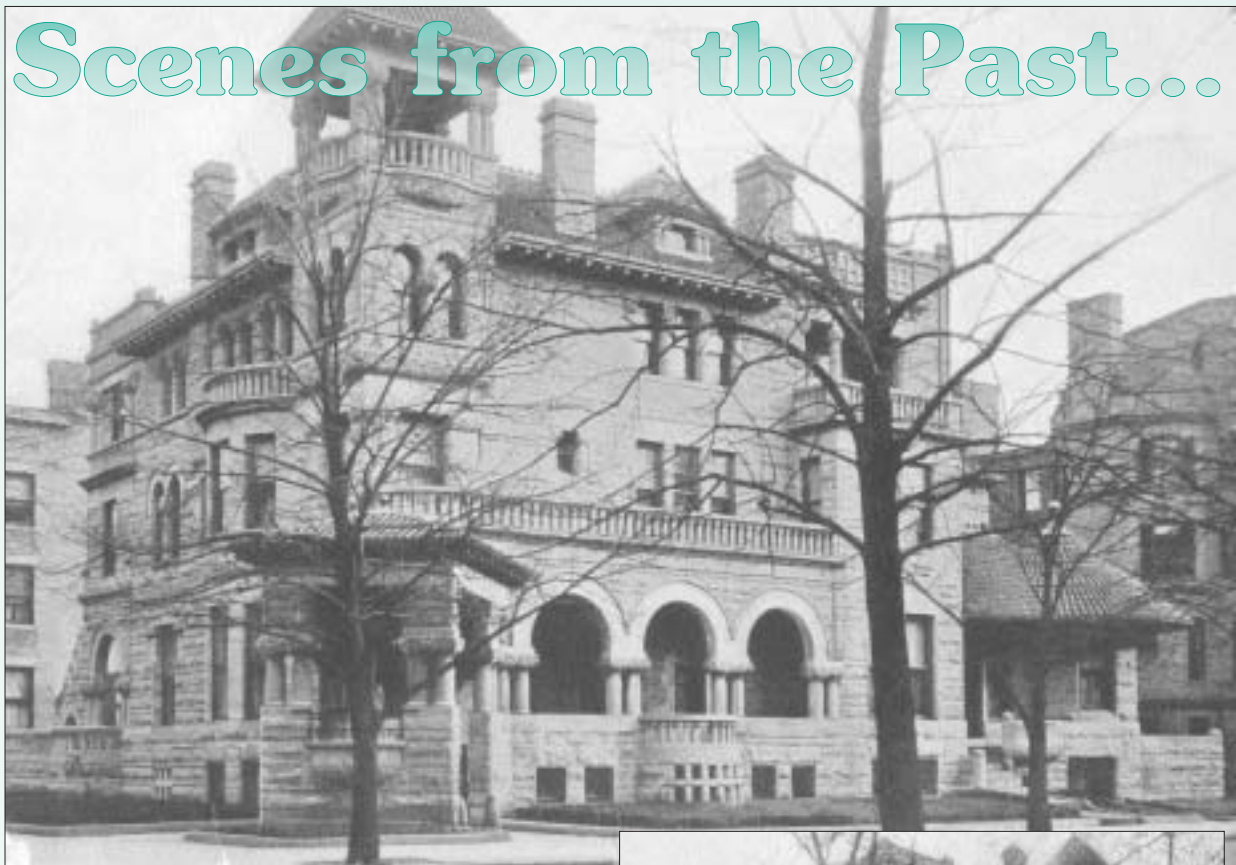


Scenes from the Past...



Prolific architect and builder Thomas Franklin Schneider built himself this impressive mansion in 1890 at the southeast corner of 18th and Q Streets, above. This side view, at right, of the mansion along Q Street is rarely seen, and shows the large rear yard of the home.

The large and impressive stone house seen here once stood proudly on the southeast corner of 18th and Q Streets. Many readers may recognize it as the Schneider mansion, home to prolific architect and developer Thomas Franklin Schneider and his family. He built the house in 1891, only eight years after he began a private practice commonly designing and building entire blocks of lavish townhouses at once, such as the 1700 block of Q Street adjacent the house.

What many readers may not know, however, is that Schneider and his family did not remain in the house for long. They apparently decided that the house was too large, and possibly too expensive to staff and maintain following an economic depression in 1893, and moved not long after its completion into a luxurious apartment in the Cairo Apartment Building in the 1600 block of Q Street, another Schneider landmark that would remain in the family until the 1960s.

The mansion was immediately rented to the Chinese legation for a short period, then to Senator John Fairfield Dryden of New Jersey, and in 1914 to the Colonial School for Girls. The school had moved into the Schneider mansion from 1715 & 1725-29 Connecticut Avenue, where Miss Charlotte Crittenden Everett served as principal.

The school was many things; both day students and boarding options mixed with college preparatory classes and finishing school seminars and training. According to its 1915-1916 bulletin, the "true aim of education is to teach the individual to see clearly, to think independently, to imagine vividly, and to will nobly." It noted that its location was "high and healthful" being just a block from Dupont Circle "in one of the best residential parts of the city."

