

March 19, 1979

TO: THE MONTELLONIANS

FROM: DOUGLAS HALLER, NO.802

Historian and writer, gay activist, sometime antique dealer and interior designer, and resident at the Montello.

Greetings Fellow Montellonians,

After reading the architectural Inspection Report and being amazed to discover that there were cracks in my plaster, air infiltrating my windows, that my radiator valve didn't work, that my floors were worn, and that my bathroom faucet needed a washer, I felt that it was time for me to make a statement. Having been a resident at the Montello for 3 years- and largely enjoying it, I have been distressed to see some recent developments take place. The circumstances attendant upon the projected conversion of the Montello, and the retirement of Miss Ward, have resulted in an entirely new atmosphere in the building.

Yes, it is true Mr. Ellenbogen, we at the Montello have come to accept less than perfection in our apartments, but we came home to our unpredictable antique elevator which brought us to what was once an island of privacy and a friendly, live-and-let-live atmosphere and we didn't mind that we lived in a state of "genteel shabbiness, with the emphasis on shabby." Had I not been called far worse things in far more original English on many prior occasions I might have been offended by that remark, sir.

There was once a time when the neighbors that I encountered in the halls smiled and said Hello and held the door of our charming lift if one stood there with large bags of groceries. Those were the days before our walls became papered with Admonitions, Warnings

of Impending Crises and Notices of Extraordinary Meetings presided over by Executive Boards, Presidents, and Secretary-Treasurers, rather than the traditional "dirty vinyl" that the architect makes mention of. Suddenly persons who had not bothered to call on me before were pounding on my door demanding to know why I hadn't paid dues to an Association I had never joined. Instead of holding doors for me they began to stuff more paper into my grocery bags, under my door, and in my face. Now I will return the compliment and add to their stock of informative literature. I do believe that when this Emergency is over we will have enough paper to redecorate the bathrooms and kitchens, and then perhaps we can call the architect in again for a reappraisal.

We at the Montello have witnessed the Rise and Decline of Little Napoleons within our very walls. After Mr. Gerstenfeld had been fashioned into a Horrible Monster the Tenants Association took up its own challenge, and like Saint George offered to slay the Beast. The trouble being that Mr. Gerstenfeld is not a monster. He has been cooperative and willing to discuss matters. Did he not arrange for the architectural survey? In my opinion his original offer has the air of generosity in it. The basic Good News of the Inspection Report is that the Montello is structurally sound. Now that we have further intelligence, the major deficiencies of the building must be corrected: Repair of the balconies, Replacement of the steam piping system and window system, and Repair of wood floors, bathroom tile, deficient plaster, roof and surface brick. If Mr. Gerstenfeld can be persuaded to make these repairs, while

the other cosmetic improvements are left to the individual occupants, his offer can retain its generosity.

I believe that a Tenants Association is a good idea for the Montello, but in order to be effective it must represent the interests of all the tenants and not just those who wish to see the building as a condominium or cooperative and who would use the Association to bicker about the way in which the building should be converted or as an excuse for their political ambitions. As Mr. Gerstenfeld has maintained effective dialogue ~~and~~ accessibility with the tenants I think it foolish to view him as Incarnate Evil. Granted, his profession is that of a businessman- but he has shown that does not preclude generosity, a spirit of compromise, and even a certain sentimentality at times. Why force him to become something he is not? In this regard a Tenants Association in which the Chairperson is recognized as primus inter pares rather than dictator might serve to curb a tendency toward image mongering.

Although I was grateful to have benefit of the architectural survey in terms of the Montello's structural architecture I was not pleased by what I consider to be the architect's failure to relate the many positive attributes of the building, many of which he failed to recognize or discounted unjustly. The Montello is an example of the early Art Deco style of the Modern period in architecture. Noteworthy is the building's emphasis on clean lines, geometric shape, and commodious, well-lit rooms having simple interior architectural detailing- all of which are hallmarks of the taste of that period. The apartments have been provided with

spacious walk-in closets, some of which are large enough to be converted into specialty rooms such as studies. Many have balconies with commanding views. The building is an early example of 'fire-proof' construction in which fires originating in a unit can usually be contained therein. The Montello's 'second stairway' is in reality an indoor fire escape. The facade of the building betrays the fact that its architect Mr. Frank Russell White<sup>3</sup> was still using vestiges of the vocabulary of architectural decoration from the Victorian period when he chose to use stonework floral garlands as external embellishments. Original Victorian decoration of this type is still in abundance throughout the neighborhood surrounding the Montello.

