

Scenes from the Past...



photo—Paul K. Williams.

The house at 1514 R Street was designed by Albertus R. Duryee and built in 1886 for ice cream mogul Jacob Fussell.

One never knows what interesting history old houses have ingrained in their past until one begins to research the past occupants, owners, and evolution of the building. A single house in the 1500 block of R Street, NW may not stand out among its many neighbors architecturally, but recent research revealed that it was built by an individual who changed the way ice cream was manufactured in 1856, making it instantly available and affordable to the masses.

Jacob Fussell applied for a Permit to Build on August 24, 1886 for the construction of a single-family house for himself at 1514 R Street. He listed architect Albertus R. Duryee on the application as responsible for its design, and builder John H. Lewis for its construction, estimated to cost \$5,000. The estimated cost was slightly higher than the typical townhouse being built in Washington at the time, which usually ranged from \$2,500 to \$4,000.

Architect Albertus R. Duryee first appeared as an apprentice architect in the 1880 cen-

sus, when he and his large family resided at 1606 Q Street, NW. Duryee had been born about 1862 in Connecticut, and his *City Directory* entry from 1881, when he was at the young age of just 19, indicated that he was a draftsman; the following year his listing showed him as an architect. Little is known of his other Washington commissions.

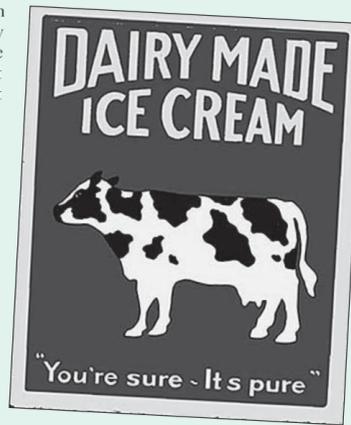
From 1885-1886, Duryee was not listed in the *City Directory*, and apparently ventured to Philadelphia, as several of his designs appeared in *Builder and Wood-worker*, published in 1884. Jacob Fussell hired Duryee to design 1514 R Street in 1886 as one of his two personal residences, the other being in New York City. He was 67 years old at the time, when most individuals of that era were living with their children.

Fussell was the founder and owner of the Fussell Ice Cream Company, said to be the first large-scale, wholesale ice cream business in the country. By 1886, he had businesses in Baltimore, New York, and Washington. He had been born on February 24, 1819 in Hartford

County, Maryland. His first career followed an apprenticeship and journeyman in the tinsmith business. Fussell left that occupation in 1851 to open four milk routes in the emerging city of Baltimore, before opening the first manufacturing plant for ice cream in the country on June 15th of that year, utilizing manually operated churns.

He advertised his ice cream business liberally, and the business grew such that he left the milk delivery business to a partner to manage in 1856, at which time he started an ice cream business in Washington, located at 1427

“father of the wholesale ice cream industry.” From then on, ice cream popularity skyrocketed, and Fussell’s contribution is often cited in articles on the history of



ice cream describing other inventions that made possible the making of ice cream better and faster, such as William Clewell’s mechanical ice cream scoop used in 1878.

Fussell sold his ice cream at less than half the price charged by others in the city (25-cents a quart against 65-five cents a quart). By 1856, he had opened manufacturing operations and parlors in both Washington and

Who invented the ice cream cone? The answer is yet another ice cream mystery. Most sources credit Ernest Hamwi, who sold waffle-shaped cakes at the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis, Missouri. He rolled his cakes into cones when a nearby ice cream stand ran out of dishes.



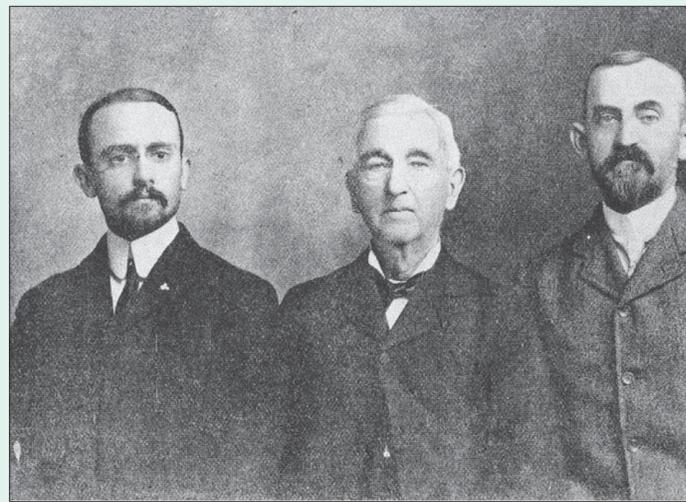
Fussell purchased a house in New York City, establishing an ice cream store on 4th Avenue.

