

CITY OF
Magnificent
Intentions

A History of Washington, District of Columbia

KEITH MELDER

SECOND EDITION

1790 The Residence Act— Congress authorizes a permanent seat of government on the Potomac River.

1791 President Washington announces his choice for the site of the District of Columbia at the confluence of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers and appoints the first District government of three commissioners.

1800



A drawing of the Potomac River made during the late 1790's, just after the site was selected for the new federal capital.



Major Andrew Ellicott began his survey of the District of Columbia in 1791.



Major Pierre L'Enfant developed original plans for the City of Washington.



The President's House as it looked in 1807.

1800 The Federal government moves to the District of Columbia.

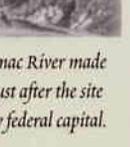
1802 The City of Washington is granted a city charter by Congress, providing for an elected council and a mayor appointed by the President.

1812

1812 An elected board of aldermen is added which selects the mayor along with the city council.



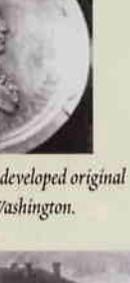
Eastern School (left) and Western School (right) were the first public schools in Washington.



Much of Washington was burned by the British on August 24, 1814, during the War of 1812.



Less than half of the Capital building had been completed when the federal government moved to Washington.



Alethia Browning Tanner, born a slave, purchased her own freedom in 1810. In 1826 she bought her older sister and five children. In all, Alethia Tanner helped to free at least eighteen people.



Robert Brent was the first mayor of Washington City. He held office from 1802 to 1812.

1812

1812 An elected board of aldermen is added which selects the mayor along with the city council.

1820



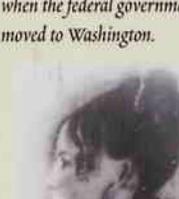
Brown's Indian Hotel, Washington's most famous hostelry in the 1830s and 1840s.



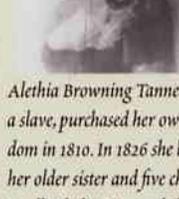
Many ordinary citizens attended Andrew Jackson's inaugural party in 1829.



Washington seen from the south bank of the Anacostia River in 1833.



Slaves in chains in front of the U.S. capitol.



The City Hotel, later known as Willard's Hotel.



Columbian College build in 1821, later became George Washington University.

1820

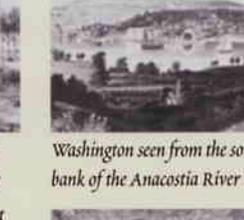
The mayor is elected directly by the people.

1846

The Virginia portion of the District is retroceded, or given back to Virginia.



During the Civil War soldiers camped in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol.



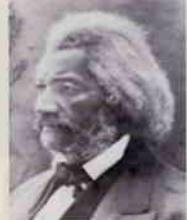
Women picketing in front of the White House in favor of women suffrage.



Ford's Theatre as it looked the day after President Lincoln was assassinated while watching a play.



A corner in Washington at the turn of the century.



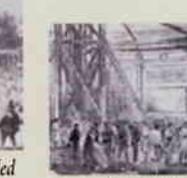
Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) has been described as "the most important black man of his day."



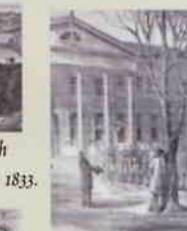
Brown's Indian Hotel, Washington's most famous hostelry in the 1830s and 1840s.

1874

1874 Congress ends the territorial government. Three commissioners are appointed by the president to govern the District.



The Organic Act makes the commissioner system permanent. Two civilian commissioners are appointed; the third is a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For the first time provision is made for a regular federal payment in lieu of taxes.



In April 1861, one month after Abraham Lincoln became president, the first District of Columbia volunteers were sworn in to serve the city.



A corner in Washington at the turn of the century.

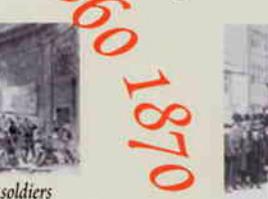
1871 The District is given territorial status, with a governor and council appointed by the president, a popularly elected house of delegates, and a non-voting delegate to Congress. The previous governmental functions of Georgetown, Washington City, and Washington County are absorbed by the new territory.

\$200 REWARD!

Who ever been in... (Small text advertisement for a reward.)

Slaves continually sought freedom by flight. Owners advertised for their return.

1874



An electric streetcar on 7th Street and New York Avenue, NW, in 1888.

