Links for Online History Research

Research queries & appointment requests:
Library@DCHistory.org, 202-516-1363 ext. 309

Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

Historical Society of Washington, D.C.’s Online Catalog
http://dchistory.pastperfectonline.com/
Online catalog that contains records for the Historical Society’s (HSW) processed materials

Historical Society of Washington, D.C.’s Digital Collections
http://dchistory.historyit.com/
HSW’s online portal for select digitized collections

Washington History
http://www.dchistory.org/publications/online-access/
Archives of HSW’s publication on D.C. History. Available to members of the Historical Society or those with access to JSTOR.

Wymer’s DC
http://www.wymersdc.com/
HSW’s John P. Wymer photo collection plotted on Google Street View; 1,800+ images of D.C. from 1948-1952

D.C. Public Library

DigDC
http://digdc.dclibrary.org/
DC Public Library’s online portal for select digitized collections, including Hopkins atlases from 1874-1896

DCPL Digital Newspaper Archives
https://www.dclibrary.org/node/35995
Select D.C. newspapers, including Evening Star and Washington Post. Available remotely for anyone with a DCPL library card.

HeritageQuest
https://www.dclibrary.org/node/33971
Contains the Federal Census up to 1940 and info on 25,000 families. Available remotely for anyone with a DCPL library card.

D.C. Government

D.C. Surveyor Documents – SurDocs
https://dcratrcalrs.dcravc.gov/SurDocsPublic/
View digitized land records from the Office of the Surveyor via their online portal.
DDOT Back in Time
http://ddotlibrary.omeka.net/
Thousands of images chronicling DC's transportation history, including transit, streets, bridges, construction, bikes, pedestrians, and more from the D.C. Department of Transportation.

DDOT Interactive Maps
https://ddot.dc.gov/page/ddot-interactive-maps
Compilation of interactive maps produced by D.C. Department of Transportation, including a Streetcar Story Map and a Commercial Use of Public Space map.

Historic Landmarks and Historic Districts
https://planning.dc.gov/page/historic-landmarks-and-historic-districts
This site provides a list of sites in D.C. with historic designation, a list of pending nominations, and a list of historic districts.

Historic Preservation's Office Links for DC History
https://planning.dc.gov/page/dc-history
DC history projects cross-referenced or created by the Office of Historic Preservation, including Historic Alley Buildings Survey, Historic Rural Farm and Estates Survey, etc.

HistoryQuest
https://planning.dc.gov/page/historyquest-dc
Interactive map with data on 127,000 buildings in D.C.

Interactive Maps from D.C. Government’s Chief Technology Officer
https://octo.dc.gov/node/708212
The District of Columbia offers several online mapping applications highlighting data and information from various fields of interest such as crime statistics, public school profiles, detailed property information and more.

Real Property GIS and Online Mapping Services
https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/real-property-gis-and-mapping-services
Interactive map with current property and building value and data plus square and lot numbers, created by DC Geographic Information Systems program.

Recorder of Deeds
View public records from the D.C. Government’s Department of Tax and Revenue’s Recorder of Deeds.

History of Emancipation Day
https://emancipation.dc.gov/page/history-emancipation-day
Select articles on topics related to Emancipation Day, such as Snow Riot of 1835, Pearl Affair, Compromise of 1850, Emancipation Day Amendment Act of 2004, and more.

Library of Congress & Federal Government

Baist Real Estate Atlases through Library of Congress
https://www.loc.gov/item/87675120/
Digitized atlases of D.C. for 1903, 1907, 1909, 1913, and 1919

Chronicling America through Library of Congress
http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/
Collection of newspapers nation-wide from 1789-1924 through Library of Congress
District of Columbia Records at National Archives
A list, with links to finding aids, of District-related records available through National Archives.  
https://www.archives.gov/research/district-of-columbia

National Register of Historic Places List of Sites in D.C.  
https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/sitelist.htm
A National Park Service website that lists local sites on the NRHP. For each site, description and a brief history is provided.