Fussell shipped his ice cream in trains packed with ice from Baltimore to Washington, Boston and New York, earning the title of the

Boston. In Baltimore, at the corner of Hillen and Exeter Streets, the Maryland Historical Society has erected a plaque in Jacob Fussell’s honor, proclaiming Baltimore as the “Birthplace of the ice cream industry.”

During the second half of the 19th century, ice cream became the delight of masses of Americans, thanks to the development of the wholesale industry. Before the advent of the ice cream factory, the frozen treat was made primarily by confectioners and sold in their stores, in retail shops, restaurants, saloons and parlors. By increasing output and by sharply lowering prices, they put ice cream within the economic reach of nearly everyone.

National ice cream production in 1859 was estimated at only 4,000 gallons. Ten years later output had jumped to 24,000



photo—courtesy, Maryland Historical Society.

Jacob Fussell, founder of the Fussell Ice Cream Company, shown here in the center flanked by his son Mordecai, on the right, and a relative, P. Morgan Fussell.

gallons, and by 1899 it topped five million. In 1874, James Horton became full owner of Fussell’s original firm, although Fussell continued many of his other

ice cream businesses.

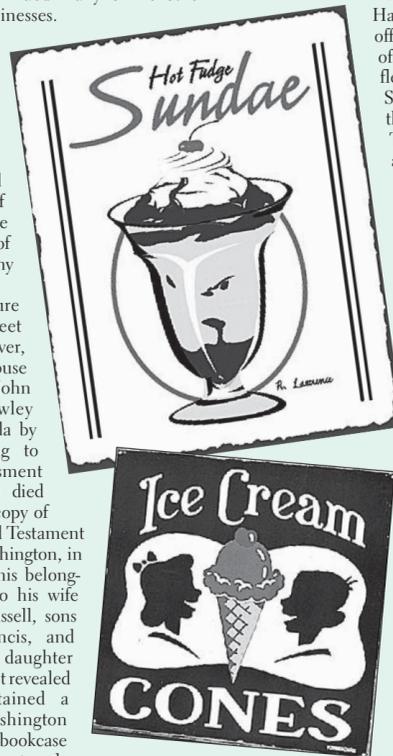
The operation grew rapidly, and by 1895, it employed 250 men and ran 250 wagons. The business continued until it became part of the Pioneer Ice Cream Division of Borden Company in 1928.

Fussell’s tenure at 1514 R Street was short, however, as he sold the house to Rear Admiral John Mitchell Hawley and his wife Ella by 1893, according to the tax assessment records. Fussell died in 1912, and a copy of his Last Will and Testament was filed in Washington, in which most of his belongings were left to his wife Caroline C. Fussell, sons Mordecai, Francis, and William, and daughter Carrie E. Craft. It revealed that he maintained a house in Washington that contained “bookcase and books, trunks, traveling bags, canes, umbrellas and personal effects,” which were left to his son William. He also left him books at the Fussell house in Manhattan, located at 38 East 28th Street, between Madison and Park Avenues, which was adjacent to the MIT Technology Club at 36 E. 28th, established in 1903. Rear Admiral Hawley who, with his wife,

became the new owner of Fussell’s house, was born on July 28, 1846 in Northampton, Massachusetts, a descendant of one of the oldest and most prominent families of the town. He graduated from the Naval Academy in 1868.

From 1887 to 1890, Hawley was executive officer of the Nipsic, one of ships the United States fleet sent to Apia in the Samoan Islands, during the uprisings of 1889. The American, British and German fleets in the bay were overwhelmed by a fearful typhoon which swept the islands in March, 1889, and the Nipsic was one of only two vessels that escaped total destruction, but both were driven ashore and seriously damaged. During the next two months, the Nipsic was repaired enough to allow her to depart for Honolulu, Hawaii, where she arrived in early August 1889. He remained at 1514 R until his death in 1925.

