusticated brick work, rusticated quoining and voussoirs, segmental arched openings and projecting stone keystones to distinguish the design. The Herman and House Building located at the corner of 7th and I Streets, N.W. is an imposing 6-story Romanesque Revival commercial building with an ornate corner tower. Clark designed the building in 1895 for the Herman and House Furniture Store. Samuel Prescott, the builder of the Victor Building, also constructed the Herman and House building.

THE BUILDER

SAMUEL J. PRESCOTT (1867-1957)
Original building 1909 and 1911 addition

Samuel J. Prescott was responsible for the construction of the original Victor building and the addition of 1911. Prescott was the founder and president of the building contracting firm of Samuel J. Prescott Company. The firm was organized in 1890, and quickly earned a reputation as one of Washington's leading and most respected building firms.²⁰

Samuel Prescott was born in Weirs, New Hampshire in 1867. He spent his youth in New Hampshire and was educated at the Pittsfield Academy. Prescott relocated to Washington, D.C. in 1886, and continued his education with studies in the field of engineering and mechanical drafting. An entry in the District of Columbia, American Biographical Directory states that Prescott took a course in architecture under Professor Charles Schlarr, and finished his studies with a special course in technology.²¹

Prescott combined his strong academic background with a practical understanding of the building trade. As a youth he had spent many hours with his father building and constructing on their farm property. He is listed in Washington City Directories as a carpenter and builder until 1897. The Samuel J. Prescott Company is credited with the construction of many important building projects in downtown Washington, including the Columbia National Bank (911 F Street, N.W.), the Harrington Hotel (430 11th Street, N.W.), the Second National Bank (1130 G Street, N.W.), and numerous structures for the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company, the Potomac Telephone Company, the Potomac Electric Power Company, and the Capital Transit Company. Individual buildings credited to Prescott Construction Company include the National Theatre, Old Foundry Church on 16th Street, Herman and House Building (901-03 7th Street, N.W.), and 2215 Wyoming Avenue, and the Friends Meeting House at 2111 Florida Avenue, N.W.

Mr. Prescott was not only a highly regarded contractor in the city but his associations with political and civic activities earned him an esteemed reputation. He was associated with the Second National Bank of this city for many years serving as the President, Chairman of the

²⁰ "S.J. Prescott Long Interested in Civic Affairs Here." The Evening Star. July 7, 1940.

²¹ entry on Samuel Jenness Prescott in American Biographical Directory for the District of Columbia. 1908-09. p. 378.

Board, Director, and Vice-President. He served as the first President of the Master Builder's Association in 1903, and two years later he organized the Employer's Association and served as its first president. He also organized the Builders and Manufacturers Exchange in 1907 and was its first president. He was also president of the Prescott Farms Company of New Hampshire which owned and operated large farming interests in that State.²²

THE ARCHITECT

WADDY BUTLER WOOD (1869-1944)

1925 Addition

Waddy Butler Wood was the architect of the 1925 addition for the Victor Building. Wood practiced architecture for 48 years in Washington, D.C. from 1892-1940, a period of great expansion and development in this city. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, one of six children of Captain Charles Wood, a Confederate soldier and native Virginian. When Wood was still a child the family returned its family home in Ivy, Virginia. He attended the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Virginia Polytechnic Institute) for two years studying engineering. Wood left school at the age of 18 to join a C&O Railroad Engineer Corps survey. He arrived in Washington in 1891, determined to fulfill a dream of becoming an architect. Wood worked as a draftsman, and studied in the architecture books at the Library of Congress in the evenings. Although self taught, he became a skilled architect in this city. Wood opened his own architectural office in 1892. He began his career designing modest residences in Northeast Washington. His first large commission in 1895 was for the Capitol Traction Company to design their new car barn in Georgetown (M Street and Key Bridge.)