1878



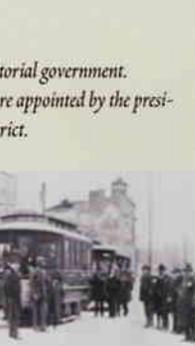
Women picketing in front of the White House in favor of women suffrage.



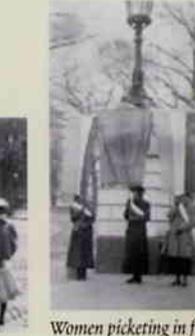
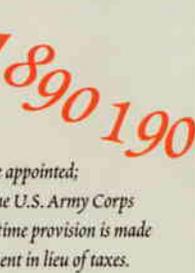
Frances Benjamin Johnston took this photograph of a Washington classroom in May, 1899. It was displayed at the Paris Exhibition of 1900.



Cows in the Anacostia flats, 1890.

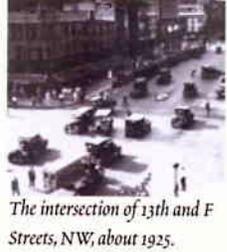


An electric streetcar on 7th Street and New York Avenue, NW, in 1888.



Women picketing in front of the White House in favor of women suffrage.

1790 1800 1810 1820 1830 1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900



The intersection of 13th and F Streets, NW, about 1925.

Mrs. Leola N. King, Washington's first traffic policewoman, controlled the intersection of 7th and K Streets, NW, in 1918.



Pennsylvania Avenue in 1908 from the Treasury Building.



In 1926, more than 50,000 autos were registered in the District of Columbia.



World War I soldiers.



In 1919, nearly one year after World War I ended, Washington welcomed home General Pershing's American troops with a huge parade.



An unemployed man with his son in the 1930's.



Looking for work in the 1930's.



During President Franklin Roosevelt's administration the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) put many people to work.



The young singer Ella Fitzgerald won an amateur night contest at the Howard Theatre in 1933 and went on to become a world-famous entertainer.



A World War II family under the cherry trees at the Tidal Basin.



Fearing invasion during World War II, Washington maintained a state of readiness. These soldiers are manning anti-aircraft guns.



An aerial view of the Pentagon taken in 1945, shortly after its construction.



The Anacostia Bridge at 11th Street, SE, looking east in 1954.



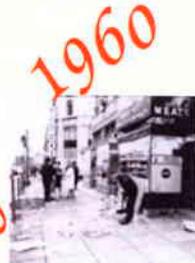
Black and white students leave school together following the U.S. Supreme Court's end to school segregation in 1954.

■ **1961**
District residents are allowed to vote in the presidential elections as a result of the 23rd Amendment.



Opening day of the Beltway in 1964.

■ **1967**
The three-commissioner system is changed to a single presidentially appointed commissioner and an appointed nine-member council. President Lyndon B. Johnson appoints Walter Washington as mayor-commissioner.



Store owners cleaned up after the riots of 1968.

■ **1968**
Congress authorizes an elected school board for the District.



In the 1960s and 1970s, the Mall drew demonstrators for civil rights and against the Vietnam War.

■ **1970**
The District gains an elected non-voting delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives.

■ **1973**
The Home Rule bill passes Congress, providing for an elected mayor and 13-member city council.

■ **1974**
D.C. citizens approve the home rule charter, and the first elections are held in November.



Voters went to polls in 1974, in the first municipal election in over 100 years.

■ **1975**
Citizens elect the first members of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions created by the Home Rule Bill of 1973.

■ **1978**
Congress passes a proposed Constitutional Amendment authorizing voting representation in Congress for the District. The Amendment must be ratified by three quarters of the states by 1985.



Inside the Grand Foyer of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

■ **1980**
District voters approve the Statehood Initiative providing for a constitutional convention on statehood.

■ **1982**
The D.C. Statehood Constitutional Convention drafts a constitution for the new state, naming it New Columbia and proposing a populist bill of rights that guarantees the right of a job for all citizens.

■ **1985**
The D.C. Voting Rights Amendment, giving the District voting representation in Congress and approved in 1978, dies after 13 states reject it.



The National Museum of African Art got its start in a building that was once home to Frederick Douglass.

■ **1990**
D.C. voters elect a "shadow" congressional delegation to lobby Congress for statehood.

■ **1993**
D.C. Delegate to Congress Eleanor Holmes Norton, supported by other leaders, introduces a measure in the U.S. House of Representatives to grant statehood to the District of Columbia. The measure is defeated.



Eleanor Holmes Norton.



U.S. President Bill Clinton helped area residents in a cleanup of Lady Bird Park in 1993.



Marion Barry was reelected mayor in 1994.