—Paul Kelsey Williams
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NEIGHBORHOOD THEATER

By Anthony L. Harvey

Scena Theatre Presenting Three Short Pinter Plays at Warehouse Arts Stage (1021-7th Street, N.W.)

Three short, horrifying morality tales, which use the excoriating language of contemporary human cruelty and of the all too real encounters between agents of the world’s controlling forces and people of both humble, and ordinary pursuits, and those of more intellectual aspirations have just opened in a revival production by Scena Theatre of Harold Pinter’s three recent cries for compassion, *One for the Road*, *Mountain Language*, and *The New World Order*. They are heart-breaking, and are meant to be!

Presented in Warehouse’s Second Stage space, an appropriately claustrophobic setting, with sound and lighting magnifying the vicious horror of the speech of the oppressors bouncing off the pitiable responses of the vulnerable objects of their respective controlling oppressions, it is an evening of the haughty grinding the hapless into an emotional and physical oblivion, with it not mattering whether the victims remain living or becoming spiritually dead.

Parallels from these plays to the present are too painfully at the forefront of our daily news and weekly news magazines and the television feeds from foreign broadcasting services. *One for the Road* could be an emblematic account of the torturing of the disappeared in Pinochet’s Chile; *Mountain Language* an exegesis on the cross-cultural, economic and religious differences between rural peasants and urban armed and homicidal military thugs in the Balkan wars just ended; and with *The New World Order* combining sounds and visual imagery from any number of secret torture prisons throughout the world. Their common thread is the destruction of the innocent – without any apparent remorse or retribution.

Robert McNamara’s crisp and taut production of these three, frightening Harold Pinter language gems is beautifully articulated by an unusually gifted cast. David Bryan Jackson is extraordinary in his key roles in each of these very short plays – as the boss man interrogator in *One for the Road*; as the most aggressively mean of the soldiers, the Sergeant, in *Mountain Language*; and as Lionel, the intrusive and “pure” enforcer in *The New World Order*, determined to do his part – lovingly – in making the world “Clean for Democracy!”

This short but brilliant evening of brutal political theater is not for the faint-hearted. No redeeming fictions intervene between the viewer and the action of these plays and their enveloping verbal context, nor is their any human resolution of this almost sur-



photo—Ray Gniwiew

Michael McDonnell and David Bryan Jackson in *New World Order*.

real amount of verbal and physical violence and emotional and spiritual grief. No transcendent event concludes their enactment; it is sheer human tragedy justified, sadly, by today’s world-wide events. The lighting design of Marianne Meadows serves to illuminate and heighten the viewer’s appreciation of the evening’s whole sordid and almost seamless tale with sounds appropriately amplified by David Crandall and set designs that work perfectly in the second stage’s small space by AJ Guban.

Continuing through July 9 with performances Thu-Sat. at 7:30 pm and Sun. at 3 pm. Tickets, \$25-\$32 (\$5 discount for students & seniors), available on-line at www.scenatheatre.org or call (703) 683-2824. □

Solas Nua’s February Run of *Howie the Rookie Was a Showcase for Talent*

Solas Nua’s third new light on Irish arts during this past February was a bravura production of Mark O’Rowe’s two-man, two-

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District Department of Transportation Current Road and Bridge Construction Projects

Project	Boundary	Expected End Date
Thomas Circle	14th St., Vermont Ave. & M St.	June 2006
New Hampshire Ave. Bridge, NE	Over Railroad	July 2006
Southern Ave. Bridge	Over Suitland Parkway	Aug. 2006
Taylor St. Bridge, NE	Over Railroad	June 2006
Eastern Ave.	Riggs Rd. to New Hampshire Ave. & North Capitol to Carroll St.	Oct. 2006
Reno Road	Military Rd. to Nebraska Ave.	Feb. 2007
Roosevelt Bridge	Over Potomac River	Nov. 2006
South Capitol St.	Between Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave. & Galveston St.	May 2006

d.
District Department of Transportation
Dan Tangherlini, Director
2000 14th St., NW, 6th Floor Washington, DC 20009

For more information, visit www.ddot.dc.gov or call 202-727-1000

Government of the District of Columbia
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor