

# A Fitting Tribute

## LOGAN CIRCLE HERITAGE TRAIL



The 1870s mansions of Union Army leaders gave this neighborhood its original elegance. Later, its proximity to Howard University brought well-heeled African American families. Though urban ills eventually drove many residents away, those who remained were joined by newcomers in the 1970s to begin a new chapter. Walk their history as you explore Logan Circle.



# Welcome.

General John A. Logan, rendered in bronze in Logan Circle's center, could tell a tale or two. The elegant mansions around the park rose soon after the Civil War. Later, housing shortages and neighborhood decline turned them to rooming houses and even brothels. But today they shine again.

Prosperity has also returned to 14th Street. Once notorious for its "ladies of the night," it now bustles with theater- and restaurant-goers. Follow *A Fitting Tribute: Logan Circle Heritage Trail* to explore the neighborhood's transformation. This keepsake guide summarizes the 15 signs of the city's 15th Official Walking Trail.

15 Logan Circle, photographed in 1903.

*Huntington Library*

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Map by Larry Bowring, Bowring Cartographic



Neighborhood Heritage Trails are the Official Walking Trails of the District of Columbia.

*As you walk this trail, please keep safety in mind, just as you would while visiting any unfamiliar place.*

On the cover: Statue of General John A. Logan in Logan Circle by Franklin Simmons.  
*Library of Congress*

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• A Fitting Tribute  
Logan Circle  
Heritage Trail

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# Introduction



THE LOGAN CIRCLE neighborhood began with dreams of greatness, just after the Civil War (1861–1865). The war had nearly ruined Washington, and Congress was threatening to move the federal government elsewhere. In response city leaders raced to repair and modernize the beaten-up city. As paved streets, water and gas lines, street lights, and sewers reached undeveloped areas such as this one, wealthy white developers followed. Mansions soon rose around the park where Vermont and Rhode Island Avenues crossed. Senator William Boyd Allison pulled strings and had the park named Iowa Circle to honor his state. His plan: to install a statue of Civil War General Grenville Dodge, of Iowa, in the circle's center.

Monuments are for the deceased, however, and Dodge was still alive when, in 1901, Illinois's Congressional delegation arranged instead for an equestrian statue of their late politician and Civil War General John A. Logan to anchor the park. This made sense, as Logan (1826–1886) had lived on the circle. In 1930 the circle took his name. A founder of Memorial Day, Logan argued



This 1887 memorial print commemorates John A. Logan's achievements as politician, military leader, and family man.



that the holiday would serve as “a fitting tribute to the memory of [the nation’s] slain defenders.”

The neighborhood’s African American community also dates to the Civil War. As fighting raged, thousands of the –formerly enslaved poured into Washington and other Union territories. Some were housed at Camp Barker, near 11th and R Streets, and remained in the area after peace returned. The camp’s medical facility evolved into Freedmen’s Hospital and moved to Howard University’s campus.

As the city grew and wealthy white families moved farther north, affluent African Americans, including doctors and intellectuals associated with Freedmen’s and Howard, gradually replaced them. Among the most prominent of the new residents was activist and educator Mary McLeod Bethune,

National Archives and Records Administration



Residents of Camp Barker sing for President Lincoln, around 1863.

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who lived on Vermont Avenue just south of Logan Circle in the 1940s. From there she presided over the National Council of Negro Women. In addition, as a member of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet," Bethune pushed for federal government hiring of African Americans and equal access to government programs.

During the segregation era (pre-1954), most hotels in the city, being white-owned, refused black guests. To fill the gap, some African American families opened their homes and rented out rooms by the night. Logan Circle residents with large houses enjoyed ample business from performers associated with nearby Howard Theatre and the U Street halls and clubs, as well as tourists.

America's entry into World War II (1941–1945) brought tens of thousands of government workers to the city, and an acute housing shortage. As a result, homeowners divided many of Logan Circle's mansions, and smaller homes as well, into rooming houses and apartments.

Collection of Therrell Smith



The wedding party of Therrell Smith and Wylie Daniel in the dining room of 14 Logan Circle, 1940.



Mary McLeod Bethune served in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet."



National Park Service

In the late 1950s, more DC neighborhoods opened to African Americans, and many decamped for newer housing. Suburban Maryland and Virginia drew investment away from the city, and decay set in for many close-in neighborhoods, including Logan Circle. The civil disturbances that erupted in response to the April 1968 assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., left many areas in ashes or boarded up.

By the 1970s, though, the creative force of nearby Dupont Circle's counterculture and gay businesses was extending east to Logan Circle. The Victorian rowhouses could be had for a song, so collectives and individuals slowly began buying and restoring them. The Logan Circle Community Association formed after the neighborhood was designated a historic district in 1972 and the city provided incentives for homebuyers, spurring revival.

While Logan Circle's housing steadily improved, 14th Street's businesses were another story. The neighborhood's commercial corridor had originat-

Collection of John Shriver



Passengers wait out a power failure on 14th St. in 1962, a century after streetcars spurred neighborhood development.



