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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Garfinckel's Department Store

other names/site number Hamilton Square

2. Location

street & number 1401 F Street, N.W. not for publication N/A  
city or town Washington vicinity X  
state District of Columbia code DC county N/A code N/A  
zip code 20004

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant     nationally     statewide X locally. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Philip J. Carr* Signature of certifying official      3/1/95 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official      Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
(See continuation sheet).
- determined eligible for the  
National Register  
(See continuation sheet).
- determined not eligible for the  
National Register
- removed from the National Register

*Edson H. Beall*

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

*for*

Signature of Keeper

*4.4.95*

Date  
of Action

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: department store  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne  
OTHER: Stripped Classicism  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
roof METAL  
walls STONE: limestone  
  
other STONE: marble  
METAL: bronze

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
COMMERCE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1929-1946  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1929  
1946  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Starrett and Van Vleck  
Porter and Lockie

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>323770</u>	<u>4307150</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen Callcott, Architectural Historian  
organization D.C. SHPO date January, 1995  
street & number 614 H Street, N.W. Suite 305 telephone 202-727-7360  
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

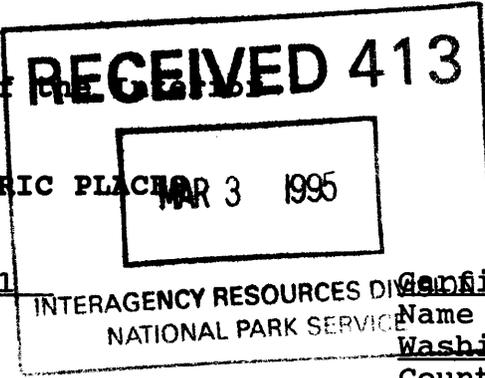
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name The Oliver Carr Company  
street & number 1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. telephone 202-624-1700  
city or town Washington, DC state DC zip code 20006

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the  
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7

Page 1

Garfinckel's Department Store  
 Name of property  
 Washington, DC  
 County and State

Garfinckel's Department Store, located at the northwest corner of 14th and F Streets, N.W. is a nine-story, steel frame, limestone clad commercial building. The rectangular building is fifteen bays wide along F Street (south elevation) and nine bays wide along 14th Street (east elevation). The building represents the stripped classical style and retains its original details, with only minor alterations to its storefronts. Two bays were added to the west end of the south elevation in 1946. They closely replicate the original details and are difficult to differentiate today.

Garfinkel's has a simple mass and restrained detailing, both characteristics of the stripped classical style. The block-shape building has a chamfered corner and the top two floors have a setback. The building is faced with smooth, grey limestone. Ornament includes low relief piers, fluted and plain inset panels, shallow cornices, dentil moldings, and string courses.

The building's south and east elevations (the street facades) are organized in a tripartite composition. The first three floors comprise the base of the building and have the most ornament. The base is further divided into two components: the first floor storefront and the upper two floors. The first floor is dominated by large display windows, set flush with the face of the building. Each window extends the width of the structural bay, is set within a decorative bronze frame, and has a single pane of glass. Polished grey marble kickplates, with etched diamond pattern, are set beneath the windows. A smooth band of limestone runs above the storefront windows and is surmounted by a projecting string course which is located just below the second floor windows. Entrances to the building are centered on each facade, with a projecting, classical, stone surround which terminates just below the string course. Both door surrounds have "Julius Garfinckel Co." carved into their fascia. Each entrance contains two pairs of glass doors with bronze frames which are surmounted by a transom covered with a decorative bronze grill.

The upper two floors of the base are linked by two-story piers which are terminated by an entablature. Each pier suggests a pilaster through a discontinuous base and a slightly projecting molding which suggests a capital. The windows of both floors are recessed. Although the multi-light windows are double hung, their pairing and full-floor height suggest french doors; those on the third floor have decorative bronze grills resembling balconies.

The mid-section of the building incorporates the fourth through sixth stories. The walls of these floors are completely sheer and unadorned, with the exception of slightly recessed window surrounds around the fourth floor windows. The four-over-four, double hung windows are grouped in pairs. The mid-section is terminated by a simple architrave.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   7   Page   2  

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

---

The seventh floor serves as the crown of the building. The windows are divided by fluted panels. The floor is terminated by a large entablature with dentils in its cornice.

