

# Scenes from the Past...

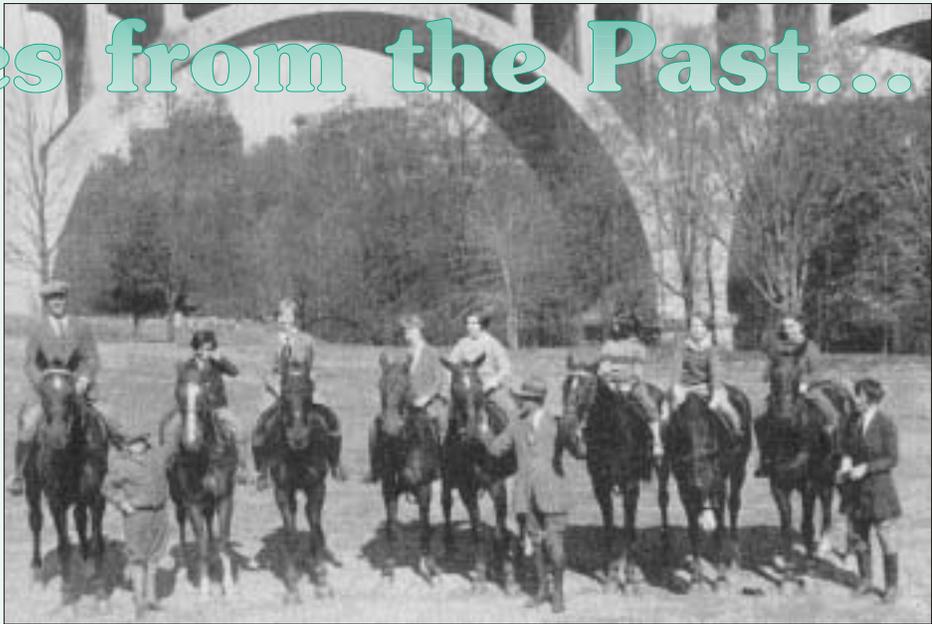
The famed Maret School at 3000 Cathedral Avenue in Woodley Park was founded as a French school for girls in 1911 by Louise Maret, a teacher born in Switzerland and educated in the United States. Success was immediate in Washington, and by 1923, the school was able to raise funds, expand, and commission the Tudor Revival building at 2118 Kalorama Road, seen here. The Maret School expanded again, admitting both boys and girls, and in 1952 moved into the Key mansion and its seven-acre estate, coined "Woodley," that continues to serve as its campus.

Louise Maret established the school with the aim to "procure for American students a complete course of studies including preparation for college, music and art, with the added advantage of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the French language." Speaking French while at school was required as soon as the pupil mastered the elements of the language. When it was located on Kalorama Road, the High School, for girls, included boarding and day departments, with a complete academic course and college preparation. The Lower School was a day school open to both boys and girls, with a complete course of studies and French beginning in the first grade.

The school building at 2118 Kalorama Road was built in 1923 with 25 "sunny and airy" rooms in close proximity to Rock Creek Park for recreation purposes. Offered by the school were tennis, basketball, skating, riding, playground games, football, baseball, folk dancing for girls, and swimming—which was held at the Shoreham Hotel swimming pool. According to a 1930 school program, the building itself featured "specially designed windows for scientific ventilation" in addition to a gymnasium, library, assembly hall, dormitory rooms, and roof top garden and playground.

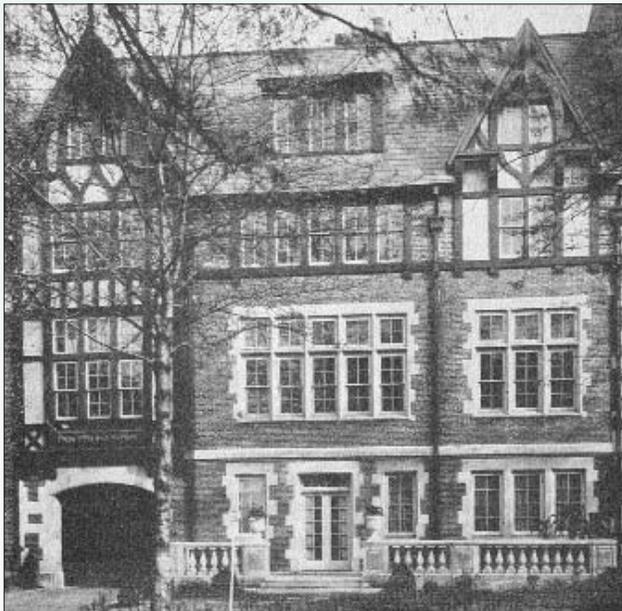
The school provided automobile transportation for day students as early as 1930. School plays were given by students twice a year in the assembly hall, and the school published a magazine, *Hand in Hand*, (*La Main dans la Main*). However, "no social clubs or secret societies" were permitted at the school! Tuition and fees in 1944 ranged according to class, from \$200 a year for first grade, to \$400 per year as a junior or senior. Hot lunches were served at \$50 per