Nelson Jackson advertised his tourist home in the *Capitol Spotlight*, 1975.

ed with the 1862 extension of a downtown streetcar route to Florida Avenue. When private automobiles later eclipsed public transit, auto showrooms and repair shops clustered here. In the 1950s, though, they joined the flight to the suburbs. Prostitution flourished along the neglected avenue until the Community Association led the battle to shut it down.

As prostitution began to subside in the 1990s, 14th Street was becoming a full-fledged theater district. The spacious and affordable former auto showrooms attracted the Source and Studio theaters in 1980, followed by Arena Stage's Living Stage, Woolly Mammoth, and others.

*A Fitting Tribute: Logan Circle Heritage Trail* introduces you to the array of individuals, from generals to musicians, who made the neighborhood's history and set the stage for today's beautifully restored mansions, quiet leafy streets, and thriving arts and restaurant scene.



Trew Motor Co. opened its showroom at 14th and P Sts. in 1920.



In the Luther Place Memorial Church sanctuary, parishioners organize bags of groceries to distribute to the needy.



The National Capital Planning Commission looked for buildings worth preserving during National Capital Landmarks Week, November 1964.



In August 1979, the city sold 18 Logan Circle for \$30,000.



Studio Theatre co-founders Russell Metheny and Joy Zinoman inside their new space in the old Trew Motor Co. building, 1987.

# 1



Needy children depart for Center Camp in Virginia created by the Jewish Community Center, Washington Community Chest, and National Park Service, 1937.

*Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington*

# See You at the Center

16TH AND Q STREETS NW

THE CITY'S JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER opened here in 1926. Its grand presence one mile north of the White House expressed Jewish residents' prosperity and their growing contributions to the federal city and the nation. With American Jews routinely barred from social clubs, the JCC promoted Jewish identity and offered a gym, swimming pool, symphony orchestra, choral society, and basketball league. High school students thronged to dances held on its rooftop.

Housing developer Morris Cafritz, a co-founder in 1909 of the local Young Men's Hebrew Association, led the fundraising campaign to build the JCC and served as its president for eight years. The center thrived until the 1950s, when many members moved to Washington's new suburbs. In 1967 it relocated to Rockville, Maryland, and sold this building to the DC government. When later generations of Jewish Washingtonians chose city living, they launched a new, independent DCJCC. Cafritz's son, Calvin, helped raise funds to buy back and renovate the building, which re-opened in 1996.

The Church of the Holy City, the national church of the Swedenborgian denomination, is one block north of the JCC. Dedicated in 1896, the church was designed by Herbert Langford Warren, a Swedenborgian and founder of Harvard University's School of Architecture.

Three blocks north is the House of the Temple, the headquarters of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, USA. Completed in 1915, it was DC's first major building by John Russell Pope, who later designed the National Archives and the Jefferson Memorial.

# 2



Alma Thomas (1891–1978) in her studio, around 1968.  
*Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution*

# Advancing the Race

15TH AND CHURCH STREETS NW

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ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH was completed in 1880 by DC's first independent black Episcopalian congregation. Founding pastor Alexander Crummell, a prominent African American intellectual, was appointed in 1873 to head St. Mary's, a small church in Foggy Bottom. In 1875 his growing congregation purchased this site for St. Luke's and commissioned Calvin T.S. Brent to design it. Brent is considered the city's first African American professional architect.

In 1897 Crummell co-founded the American Negro Academy to advance black unity and achievement and develop intellectual arguments against racism. Crummell's belief that progress for African Americans required intellectual leadership influenced the early thinking of W.E.B. Du Bois, who led the ANA after Crummell died in 1898.

The ANA organized at John Wesley Cromwell's 1439 Swann Street home. Cromwell was a lawyer and newspaper publisher whose *The People's Advocate* promoted racial uplift and the Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln. Cromwell clerked at the Treasury Department, then went on to serve as a teacher and principal in DC's Colored Schools, writing and lecturing on black history. Cromwell's daughter, educator Otelia Cromwell, was the first known African American to graduate from Smith College. As an adult she lived just off Logan Circle on 13th Street.

The internationally acclaimed artist Alma Thomas, known for her abstract oil paintings, lived nearby, at 1530 15th Street. Thomas was the first graduate of Howard University's Art Department (1924) and earned an M.A. from Columbia University. She taught art at Shaw Junior High School for 35 years.

# 3



*Minker Motor Company sold Columbia Six automobiles at 1333 14th Street, 1922.*

*Library of Congress*



# Automobile Row

## 14TH AND CHURCH STREETS NW

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ETCHED INTO THE CORNER of the building at 1522 14th Street are the names of cars and trucks sold here when auto showrooms lined this stretch. Hurley Motor Company, which opened here in 1920, sold Milwaukee-made Nash cars and trucks. Trew Motor Company's showroom (now Studio Theatre's main building) opened the same year to sell Peerless and REO cars.

Horse-drawn streetcars began running along 14th Street from New York Avenue to Boundary Street (Florida Avenue) in 1862, making this a major transportation corridor that attracted residential development. In the early 1900s, when automobiles became affordable, showrooms clustered here. In 1925 some 40 car-related businesses operated on 14th Street between Thomas Circle and R Street. But as the DC suburbs exploded in the 1950s, most dealerships followed their customers out of town.