We discover that the Montello was born on August 24, 1921 under rather auspicious circumstances. It seems that as a Washington burgeoning with the diplomats, military personnel, and international visitors of the World War I era thrust its affluent further and further north along Massachusetts and Connecticut Avenues, many luxury and near luxury residential towers began to bloom on 'the heights' above the Florida Avenue line which had served as the city's northern boundary until that time.<sup>4</sup>

So had the celebrated Altamont risen, the Montello's next-door neighbor, which was a real estate extravaganza much like the Watergate project of today. The Altamont featured apartment residences for the privileged few. Apartments were designed so as to be expandable or contractible according to an occupant's wishes, and there were apartments consisting of entire floors. Each floor had an oval shaped dining room inspired by the Oval Room in the<sup>5</sup>

White House, and contained many working fireplaces. The lobby was and is remarkable. The building featured a men's athletic club as well. Further, there was a common dining room on the uppermost floor along the front of the building which looked down the hill and out over the city below. The Altamont's roof gazebos are visible from my living room windows. The building was constructed c.1916 and was owned by a General or Colonel Trousdale. A book was published about it entitled The Altamont,<sup>6</sup> and should be available at the Library of Congress. The name<sup>7</sup> Altamont is of Latin inspiration meaning a lofty mountain.

As the Roaring Twenties dawned and the 'Nation of Millionaires' basked in its unparalleled affluence and entry into the world of international power, which had been the result of America's participation in World War I and its postwar position as an isolationist island of prosperity in a sea of war torn nations, a second building rose at the top of the 19th Street hill. Although lacking the luxurious comforts and unequalled prestige of the Altamont, the Montello shared the Altamont's glory by basking in its status symbol sun. The Altamont, via its rays such as the Montello, sunned those who if not as wealthy were perhaps even more status conscious than the Altamontonians themselves. Owned by Mr. Earnest G. Walker and built by Mr. W.H. Swerdy, the Montello's<sup>8</sup> 8 towering stories boasted an estimated cost of \$200,000.00. After the Montello, rose the Shawmut, the Knowlton, and the Weburn completing the architectural picture of the block as we know it today-- bounded by Wyoming Avenue and Columbia Road on the south, Kalorama

Road on the north, 19th and 20th Streets on the east and west.

Unknown to many Montellonians perhaps is the fact that 4<sup>9</sup> of the 5 buildings on the block, the exception being the original Altamont, appear to have been built at intervals by Mr. Walker. It is my belief that after the Altamont (1916) the Montello was first (1921), followed by the Shawmut (1926), the Knowlton, and the Woburn.<sup>10</sup> Even a quick survey of the buildings will attest their architectural similarity. Each is a simple geometric construction, built of similar brick, has either open or enclosed balconies, and displays neoclassical architectural embellishments which probably derive from a Victorian tradition in the neighborhood, the inspiration of the Altamont, and neoclassical elements of the Art Deco style. As a status symbol each building displays the same rectangular brass doorplate bearing its name and street number.<sup>11</sup> Probably this was done in emulation of the Altamont. Note the 'Greek wave' motif and classical urns on the facade of the Shawmut, the classical door pediments of the Shawmut, Knowlton, and Woburn, and the floral and fruit garlands of the Montello. Some of these motifs were borrowed from the Altamont, such as the fruit motif on the Montello which echos the cornucopia and fruit motif above the Altamont's entranceway. The cornucopia as symbols of abundance were appropriate for the Altamont. Again, the Knowlton utilizes ceramic tiles of terra cotta color and diamond shape as external ornamentation. These same diamonds but in cream color exist as a band around the top of the Altamont and recall the original diamond shape of the District of Columbia.