The building has two attic stories which are significantly set back from the main wall plane of the building. The windows of the attic elevations are the same as those below. They are separated by slightly recessed panels. A stringcourse separates the two attic floors and the attic is capped by a simple cornice.

The store's interior plan is largely open and has not been significantly altered. The interior of the building is not accessible.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

---

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Garfinckel's Department Store, designed in 1929 by the New York architecture firm of Starrett and Van Vleck, is an excellent example of a 1920s department store. The building exemplifies the firm's acknowledged mastery of department store design and the stripped classical style. The building established the western end of F Street as one of the most fashionable areas in the city for upscale retailers to locate. The building is also significant for its association with founder Julius Garfinckel, who made important contributions to the city's retail and economic development through the founding of a major chain of department stores which set the tone for style and sophistication in Washington for eighty years. While no longer functioning as a department store, the building remains an important anchor of the city's downtown retail core.

The Rise of the Department Store

The department store as a retail institution, and later as a building type, began in the mid-19th century, with the dramatic growth of urban centers resulting from the Industrial Revolution. The emergence of the department store was made possible by the expanding wealth of the middle class which had increasing amounts of discretionary income for consumer goods. The first department stores appeared in Paris, France in the 1840s as a result of separate, existing shops which consolidated under a single manager. Different departments within the same building offered a more diversified selection of goods for men, women, and children and of furnishings than could be provided by smaller shops. The densely populated European cities were the natural breeding ground for this new type of merchandising.

American merchandisers followed the European model. In the decade following the Civil War, most major cities had department stores arise in the prime retail locations. In the 1870s and 1880s, many existing large retailers changed their terminology from "dry goods" and "fancy goods" stores to "department stores." As in Europe, the new department stores were promoted as having greater variety, better prices, and more dependable merchandise than smaller merchants could provide.

In Washington, the emergence of this new type of merchandising coincided with the expansion of the city's retail core from its focus on 7th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue to include F and G Streets between 7th and 14th Streets. The first major retailer to establish a presence on F Street was Woodward & Lothrop's Department Store, which moved from Pennsylvania Avenue to F Street in 1887, seven years after the store's founding by Samuel Woodward and Alvin Lothrop. Typical for a rapidly expanding department store, Woodward & Lothrop bought up adjacent property as it became available, enlarging their building with additions. By 1925, the store

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

---

---

encompassed all but one small parcel on the block between F, G, 10th, and 11th Streets, housed in two complimentary buildings.

With Woodward & Lothrop as an anchor, F Street quickly became established as the heart of commercial Washington. The Palais Royale Department Store, founded by Abraham Lisner in 1877, relocated from Pennsylvania Avenue to 11th and G Streets in 1892 to a new, six-story, brick, Romanesque Revival building. The Hecht Company, founded in Baltimore in the 1860s, established a Washington headquarters on 7th Street, near F Street, in an existing commercial building in 1896. Lansburgh's Department Store, founded by Gustave and Max Lansburgh in 1859, relocated to 8th and D Streets to a new six-story, white terra-cotta clad department store in 1916. To an even greater degree than Woodward & Lothrop, all of these department stores, by the 1920s, were collections of buildings of different architectural styles, materials, and sizes. The conglomerations reflected the department store's prosperity and haphazard growth.<sup>2</sup> The image of these hodgepodes were in stark contrast to the modern, unified image which was sought by Julius Garfinckel when he constructed his department store in 1929.

As they developed, the design of department stores presented architects with unusual problems. The solution to these issues led to a distinctive building typology in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth century. Department stores were necessarily large to accommodate the diverse departments and the volume of merchandise. To provide this size, the buildings that housed the stores were large, required large sites, large amounts of capital to build, and offered shopping on most floors within the building. The ideal department store capitalized on the size of its building by selecting a prominent location and a distinctive appearance, so that the building itself served as an advertisement for the business. The Garfinckel's department store, more than any other in Washington, epitomizes the design ideals of this type of commercial construction.

