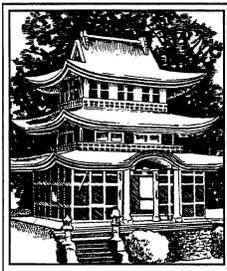


SAVE OUR
SEMINARY



AT FOREST GLEN

SOS ONLINE

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June 2010

Celebrating Over 20 Years of Preservation and Education 1989 – 2010

Look at our masthead above and you'll find something new. SOS has a new mailing address: **Save Our Seminary, 9615 Dewitt Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910**. The rest of our contact information remains the same.

May Day Weekend at National Park Seminary

May Day was always an important event on the National Park Seminary campus. Although the school has been closed for almost seventy years, many of the women who attended it still remember May Day with strong and happy emotions. On May 1st and 2nd, Save Our Seminary hosted a May Day reunion of "Remembrance and Renewal" for National Park alumnae and their families. Seven alumnae and eight family members attended the open house and dinner on May 1st. Highlights of the day were visits to their sorority houses, viewing restored archival films of the school from 1941, looking through pictures and yearbooks, catching up with old friends and, most important, seeing first-hand the bright future that has opened up for their beloved school.

For years after their school closed, many former students stayed active in alumnae groups that kept alive its memory even as they learned about the continuing deterioration of the campus they loved. Seeing the newly renovated ballroom brought wonderful memories of dime dances, boyfriends, and dorm rooms off the balconies. Tours of sorority houses ended in singing of the old sorority songs. The grandchildren of the Seminary's last owner, Roy Tasco Davis proudly escorted the ladies around the campus. At dinner, green table linen and white china reprised the old school colors. One alumna found her elbow-length white gloves and wore them to dinner.

On Sunday morning, three former students shared their first-hand experiences of campus life almost seventy years ago. As part of both the weekend-long alumnae reunion and a year-long lecture series (financed in part by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission), they talked of visits by actress Mary Pickford and singer Frank Sinatra, explained the rituals of dating and social life from an era long past, told stories of students who pushed the limits of the faculty's expectations, and answered questions from the audience about tuition and fees, campus food, dress codes, sports,

favorite teachers, and trips to Washington. Perhaps most important, the alums talked of the values that were instilled by their teachers and passed on, in turn, to their children. They all remembered the mantra they heard often at National Park, "Remember who you are and what you represent."

Their reminiscences ended with the alums expressing their delight with the restoration of the Seminary and the audience responding to them with a very long standing ovation. We at SOS are mindful of the many alumnae who were unable to attend this event and we hope that, in some way, they shared the excitement of those present at their renewed and still magical campus.

The Sculpture Project: A Campaign of Restoration, Renewal and Remembrance of the Outdoor Sculpture of National Park Seminary

On May 1st, Save Our Seminary announced our commitment to restoring the Seminary's outdoor sculptures to their appropriate place on the campus, to renewing them by repairing the effects of damage and neglect, and to remembering with photographs and documentation those that have been lost.

Twenty years ago, our dream of saving the Seminary, restoring and renewing its physical form and communicating history and legacy began. Despite setbacks and delays, that dream is coming true as restoration work continues and new families make their homes in and among the historic buildings. It is now time to focus more attention to the statues and other sculpture that adorned the campus and delighted all who spent a part of their life here. The campus sculpture enriched the experience of students and their families, it comforted recovering soldiers, and it added a unique attraction to the surrounding neighborhood. Over the years, however, some of the sculptures were given away, stolen, lost, or destroyed. Fortunately, others were put in storage to protect them from theft and vandalism. Our challenge now is to restore as much as possible of the outdoor sculptures to their rightful place, to clean, refinish and repair them, to identify what was lost and replace it if possible, or document the loss when necessary.

This commitment will take time, effort, and financial support to complete. We have set a fund raising goal of \$20,000 to begin the work. Since May 1, \$4600 has been raised toward our goal. Our first priorities will be –

- ❖ The seated Joan of Arc recently returned to the front steps of Senior House that needs to be cleaned and the remnants of a military paint job removed,
- ❖ The reclining lion statues, known to the students as Theo and Leo, now in storage but soon to be returned to their pedestals near Fountain Circle, need to be repaired, cleaned and refinished,
- ❖ The Grief of Cyparissus statue at the edge of the glen is in good condition but it should be carefully examined, its provenance determined, and the statue cleaned,



- ❖ The Hiawatha statue next to the Theta Sigma Rho sorority’s Spanish Mission clubhouse that needs to have the mustard-color paint stripped and refinished, the bow repaired, and the pedestal repointed, and
- ❖ Finally, the ten or more statues that are lost and those located away from the campus need to be identified, documented, and if possible, photographs or other facsimiles found, so that they can be memorialized on the Seminary campus.