In 1902, Wood formed a partnership with Edmund Donn, Jr. and William I. Deming. The firm was known for its outstanding and imaginative design while maintaining reasonable and affordable costs through the honest use of materials. In 1912, the partnership was amicably dissolved. As an independent architect, Wood continued to capture prestigious commissions. He focused his attention on commercial and government work, accepting commissions for residential work only for large homes and mansions of Washington's elite. After 1912, Wood worked extensively for large companies such as the Potomac Electric Company designing 999 E Street, N.W., the Union Trust Company Building at 738-740 15th Street, N.W., the Masonic Temple at 801 13th Street, N.W., the Southern Railroad Company Building at 1500 K Street, N.W., the Commercial National Bank at 1405 G Street, N.W., and the Department of the Interior Building. His commissions for private interests and large residential structures included the remodeling of the old Holton Arms School, the remodeling of the Chevy Chase Club, and the design for homes of Frederick Delano, George Cabot Lodge, Dr. Cary Grayson, and Henry Fairbanks, whose house at 2340 S Street he later remodeled for Woodrow Wilson.

Wood was also active and did extensive work with the Washington Architectural Club and the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects serving as president in 1917 and 1918. Wood retired in 1940, to his country home in Warrenton, Virginia. His architectural designs

²² "S.J. Prescott, 90, Dies; Ex-Trade Board Head." The Evening Star. September 2, 1957.

showed both the understanding of the past and a vision of the future, while his work in Washington, D.C. served to enhance the beauty of the city and help shape its character. Woods career was regarded with respect both as a active citizen, business man and highly respected architect as described in the Sunday Star from 1940:

"The architectural tradition of Washington is especially distinguished...It is gratifying to know, that not all of this splendid service has been rendered by non-resident architects. Some of the best of our buildings have been designed by those living in Washington and practicing here. Among these special mention may be made of Waddy B. Wood."²³

THE BUILDER

JAMES BAIRD (1874-1953)
1925 Addition

James Baird was a prominent local builder and civic engineer in Washington for over 50 years. Born in Vanceburg, Kentucky in 1874, he spent his childhood in Ann Arbor, Michigan and Chicago, Illinois. He studied civil engineering at the University of Michigan. Upon completion of his studies in 1898, Baird went to work for the George A. Fuller Construction Company in New York, one of the largest and most productive construction companies on the east coast. While in New York, Baird managed the construction of the Flat Iron Building, considered one of the first steel skyscrapers. Baird relocated to Washington in 1903, and was named vice-president of the company by 1910, and elected president in 1922. In 1925, he formed his own construction firm, the James Baird Company, Inc.

Baird is credited with the construction of many of the city's most important structures including the Lincoln Memorial, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Freer Gallery of Art, Arlington Memorial Ampitheatre, Raleigh Hotel, the Munsey Building and portions of the Washington Cathedral. The firm was also responsible for the construction of smaller residential and commercial projects including 2416 Tracy Place, N.W., 2500 30th Street, N.W., 2601 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., 1309 F Street, N.W., 1314 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., and 1100 H Street, N.W.

²³ "Noted Architect Has Perpetuated Washington's Finest Tradition." The Sunday Star. September 15, 1940.

Upon his death in 1953 the Evening Star praised his achievements:

James Baird worked in Washington in an era of vast expansion. When he came here from New York in 1903, the Nation's Capital was still an overgrown country village. By the time of his retirement about a decade ago he had lived to see the city a thriving metropolis. Many of its finest structures he helped to put together...Now he has died at 79, leaving a tradition of accomplishment which should remain bright indefinitely.²⁴

The Victor Building

The original 6-story Victor Building located at the corner of 9th and Grant Place was built at a cost of \$100,000. Victor Evans established his headquarters in the Victor Building from which he commanded his enormous patent attorney business.