Julius Garfinckel

Julius Garfinckel was born November 5, 1874 to Harris and Hannah Harrison Garfinckle in Syracuse, New York.<sup>3</sup> The family soon returned to their native Louisiana, whereupon Julius' father died. At age 16, Julius left home and headed

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<sup>1</sup> For history of Woodward & Lothrop, see D.C. Landmark Application for Woodward & Lothrop Service Warehouse, State Historic Preservation Office, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Information on Washington's department stores from the Downtown Survey files, conducted by Don't Tear It Down, 1978-80, located in the State Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>3</sup> Much of the biographical information on Garfinckel is from William Hogan, "Washington's Merchant Prince," Regardie's (September-October 1981), with corroboration from contemporary newspapers and documents.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

for the gold and silver in Colorado. Instead of finding work as a miner, he wound up in retail; first as a stockroom boy for the Denver Dry Goods Co. and then as a clerk for the J.J. Joslin Dry Goods Co. Not unlike the founders of other local department stores, Julius Garfinckel moved to Washington in late 1899 as a young man of modest means seeking employment in the retail business. His first job in Washington was with Parker, Bridget and Company, a dry goods store located at 9th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. He quickly became a buyer for the company and regularly traveled to New York City to purchase clothes, fabrics, and accessories, during which he learned about all aspects of the retail business.

Within five years, Garfinckel left Parker, Bridget and Company to begin his own business. On October 2, 1905, Garfinckel opened his own store in the basement, first floor, and balcony of an existing red brick building at 1226 F Street, NW. From the outset, Garfinckel created a gracious, style-conscious tone that would become the foundation of the store's success. When the store opened it was filled with the finest imported and American clothing and furs found in the city. His earliest motto was "only the best goods." Employees were instructed to treat each customer as an honored guest, attentively helping them find the goods that best suited their needs. As part of the image, Garfinckel adopted a set-price policy (which had been pioneered by Woodward & Lothrop), that eliminated unseemly price haggling with customers.

Garfinckel's formula of fine goods, unique up-to-the-minute fashions, and outstanding customer service was an immediate success. In its first ten months, the store grossed nearly \$167,000, and soon outgrew the three levels originally leased. Within a few years, Garfinckel was grossing more than \$2 million in annual sales and had expanded into every floor of the seven story building. As the store continued to grow, and in the tradition of other department stores, he leased the neighboring two-story building at the corner of F and 13th Streets. He ultimately filled that building as well as the five stories he added onto it.

Garfinckel was often referred to as the "Prince of Broadway" because of his frequent trips to New York to purchase the most current and tasteful fashions; he was renowned for personally selecting nearly every item available in his store. It was rumored that he adamantly refused any merchandise carried by another store in the area and would drop an item if it was offered by a competitor. Throughout his career, he devoted himself to his store, spending long hours in the office and visiting every department and speaking to every employee twice a day.

Interestingly, Garfinckel altered the spelling of his last name and that of the store from "Garfinckle" to "Garfinckel" in the 1920s, long after the store's reputation was solidly established. This name change fueled speculation that

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

Garfinckel was irritated at being identified as Jewish, and may have been the source of rumors that he refused to employ Jews in the early years of his store.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1920s Julius Garfinckel was the undisputed retail leader for Washington's elite. Diplomats, government leaders, Congressmen, and visiting dignitaries from around the world visited and shopped at his store. His reputation was a critical part of the store's image and success; both well-known and reclusive, his eccentricity added to the appeal and mystique of the store. Charming and unfailingly available to his customers for business, he nevertheless refused to participate in the social world of his clients. He was reportedly a teetotaler and a vegetarian, who stood on tiptoes when talking to customers to compensate for his small stature, and rushed to wash his hands after shaking hands with visitors. At his new store, he set up his desk on an upper, exterior balcony, protected only by an awning, and conducted business outdoors on all but the coldest days. Garfinckel never married.