All 4 Walker buildings share another architectural feature, common to their immediate interiors: the lobby. Each had a lobby consisting of a wide lower platform covered with a mosaic tile floor showing a Greek meander border in a contrasting color. <sup>12</sup> Base moldings were of marble. The lower platform led via 3 marble steps to a higher, tile covered platform which serviced the elevators, stairs, and mailboxes. The exciting news of this discovery is that, in all probability, the original mosaic tile floors and marble stairs lay waiting to be excavated below the linoleum and carpet of the Montello lobby. They are fully visible to the eye of any curious person who takes the time to peer in the front doors of the Shawmut, Knowlton, or Woburn. Does tile lay under our carpeted halls as well? The architect neglected to mention that the wall which now secludes the elevator area from the main lobby is a later one, added in the 1960's along with the general refurbishing of the Montello. <sup>13</sup> A simple rapping with the fingers on its surface will attest to this. It would be my recommendation that the wall be removed and the original space of the entranceway restored, along with the floors and stairs if still extant. The lobby ceiling has ornate moldings which are still attractive despite their years of paint.

Miss Effie Ward, longstanding Manager of the Montello, recalled the original appearance of the lobby. <sup>14</sup> There was once a furnished reception area and an elevator operator on duty during busy hours of the day. Perhaps there was a switchboard as well. It is remarkable that another example of the hall table which still serves for

mail in the Montello's inner lobby- of obvious 1920's vintage, can be seen today in the lobby of the Shawmut! In all probability they are the original furnishings of these buildings. It is to be regretted that the Montello's was recently 'redecorated' by being painted by our last maintenance man. Miss Ward has had interesting predecessors as Manager. Mr. Walker had as his concierge Madame Rimsky-Korsakov, a cousin of the celebrated Russian composer.<sup>15</sup>

The passenger elevator, which Mr. Ellenbogen considers to be in poor condition,<sup>16</sup> has been successfully transporting Montellonians from floor to floor most everyday since 1921. As a functioning relic of the building's original equipment, which adds charm and interest to the building, the elevator should be retained. Its parts can be replaced using the same sources that Mr. Gerstenfeld has used formerly, until such time as replacement of the elevator is absolutely essential. It is in need of authentic cosmetic restoration.

The service elevator is responsible for one of the darker chapters in the Montello's history and gave rise to one of the building's ghosts. It is said that in the early days the wife of the janitor was either decapitated or crushed to death by the service elevator as she entered the shaft to determine the whereabouts of her husband.<sup>18</sup>

Based upon the information we have compiled thus far I would like to offer a hypothetical reconstruction of the buildings on the Montello block. After the Altamont was constructed Mr. Walker obtained the balance of the land on the block. He planned to complete



the architecture of the block with apartment buildings which would capitalize on the Altamont's prestige by their proximity to that building and by being architecturally related to it. The Walker buildings were intended to house status seeking persons of an economic class below that of the Altamontonians. His first building was the Montello. Its 8 stories outdid the Altamont's 7 by affording superior views within the apartments themselves, the Altamontonians having to use their roof gazebos in order to achieve the perspective of the Montello's eighth floor. The Montello further improved on the Altamont by offering outdoor balconies. Mr. Walker was not above borrowing the Altamont's address for the Montello either. Both addresses are 1901. As the buildings occupy the same corner of the block this deliberate confusion served to elevate the Montellonians. I might add that this confusion persists today. Oftentimes my guests looking for 1901 Columbia have arrived at 1901 Wyoming expecting to be ushered to my apartment by the Altamont's doorman. I suspect that directing the Montello's guests around the corner to the hovel of their hosts has been the bane of the Altamont's doorman since the Montello was built. Unfortunately, Mr. Walker apparently overinvested in the Montello. As a result, he may have had to reduce expenditures on the remaining buildings. The Shawmut rose next. Its position as the corner counterpart of the Altamont suited it as the recipient of the most elaborate of the Walker facades. Noteworthy are the elaborate porch lamps, the overhanging roof, the abundance of sculptural reliefs and false balconies on the facade, and its 8 story view- all inspired by the

Altamont. The Shawmut's enviable location enabled it to commandeer as a front yard the triangular shaped park which had been created at the intersection of 19th Street, Kalorama Road, and Columbia Road. The Altamont enjoyed a similarly fortuitous location, having as its front yard the triangular park formed at the intersection of Wyoming Avenue, Columbia Road, and 20th Street. The Knowlton and Woburn were built as back buildings. Architecturally related to the Altamont and other Walker buildings they were far simpler in style and built only 5 stories high so as not to block the view from the rear windows of the Montello and Shawmut (and Altamont). In order to capitalize fully on the remaining space of the Montello block while preserving the unobstructed view of his earlier buildings, Mr. Walker fit the Woburn and Knowlton into one another by building the back wing of the Woburn deep into the alley. This created an architectural canyon in the center of the block through which only the alley was able to flow. The resultant lack of parking space which the inhabitants of the block enjoy today can be attributed to Mr. Walker's zest for profit, and it is only fitting that the alley be named the Walker Way in his honor.

