

Water Under the Bridge:

Pages from Washington's Past

He'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again...

The first federal employee to be fired in Washington was city designer Pierre L'Enfant, in 1792. A French artist and soldier, L'Enfant had served with George Washington during the Revolution. He was a visionary, but could also be hardheaded and abrasively aristocratic, and he infuriated landowners when they realised that he had used over half of the available land (which they intended to sell profitably as city lots) for grand boulevards. He also refused to publicly display his plan, without which no one was willing to purchase building lots, leaving both the landowners and government short of money.

The final straw came when a nephew of one of the city commissioners began building a new manor house that disrupted one of L'Enfant's views. While the owner was away, L'Enfant had the structure torn down. George Washington had no choice but to fire him, although the government continued to use his plan. He was offered

Background: Pierre L'Enfant's grand plan for Washington was both ambitious and visionary, and much of his design was eventually built

\$2,500 and a prime city lot for his efforts. He refused, but later tried unsuccessfully to sue. He eventually died a poor and broken man.

The Man Who Would Be King

In 1804, Vice President Aaron Burr (one of the founders of Chase Manhattan Bank) challenged his long-term political enemy, Alexander Hamilton, to a duel, and killed him. Burr returned to Washington and coolly resumed his duties as vice president while New York and New Jersey considered pressing charges for murder (eventually all were dropped).

control of the vast new Louisiana Purchase, creating his own country. Eventually one of his co-conspirators, General James Wilkinson, betrayed him to President Thomas Jefferson, who ordered Burr to be arrested for treason. Burr turned himself in to the local authorities, but later escaped and was recaptured. He was acquitted on a technicality and spent most of the rest of his life in Europe.

Hot Time In The New Town

During the War of 1812, British forces under Admiral George Cockburn attacked Washington. President James Madison left the White House

After shooting and killing Alexander Hamilton in a duel, Aaron Burr returned to Washington to resume the duties of vice president



When his term as vice president ended, he headed for the Western frontier, obtained over a million acres of land, and began to gather armed men and supplies. Accounts differ as to his intentions, but was believed he planned to conquer Mexico and take

to supervise the defence of the city, while his wife Dolley remained behind until the last moment. Hastily loading a wagon with valuables, she refused to leave until the now famous Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington had been placed in safekeeping.