Throughout the year, SOS will be appealing to our members and supporters, to neighbors and local business, to art-lovers and fellow preservationists, and to the community at large to raise the funds to support this important effort. Donors who contribute at the Restoration Level (\$500), the Renewal Level (\$1000), or the Remembrance Level (\$2500) will be recorded on an honor plaque that will be prominently displayed at the Seminary. You can help by copying the coupon below and donating to the SOS Sculpture Campaign.

Please contribute to *The Sculpture Project: A Campaign of Restoration, Renewal and Remembrance of the Outdoor Sculpture of National Park Seminary*

Restoration Level \$500 ____ Renewal Level \$1000 ____ Remembrance Level \$2500 ____

Other: _____ Check to Receive Information on Planned Giving Opportunities ____

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Telephone _____
 Email _____

Please send your tax-deductible contribution to Save Our Seminary, 9615 Dewitt Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The names of donors will be enrolled on an honor plaque at National Park Seminary

From Girls' School to Army Hospital: Part 2, Army Activities at National Park Seminary, 1942-1945, Colonel Donald Hall (Part 1 appeared in the [February issue of SOS Online](#))

Although the Army had paid \$890,000 for the Seminary property in 1942, that hardly ended their expenditures on the site. Their plan was to house 1,000 patients at the site, more than twice the Seminary's peak enrollment. This required significant renovations, much of which is not visible today. Between the start of construction on 2 September 1942 and its completion on 1 June 1943, the Army spent \$921,683 in renovating the facility, with most of the work by the general contractor, Ross Engineering Company of Washington DC.

The Odeon theater underwent the most change. A second floor was added to convert the building to a barracks for the Army band assigned to the hospital, and for storage of patient luggage. The dining room and kitchen in Main underwent significant renovation, including installation of a cafeteria serving line and expanded capability in the kitchen. This would be an important conversion, as the dining room served 231,342 meals in 1942, 328,390 in 1944, and 268,863 in 1945. The student bookstore was converted to a post exchange, and the upper floor of the science building, immediately adjacent, was converted to a snack bar. Although beer would not be served there until June of 1945, shortly after the end of fighting in Europe, the annual reports for the Annex's laboratory section all proudly proclaim the lab's ability to measure blood alcohol.

The now infamous fire stairwells were added, and the existing sprinkler system in the buildings was expanded and repaired. To support lighting and medical equipment, 1200 new electrical outlets were installed, and the direct current (DC) power line from Silver Spring, originally installed under the direction of Dr. Cassedy, was replaced with alternating current (AC) power. The Seminary had been using city water and sewer services when it was taken over by the Army, and the water and sewer lines were enlarged and replaced, as were the hot water heaters for the site.

Although the sorority houses had small kitchenettes and water closets, these were expanded to full kitchens and baths to allow their use as officers' housing, which in World War II meant "geographical bachelors," as family members rarely accompanied married soldiers as they moved from station to station in support of the war. Other changes to the sorority houses included enclosing the porches on the back of the Alpha bungalow and the Kappa windmill, and the construction of walls to subdivide what were essentially large single rooms to allow the housing of multiple officers. Seven of the sorority houses were used for housing, but the Beta Castle was used as a recreation facility for the Annex's assigned nurses, who were housed in the Villa.

Further modifications were made throughout the war as areas needing improvement were noted. Although the carpeting had been removed from the rooms used as wards in 1942, it was left in the hallways and dining room, only to be removed in 1943 when it became overly worn and replaced by tile. As a school, most of the buildings were empty during the summers and their windows were not screened. It took the Army over a year to construct new screens for the windows, due at least in part to a shortage of screening

material caused by the war. Additionally, roads were graveled or paved, dead or damaged plantings were replaced, and a Seminary landfill located off of what is now Woodstock Court was leveled and covered.

Construction was not limited to renovations of existing buildings. In the area near the railroad tracks now occupied by Walter Reed's warehouse, a company barracks complex, for 183 soldiers, a company supply room, an orderly room, and a separate dining facility were constructed to house a detachment of "Service Troops," a term used during World War II to designate segregated companies of African Americans used for general labor. Five cinder block buildings were constructed in 1945 for use as classrooms and other training facilities for the Occupational Therapy program for convalescing soldiers. They were not used as barracks, as has long been rumored. The cinder block buildings were eventually torn down to allow construction of new townhouses.



Forest Glen Dental Clinic, 3rd Floor of Main, 1943. US Army photo.

For Further Reading:

The Medical Department: Hospitalization and Evacuation, Zone of Interior.

<http://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/wwii/thetechnicalservices/thetechnicalserviceshospitalizationevacuation/default.htm>

Borden's Dream: The Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington DC.

http://www.bordeninstitute.army.mil/other_pub/borden.html

Look for Part 3: The Annex's Organization for War in the next issue of SOS Online.