John Wesley AME Zion Church, a DC Historic Landmark, stands at 14th and Corcoran Streets. Organized in 1847, the church purchased its building, the former St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, in 1913. Fifty years later, after civil rights activist Medgar Evers was murdered in Jackson, Mississippi, his body lay in state here as 25,000 people filed through to pay him tribute. Evers, a decorated World War II veteran, was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

The former Berret School (1889), at 14th and Q, was named for DC Mayor James G. Berret, elected in 1858. When the Civil War erupted in 1861, he was briefly imprisoned as a Confederate sympathizer.

# 4



Volunteers present actress and clinic supporter Elizabeth Taylor with an AIDS quilt during the 1993 opening of the Whitman-Walker Clinic facility named for her.

*The Washington Post*

# Paying Attention

14TH AND R STREETS NW

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IN THE 1970S, as Dupont Circle's counterculture extended east, Logan Circle became an attractive place to live for members of DC's gay and lesbian communities. Political collectives and individuals acquired neglected but stately 19th-century rowhouses, restoring them as community centers, workplaces, and private homes.

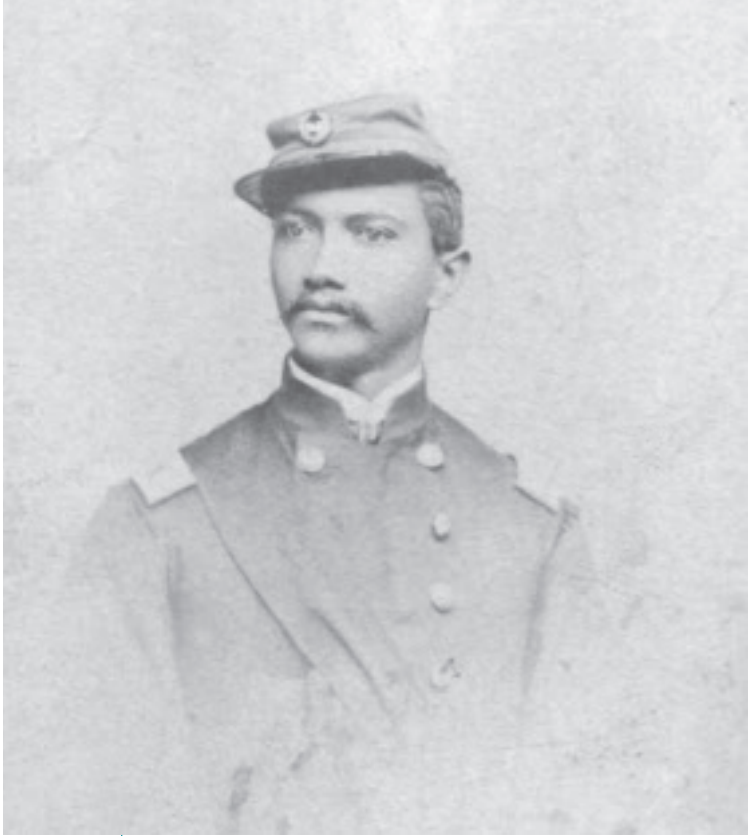
In the early 1980s, a mysterious disease—soon known as AIDS—began taking lives, including at least eight on Corcoran Street's 1300 block alone. Whitman-Walker Clinic, founded in 1973 as the Gay Men's VD Clinic in Georgetown, became the local leader in providing health care and supportive services before and after AIDS treatments became available.

Whitman-Walker moved to 14th and S in 1987. Six years later it opened its 14th and R Streets facility, named for actress Elizabeth Taylor to honor her advocacy for AIDS research and her role in persuading President Ronald Reagan to address the AIDS crisis.

The house at 1333 R Street once belonged to renowned artist James Lesesne Wells. At 1327 R is the former Mu-So-Lit Clubhouse. This elite African American men's group, established in 1905, presented lectures on music, society, and literature. One of its members, the eminent writer and philosopher Alain Locke, lived across the street at 1326 R.

The Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, founded in 1841 as the First Colored Presbyterian Church, stands at 15th and R Streets. The church sponsored the nation's first high school for African Americans, the prestigious Preparatory High School for Colored Youth (later M Street and then Dunbar High School).

# 5



Major Alexander T. Augusta, M.D.,  
directed the hospital at Camp Barker.

*National Archives and Records Administration,  
courtesy, African American Civil War Museum*

# “Contraband” to Community

VERMONT AVENUE AND R STREET NW

AFTER THE CIVIL WAR BROKE OUT in 1861, men, women, and children walked away from bondage. When some sought shelter at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, Union General Benjamin Butler allowed them to stay as “contrabands of war” or captured enemy property. Soon thousands poured into Washington and other Union territories seeking new lives. In 1862 the Army decided to house the formerly enslaved in the wooden barracks built here for Captain Charles Barker’s Chicago Dragoons.