■ **1995**
Congress approves the D.C. Financial Responsibility and management Assistant Authority Act, authorizing the appointment of a five-member control board with power over the District's budgetary and administrative policies. Subject to congressional approval, the control board may override the mayor and city council in managing District spending.

1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990

CELEBRATING WASHINGTON'S HISTORY

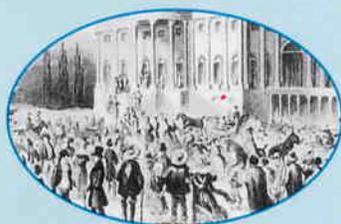
For many Americans, January 20, 2009 began a new era in the history of Washington, D.C.—the Nation's Capital. That date marked the inauguration of a new president of the United States—Barack Obama—the first chief executive from African American origins, elected and welcomed by a decisive majority of voters. More than a million visitors came to the capital in celebration of Barack Obama's presidency. With his election, after more than two centuries of history, the Nation's Capital seemed to become a different place, emblematic of and belonging to Americans of every racial and ethnic background.

From modest beginnings in the 1790s as a compact group of towns and settlements clustered along the Potomac River, near the boundary between Northern Free states and Southern slavery, Washington had grown into a small city. Always perplexed by issues of slavery and freedom, the capital survived a nearly fatal Civil War and the end of slavery in the 1860s. The capital's leaders continued arguing over issues of racial discrimination into the twentieth century. During America's great Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s Washington occupied the center of national attention as the Federal government struggled to achieve the dream of equal justice for all Americans. At last, early in the twenty-first century, many people dared to believe that Barack Obama's election symbolized the National Capital's full commitment to freedom.

By 2009, the capital over which Barack Obama presided had become, according to any measure, a great city. Its several million residents occupied a metropolitan landscape more than fifty miles across. Controlling a vast array of intellectual, cultural, financial, and governmental resources, Washington had grown into a world center of learning and communications. The city's institutions flourished in every neighborhood and suburb from the grandest to the most modest—from great private and public universities to simple primary schools, from great national churches to tiny storefront chapels, from celebrated concert halls and theaters to simple neighborhood gathering places, from vast shopping centers and malls to isolated corner grocery and convenience stores, from expansive national parks and monuments to compact local children's playgrounds, from great national museums to simple historic houses.

Each of these institutions carries its own unique story—worthy of study and celebration. The vast fabric of Washington history, made up of thousands of individual and personal stories and millions of details, deserves our attention and our celebration. Let us go forward with the celebrating.

—*Keith Melder*



Preface and Acknowledgments ix

Introduction xi

UNIT I BIRTH OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL 3

ONE Early Settlers of the Potomac Region 5

1. Native Americans 5
2. The English Invasion 8
3. Out of Africa 12
4. The Colonial Legacy 16

TWO Origins of the National Capital 21

1. A New Nation 22
2. The Federal District 24
3. A Planned City 32
4. A City Under Construction 36

THREE Growing Pains, 1800–1820 43

1. Forming the City Government 44
2. The First Decade of City Life 49
3. Growth of the Free Black Population 57
4. The War of 1812 and Its Impact 62

FOUR The Look and Life of the City, 1820–1860 68

1. A Visit to the Capital 68
2. The People of Washington 73
3. Patterns of Change 83

FIVE Economic and Political Problems, 1820–1860 92

1. Failed Visions 92
2. The City Government 101
3. The Federal Presence 107

SIX Slavery and Freedom in the National Capital 115

1. The Dispute over Slavery 115
2. Fear and Violence 118
3. Ending Washington's Slave Trade 120
4. The Black Community in 1860 123
5. The Eve of War 133

UNIT II FROM CIVIL WAR TOWN TO MODERN CITY 135

SEVEN The Capital at War 137

1. The Coming of the War 138
2. Washington in Wartime 149
3. War Changes the City 157

EIGHT Emancipation and Its Aftermath 164

1. Freedom's Dawning 165
2. The War Ends 173
3. Reconstruction 179

NINE Toward a New Era 188

1. The Postwar City Government 188
2. Civic Change 193
3. Life in the Postwar City 196

TEN Building a Modern City 205

1. The Territorial Government 205
2. The Board of Public Works 207
3. The End of Territorial Government 209

UNIT III WASHINGTON IN THE INDUSTRIAL NATION 229

ELEVEN City Growth in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries 230

