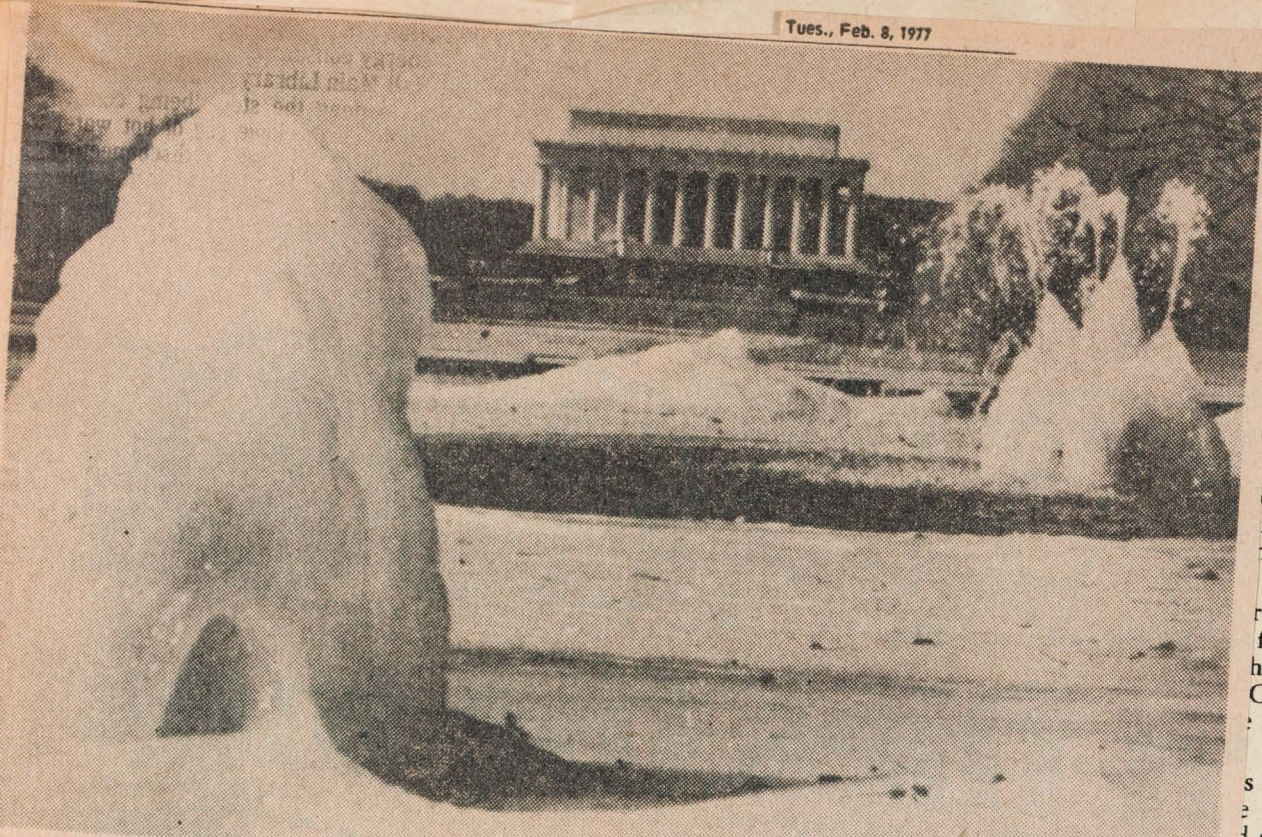


# Washington D.C.★

Tues., Feb. 8, 1977

## You



**FROZEN FOUNTAINS** form grotesque mounds of ice in reflection pool in front of Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.,

Monday following weekend temperatures below freezing.

—AP Wirephoto

22, 1971.

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## You Wouldn't Want to Live There

By Gil Bailey

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Here are the shrines, the monuments, the public buildings and the representatives of the people, freely elected to tax with representation and to continue a republican form of government, founded in part by the man for whom this city is named.

On Feb. 22, George Washington's 239th birthday, the United States senators and representatives will rise to speak in honor of the founding father and the others who proposed, fought and then brought to life a new form of government.

