

The History of Coram Residents...
U.S. Ambassador John G. Erhardt
&
NIC Chairman Thomas Fingar

U.S. Ambassador **John G. Erhardt** and National Intelligence Council Chairman **Thomas Fingar**

— *both former residents of Coram*

One of the jobs that our new president will have to complete is the appointment of ambassadors. Coram was the home of Ambassador John G. Erhardt.

John G. Erhardt was born in Brooklyn in 1890. He attended Hamilton College and then studied law at Fordham College.

During World War I, he served as a staff sergeant. While stationed at Camp Upton, he befriended fellow soldier Homer Davis. Visiting the Davis home in Coram, he met Homer's sister Eleanor and they eventually married. He and Eleanor had two sons, Richard and D. Davis Erhardt.

Following the WWI, Mr. Erhardt joined the Foreign Service and was sent to Athens serving as a consul representing the United States in several important trade deals. From 1933-1936, he did a tour as consul general in Germany. During World War II, he served as Consul General attached to Ambassador Joseph Kennedy in London.

After World War II, he served as political advisor to General Mark Clark, commander of United States occupation forces in Austria.

In 1960, he was appointed Ambassador to South Africa by President John F. Kennedy. In 1961, he died in South Africa away while serving his country. There is a memorial marker at the Union Cemetery.

When the family returned to Coram, they made frequent trips to Fingar's General store. Young Thomas Fingar, who served as a clerk in his father's store, was fascinated with the tales of Foreign Service. These tales had a lasting effect on Thomas who would have a long and storied effect in the United States State Department.



Assistant Secretary of State G. Howard Shaw, talking with State Department heads John C. Ross and J. G. Erhardt. January 01, 1943

Thomas graduated from Longwood high school becoming the first Longwood student to score a perfect 1600 on his college boards. After graduating from Cornell University, he entered the United States Army and served as an Intelligence officer. Following his military service, he entered Stanford University where he received his MA and PHD in Political Science.

Fingar then entered Foreign Service where he held a number of positions. He is fluent in both German and Chinese, and these skills were put to good use.



Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell chats with National Intelligence Council Chairman Thomas Fingar.

From 1986 -2005, Dr. Fingar served as:

- Chief of the China Division (1986–1989)
- Director of the Office of Analysis for East Asia and the Pacific (1989–1994)
- Deputy assistant secretary for analysis (1994–2000)
- Principal deputy assistant secretary (2001–2003)
- Assistant secretary of the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (2004–2005),
- Assistant Secretary to Colin Powell and head of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research for the United States Department of State.
- From 2004-2005, as chairman of the National Intelligence Council, he briefed President George Bush each morning on intelligence affairs.

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Leo Lion Dr. Fingar was a member of the first graduating class of Longwood. At the 50th commencement he was the featured speaker. At the beginning of his talk, he turned and faced the graduates, very unusual, but very impressive.
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Lawrence Boddy Tom went back to Stanford after George W. left office where he still works. As I remember my Uncle Don (Tom's father) saying, Tom was the first non political person to raise to the level he did in the State Department.
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