1. Growth and Transportation 231
2. Neighborhoods and Suburbs 235
3. The "City Beautiful" Movement 249

TWELVE Washington's People and Their Work 256

1. A Diverse Population 256
2. White-Collar Occupations 261
3. Manual Workers 268

THIRTEEN An Age of Enterprise 273

1. The Telephone and the Capital 274
2. Newspapers 278
3. Trade and Finance 285

FOURTEEN Governing the City 292

1. Government by Commission 293
2. Serving the People 298
3. People in a Voteless City 309



FIFTEEN Free but Not Equal: Black Washington 316

1. Institutions of Freedom 316
2. The Growth of Inequality 326

SIXTEEN Crises of War and Peace 332

1. Wartime Washington 333
2. Postwar Challenges 344

UNIT IV THE METROPOLITAN CITY, 1920–1946 365**SEVENTEEN The Expanding Metropolis 366**

1. The Revival of City Planning 366
2. Housing 374

EIGHTEEN Vehicles of Change 388

1. Automobiles and the Changing City 388
2. Automobiles as Problems 394

NINETEEN The Changing Urban Economy 401

1. Employment 402
2. The Great Depression 405
3. The New Deal 412

TWENTY The Black Community: Toward a New Identity 427

1. Social and Cultural Life 428
2. Activism and Change 437

TWENTY-ONE Recreation and Amusement 454

1. Sports and Games 455
2. Showtime in the Capital 462

TWENTY-TWO The Wartime Capital 472

1. The Spirit of the Place 473
2. Total War 478
3. Facing the Postwar World 489

UNIT V WORLD CAPITAL 499**TWENTY-THREE The Postwar Boom and Transformation 500**

1. The Exploding City 501
2. Changes in City Neighborhoods 506





TWENTY-FOUR Planning and Mobility 515

1. City and Regional Planning 516
2. The Idea of Urban Renewal 520
3. Mobility and Growth 529

TWENTY-FIVE The Struggle for Civil Rights 542

1. Campaigning Against Discrimination 543
2. The Battle to Integrate Public Education 548
3. The Civil Rights Movement 555
4. The National Civil Rights Movement Comes to Washington 562

TWENTY-SIX A New Era in City Government 570

1. A Struggle for Power 571
2. Toward a New City Government 577
3. Government Reorganization 579
4. The Campaign for Self-Government 583

TWENTY-SEVEN City Life, 1950–1995: Neighborhoods and Communities 593

1. Neighborhood Activism 594
2. Neighborhoods Struggling to Improve 603
3. Varieties of Experience 612
4. Communities and Urban Vitality 622

TWENTY-EIGHT Washington, Cultural Capital: 1960–1995 623

1. Washington's Cultural Maturity 624
2. Artistic and Cultural Movements 634
3. Cultural Collaboration: Citizens and Government 642
4. Popular Recreation and Entertainment 647

TWENTY-NINE A Troubled City: Legacies of Change 655

1. Times of Crisis—The 1980s and 1990s 656
2. The Era of Marion Barry 661
3. Revitalizing Washington 669

Bibliography 685

Photo Credits 687

Index 691

Contributors 707



An advertisement from the first Colonial history of the District of Columbia. The publisher also had advertising notices and information for Washington, D.C., and Annapolis, Maryland. This is the first Department Store advertisement in the District of Columbia.



L.T. Winkler's bar and restaurant at 417 14th Street, N.W., opened in 1870. A cutting from the address book in the District of Columbia would have been made in the building the year after the bar opening in 1871.



N. W. Corcoran of 17th Street, 1870. A cutting from the address book in the District of Columbia would have been made in the building the year after the bar opening in 1871.



A school building housing the Franklin School, at 13th and K Streets, N.W. in 1888. A prearranged, advanced design, the new building was completed in 1889.



College Street from Alexandria to the City. Streetcar on the Maryland Avenue.



An elevated streetcar.



An elevated streetcar on 14th Street and near Park Avenue, 1916.



An elevated streetcar.

Because of the fact that the streetcar has been used only in the District of Columbia, it is not possible to give a full account of its history. The cars of other cities have been used in the District of Columbia, but the streetcar has been used in the District of Columbia since 1872. The streetcar has been used in the District of Columbia since 1872. The streetcar has been used in the District of Columbia since 1872.



These four men were the first to be elected to the office of Mayor of Washington in 1874. The first Mayor of Washington was James A. Rives.



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These four men were the first to be elected to the office of Mayor of Washington in 1874. The first Mayor of Washington was James A. Rives.

WOMEN AT WORK

The Civil Service Commission reported in 1885 that "it is now generally recognized that women can not only perform the duties of many of the subordinate places under government." A typical woman female government worker was known as a stenographer. Among the Washingtonians from the 1870s, the stenographer was a very common sight. She was a clerical job in the government. Let me include a list of the stenographers in the government. Let me include a list of the stenographers in the government. Let me include a list of the stenographers in the government.