The tourists will be impressed, both by the beauties of this city — for Washington, D.C., is a beautiful public city — and by the words pouring from these men as they speak from the gleaming, white Capitol. But these words will hold a different meaning for the residents of Washington, D.C., in the winter's light of Feb. 22, 1971.

Just three blocks from that Capitol, a gaggle of streets, including Pennsylvania Avenue, come together into something which isn't quite a circle, or a triangle, but which has been turned into a park, a spot of greenery, trees and a few benches in the midst of the concrete buildings which make up this city.

Besides its usual purpose, the park serves after dark as a wall, a wall as real as the Berlin Wall, dividing the Capitol and its surrounding rich white ghetto from the real Washington, D.C.

This is a charmed circle, well policed, not only by the Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, D.C., but also by an extra thousand policemen, specially hired by the Congress of the United States to protect the congressmen and their employes from the D.C. crime wave which the congressmen so often decry.

On the other side of the wall almost 300 people are murdered annually, robbery and dope is common, joblessness and despair are rampant.

Washington, D.C., is many things besides our nation's capital. It is the home for 700,000-plus human beings, 70 per cent of whom are black. It is a southern city, controlled by southern dominated committees of the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

The mayor of Washington, D.C.,

Walter Washington, a black man, must go on bended knee to these congressional committees to beg for the money to run his city.

The people here are taxed without representation. Their laws are decreed by men over whom they have no say.

There are no citizens of Washington, D.C., for the people here have no vote. There is no self-government here, for Congress has ruled these people are not fit for self-government.

Anger is a conditioned reflex of the people here, a congressionally conditioned reflex.

A subway is needed. The city, the surrounding states and the federal government agreed to finance a subway, but key members of the congressional committees also wanted a freeway and bridge, which would slice through homes, tearing up Washington, D.C., the black portion of the city.

"No freeway, no bridge, then no subway," the committees said.

"Blackmail," replied the appointed city council, but eventually it bowed.

Some of the citizens at that council meeting were angry. They threw chairs.

This is a city dependent on the federal government for jobs. The government printing plants provide thousands of jobs, many of them going to the black community, but the Congress wants to move that plant to the suburbs, and there is no transportation to that suburb, no way for the black worker to get to that all-white suburb.

Washington, D.C., has a varied "citizenry." Most of the white residents are called to the capital by the government. They are paid well and live well. Some live in the magic circle around the Capitol buildings, others move into such protected fortresses as the Watergate on the Potomac, where extra police can and do protect such high officials as Atty. Gen. John Mitchell from disturbance.

Most, if they stay long or have children, move to the white suburbs. These government workers can escape, they have little reason to care about the city.

Others are not so lucky. They live and die in Washington, D.C., in crumbling old buildings, which burn well.

They sit on the stoop in the hot of a humid summer day trying to cool themselves, stand on the street corner next to the pool hall and the tavern. The slums are within four blocks of the White House, and those slums burned in 1968 to within four blocks of the White House. The ruins are still there.

Crime here is a problem on every street corner. Seventy per cent of the population is black, so most of the criminals are black, but so are the victims. For a woman on welfare, the theft of \$5 may mean her children go hungry, theft of a coat means she will be cold. For the \$20,000-a-year federal man, the loss of an apartment full of furniture is but an inconvenience, not a tragedy.

The Congress, the federal office buildings, the White House and the foreign embassies are protected. A 1,000-man Capitol police force keeps the Congress safe and the Congress approved extra police for the White House and the embassies. And troops are brought here on occasion to protect the government.

But in the city itself, there is a saying:

"If you take an evening walk, walk fast. You're running for your life."

The budget for extra policemen for those who live here must be approved by Congress, not the people who pay the taxes.

Part of the problem lies in the district committees of the Congress where self-government legislation has been stifled. Most northern members of Congress have no desire to serve on such a committee — there are no votes back home to be gained there.

Seniority, southern seniority, dominates the committees.

Each year there is an effort to make Washington, D.C., self-governing. Last year the League of Women Voters made such self government a project, but the women failed, as have congressmen who have tried.

Washington, D.C., is still a beautiful city with the Capitol, the White House, the museums and the stately white governmental building and monuments. It is a beautiful and inspiring place to visit and to worship at our national shrines.

Yet, it is the only city in the nation to be denied its basic freedom. □