Perhaps you have noticed that the Montello stretches skyward attempting to surpass the Altamont, and towers above the Knowlton and Woburn to its rear. Whereas the Altamont and Shawmut were constructed wide enough to render their height graceful, the Montello's height as compared to the width of the building and the overall plainness of its facade result in an aspect which is not altogether pleasing. Have you pondered why it was built so? The answer is the

Secret of the Montello, the answer is the view. The Montello is an observation tower. By its central position between the Altamont and Shawmut, perched atop a hill which is conveniently located between 2 other celebrated hills in the city- Capitol Hill and the hill which supports the National Cathedral, the Montello's apartments on the uppermost floors afford unequalled views of the city's most important symbols: The Capitol as seat of the government and the Cathedral as seat of the church.

The National Cathedral was the brainchild of Woodrow Wilson, and he is interred there as its patron saint. The Cathedral can be seen as a symbol of Wilson's religious idealism, which had failed so miserably in his peace proposals after World War I. Is it coincidence that the Cathedral occupies a loftier hill than the seat of Wilson's uncooperative Congress?

The Cathedral was over 10 years in building when the Montello was erected. Today it has risen to the loftiest height of a building in the city. For almost 60 years the Montello has watched the Cathedral rise. During those same years Montellonians of the upper stories have been afforded the opportunity of looking down on the Capitol, the Washington Monument, and the old city below, and the Cathedral, Upper Connecticut Avenue, and the new city above-- from their pinnacle of haughty materialism in between. Should one doubt that this could have been the intention of the builder, one need only be informed that in former days the apartments on the 7th and 8th floors were assessed higher rents as a result of their view.<sup>19</sup>

It is comforting to know that after 58 years of waiting the Montello

will live to see the completion of its Cathedral within this century.

From my balcony on the rear corner of the eighth floor I too have watched the Cathedral for the past 3 years. The panorama is <sup>20</sup> incredible. Like the series of Impressionist studies done of the Cathedral of Rouen by Monet the ever changing aspect of the National Cathedral, perched upon its acropolis above Rock Creek Park against a background of changing seasons, light, color, clouds, and weather conditions, is truly inspiring. Other vistas, including sunset seen through the towers of 2101 Connecticut Avenue- a culmination of the Art Deco architectural influences on apartment architecture in the neighborhood (c.1930) with its Islamic and <sup>21</sup> Medieval motifs, transport the beholder to another world. Often views such as these have reminded me of the work of Maxfield Parrish, the American illustrator whose work is contemporary with the building of the Montello. I have recollected the line from a popular song of 1928: 'You'll see your castles in Spain through your window-pane back in your own back yard'. For the privileged Americans who inhabited neighborhoods such as the Montello's in the 1920's these lyrics were no metaphor. I strongly suggest a hint to Apt. 805 that the view from that 2 bedroom apartment, which looks out on both the Capitol and Cathedral, is the best in the building.

What of the names of the Walker buildings, and the Montello in particular? I began with the partially correct information that the buildings were named for events in American history, possibly <sup>22</sup> with reference to Indian history. In this wise I learned that

Shawmut was the Indian name of Boston. Woburn is a city in Massachusetts north of Boston.<sup>23</sup> Thomas Knowlton was an English botanist, but perhaps the Knowlton building commemorates a historical location in Massachusetts as well.<sup>24</sup> How does Montello fit into this scheme? It doesn't exactly.

