



September 2001

TREASURY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Inside this Newsletter...

- **Special savings to members on THA holiday cards.** THA is offering its members special savings on the purchase of its snow scene holiday greeting cards, through October 31, subject to stock on hand.
- **New THA web pages.** Thanks to the support of a team of website experts, THA's website has undergone major changes, including the addition of on-line posting of this newsletter.

Treasury Building Placed on Washington, DC's New "Heritage Trail"

Last July, the DC Heritage Tourism Coalition and the Downtown Business Improvement District unveiled the new Downtown Heritage Trail. This trail leads visitors to historically-significant buildings and sites that were important in the history of the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement. Each of the 21 locations on the DC Heritage Trail is marked with a permanent interpretative panel that reproduces historic photographs, engravings and text.

The Heritage Trail includes the back alley down which John Wilkes Booth escaped after having assassinated President Lincoln at Ford's Theatre in 1865 and the Willard Hotel where, in August 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. finished writing his forever-remembered "I Have a Dream" speech.

The panel for the Treasury Building has been placed on 15th Street, and it discusses Treasury's significant Civil War history, including such items as Secretary Salmon P. Chase's efforts to raise funds to support the Union army. Also included in the Treasury panel is information on Blanche K. Bruce, who was the first African-American to serve as the Register of the Treasury.

A companion book to the tour route, titled *Civil War to Civil Rights: Downtown Heritage Trail*, is available for \$4.95 plus tax and shipping, from Olsson's Book and Record Stores ((202) 347-3686) and at the National Building Museum gift shop ((202) 272-7706).

First Secret Service Chief and Treasury Guard Flag Recent News Headliners

Treasury's history has been in the news lately. In May, the *New York Times* ran a feature article (5/29/01, page A12) about the headstone recently erected to mark the grave of William P. Wood, the first chief of the U.S. Secret Service. Wood, who is buried in Washington's Congressional Cemetery, died in 1903 nearly penniless. Until recently, his grave was marked with only a small stone engraved with his last name. The Association of Former Agents of the U.S. Secret Service raised funds for a larger stone which is inscribed with his birth and death dates, as well as dates of tenure with Secret Service. The headstone was dedicated this past Memorial Day.

Chief Wood, who was appointed in July of 1865, served for four years and is credited with organizing the operation responsible for catching counterfeiters. In the *Times* article, Mike Sampson, current archivist of the Secret Service, remarked, "I don't know if he would cut it as director today. He was kind of gruff But when they were starting out, they wanted a no-nonsense guy."

Another recent *New York Times* article (7/5/01, page A17) reported on the discovery of a Treasury Guard flag in a storage room at the Connecticut Historical Society. One of the five flags on display in President Lincoln's theater box at Ford's Theatre the night he was assassinated, this hand-painted flag was found in a box on top of a storage room shelf. The flag is stitched with the inscription, "Presented to the Treasury Guard Regt. by the Ladies of the Treasury Dept. 1864." The Treasury Guard Regiment was composed of male Treasury employees who formed a militia that could spring into action and protect the Treasury Building in the event of a Confederate attack on Washington, DC.

This flag took a circuitous route following Lincoln's assassination. It was stored at Treasury until the 1870s when it was taken by Henry Cobaugh, captain of the watch who, in turn, gave it to Edgar Yeargason and, in 1922, the Yeargason family donated the flag to the Connecticut Historical Society where it was forgotten for more than 75 years. A second Treasury Guard flag is on display at Ford's Theater.

Special Offer on THA Holiday Cards for Members Only

THA is offering its members a special savings on holiday cards of the Treasury Building through October 31, subject to stock on hand. The cards show the Treasury Building from a Southwest view, in a full color snow setting, with the Treasury Annex Building in the distance. This image, from a watercolor by noted local artist Ken Frye, may be viewed on THA's website.

The THA holiday cards are packed 10 to a box, and come in a choice of inside printing (see below). To order, cut out or photocopy this column, including your name and address, and mail it with your check to the address in the right column before October 31.

Special pricing is a \$1 discount (\$7 instead of the usual \$8 per box), plus a free box for every two purchased. Inside printing types may be mixed.

Order for Treasury Building Cards

**SPECIAL MEMBER-ONLY OFFER
EXPIRES OCTOBER 31, 2001**

__ Box(es) Holiday Cards @ \$7, with inside inscription as follows:

- () "Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year"
 () "Seasons Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year"
 () Blank inside for your own note

TOTAL OF ORDER: \$ _____

Plus Free Boxes of cards, 1 box free for every 2 boxes purchased:

- () **Merry Christmas;**
 () **Seasons Greetings;**
 () **Blank**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Lafayette Square Day Slated for October 6

Ten sites surrounding the President's Park will celebrate their two hundred years of rich history at the seventh annual Lafayette Square Day Open House. There will be museum and exhibit tours, gallery talks, walking tours, family workshops, children's programs, artist demonstrations and much more.

The open house, running from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., will include the Corcoran Gallery, Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Decatur House Museum, the Hay-Adams Hotel, the Octagon, Riggs Bank, the Renwick Gallery, St. John's Church, the White House Historical Association and the White House Visitor's Center. For further information, call (202) 842-0915 or visit www.decatourhouse.org.

THA Holiday Ornament Series Now Concluded

THA's commemorative holiday ornament for the year 2000 was the last in the series of the commemoratives that celebrated the histories of each current Treasury bureau. The series, which began with the ornament that commemorated the bicentennial of the Department of the Treasury in 1989, extended 12 years, concluding with the ornament that honored the bicentennials of the first Treasury Building in Washington, DC and of Washington, DC as the Nation's Capital in 2000.

Past years' ornaments remain available for sale, subject to stock on hand. Member prices are \$11 each for 1990 through 1999 ornaments and \$15 each for the 2000 ornament. To order ornaments, members may either use the form that is on THA's website, contact THA and request a product brochure, or simply send THA a note, specifying the year(s) and number(s) of ornaments wanted. All prices included shipping and handling charges.

THA Posts New and Improved Web Pages

In late August, THA posted its new, updated web pages, developed without charge to the Association by a group of website experts who wanted to apply their talents to help THA in its missions of supporting the Department in historic preservation and of providing education relating to the history of the Department of the Treasury.

The THA website address remains: www.treasuryhistoricalassn.org but the appearance of the website is dramatically different than THA's past Internet website pages. Now added to the website are narrative descriptions of each of THA's commemorative products, as well as an order form that can be printed and completed by purchasers.

Other changes to the website include current posting of a number of past THA Newsletters and the first of several new Internet links to other Treasury-related history sites. Future plans are to add other THA publications for on-line access.

THA wishes to thank Eric White and Erin Weinman, who initiated the planning for the new website content, Lisa Balcazar, who was the principal website designer, and Rene Smeraglia, who reviewed content and design, all under the direction of Glenn Hall who recently retired from the United States Mint.

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