Garfinckel was involved with religious, philanthropic, and business organizations. He became an active member of All Souls' Unitarian Church at 16th and Harvard Streets, NW, and devoted time to its interests and helped guide its fundraising and building programs. His other activities included directorships with Riggs National Bank, Potomac Electric Power Company, and Emergency Hospital. He was also a trustee of George Washington University and Gallaudet College. He was an active supporter of the Boy Scouts of America, Masons, Chamber of Commerce, Columbia Historical Society, and Washington Board of Trade. His personal interests included horseback riding and collecting the work of artist James McNeill Whistler. Over the years, he amassed one of the largest private collections of Whistler's work, which he maintained in his hotel suite. He lived in the Burlington Hotel at Thomas Circle from around 1910 until the opening of the Hay-Adams Hotel in 1930. He then occupied a suite in the Hay-Adams that overlooked Lafayette Square and the White House until his death in 1936. During his life, he was an enigma to most people and remained one after his death at the age of sixty-two.

Garfinckel died in November of 1936, soon after a diagnosis of terminal cancer. The provisions of his will offers insight into his character. He left small bequests to over one hundred long-term employees of the department store, a \$50,000 bequest to the Washington Central Dispensary and Emergency Hospital, an equal amount to All Soul's Church, and his Whistler collection to the Corcoran Gallery of Art. The most surprising portion of his will was the dedication of the remainder of his estate, totalling more than \$4 million, to the Washington YWCA to establish and operate the Hannah Harrison School of Industrial Arts, named in

<sup>4</sup> This rumor was denied by Ms. Leona Hechinger Hacke, who was offered a job in c. 1918 by Garfinckel. Leona Hechinger Hacke, Autobiography of Leona Hechinger Hacke, interview conducted by Laura Rupp, 1987.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

---

honor of his mother. His will stipulated that the school be devoted to "providing worthy women, under the necessity of earning their own livelihoods, a school wherein may be taught such useful occupations as stenography, typewriter operating, bookkeeping and accountancy, dressmaking, millinery, and other lines of endeavor suitable to women."<sup>5</sup>

In requesting that the school bear his mother's maiden name, rather than his own, it seems likely that Garfinckel was responding to his family experiences when his mother, widowed with five young children, sought to enter the work force with little training or preparation. During the Depression, he must also have seen many other women in similar circumstances. The Hannah Harrison Career School, as it is now known, still operates at 4470 MacArthur Boulevard, NW. While Julius Garfinckel's philanthropy resulted in several important gifts to the city, they are secondary in significance to his contributions to the economic and retail development of Washington.

Garfinckel's Department Store

Since 1905, Julius Garfinckel had been setting the tone of fashion in the nation's capital. By 1928, he was the leading clothier in Washington, operating out of a complex of buildings at the corner of 13th and F Streets, NW. In that year, he announced that a nine-story building would be designed to contain all of the store's departments under one roof. The building was prominently sited on the northwest corner of the intersection of 14th and F Streets, NW.

Garfinckel's decision to locate at 14th and F Streets was a major addition to downtown Washington. It influenced the shape and focus of Washington's retail core. When he opened his business in 1905 in the 1200 block of F Street, his store was at the western end of the city's retail area. The rapid success of his store was instrumental in the westward extension of the retail strip. By the 1920s, when Garfinckel was the undisputed leader in exclusive retailer goods and clothes, F Street was in its heyday. Contemporary accounts speak of the "F Street promenade" where, "beginning at 14th Street, the F-Streeters can find anything their hearts desire."<sup>6</sup> His store became the dominant anchor of the upscale western end of F Street, just as Hecht's served as anchor to the lower-priced eastern end of the street. Fashionable stores, selling furs, jewelry, candies, stationery, and expensive men's and women's clothes were established around Garfinckel's store.

In preparation for his department store, Garfinckel began acquiring land at the corner of 14th and F Streets in the early 1920s. By the mid-1920s, he owned many of the lots fronting on F Street. In 1926 his assemblage included all of the lots

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<sup>5</sup> Hogan, "Merchant Prince," citing relevant section of Garfinckel's will.

<sup>6</sup> Hogan, "Merchant Prince," quoting society editor of a local paper.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

---

---

fronting on 14th between F and<sup>7</sup> G Streets and most of the lots fronting on F Street at the east end of the block.

When Garfinckel announced his development plans in 1928, he emphasized the construction of the department store, but the full scope of his plans included a complex of as many as eleven coordinated retail buildings. With the prominent corner site reserved for the department store, the remaining buildings were to be filled with specialty stores, creating a lively retail environment. By owning and developing the lots surrounding his department store Garfinckel, in contrast to his competitors, was able to: control the quality of the store's immediate environment; provide land for the store's future growth, and; present an elegant, unified, architectural image for his business.

