The World Bank Group Archives Exhibit Series contains exhibits originally published on the Archives’ external website beginning in 2002. When the Archives’ website was transferred to a new platform in 2015, it was decided that older exhibits would be converted to pdf format and made available as a series on the World Bank’s external database, Documents & Reports.

These exhibits, authored by World Bank archivists, highlight key events, personalities, and publications in the history of the World Bank. They also bring attention to some of the more fascinating archival records contained in the Archives’ holdings.

To view current exhibits, visit the Exhibits page on the Archives’ website.
In July 1944, representatives from 44 nations met at the Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire for the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference. The United States government selected the Mount Washington Hotel as the site of the now famous Bretton Woods Conference for various reasons: its remoteness offered seclusion from outside interference; the White Mountains scenery was spectacular; and war-time security was more easily managed. The Mount Washington Hotel was closed for business in 1930 and completely refurbished before the conference.

“…a prodigious amount of work was done during the three weeks of the Conference. Many persons were assigned to both Bank and Fund committees, which met around the clock, and in addition to committee meetings, there were plenary sessions, where microphones were whisked from speaker to speaker by Boy Scouts…” recalls Shirley Boskey (International Bank Notes, July 1956)
More than a year later, representatives of 28 nations gathered at the State Department in Washington, D.C. to sign the Bretton Woods Monetary Agreements preliminary agreed upon at the Bretton Woods Conference.

Fred Vinson, the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, said at the time of the formal signing of the Bretton Woods Agreements: “History is being written today as we execute these documents and breathe the breath of life into the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. We can be thankful that the history we are now writing is not another chapter in
the almost endless chronicle of war and strife. Ours is a mission of peace – not just lip service to the ideals of peace – but action, concrete action, designed to establish the economic foundations of peace on the bed rock of genuine international cooperation.

"If these two great international institutions are to achieve the mission which the world has so hopefully entrusted to their care, it will require the wholehearted and concerted cooperation of each of the member countries and their people" (Treasury Department, Press Release, December 27, 1945)