Our first clue to the origin of the name is an 11 block street in the northeast section of Washington: Montello Avenue. Several business establishments with the name Montello are located either on or off of the Avenue in its immediate vicinity. Further, there is a Montello Ingram Baptist Church on Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.<sup>25</sup> These names are remembrances of a time when the community surrounding the present Montello Avenue was known popularly as Montello. Indeed, we discover that in the days before this area north of Florida Avenue, N.E. was organized and incorporated into the city it was known as the Montello subdivision on city index records.<sup>26</sup> It has even been suggested that Montello may have been the sobriquet of a country residence which may have been situated in the vicinity of the present Montello Avenue in the early days of the city.<sup>27</sup> An analysis of the name based on its Latin origin reveals that it means a mountain district or estate.<sup>28</sup> This would have been both a logical and romantic name for a country estate located upon the hills above Washington.

We are now in a position to recreate the historical circumstances surrounding the naming of the Montello. The name had been the Latin sobriquet of a country estate located in the hills above Washington. The community surrounding the estate adopted the name

as its own. When the community was incorporated into the City of Washington in the World War I era the name was preserved in an avenue. On the opposite side of town above Florida Avenue, N.W. another community was incorporated into the City of Washington at about the same time. An apartment building in this area at 1901 Columbia Road was named Montello. The question is why? The answer is complex. It is possible that what was common knowledge to Washingtonians at that time, the Latin origin of the name Montello as a mountain estate, suggested itself to Mr. Walker as appropriate for his apartment with social pretensions located on the hill next to the Altamont. If the Altamont was a 'lofty mountain' then the Montello would be a 'mountain estate'. Perhaps a feeling of civic pride for the Montello community or family connections with it or a mere historical interest in it caused him to name the building Montello. <sup>29</sup> Until further research is done we cannot know what Mr. Walker's intention was. It is my guess that the suitability of the name Montello vis-a-vis the name Altamont is the key. The man who stole the Altamont's view, height, and address was certainly capable of borrowing its name too. Is it any wonder then that we discover that the name Montello was not only a borrowing from the name Altamont but also plays upon it. <sup>30</sup> Montello is the phonetic reverse of Altamont: Altamont-Montello! In the final analysis we may find that the choice of the name Montello reflected all of the reasons mentioned above. At any rate, it is revelatory of Mr. Walker's conception of the block that he named his first building by punning on the Altamont, no doubt with

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his tongue in cheek.

The Montello with its advantageous location in the city, its enviable position alongside the Altamont, its unsurpassed views, and its fascinating occupants was and is no ordinary building. What Mr. Ellenbogen failed to see while looking for the cracks in the plaster of our shabby apartments were the signs of active, intelligent, and interesting people. The large collections of books and unusual furnishings that I have seen in many of the Montello's apartments betray its greatest treasure and Best Kept Secret: its residents. My guess is that Montellonians have always been a different lot, and the present collection is no exception to the rule. I hope that one of you will take up the investigation of your past, starting with the sources I have mentioned, and fill in the gaps in our knowledge about the Montello. As I will be moving out of the city in a few days I cannot do it. Believe it or not, I had to cut this investigation short for lack of time. The remarks I had intended to make concerning the complete 'modernization' of the Montello's kitchens and bathrooms in the 1960's must go unheard as a result. I will leave it to Ms. Kmet our Manager to inform you about the original appearance of those rooms.

Fellow Montellonians, I leave you. Yours is a distinguished tradition. I urge you to guard your individuality from all would-be saviors, especially if they reside on the top floors. Psychologists tell us that such people tend to be megalomaniacs, and we have seen that those in the Montello have become accustomed to looking down on the church or state or both. Practice a spirit of

neighborliness amongst yourselves and cooperativeness with Mr. Gerstenfeld. The Montello has known better years and perhaps worse. Yours is the discovery. If the building has been somewhat neglected it has also been private and a mountain refuge as its name implies. Think of the fate that other buildings have suffered. Had you wanted to live in Mr. Ellenbogen's Architectural Digest I suspect that you would not have come to the Montello in the first place.

Affectionately,

Douglas



1

Peter E. Ellenbogen, "Report of OKE, Inc.," in Inspection Report 1901 Columbia Road, N.W., (Washington, Montello Tenants Association, 1979), p. 1.

2

Ibid., p. 4.