The shopping district and a plethora of street car lines were also highlighted in the school's brochure. Meals were served in the dining room, where the mid-day luncheon only consisted of "milk, bouillon, and crackers." The girls listened to evening lectures on such subjects as Moorish art and architecture, the Panama Canal tolls controversy, and *The Effect of War on Womanhood* by Jane Addams. Thomas Schneider remained so close to the operation of the school that he invited all the students to attend the wedding of one of his daughters.



photos—The Annual Bulletin of the Colonial School for Girls, 1915-1916, Kelsey & Associates private collection.



The grand dining room, above, was large enough to accommodate two large tables during its years as a girls school, as seen here in 1914. Students "ham it up," at left, for the camera while enjoying outside athletic activities in the rear yard in the spring of 1914.

Much of the mansion retained the furnishings of the Schneiders, and rented along with the house. The girls rooms were likely to each have an open fireplace "for cheerfulness, and for healthfulness." Classrooms, study halls, dining room, music studio, laboratory, offices, and several social gathering rooms completed the lavish environment.

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RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED

By Alexandra Greeley*

LOCAL 16
No Union Label

Two meals and some days later, I am still not convinced that Local 16 merits more than a visit or two—despite the casual twenty-something crowd, its gilded décor and upstairs swank, the rooftop dining, and its energetic waitstaff. Problem is, another part of the fine-dining equation is missing: kitchen consistency, because one meal was great, but another was dismal, and for diehard foodies, that's critical.

That said, my friend delighted in the steamed mussels appetizer, a steaming bowlful of mollusks made pungent by its generous portion of garlic, wine, and cubed fennel and best served with plenty of bread for soaking up the broth. Even the grilled squid were commendable, but the French onion soup rankled, lacking the onion punch of the classic version. Too much wine? Not enough salt? That was unclear.

An earlier dinner starred entrées of the grilled steak sandwich and an oyster Po' Boy, both unremarkable, and the latter—more roll than oysters—has obviously been deleted from the menu. Far better entrée choices were the grilled chicken, completely boned and seasoned with coarse-grained mustard forced under the skin. Well-prepared and fortified with tarragon, the chicken was also accompanied by very tender Brussels sprouts—a rare state for typically overly tough sprouts—and delicious mashed potatoes. The result: modern American comfort food, but with a slightly offbeat spin.

Evidently the kitchen has its chicken cooking down pat, for the generous mound of jerk chicken pasta was another thumbs up for the evening. For this winner, the chef tossed penne with mushrooms and a cream sauce laden with spices and grated Parnesan cheese. Indeed, the portion was too much for one person—at least one with

a moderate appetite—and the dish made for great leftovers.

Desserts, all priced at \$5, were not gastronomic triumphs, though the chef dreamed up an interesting presentation of panna cotta, an Italian custard-like pudding that must be this kitchen's trademark. Spooned into a charming coffee cup detailed with drawings of a string ensemble, the panna cotta tasted much like firmed-up sour cream. Other choices fall more into the comfort food category—milk and cookies for one, a warm chocolate brownie with vanilla gelato for another, and cheesecake for a third.

Perhaps the point of Local 16 is not so much the food as the scene. Definitely a hip and trendy neighborhood hangout, Local 16 has a sophisticated attitude underscored by its dark, sexy look. Heavy woods, gilt mirrors, decorative overhead light fixtures, and church pew benches all contrive to give this place the air of “right now” action. That's great for socializing, but don't head there expecting over-the-top food. And, if you have the option, ask for seating at the window-side table. That puts you just enough out of the way so that you can hear friends talk and also avoid the crush of waitstaff and patrons tripping over each other. □

Local 16, 1602 U St., NW; tel., 265-2828 (after 5 pm). Dinner nightly, starting at 5:30 p.m. Entrées: \$11 - \$22. Major credit cards.

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SCENES

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The house also featured a large rear lawn along Q Street that was utilized for outdoor exercises. Tuition ranged from \$800 to \$1,000 per year, with incidental charges for such items as riding lessons, piano, breaking furniture, “corrective work in gymnastics,” and sewing.



The ballroom was large enough for school theater productions, such as this adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, which took place on March 13, 1914.

When not attending classes in Latin, Greek, French and German, home training was taught as an “essential factor of an education which aids a girl to develop into a wise, true woman.” The school's bulletin also stated, “The principal and her associates aim to help the girls realize the dignity and beauty of presiding in their homes with ease and graciousness.” History, art, rhetoric, biology, zoology, chemistry, economics, botany and “the Art of Church Organ” were also available.

Art students regularly visited the local galleries, including Veerhoff's, then located farther downtown before its eventual relocation to Dupont Circle where it remained until the mid-1990s; however, all students were closely chaperoned any time they were off campus: “Under no circumstances are our pupils subjected to the embarrassment of appearing in public places unchaperoned” reads the school bulletin for 1915. Students were charged 50 cents an hour when visiting doctors or dentists.

Principal Everett was joined by co-principal Jessie Truman in 1920, and the school continued to operate in the Schneider mansion until 1930, when the house was converted into a boardinghouse. Twenty-eight years later, the house was razed for a parking lot. In 1961, the nine story Dupont East apartment building was built on its site, and remains there today.

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

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