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Archives of American Art

Jacques Seligmann & Co. records, General Correspondence: Mellon, Andrew W., 1924-1928

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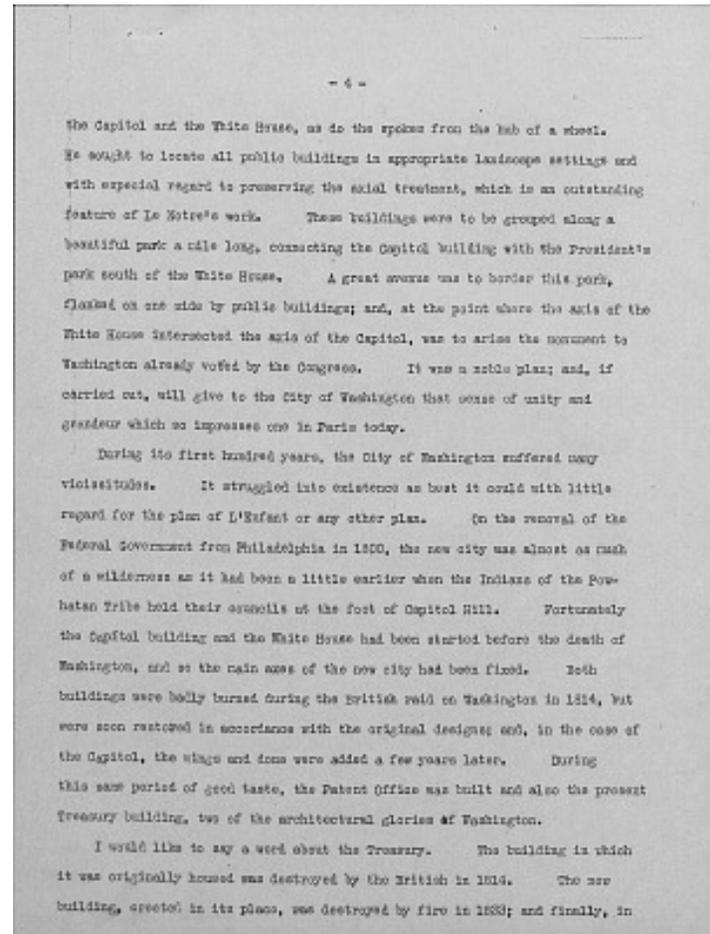
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the Capitol and the White House, as do the spokes from the hub of a wheel. He sought to locate all public buildings in appropriate landscape settings and with especial regard to preserving the axial treatment, which is an outstanding feature of Le Notre's work. These buildings were to be grouped along a beautiful park a mile long, connecting the Capitol building with the President's park south of the White House. A great avenue was to border this park, flanked on one side by public buildings; and, at the point where the axis of the White House intersected the axis of the Capitol, was to arise the monument to Washington already voted by the Congress. It was a noble plan; and, if carried out, will give to the City of Washington that sense of unity and grandeur which so impresses one in Paris today.

During its first hundred years, the City of Washington suffered many vicissitudes. It struggled into existence as best it could with little regard for the plan of L'Enfant or any other plan. On the removal of the Federal Government from Philadelphia in 1800, the new city was almost as much of a wilderness as it had been a little earlier when the Indians of the Powhatan Tribe held their councils at the foot of the Capitol Hill. Fortunately the Capitol building and the White House had been started before the death of Washington, and so the main axes of the new city had been fixed. Both buildings were badly burned during the British raid of Washington in 1814, but were soon restored in accordance with the original designs; and, in the case of the Capitol, the wings and dome were added a few years later. During this same period of good taste, the Patent Office was built and also the present Treasury building, two of the architectural glories of Washington.

I would like to say a word about the Treasury. The building in which it was originally housed was destroyed by the British in 1814. The new building, erected in its place, was destroyed by fire in 1833; and finally, in



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