3

Permit To Build 1901 Columbia Rd., N.W. - #1929 (Washington, August 24, 1921). Information from this permit, now contained in microfilm collections held at the National Archives, was obtained for the author by Ms. Dorothy Provine (523-3283/3238) who is employed there. She is an eager researcher and has offered her assistance to anyone who would care to investigate the history of the Montello in permits, tax assessments, etc. from 1921 to the 1950's. She suggests an investigation of Lusk (a record of property transfers) held in the Martin Luther King Library and beginning in the 1930's. Polk may be consulted for transfers before 1930 I have learned. Both Ms. Provine and officials of the District of Columbia government whom I interviewed agreed that the city's copy of the Montello's blueprints was probably destroyed during a massive discard operation in the 1950's. Those records that were spared were sent to the National Archives where I located the Montello's birth certificate. A blueprint drawing of the Montello's entrance area is appended to the permit.

4

Ibid.

5

Florida Avenue was formerly known as Boundary Street. A predecessor of these apartment towers dating from the turn of the century is still extant on Connecticut Avenue: The Highlands. See: The Junior League of Washington, The City of Washington, ed. by Thomas Froncek (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), p. 295 for a photographic glimpse of the Highlands and surrounding area in 1900. The Mendota was erected at the turn of the century in what was to become the Montello's back yard.

6

Grateful appreciation is expressed to Mr. Charles Patterson (462-0741), interviewed by author (Washington, March, 1979) for information on the Altamont. Mr. Patterson is a former resident manager of the Shawmut and interests himself in the area's history. He has offered his assistance to anyone wishing to research the Montello's history and offers his personal contacts with older residents on the Montello block. Mr. Patterson believes that before any of the present architecture on the block was extant the area was the site of a Victorian, perhaps Romanesque style, house complete with orchard and stables etc. He believes this house was employed as a diplomatic mission by the Ukrainians at the time of the Russian Revolution, and that research into the mission has been ongoing and may now be in publication.

7

Langenscheidt Shorter Latin Dictionary, ed. by S.A. Handford and Mary Herberg (McGraw-Hill, 1969), see: altus p. 36 and mons p. 203.

8

Permit.

9

Mrs. M. Roberts and Mrs. E. Randolph, interviewed by author (Washington, March, 1979). These sisters are probably best known to Washingtonians as owners of the Little Caledonia boutique in Georgetown. Mr. Walker was a friend of their family, and they related what they remembered about the Montello block. Mrs. Randolph recalled that Mr. Walker had found it necessary to borrow money from her mother in order to retain the Montello. It seems that he had gotten in over his head. She thought that his father had either been in the city government or in the newspaper business.

10

Until further research is done into the records held at the National Archives the chronological reconstruction of the buildings on the Montello block can only be approximated. Patterson, Interview, believes the Shawmut was built in 1926.

11

Soon after my friend John Johan and I moved into the Montello in 1976 we obtained Miss Ward's permission to polish the doorplate and secure the letters and numbers which had become loose. Although this took a few hours we were happy to do it. Thereafter the maintenance man has kept it polished and in repair.

12

This same Greek meander motif is still extant on the ceiling lighting fixtures in the stairwell of the Montello.

13

Miss Effie Ward, interviewed by author (Washington, 1976-79). ~~Having been Manager of the Montello for many years~~ Miss Ward should be encouraged to commit to writing or at least to notes her most memorable experiences of the building. These might include personages who lived at the Montello, the changing demographic, economic, and social conditions of the surrounding neighborhood, and physical changes in the building itself. It is obvious that the inner wall and door of the lobby along with the intercom system were added for security reasons.

14

Ibid.

15

Roberts and Randolph, Interview. Was Madame Rimsky-Korsakov one of the persons displaced by the ferment of the Russian Revolution?

16

Ellenbogen, p. 4.

17

Shortly after moving into the Montello my apartment was shaken one evening by what I interpreted to be an earthquake. It turned out to be an elevator failure. At that time I was informed by an aged elevator inspector in the District of Columbia government that the elevator had been inspected first in 1921. He had the inspection records dating before 1950 at his disposal. A recent conversation I held with a Mr. Ackerman in the Elevator Inspection Office revealed that May 31, 1950 is the earliest date now on file for an elevator inspection held at the Montello. In 1963 the

17 contd.

voltage level of the elevator was changed, and in 1966 there was a 'renovation' of the cab. Mr. Ackerman believed that the present A B See equipment was the original installed in the building. The elevator was last inspected on November 2, 1978.

18

Ward, Interview.