Garfinckel chose the New York architectural firm of Starrett and Van Vleck, considered the foremost department store architects of their day. The firm was responsible for designing the buildings that housed some of the most prestigious retail establishments in New York including: Lord & Taylor at 38th and Fifth Avenue (1914), Abercrombie & Fitch at 45th and Madison Avenue (1917), Sak's at 39th and Fifth Avenue (1924), McCreery's Arcade (1930), Abraham and Straus in Brooklyn (1929), and Bloomingdale's at 59th and Lexington Avenue (1930).

Goldwyn Starrett (1876-1918) was born in Lawrence, Kansas and educated at the University of Michigan. He worked as a draftsman in Daniel Burnham's Chicago office, where he progressed from an entry-level draftsman to head designer. In 1902, Starrett designed the celebrated Algonquin Hotel at 59 West 44th Street.<sup>10</sup> Joseph Van Vleck (1875-1956) studied at Cornell University and later in Europe. The partnership of Starrett and Van Vleck was established in 1904. At times, the firm included other members of the Starrett family, in particular William Aiken Starrett, who was a partner from 1913-1918. In its early years the firm designed a variety of commercial buildings, but by the 1920s it specialized in stores, including large department stores and small retail buildings.

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<sup>7</sup> "Julius Garfinckel Acquires Stilson Hutchins Estate at 14th & G Streets," Washington Star, July 28, 1926.

<sup>8</sup> See: Stern, Robert A.M., et.al., New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism, 1890-1914, New York: Rizzoli, 1983; and Norval White and Elliot Willensky, eds., AIA Guide to New York City, New York: American Institute of Architects and Collier Books, 1978.

<sup>9</sup> Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Whitney, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los Angeles: Hennessy and Ingals, Inc., p. 567.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Goldberger, The City Observed: New York, A Guide to the Architecture of Manhattan. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

Starrett and Van Vleck proficiently accomodated the complicated demands of a large department store while providing an urbane building for the sophisticated tastes of metropolitan residents. They created restrained classical designs as exemplified in their numerous Manhattan department stores. While all of their stores exhibit variations of classicism, they employed different sources of inspiration. For example, Lord & Taylor's used Italian Renaissance details and Sak's was a stripped classical design. The latter details were especially appropriate for Garfinckel's building as set within the classical context of Washington.

In 1928, the year Garfinckel's was constructed, stripped classicism was gaining popularity in Washington as it easily merged with the Beaux-Arts architecture championed by the 1902 McMillan Plan. Stripped classicism was considered, by those architects who practiced it, to be a modern interpretation of classical architecture because of its incorporation of contemporary, geometric designs. By abstracting traditional motifs, they demonstrated the influence of abstraction that affected all forms of modern art in the period.

In choosing the preeminent department store designers of the period, Garfinckel once again displayed his establishment's supremacy to other local department stores. His new store would be the only department store designed by a New York firm, in the latest, fashionable style. In short, Garfinckel would have a store which would always reflect the style and sophistication which he sought to provide for his customers.

Garfinckel's originally intended to build an eight-story building.<sup>12</sup> Thereafter, he decided to expand it to nine stories as a means of increasing its capacity and presence on the street. The D.C. Zoning Commission, following the lead of New York City, had recently passed legislation requiring setbacks on tall buildings.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Garfinckel was required to set his top two stories back from the street. Garfinckel's was constructed by the local firm of Charles H. Tompkins.

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<sup>11</sup> Bertram Goodhue and Paul Cret were leading proponents of stripped classicism on a national level. Both architects designed important edifices in Washington. The style was widely adopted for institutional and governmental buildings in the area until the 1940s. Its popularity was partly due to the fact that simple decoration and planar wall surfaces was economical.