In 1862 Camp Barker reportedly housed 4,000 people. The overcrowding led to deadly epidemics, despite the camp’s health facility. Contraband (later Freedmen’s) Hospital, was led by Major Alexander T. Augusta, M.D., the nation’s first African American commissioned medical officer. Many refugees left for Freedmen’s Village, established in 1863 on Robert E. Lee’s former estate in Arlington, Virginia. Others remained here, in a growing community.

President Abraham Lincoln occasionally visited Camp Barker from his summer retreat at the Soldiers’ Home, about 2.5 miles northeast. Mary Dines, who escaped bondage in Maryland and lived at the camp, cooked for Lincoln at his retreat. She sang in a concert organized at the camp for the president and guests.

Vermont Avenue Baptist Church, at 1630 Vermont, was founded to serve the community seeded by Camp Barker. The politically active church has attracted eminent speakers, such as the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1956, and President Barack Obama in 2010.

# 6



John Alexander Logan posed in June 1865 with other generals of the Army of the Potomac: from left, Horatio G. Wright, Logan, George G. Meade, John Grubb Parke, and Andrew A. Humphreys.

*Library of Congress*

# Logan Circle, Just Ahead

1500 BLOCK VERMONT AVENUE NW

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SOME OF THE CITY'S FINEST Victorian houses ring Logan Circle. While the area appears on the L'Enfant Plan of 1791, it wasn't until local landowner and public works czar Alexander "Boss" Shepherd made improvements in the 1870s that these grand houses were built.

Among the Union leaders who set up house-keeping after the Civil War on what was then called Iowa Circle was General Eliphalet Whittlesey of number 8. Whittlesey worked for the Freedmen's Bureau and helped start Howard University. Captain Allen V. Reed, commander of the *USS Kansas*, lived at number 6; his daughters remained there into the 1930s. General Benjamin Brice, paymaster general, lived at number 20.

Most notable was former Union Army General John A. Logan. On June 12, 1885, African American bands played and a crowd cheered as Logan arrived home at 4 Iowa Circle. The recently elected Illinois senator was known for promoting civil rights and for establishing Memorial Day in 1868. Logan invited everyone inside and reportedly shook a thousand hands. In 1901 veterans joined Congress to fund the circle's monument to Logan.

By 1930 nearby Howard University had attracted affluent black families to Logan Circle. With U Street's "Black Broadway" so close, and segregation barring African Americans from white-owned hotels, entrepreneurs converted large houses into lodgings for black travelers. Myrtle Williams, who opened the Cadillac Hotel at 1500 Vermont Avenue in 1941 explained, "We like to travel, but we could never find a decent place where a colored person could lay his head."

# 7



Inside 15 Logan Circle during its time as  
the Korean Legation, 1903.

*Huntington Library*



# If These Mansions Could Talk

1500 BLOCK LOGAN CIRCLE NW

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LOGAN CIRCLE'S MANSIONS have experienced numerous uses. For example 15 Logan Circle was built in 1877 for Lt. Cmdr. Seth Ledyard Phelps, a Civil War veteran then serving on the Board of Commissioners that governed DC. In 1891 the Joseon Dynasty of Korea purchased number 15 for its legation in the United States. In 1910, after Imperial Japan annexed Korea, the Japanese government forcibly took possession of the house and sold it. Eventually the mansion housed a World War II-era recreation center for African Americans and then labor union offices before returning to private ownership. After its independence from Japan in 1945, the Korean government and Koreans living in the United States sought to recover the house. In 2012 the Korean government finally repurchased it. The house next door, 1502 13th Street, also built by Cmdr. Phelps, was briefly a journalists' clubhouse, then a rooming house of ill repute known as the Raleigh, and, since the 1990s, condominiums.

Number 14 has always been a family residence. It was built in 1903 for Woodward & Lothrop manager Josephine Nourse, who sold it to Dr. Thomas Caesar Smith in 1930. A Howard Medical School graduate, Dr. Smith lived with his family upstairs and treated patients in an English basement clinic. He spent off hours visiting patients who lacked access to health care. He purchased property for each of his five daughters. Therrell Smith used hers to open a ballet school, and was still teaching dance in 2013, at age 95.

# 8



Beulah Hall, left, and an unidentified laundry worker, photographed in 1977 as Louise Hand Laundry's owner contemplated retirement at age 87.

*The Washington Post*

# Honest Labor

12TH AND P STREETS NW

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FOR 65 YEARS, Louise Hand Laundry occupied 1405 12th Street. Founder Margaret Nicodemus constructed the building, now a private residence, for her successful six-year-old business in 1918. Known for handling delicate and expensive fabrics, the laundry became an institution. The White House sent its French embroidered curtains here. The Smithsonian trusted the Louise with garments belonging to John Quincy Adams, and Mount Vernon sent George Washington's bedspread. One employee recalled, "the proudest days of my life were when I was washing President Kennedy's clothes." The laundry's second owner, Beulah Hall, led employees in prayer each morning until her retirement at age 87 in 1977, when the laundry closed.