In 1910, Evans built a special building, the Victor Building, in order to place at the disposal of his clients every facility for the prompt and efficient handling of their patent matters. It is a commodious, fireproof, six-story structure, built of bricks, stone, marble and steel, opposite the United States Patent Office in Washington, and cost \$150,000.²⁵

The Victor Evans Company occupied many suites in the building with the remaining offices dominated by other patent attorneys, agents, draftsman, stenographers, and clerks. At the time the Victor Building was under construction the Renaissance Revival style Ouray Building (1905) located at 801 G Street, N.W. (now demolished) had been completed for several years. Both buildings were dominated by professionals whose business revolved around the Patent Office. Appleton P. Clark, Jr., was certainly familiar with the Ouray Building and Evans was undoubtedly impressed by the image, style, height and massing of the neighboring structure, for the Victor Building echoes the Ouray Building in stylistic inspiration, detailing and choice of materials.

In 1911, Victor Evans expanded his building with an addition costing \$60,000 located to the rear of the original structure extending along Grant Place. The addition was again designed by Appleton P. Clark and built by Samuel J. Prescott, and echoed the original structure in style and building materials.

Evans orchestrated the final addition to the building in 1925, increasing the 9th Street frontage by 47'3", and adding two additional stories to the original 6-story structure. The architect for the 1925 addition was Waddy Butler Wood, with the James Baird Company serving as the

²⁴ "A Builder Among Builders." The Evening Star. May 19, 1953.

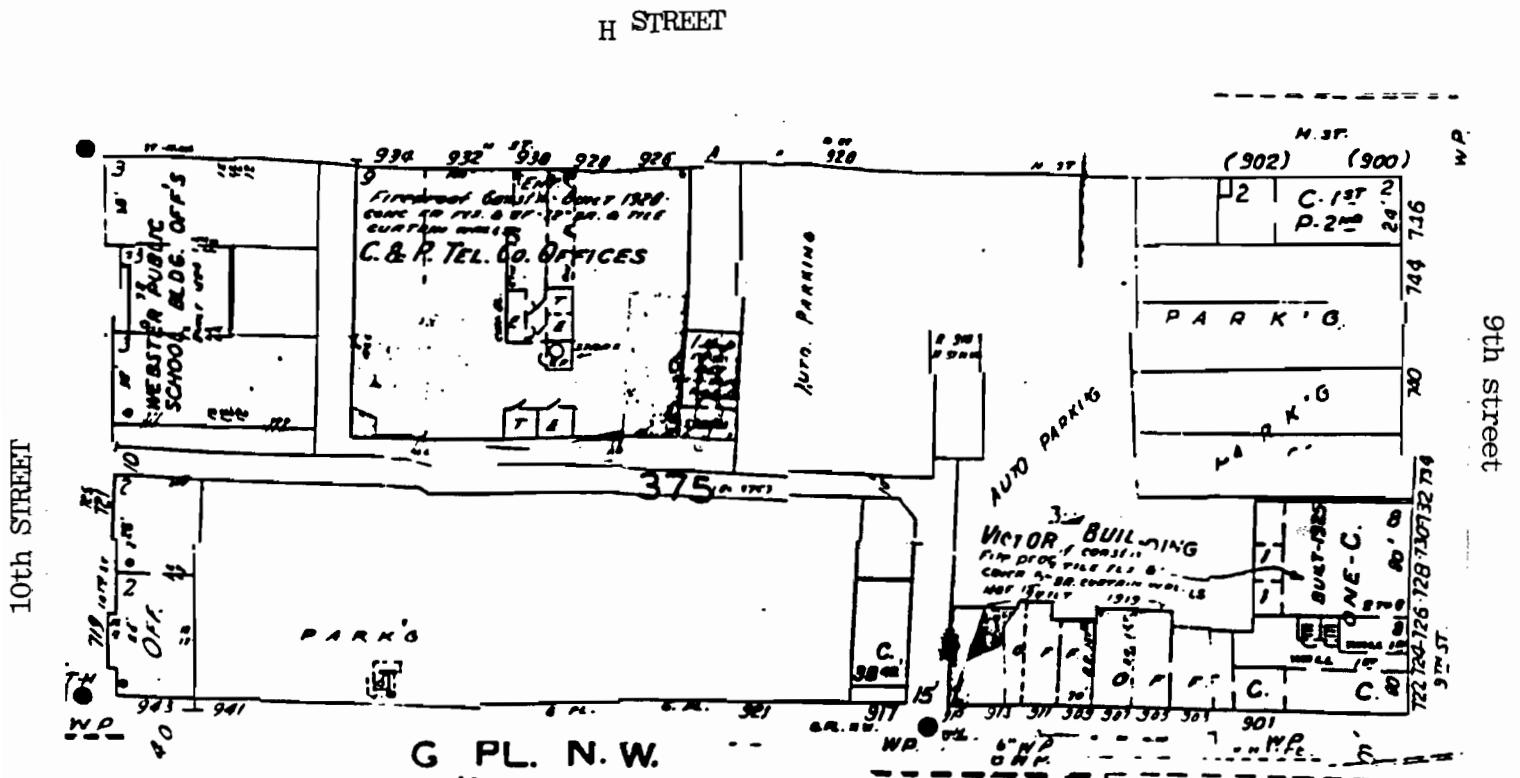
²⁵ National Cyclopedia of American Biography entry on Victor P. Evans. p. 424-426. volume 16.