<sup>12</sup> "Garfinckel Plans Eight Story Building at Corner," Washington Star, May 20, 1928, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> "New Design for Garfinckel Store Shows Two Set-Backs," Washington Star, April 6, 1929, p. 13.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

The building program began in 1928 with the construction of a three-story structure fronting on F Street just west of the future department store. A relatively simple brick building, it was also designed by Starrett and Van Vleck. Garfinckel erected two more buildings on the block in 1930, both two-story structures, made of brick and again designed by Starrett and Van Vleck. One of the stores extended north from Garfinckel's along 14th Street, and was leased to a bookseller. The other fronted F Street, and was also leased to an outside retailer. Despite the economic difficulties of the Depression, Garfinckel was able to carry out his plans to build the new department store, largely because he was the sole owner of the business and provided most of the capital for the construction. When the new store opened for business on October 6, 1930, it was welcomed by the Washington Post as a combination of "beauty of proportion, grace of line, and dignity of balance."<sup>14</sup> The opening festivities included a ribbon cutting ceremony performed by the First Lady, Mrs. Herbert Hoover.<sup>15</sup>

Like its exterior design, the new store incorporated many innovative features on its interior. It was the first department store in the city to be air-conditioned, to provide cold storage for furs, and with ground- to top-floor elevators. Other innovations included an automatic sprinkler system, a central vacuum, and pneumatic tubes and belt conveyors for inter-departmental communication and connection.

Garfinckel's original plan to construct eleven buildings at 14th and F Streets was never realized. The two small buildings that were constructed in 1930 were the last to be built before the impact of the Depression. Julius Garfinckel's death in 1936 put an end to his building program. In 1939, the store became a publicly-owned corporation with a general stock issue. However, despite Garfinckel's death, the store never deviated from the standards and market strategy defined by its founder. The prosperity that followed World War II enabled the department store to expand in 1946 by adding two bays at its western end. The addition was designed by the prominent local architectural firm of Porter & Lockie, who duplicated the design and quality of materials of the original building. The addition is a seamless one, continuing the unified image of the store, just as Julius Garfinckel would have directed.

As was typical of department stores in the post-War years, Garfinckel's expanded its operation by opening stores outside of downtown. The store was the first in Washington to open a suburban location, opening a branch in Spring Valley (D.C.) in 1942. The store remained an anchor of the suburban Spring Valley Shopping Center for over 40 years. Store management continued this policy of expanding into growing, upscale suburban markets, resulting in a chain of ten stores located throughout the Washington metropolitan region. After being sold several times

<sup>14</sup> Washington Post, "Garfinckel's Store to Open Tomorrow," October 5, 1930, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> "Garfinckel's Store to Open Tomorrow," Washington Post, October 5, 1930, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

---

during corporate takeovers in the 1980s, the Garfinckel's chain, loaded with debt incurred through the takeovers, was closed in 1989. The original flagship building remains empty in 1994.

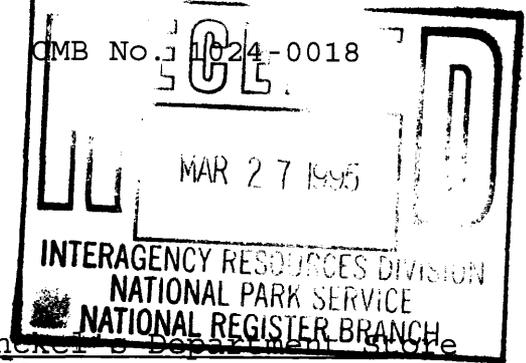
Garfinckel's Department Store, and its founder Julius Garfinckel, more than any other retail establishment or retailer in the city, became synonymous with top quality merchandise and attentive customer service. Garfinckel's Department Store set the tone for all other Washington clothing retailers, and was influential in shaping the city's retail core. Garfinckel's embodies all of the qualities that characterize leading twentieth century department stores: a cohesive design large enough to house all departments under one roof, and; an open plan that allows for easy expansion, and; has served as an effective advertisement for the business that it housed.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   9   Page   1  

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State



=====

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MAR 27 1995

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   9   Page   2  

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

=====

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MAR 27 1995

MAR 27 1995

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1

Garfinckel's Department Store  
Name of property  
Washington, DC  
County and State

=====

The property is located on the southeast corner of Square 224, on lot 824 in Washington, D.C. The square is bounded by F, G, 14th and 15th Streets, N.W.