As middle-class whites and African Americans moved to the suburbs in the 1950s and '60s, this area's handsome but declining buildings drew attention from the fledgling historic preservation movement. Architect Francis D. Lethbridge led the Joint Committee on Landmarks in identifying DC structures and neighborhoods worth preserving. When Logan Circle's houses were listed, they began attracting new owners. The city's Shaw Renewal Project, inaugurated shortly after the 1968 civil disturbances, spurred new affordable housing. The city also bought dilapidated structures and encouraged renovation through below-market prices and low-interest loans. Resulting investment gave an economic boost to the neighborhood.

Shortly after Louise Hand Laundry closed, its open, industrial space appealed to architect Robert Lewis and artist Sanford Shapiro. In what is now known as "adaptive reuse," they created elegant, modern living and work spaces inside the former laundry.

# 9



Ella Watson as "American Gothic, Washington, D.C.," by Gordon Parks for the Farm Security Administration.

*Library of Congress*

# When Gordon Met Ella

11TH AND P STREETS NW

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ELLA WATSON, the subject of photographer Gordon Parks's famous and pointed portrait "American Gothic, Washington, D.C.," rented rooms at 1433 11th Street. Watson worked as a cleaning woman in the headquarters of the Farm Security Administration, a New Deal agency that employed writers and photographers to record the grim conditions of the Great Depression. In 1942 Parks, the FSA's first African American photographer, spent a month capturing Watson at work, church, and home.

Parks documented Washington's segregation. "What the camera had to do was expose the evils of racism, the evils of poverty, the discrimination and the bigotry, by showing people who suffered most under it," he later said. Parks's grim parody of "American Gothic" by Grant Woods accomplished this goal and was seen around the world, but it was only part of Ella Watson's story. His pictures balanced the poverty of Watson's circumstances with the richness of her life: her three beloved grandchildren and adopted daughter as well as her worship at the nearby Verbycke Spiritual Church. In so doing Parks differentiated his work from that of his white FSA colleagues who captured only the despair of African American poverty.

Sixty years earlier, when this area of modest buildings was known as Hell's Bottom, a saloon occupied the building where Ella Watson later lived. The saloon was one of many forced to close in 1891 after the minister of nearby Lincoln Memorial Church led a campaign to revoke liquor licenses and clean up the neighborhood.

# 10



Henry M. Letcher, Jr., center, poses with bandmates on the roof of their home/studio, 1-2 Logan Circle.

*Photograph by Gary Price*

# The Artistic Life

1-2 LOGAN CIRCLE NW

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THE IMPOSING DOUBLE HOUSE at 1-2 Logan Circle was built in 1877 as an investment for Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., son of the 18th president. The house would later serve as the Venezuelan Legation and then a Seventh-Day Adventist nursing home.

Henry M. Letcher and his wife Evelyn purchased 1-2 Logan Circle in 1949. Henry, an artist, designer, educator, and decorated veteran of the Tuskegee Airmen, and Evelyn, a teacher, opened Letcher Art Center. They taught sign painting, silk screening, architectural drafting and other commercial arts to World War II veterans as well as children. Henry's first cousin Duke Ellington often visited the students and helped promote the school. Letcher Art Center, recalled Letcher's son Henry, Jr., enabled scores of black service men to become "peace-time earners and family men" despite segregation.

After Letcher's death in 1967, Henry, Jr., took over the mansion, populating it with fellow musicians and artists, among them musician/poet Gil Scott-Heron. The younger Letcher's band Jambo performed locally in the early 1970s and attracted audiences with jazz-inflected R&B accompanied by psychedelic light shows. In 1972, when the neighborhood "became too rough," as Henry Jr. recalled, his mother sold the house. In 1998 it was converted to condominiums.

One block west is 1316 Rhode Island Avenue, an example of the 1970s wave of rehabilitation in Logan Circle. Architect Robert B. Gordon and his wife Doll purchased the shell of 1316 in 1979. Gordon designed a Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired interior within the Victorian exterior of the 1885 red-brick rowhouse.

# 11



Mary McLeod Bethune, seated, center, works alongside staffers of the National Council for Negro Women preparing a mailing at Council House, 1947.

*National Park Service*



# Striving for Equality

1318 VERMONT AVENUE NW

THIS BUILDING, called Council House, was the headquarters of the National Council of Negro Women from 1943 to 1966. Political activist and educator Mary McLeod Bethune founded NCNW in 1935 in her nearby apartment and moved the organization here eight years later. The building, a National Historic Site, now houses a museum and archive of African American women's history. NCNW moved to Pennsylvania Avenue during the 1957–1998 tenure of its fourth president, Dorothy Height.

Trained as a teacher, Bethune (1875–1955) founded a school for African American girls in Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1904. (It eventually became Bethune-Cookman University.) Her advocacy for women and children brought her national attention in the 1920s and led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to name her to his National Youth Administration in 1936. As a member of FDR's "Black Cabinet," Bethune helped ensure equal access to New Deal jobs, training, and economic assistance. During World War II she successfully lobbied President Roosevelt to allow African Americans into the Women's Army Corps. And under her leadership the NCNW led blood drives and sold bonds to support U.S. war efforts.