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Maret School students in Rock Creek Park practicing for a spring 1942 horse show.

photo—Washingtoniana Division, MLK, Jr. Library.



photo—Washingtoniana Division, MLK, Jr. Library.

**Maret School**  
INCORPORATED  
 2118 KALORAMA ROAD  
 WASHINGTON, D. C.

**APPLICATION FOR ENTRANCE**

I hereby apply for the admission of the following pupil for the school year 19...-10..., according to the terms stated in the Maret School Catalogue.

Full name of pupil .....

Date of birth .....

Place of birth .....

Grade in last school .....

Name of last school .....

We want the ..... grade in the Maret School as a (Boarder/Day) student, at the yearly rate of .....

Social reference .....

Business reference .....

Father's or guardian's name .....

Mother's name .....

Home address .....

Telephone number .....

Business address .....

Telephone number .....

Date .....

Signature

A deposit is required with each application, \$25.00 for a day pupil and \$50.00 for a boarding pupil.

The simple entrance application, shown above, issued by the school in the 1940s, asked for both a social and business reference in addition to a then hefty application fee of \$50 for a resident pupil.

The Maret School's 1923-built building as it appeared in 1944, at left.



photo—Washingtoniana Division, MLK, Jr. Library.

Students pictured here in 1944. In addition to tennis and other sports, students utilized the Shoreham Hotel's pool for their swimming lessons.



photo—Washingtoniana Division, MLK, Jr. Library.

This 1930 photo of the school building's rear shows that students were able to enjoy fresh air and playground equipment, with a rooftop slide that might be considered precarious by parents of today.

## RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED

By Alexandra Greeley\*

**CHEN'S GOURMET**  
Little China

**TWO 4 ONE  
MARTINI  
DESTINATION**

**MONDAY - THURSDAY  
5PM - 8PM**

**HAPPY  
HOUR**



**AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT WAY TO CHILL**

## SCENES

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semester, as was milk and crackers at recess, for \$7.50 per semester. Additional fees were charged for use of the laboratory, piano, athletics, art, dramatics, and graduation exercises.

The school greatly expanded and changed by 1952, when it moved into the "Woodley" estate on Cathedral Avenue, which it had purchased some years earlier, and became a coeducational, college preparatory school. Philip Barton Key, the uncle of Francis Scott Key, had bought the 250 wooded-acre estate in 1797. In 1803, he built Woodley, the Federal-style house on the hill that would later become home to a number of statesmen, including U.S. presidents, secretaries of war, and General George Patton. Its last resident owner was Henry Stimson, Secretary of War during the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, who helped direct the American war effort from the study, which is now the school's library computer room. For 150, the woods, parks, and vistas of Woodley provided a quiet retreat for politicians and presidents.

The main house is still in use today, housing the school's administrative offices, classrooms, and the library, while their old building at 2118 Kalorama Road today houses the Embassy of The Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria. It has



photo—Washingtoniana Division, MLK, Jr. Library.  
This image, taken in 1944, shows the two Maret School French poodles, Cyano and Caniche, "known and loved by all the pupils."

been completely restored and enhanced following a disastrous fire that gutted the building in 2001. (See, "Huge Algerian Embassy Fire Unnerves Kalorama Neighbors; Questions Raised, Unanswered," InTowner, February 2001, page 1.)

—Paul Kelsey Williams  
*Historic Preservation Specialist*  
Kelsey & Associates, Washington, DC



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