Other Institutions

Anacostia Unmapped  
http://www.anacostiaunmapped.com/  
WAMU works with Anacostia residents to record stories and produce them for radio. Access dozens of interviews and clips associated with the project.

Black Broadway on U  
http://blackbroadwayonu.com/  
Black Broadway on U: A Transmedia Project is a multi-platform story and public history initiative created to chronicle the cultural legacy of Washington, D.C.’s Black community along the historic greater U Street community.

Capitol Hill Photo Project  
http://chb.chrs.org/  
This active project photo-documents the historic architecture of Capitol Hill and maps the photos into a searchable database.

Capitol Hill Restoration Society  
http://chrs.org/  
The Society helps preserve and protect the historic neighborhood’s architectural and residential character. The site contains information on the historic districts, architects, and neighborhood histories.

Civil War Defenses of Washington, D.C.  
https://www.nps.gov/cwdw/learn/historyculture/places.htm  
Produced by National Park Service, this website explores the complex system of Union fortifications of Washington, D.C.

Civil War Washington  
http://civilwardc.org/  
Civil War Washington examines the U.S. national capital from multiple perspectives as a case study of social, political, cultural, and medical/scientific transitions provoked or accelerated by the Civil War.

Cultural Tourism Heritage Trails  
https://www.culturaltourismdc.org/portal/dc-neighborhood-heritage-trails  
Official self-guided walking trails of Washington, D.C. Download trail information and historic narrative from the website.

DC Digital Museum  
http://wdchumanities.org/dfcm/  
Compiled by the Humanities Council of Washington, DC, the Digital Museum has a substantial collection of documentary films, oral histories, and other materials of great cultural and historic significance to the District of Columbia. Many of the materials are grantee products that can be difficult or even impossible to find elsewhere.
Digital D.C.  
http://exhibits.library.gwu.edu/exhibits/show/digitaldc  
Online community history project, compiled by GWU undergraduates on the history of Washington, D.C.

Early Washington, D.C. Law and Family  
http://earlywashingtondc.org/  
This site documents the challenge to slavery and the quest for freedom in early Washington, D.C., by collecting, digitizing, making accessible, and analyzing freedom suits filed between 1800 and 1862, as well as tracing the multigenerational family networks they reveal.

Georgetown Slavery Archives  
http://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/  
The Georgetown Slavery Archive is a repository of materials relating to the Maryland Jesuits, Georgetown University, and slavery. This project was initiated by the Archives Subgroup of the Georgetown University Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation.

Histories of the National Mall  
http://mallhistory.org/  
Explore historical maps, discover stories, find people and historical events related to the National Mall’s past.

Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington  
https://www.jhsgw.org/  
Website contains institutional histories, an online catalog, and online exhibitions related to Jewish life and culture in the Greater D.C. area.

Mapping Segregation  
http://prologuedc.com/blog/mapping-segregation/  
Mapping Segregation is a public history project documenting the historic segregation of DC’s housing, along with its schools, playgrounds, and other public spaces. This project was organized by Prologue DC and GIS mapping specialist Brian Kraft of JMT Technology Group.

Rainbow History Project  
http://rainbowhistory.org/  
A non-profit which works to preserve the D.C. LGBQT communities’ memories through archives. Use their website to search their collections, including digitized materials and oral histories.

Ruth Ann Overbeck Capitol Hill History Project  
http://www.capitolhillhistory.org/  
The Overbeck Project captures the history of this community by recording the recollections of its longtime residents and preserving other records of its fascinating past.

Shorpy’s Archive of Washington, D.C. Photographs  
http://www.junipergallery.com/Washington_DC_historical_photos  
Over 2,000 historic images of D.C. landmarks, people, and more. Prints available to purchase.