Ironically, from 1908 until 2005, Confederate Memorial Hall, including a home for aged former rebels, operated quietly at 1322 Vermont Avenue, two doors from the NCNW.

The unusually small house at 1341 Vermont Avenue predates the development of Logan Circle.

# 12



United Farm Workers President Cesar Chavez, third from left, speaks with Catholic priests after Mass, 1973. Luther Place hosted the Mass and UFW representatives during their campaign to organize migrant workers.

*Luther Place Memorial Church*

# Care for the City

1200 BLOCK VERMONT AVENUE NW

LUTHER PLACE MEMORIAL CHURCH has been a neighborhood fixture since its 1873 founding as a “memorial to God’s goodness in delivering the land from slavery and from war.” It quickly gained a reputation for community service. A century later, the Lutheran church was galvanized by civil disturbances following the 1968 assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Thousands of distraught and displaced people received shelter, food, clothing, and medical care from the church.

With the 1970 arrival of the Reverend John Steinbruck, Luther Place expanded its social justice program. Its ministries to the poor eventually included N Street Village, a community of empowerment and recovery for homeless and low income women. Luther Place hosted the Community for Creative Non-Violence, which operated Zacchaeus Medical Clinic, housing for offenders awaiting trial, and a group residence. Zacchaeus later merged with Bread for the City, which was organized by Luther Place in 1976. The church declared itself a sanctuary for refugees of the war in El Salvador (1979-1992).

Memorialized in Luther Place’s stained-glass windows, murals, and columbarium are social justice leaders including Harriet Tubman, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dr. King, Dorothy Day, St. Francis of Assisi, and Mitch Snyder. The church is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The first organizing meeting for what would be Howard University took place in 1867 near the intersection of Vermont Avenue and N Street. Dr. Charles B. Boynton of the First Congregational Society hosted the meeting in his home (since demolished).

# 13



President Lyndon B. Johnson and his wife Lady Bird wait to greet pastor Dr. George R. Davis after Sunday service at National City Christian Church, 1964.

*The Washington Post*

# The Presidents' Church

1200 BLOCK 14TH STREET NW

THROUGH THE 1960s President Lyndon B. Johnson and his family worshipped at National City Christian Church. The First Family sat near the front in the pew deemed safest by their Secret Service agents. The church would host the state funeral for Johnson in 1973, and its stained-glass windows memorialize the former president with a Medicare symbol, a NASA rocket, and a pair of hands planting a tree to symbolize Lady Bird Johnson's beautification campaign. Another president, James A. Garfield, was a member of the congregation a century earlier, when the church was known as Vermont Avenue Christian Church and located around the corner. Garfield often preached there.

National City Christian Church was formed in 1843 as DC's first Disciples of Christ congregation. In 1930 it moved to this building designed by John Russell Pope, the noted architect of the National Archives, Jefferson Memorial, and National Gallery of Art. The church's magnificent organ is second only to the Washington National Cathedral's in size.

The Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas Circle, opened as the International Inn in 1962. Its mid-century modern building was designed by Morris Lapidus, an architect best known for the extravagant resort hotels that came to define Miami Beach in the 1950s. Lapidus also designed Skyline Inn in Southwest DC.

Just below Thomas Circle off Massachusetts Avenue lies an alley known as Green Court, once home to the Krazy Kat, a Prohibition-era speakeasy that attracted edgy young artists of the 1920s.

# 14



Neighbors protesting prostitution march in front of the Raleigh House, 1502 13th St., in 1975.

*Star Collection, DC Public Library; © Washington Post*

# It Takes a Village

14TH STREET AND RHODE ISLAND AVENUE NW

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AFTER THE CIVIL DISTURBANCES following the 1968 assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 14th Street appeared largely abandoned by day. By night, however, residents witnessed the “world’s oldest profession” in action. Since the 1950s, when prostitution migrated here from downtown DC, men in cars from around the region seeking women caused nightly traffic jams. Arrested prostitutes were often bailed out of jail within hours. In addition three police districts intersected at 14th and L Streets, so officers often simply shooed prostitutes and their customers into another district. “You don’t want your crime rate to go up,” one officer told a reporter in 1989, “so you make them go somewhere else.” On one notable summer night that year, a police sergeant took 24 women “somewhere else” by marching them four miles south to the 14th Street Bridge. Undaunted, the women returned in cabs.

Area residents finally had had enough. The Logan Circle Community Association, formed after the neighborhood received its 1972 National Register of Historic Places listing, led the battle. LCCA members photographed customers, affixed day-glo stickers to their cars, and took brothel owners to court. Some LCCA members purchased and rehabilitated derelict houses and former brothels. By the early 1990s, with LCCA help, stronger penalties, and the emergence of the Internet as a marketplace, the trade began to subside.

In addition to its anti-crime work, LCCA helped beautify Logan Circle and worked to expand the historic district.

# 15



Zenith Square Gallery's Margery Goldberg, first row center, and artists pose outside their shared studio at 1443 Rhode Island Ave., 1986.