builders. Wood respectfully designed his addition to harmonize with Clark's original Renaissance Revival styled building, while presenting a design of another time and undeniably representative of the stripped more classically inspired signature work Waddy Wood produced during the 1920s throughout Washington.

The Victor Building was occupied through the late 1930s by legal and patent professionals. In the 1940s, the Victor J. Evans Company relocated to new offices. By 1945, federal agencies, including the U.S. Civil Service Commission and U.S. Forest Commission, rented the majority of the office space in the building. Today the building houses a wide variety of small businesses, and non-profit organizations. The Washington City Paper has been headquartered in the building for many years. The ground floor retail spaces are presently occupied by Copies Unlimited and the Central Liquor Store.

310.24

A map showing the exact boundaries of the property proposed for designation; the square and lot number (s) or parcel number; square footage of property proposed for designation; north arrow; and contiguous streets, if any.



SQUARE 0375, LOTS 120-121 and 817
 BUILDING APPROXIMATELY 11,400 SQUARE FEET

1989 Sanborn Building and Property Atlas of Washington, D.C.

310.25 Contemporary good quality photograph(s) of the property proposed for designation which provide a clear and accurate visual representation of the property and its setting; specify view, date of photograph and list credits, if any. 8" x 10" glossy photographs are preferred. In addition, applicant may supply slides (Applicant shall submit two copies of each photograph or slide.

EXTERIOR

Photograph #1

Address: 724-26 9th Street, N.W.

City: Washington, D.C.

Name of Photographer: Laura L. Harris

Date of Photograph: September, 1990

Location of Negative: Traceries, 702 H Street, N.W.

Description of Photograph: exterior Victor Building, looking west

Photograph #2

Address: 724-26 9th Street, N.W.

City: Washington, D.C.

Name of Photographer: Laura L. Harris

Date of Photograph: September, 1990

Location of Negative: Traceries, 702 H Street, N.W.

Description of Photograph: Detail, 9th Street entrance Victor Building

Photograph #3

Address: 724-26 9th Street, N.W.

City: Washington, D.C.

Name of Photographer: Laura L. Harris

Date of Photograph: September, 1990

Location of Negative: Traceries, 702 H Street, N.W.

Description of Photograph: Victor Building, roofline showing original and 1925 addition

Photograph #4

Address: 724-26 9th Street, N.W.

City: Washington, D.C.

Name of Photographer: Laura L. Harris

Date of Photograph: September, 1990

Location of Negative: Traceries, 702 H Street, N.W.

Description of Photograph: Side elevation from G Place, looking east

310.26 A list of bibliographic and other sources used to prepare the application; indicate where the reference material is archived.

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"15 Sioux Braves Invade White House Offices, Here to Recover Black Hills Ceded to Government in 1876 -- Show Sights." The Evening Star. February 17, 1921.

