

post-Civil War era. The new Masonic Temple became a symbol of renewed civic awareness and nationalism. Forty years later, the Masons moved out, and in 1920, Lansburgh's Furniture Company moved in and stayed for fifty years. In 1994, following twenty years of neglect, the temple was restored for commercial use and the hope expressed at the 1868 dedication was renewed: that the building might "endure for many ages, as a monument to the liberality and benevolence of its founders."

### 13. Early Commercial Buildings

(918-30 F Street, NW, and 637-41 Indiana Avenue, NW)

Washington's oldest extant commercial structures stand at 637-41 Indiana Avenue, NW. Built in the 1820s as part of the expanding business development near Center Market, these structures have survived because of preservation efforts in the 1970s by two owners: Dominick Cardella, who opened the Artefactory Shop of African and Asian Art in 1972; and Fred Litwin, who joined his father in business at Litwin's Furniture in 1951 and stayed for fifty years. The Litwin building boasts one of the oldest elevators, dating to 1854. Unfortunately, since Fred left, it is no longer operating. These two men fought and won the battle to save these treasured buildings for posterity.

With the invention of the elevator, tall buildings became practical in Washington. The Atlantic Building, built in 1888, was the largest commercial structure in the city, rising nine stories. The exterior rough-cut stone façade was deliberately designed to deemphasize the height. Sadly, only the façade of the Atlantic Building remains. The National Union Building, built in 1890, however, was carefully renovated, including the restoration of the open-cage passenger elevator. The five-story oriel windows on the building's west side face onto the alley used by John Wilkes Booth when he escaped from Ford's Theatre after shooting the president.

## Chapter 5

# Dupont Circle and Kalorama Neighborhood

Washington is "the ugliest city in the whole country," complained Senator William Stewart of Nevada when he arrived in 1870. Local businessman Alexander R. Shepherd understood the problem: Washington had never been beautiful, but now it had been ravaged by four years of war. Recognizing the potential for new development, especially in the open fields to the north and west of the White House, Shepherd immediately began to make large-scale improvements. He shared his ideas with several investors, a powerful group of men from the gold-rich Wild West who became known as the Honest Miners Group. With Shepherd, they bought the land around a circle where five city streets intersected. The circle was graded, landscaped, fenced and named Pacific Circle in deference to the investors.

Senator Stewart built the first luxury mansion facing Pacific Circle in 1873. Sitting alone in the fields, it was called Stewart's Castle. The next year, Great Britain built the first foreign-owned legation nearby, and within ten years, the neighborhood had developed into the most exclusive residential area in Washington. In 1882, Congress authorized the erection of a memorial to Rear Admiral Samuel Francis Dupont, in recognition of his Civil War service, and Pacific Circle was renamed Dupont Circle. In 1921, the statue was removed and replaced by a marble fountain, with three allegorical figures holding up the basin, representing the "Arts of Navigation."