19

Ward, Interview. Residents of the upper floors of the Altamont and Shawmut share the view of the Montellonians, of course. I might add that the residents of these buildings share more than a view of the city, and I have been forced to close my window blinds on more than one occasion as a result.

Patterson, Interview, commented that Washington has had an architectural tradition of residential buildings for persons of genteel background yet limited funds. We have seen that the Walker buildings were built for persons wishing to share the prestige of the Altamont while not having the Altamontians' resources. Could it be that the Montello and Shawmut were built for mixed economic bracket residents? The intention being to house the wealthier on the upper floors while the lower floors absorbed their poor relations? If this was the case the Walker buildings may be seen as a housing project for the city's dispossessed wealthy, born to the purple but not the purse!

20

Margaret Kmet, interviewed by author (Washington, March, 1979). Ms. Kmet is the current Manager of the Montello and has been a resident of the building since 1963. She remembered that prior to the 1960's the Montello had a roof garden equipped with lawn furniture for the enjoyment of the residents. A 360 degree view of the city can be seen from the roof of the Montello.

21

See James M. Goode, The Outdoor Sculpture of Washington, D.C. (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974), p. 108 for a discussion of the Art Deco architectural influences on 2101 Connecticut Avenue. See also the sections on Massachusetts and Connecticut Avenues for the rich sculptural heritage in the Montello's back yard. Methinks I see the Altamont in the pointed tile roofs, roof gazebos, surface brick, and general structure of 2101 Connecticut Avenue.

22

Roberts and Randolph, Interview.

23

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, ed. by Laurence Urdang (New York, Random House, 1968), p. 1513.

24

Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language, ed. by Jean L. McKechnie (New York, Publisher's Guild, 1967), p. 1007.

Patterson, Interview, suggests that a Mrs. Miller, who has owned the Knowlton for a long period and may still live there, may know the origin of the name.

25

District of Columbia Telephone Directory (The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company, 1978), p. 377.

26

Ms. Dorothy Provine, interviewed by author (Washington, March, 1979). See note 3.

27

Mr. Perry Fisher (785-2068) of the Columbia Historical Society, interviewed by author (Washington, March, 1979).

28

Langenscheidt Dictionary, p. 203 mons: a mountain, and p. 319 tellus: a land, district, territory, or estate. Tellus was the Roman goddess of the earth.

29

Applying my binoculars to the facade of the Montello I discovered that the diamond shaped tile motif which we noted as an ornamental feature of the Altamont and a borrowed feature of the Knowlton exists in stone below the eighth floor windows of the Montello as well. If these diamonds were intended to recall the original shape of the District of Columbia were they not appropriate symbols for civic minded neighborhoods such as the Montello's which had been recently incorporated into the City of Washington? Perhaps Mr. Walker intended the Montello as a tribute to the Montello community which, like the neighborhood of the Montello, had just become a part of the city. It is interesting that the Kalorama area in which the Montello stands was itself named after an early country house in the area. The name Kalorama derives from Greek words meaning a pleasant view. Perhaps Mr. Walker had real estate interests in the Montello community and intended the building as a promotion of those interests.

30

Mrs. Helen Coutts, interviewed by author (Washington, March, 1979). Mrs. Coutts resides at the Hilltop Apartments located on 19th Street just below the Montello. Recently she moved from Detroit to Washington to become my associate in Hermes Antiques. I asked her to inquire of her Detroit friends who had lived in Washington what, if anything, they recalled about the Montello. Surprisingly she discovered that 2 of them had actually lived in the building in its early days. Mrs. Phylis Scofield was a little girl of 10 when she returned from China with her ~~newsman~~ father and French mother in 1922. They resided at Washington's Burlington Hotel while the finishing touches were added to the Montello. They selected their apartment from the blueprints. It was her recollection that the residents of the building understood the name Montello to be a syllabic reversal of Altamont. Needless to say I was delighted to have my hypothesis about the name confirmed by one of the original Montellonians. ~~Attorney and Mrs. John Blair of Michigan lived~~ with their child at the Montello in the early 1930's as well.

31

If I were called upon to make an analysis of Mr. Walker's character on the basis of his works I would use these adjectives: entrepreneurial, well-educated, humorous, clever, interested in art and history, benign, upper-class, visionary, a profit seeker, a gambler, and every bit a man of his era.