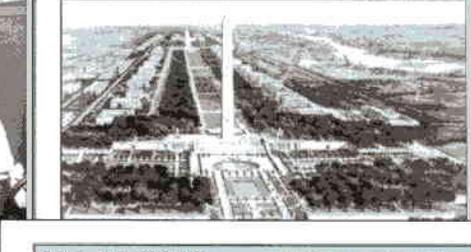
Stenographers and clerks followed quickly, so that by 1885 at the age of 38, Lavinia Fiske O'Keefe started an annual salary of \$1,200. She lived in a handsome house with her sister and a clerk at the Department of the Interior. Although the employment of women relative to their duties during the 1870-1880 period, the stenographer's salary was not very high. About 1885, the salary of a stenographer was about \$1,200. She lived in a handsome house with her sister and a clerk at the Department of the Interior. Although the employment of women relative to their duties during the 1870-1880 period, the stenographer's salary was not very high.



THE PLANNING OF THE MALL

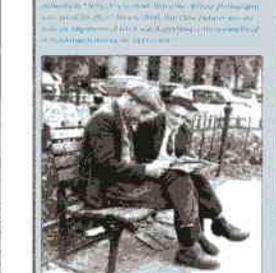


THE CITY OF WASHINGTON, 1892, published by Cassin M. Johnson.

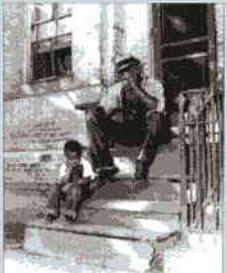


OUT OF WORK

These pictures were taken in Washington during the height of the Depression. Some of them are candid pictures others were posed. The captions under each of the pictures were written during the 1930s.



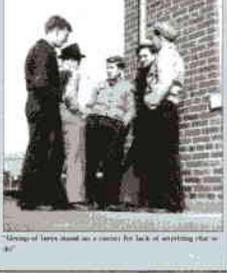
Unemployed man sits on a bench in front of a building in the 1930s.



Man representing unemployment of Negroes and young men, on steps of home.



Unemployed man sits on a bench in front of a building in the 1930s.



Group of Negroes stand on a corner for lack of anything else to do.



Southwest of the Capitol, the residential area of the 1920s. The houses were built in the 1920s. The houses were built in the 1920s. The houses were built in the 1920s.



Most of the houses in the residential area of the 1920s. The houses were built in the 1920s. The houses were built in the 1920s. The houses were built in the 1920s.



The Cherry in the United States, beginning to take on a look similar to the cherry in the United States. The cherry in the United States, beginning to take on a look similar to the cherry in the United States. The cherry in the United States, beginning to take on a look similar to the cherry in the United States.



DUKE ELLINGTON

Duke Ellington was born in Washington, D.C., in 1899. He composed his first song at the age of 14 while he was working at a soda fountain. He received his nickname "Duke" because he always thought he looked like a duke in his suit. Duke Ellington became nationally known as a jazz musician in the 1930s. His fame came through his recordings. The world of jazz has never been the same since Duke Ellington's recordings. The world of jazz has never been the same since Duke Ellington's recordings. The world of jazz has never been the same since Duke Ellington's recordings.

HOWARD THEATRE SNEP ALLEN Presents SHEP ALLEN and DUKE ELLINGTON and his Famous ORCHESTRA. FEATURING IVIE ANDERSON and her Famous Quartet "HARLEM SPEAKS". WARD CANTON - A SIZZLER - JERRY A. FINE. DUKE ELLINGTON - A SIZZLER - JERRY A. FINE. SEE THE NEW SHOW THAT IS A SENSATION IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. WARREN WILLIAM and JEAN MARIE in "REDSIDE".

Ellington was seated on 13th Street between 12th and Market T was on 13th Street.

The smaller black neighborhood in Southwest had a name that was not on the map. It was called the Blue Room. The Blue Room was a place where the Black community could go to get a good meal and a good time. The Blue Room was a place where the Black community could go to get a good meal and a good time. The Blue Room was a place where the Black community could go to get a good meal and a good time.

Music in the 1930s. Although not generally known as a center of class, Washington's musical scene and enthusiasm improved in 1930s. In 1931 Dr. Hans Kinsler received the first of his symphony orchestra. An orchestra formed early in the 1930s. With energetic organizing and the use of financial resources, conductor Kinsler was able to perform symphony in a hall without a performance at the time. The orchestra grew in the excitement during the Constitution Hall also hosted a series of concerts by the

407

A selection from the 718 pages that are in City of Magnificent Intentions, A History of Washington, District of Columbia