"100 to Make Visit to Private Zoo, V.J. Evans to Display Collection of Rare Animals to Guest." The Evening Star. May 7, 1928.

"A Builder Among Builders -- James Baird." The Evening Star. May 19, 1953.

"Animals at the Zoo." The Washington Post. August 28, 1921.

"Appleton P. Clark, 89, Dean of Architects." The Washington Post. March 27, 1955.

"Appleton P. Clark, Jr., Architect in District More Than 50 Years." The Evening Star. March 26, 1955.

"Atwood Asks \$2000 for Another Flight, Efforts Being Made to Raise the Purse Required by the Aviator." The Evening Star. July 24, 1911.

"Atwood to Try for the Prize." The Evening Star. August 7, 1911.

"Atwood is at End of Record Flight, Aviator Lands at Governor's Island at 2:38 o'clock this Afternoon." The Evening Star. August 25, 1911.

"Circled by Friends and Flowers Couple Marks 60th Anniversary." The Evening Star. October 7, 1951.

"Ends Aero Trip at White House, President Taft Sees Atwood Descend Safely on Lawn of Executive Mansion, Flight Made in Face of 25-mile Breeze." The Evening Star. July 14, 1911.

"Funeral Rites Held for Victor J. Evans." The Evening Star. February 3, 1931.

"Government Agent's Aid Asked to Make Zoo Best In Country, Institution Here, Growing by Leaps and Bounds, Expects to Benefit from Contributions Sent from all Corners of the World." The Evening Star. July 5, 1925.

"Indian Rites in Office Building (Victor Building), Scenes of Western Prairies Transplanted to Washington for Archaeologists." The Evening Star. January 23, 1922.

"Indians Sue U.S. for \$750,000,000, Sioux Tribe Alleges Lands and Property Taken by Government Years Ago." The Evening Star. May 7, 1923.

"James Baird, 79, Dies; Directed Construction of Lincoln Memorial." The Evening Star. May 17, 1953.

"Next Call Formal, Atwood Going to White House in Airship, With President Today, Interview Preliminary to More Ceremonial, Gift from Aero Club to be Delivered Friday -- Aviator's Future Program." The Evening Star. July 12, 1911.

"Noted Architect Has Perpetuated Washington's Finest Tradition." The Sunday Star. September 15, 1940.

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"Plans Flight Today, Aviator Atwood expects to Come in from College Park, Buy's Hamilton's Machine, Young Birdman may be Observed about Sundown." The Evening Star. July 13, 1911.

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"Private Zoo Site Purchased by U.S." The Evening Star. June 19, 1931.

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"S.J. Prescott Long interested in Civic Affairs Here -- Retired Builder Completed Many Local Projects." The Evening Star. July 7, 1940.

"S.J. Prescott, 90, Dies; Ex-Trade Board Head." The Evening Star. September 2, 1957.

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"To Capital by Aero Harry N. Atwood May Fly From New York Thursday, Commerce Chamber Acts, Will Ask Aviator to Make Journey Tomorrow, Sends Mr. Hunt to Gotham, Airman Will be Requested to Land Near Monument--Initiation to Luncheon." The Evening Star. July 3, 1911.

"Victor J. Evans, Patent Attorney Victim of Attack After Being Operated On." The Washington Herald. February 27, 1931. Clippings files Martin Luther King, Jr., Library.

"Victor J. Evans Rites Arranged." The Evening Star. February 2, 1931.

"Victor Justice Evans Patent Attorney, Dies." The New York Times. February 2, 1931.

"Waddy B. Wood, 74, Famous Architect, Dies in Virginia." The Evening Star. January 27, 1944.

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RG 803, Box 221, Folder 24.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Library. Washingtoniana Room, Clippings and Vertical Files.

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#4364, May 14, 1909; #4911, May 2, 1911; #171, June 16, 1925.

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Office of Public Records, RG 2, Probate Division Records, Will of Victor Justice Evans, 1931.
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MAPS

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