

CELEBRATING NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HISTORIC BLACK AMERICAN PRESENCE IN WASHINGTON, DC'S NEIGHBORHOODS

Washington, DC was declared the nation's capital in 1790. In 1791, Benjamin Banneker—freeman, astronomer, and scientist—was commissioned to assist in surveying the design of our country's new seat of government. This would include the layout of the parks, buildings, and streets that would become a part of the landscape of our city. Since that time and before, Black Americans have made Washington, DC home. The 2018 Black History Calendar takes a look at some of the places they walked. See if you have traveled those same paths.



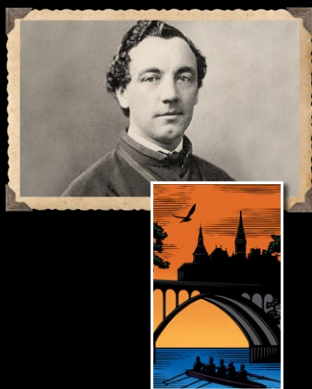
HISTORIC ANACOSTIA

Having escaped the bonds of enslavement—abolitionist, orator, and statesman Frederick Douglass, also known as “The Lion of Anacostia,” is perhaps this Southeast neighborhood's most famous resident. Cedar Hill is the name of Mr. Douglass' estate where he lived for 17 years after purchasing in 1877, breaking the covenant that forbade Black Americans from purchasing in the area. Mr. Douglass expanded the stately residence which has a commanding view of the city of Washington to 21 rooms and the estate to 15 acres. He enjoyed displaying artwork and his expansive collection of books in his library. You can visit his home today at 1411 W Street, SE and see how Mr. Douglass lived in Historic Anacostia.



DEANWOOD

Located on the eastern edge of the District and settled by newly-freed persons, Deanwood has been described as one of the oldest continuously Black neighborhoods in the District. As a benefit of its outlying charm, Deanwood was the site of Suburban Gardens, the only amusement park located within the District's borders. Architect and engineer Howard D. Woodson was among the park's first owners. Equipped with water features, Ferris wheel and a roller coaster, the seven-acre park operated from 1921 to 1940 and provided its patrons a respite from city life and the barriers of racial segregation. Suburban Gardens was located at what is now 50th and Hayes Streets, NE. Take a visit and see what's there now.



GEORGETOWN

Now one of the toniest neighborhoods in the District, Georgetown was once home to a substantial population of freed and enslaved Black Americans who built businesses, properties, and through their labor contributed to the neighborhood's developing wealth. Patrick Francis Healy was the 29th President of Georgetown University. He is credited as the University's first Black American president, as well as the first Black American to earn a Doctor of Philosophy degree. Take a tour of Georgetown and take in its history.



SOUTHWEST WATERFRONT

The evening of April 15, 1848, two young sisters—Mary and Emily Edmonson—were on a secret mission. They were among 77 enslaved men, women, and children who quietly walked the darkening streets of the Southwest Waterfront neighborhood to what was then the 7th Street wharf. Their goal was to escape to freedom aboard a schooner called the “Pearl.” This event has been called the “single largest known escape attempt by enslaved Americans.” Through betrayal and bad weather, the Pearl was caught and those aboard returned to bondage. The Edmonson sisters' story doesn't end there. Walk the 7th Street wharf and imagine what it would have been like to be on such a secret mission.

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