*The Washington Post*



# Treading the Boards

14TH AND P STREETS NW

STUDIO THEATRE, on the corner of 14th and P Streets since 1987, anchors the Logan Circle/14th Street artistic community. The theater, founded by director and educator Joy Zinoman and set designer Russell Metheny in 1978, originally rented space in sculptor Margery Goldberg's Zenith Square Gallery complex of rowhouses nearby on Rhode Island Avenue. An array of artists worked (and sometimes lived) at Zenith, finding inspiration among their peers until the city forced them out in 1986, citing zoning violations. But Studio Theatre had left six years earlier for affordable space in a former car dealership at 1401 Church Street. Another auto showroom across 14th Street was the first of three adjoining buildings the theater later renovated.

In 1980 the pioneering Source Theatre, founded by Bart Whiteman, moved into a former auto supply store at 1809 14th. A few years later Source took over a one-time Oldsmobile showroom at 1835 14th.

Although Washington never had the manufacturing activity of other cities, it developed a stock of industrial spaces including 14th Street's auto showrooms and service shops as well as print shops and other light industries. By the 1970s, with the car showrooms long gone, these spacious, affordable buildings beckoned. Among the other institutions that took root here are Woolly Mammoth, Horizons, Church Street and Keegan theaters, as well as art galleries. Over time these blocks grew into an important arts district, and its risk-taking theaters gained renown in the regional theater movement.



## Sources

NEIGHBORHOOD HERITAGE TRAIL creation begins with a community, extends through story-sharing and oral history-gathering, and ends in formal scholarly research. For more information, please consult the Kiplinger Library, Historical Society of Washington, D.C., and the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library. In addition, see the following selected works:

Adelaide Cromwell, *Unveiled Voices, Unvarnished Memories: The Cromwell Family in Slavery and Segregation, 1692–1972* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 2007).

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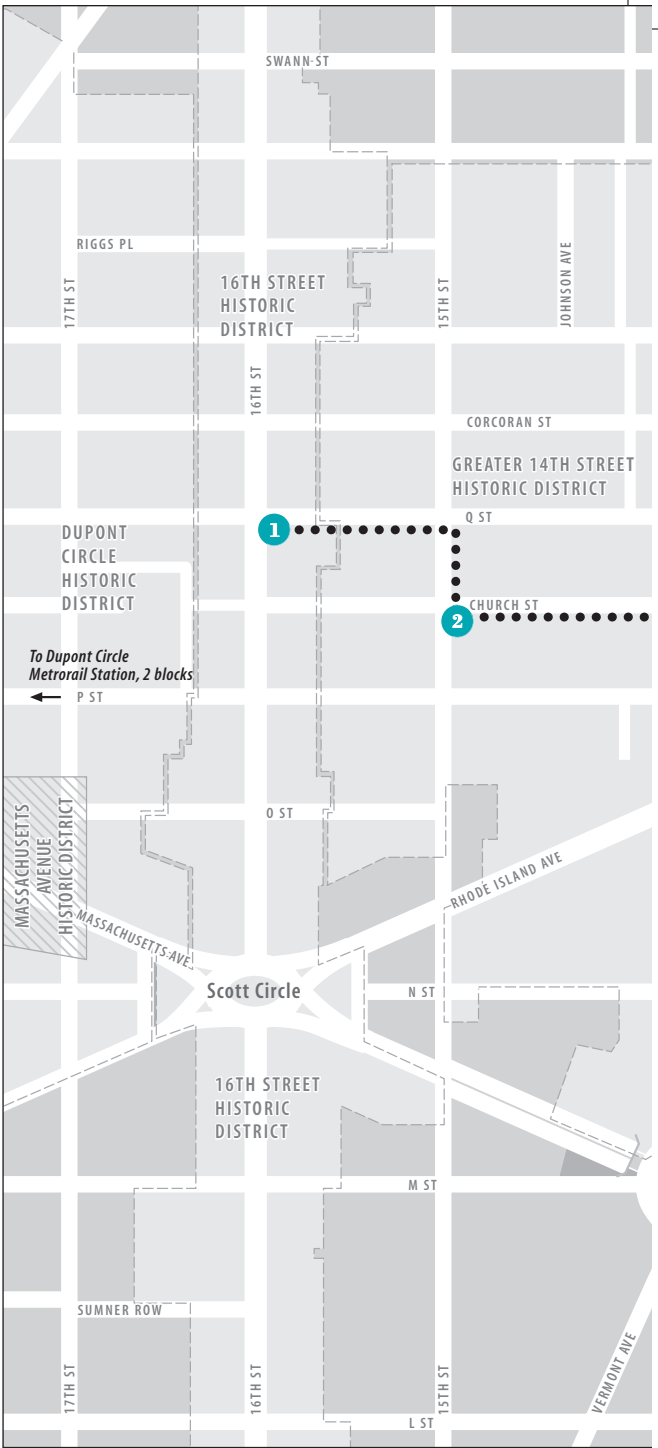
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# Acknowledgments