DC Statehood Yes We Can  
http://bit.ly/DCStatehoodYesWeCan  
219-year timeline of events related to and document’s D.C. pursuit of self government

Lost streams and historical hydrological features of Washington, D.C.  
http://imaginaryterrain.com/portfolio/dc-streams/  
An interactive GIS map of historical waterways, reconstructed via 19th century maps of the District.
Visualizing the History of Fugazi
https://www.carniklirs.com/project/fugazi
D.C.-native punk band Fugazi’s history, from tours to fundraising is beautifully visualized via this thesis project.

Whose Downtown?
https://whosedowntown.wordpress.com/
Website documenting the oral history collaboration between students of American University’s public history program and Shelter Housing and Respectful Change (SHARC). The oral histories cover themes of displacement, resistance, and the future of Community of Creative Non-Violence.

D.C. Music Mapped
https://festival.si.edu/2020/dc-music/map
The D.C. Music Map is a submission-based platform for marking how music animates our communities and experiences. They make visible the places that support these—formal and informal, “permanent” and ephemeral.

Blogs

Boundary Stones
https://blogs.weta.org/boundarystones/
A blog about local history in Washington, D.C., suburban Maryland and northern Virginia, produced by WETA.

Bygone Brookland
http://bygonebrookland.com/
History and stories of D.C.’s Brookland neighborhood.

Civil War Washington 1861-1865
http://civilwarwashingtondc1861-1865.blogspot.com/
Detailed histories on site in Washington and its immediate suburbs that have connections to the Civil War.

DC1968 Project
https://www.dc1968project.com/
DC1968 is a curated project commemorating the 50th anniversary of 1968 in Washington, DC, in 2018, focusing on the full range of individuals, organizations, events and ideas that made 1968 such a momentous year.

D.C. Past
http://dcpast.com
D.C. Past aims to present the photographic history of Washington, D.C., by collecting 19th and 20th century photographs from diverse sources such as the Library of Congress and the National Archives.

District of Columbia Africana Archives Project
http://dcaap.tumblr.com/
GWU partnered with archives throughout the city to enhance access to previously unavailable research materials that document the history of the African diaspora in DC, the civil rights movements, the struggle for Home Rule, the rise of Black-owned businesses, and more.

Ghosts of D.C.
http://ghostsofdc.org/
The lost and untold stories of Washington, D.C., from neighborhoods to people and places.
Matthew Gilmore’s Blog on D.C. History
https://matthewbgilmore.wordpress.com/
Compiles news and resources related to D.C. history, including resources for house histories.

Streets of Washington
http://www.streetsofwashington.com/
Author and historian, John DeFerrari blogs about places and people in Washington, D.C. history.

The House History Man
http://househistoryman.blogspot.com/
“Best of” stories from over 1,500 house histories conducted by Kelsey and Associates, i.e. the “House History People.”

The Living New Deal
https://livingnewdeal.org/
The Living New Deal aims to inventory, map, and publicize the achievements of the New Deal and its public works across all fifty states, including dozens of sites in D.C.

Washington Embassy Gardens
https://washingtonembassygardens.wordpress.com/

List-Services, Apps, and Social Media

H-DC

Historic Washington
https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/HistoricWashington/info

Old Time DC
https://www.facebook.com/OldTimeDc & https://twitter.com/old_time_DC

DC Soul Recordings
https://www.facebook.com/dcsoulrecordings/
The mission of DC Soul Recordings is to catalog and preserve the rich history of Washington D.C. & Maryland Funk, Soul, & R&B music.

Historical Society of Washington, D.C.
@DCHistory on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook

WETA's Boundary Stones
@BoundaryStones

Streets of Washington
@StreetsofDC on Twitter

Guide to Indigenous DC
Guide to Indigenous DC is a walking tour map featuring sites of importance to Native peoples across the Nation’s capital. Developed by the AT&T Center for Indigenous Politics and Policy at the George Washington University and in partnership with the American Indian and Alaska Native Tourism Association. Note: this app is currently only available to iOS users.