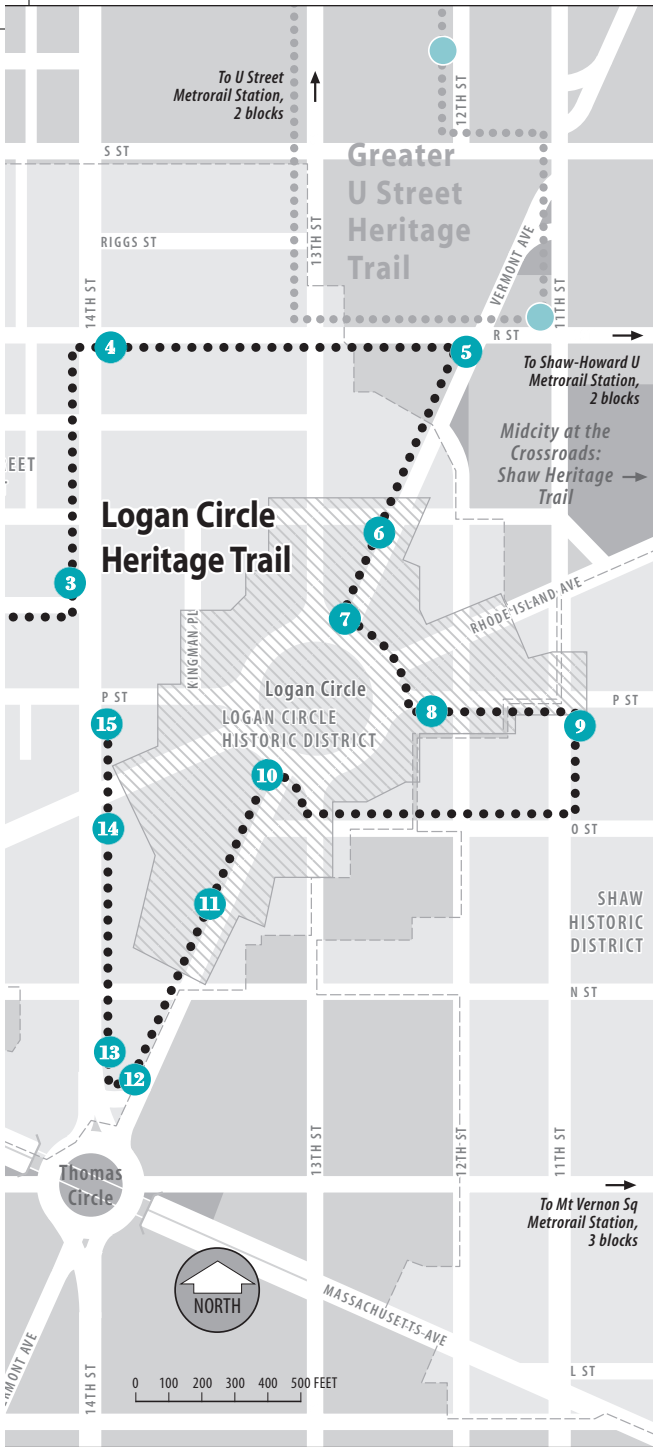
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*A Fitting Tribute: Logan Circle Heritage Trail is an Official Washington, DC Walking Trail. The 1.5-mile route is defined by 15 illustrated historical markers, each capped with an H. Sign 1 is at the*



southeast corner of 16th and Q Streets, but you may begin your tour at any sign. The walk offers about two hours of gentle exercise.

# Cultural Tourism DC

**Cultural Tourism DC** is an independent nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that invites Washington-area residents and visitors to experience and celebrate DC's authentic culture and heritage. For more information, visit [CulturalTourismDC.org](http://CulturalTourismDC.org).

The **Logan Circle Heritage Trail Working Group** is an ad-hoc, diverse coalition of neighborhood residents, business owners, activists, artists, scholars, and others organized to develop the Logan Circle Heritage Trail in cooperation with Cultural Tourism DC.



Logan Circle  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1972, the nonprofit Logan Circle Community Association works to enhance the quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors by advocating development, enhancing public safety, promoting historic preservation, presenting members' views to government officials and other organizations, and participating in charitable and educational activities. The LCCA sponsors social events and programs on community topics and keeps members informed of its activities via Facebook and email. More information is available at [LoganCircle.org](http://LoganCircle.org).

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## On this self-guided walking tour of Logan Circle, historical markers lead you to:

- The Logan Circle house where Illinois Senator John A. Logan resided with his wife, and the statue in the park that honors him.
- The site of Camp Barker, home to thousands of formerly enslaved African Americans during the Civil War.
- The church where President Lyndon B. Johnson and his family worshipped during their years in Washington.
- The former home of Ella Watson, featured in photographer Gordon Parks’s “American Gothic, Washington, D.C.”
- The church where murdered Mississippi civil rights activist Medger Evers’s body lay in state before burial at Arlington National Cemetery.
- The former headquarters of the National Council of Negro Women, now a museum and archive of African American women’s history.
- 14th Street’s historic auto showrooms and theater district.
- Beautifully restored Victorian rowhouses dating to the 1870s.



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